The serpent both in water and on land:
A critical phenomenological investigation
of foreign students' experiences of
learning English in South Africa

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree:
Masters in Philosophy.

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Rhodes University, Grahamstown: Education/Linguistic Departments
January 2000

Abstract: The serpent both in water and on land

In this dissertation   I attempt to examine "the experience of the perspective" of foreign students introduced into English classrooms in South Africa.   I acknowledge the importance of focussing on the individual's narrative, since it is "only through an unconscious synthetic activity of consciousness" that perspectives are connected together (Carspeken 1996:11), but, along with Freire, I believe that "generative themes" can only be investigated in "man-world relationships".   The researcher needs to examine the phenomenon in context of the world that it originated from, since "historical themes are never isolated , independent, disconnected or static" (Freire 1972: 73).   In this dissertation I, therefore, carefully follow the classic phenomenological steps to analyse data from my respondents and then immediately contextualise it in term of literature about the learners background, the educational and political system in which they currently find themselves as well as general literature about the phenomenon of immigrants and learning of a second language.   The premise underlying this research is the "taken-for-granted certainty" (Carspeken 1996:11) that there is something unique in the South African situation which results in foreign students experiencing the learning of English in a particular way within this context.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The roots of the study

> For me, Jeff, I said, "it's more like doing a jigsaw puzzle without the pictures on the box to follow...and I just try to get as many pieces together as I can...because for the kids, every day is a day lost. It is for everybody. (Hayden 1983:186)

The roots of this study lie in my concern about the limited time in which foreign students are expected to gain full proficiency in English within the South African context. For the past five years I have been working in the field of ESL/EFL teaching. I have taught a number of South African students learning English as a second language, as well as students of all ages from outside the country who have learnt English as a foreign language and are now attempting to integrate into South African schools. The learners' circumstances are often different from those of students mentioned in the literature relating to the subject and many of their problems appear to be unique to the South African milieu.

In 1998 I conducted a pilot study at one private school in Pretoria and discovered that the majority of foreign learners felt that the current programme did not meet their needs (Picard 1998:9). Further investigation revealed that there is little or no provision made for special programs for foreign students in South Africa.

Legislation relating to foreign students focuses purely on the acquisition of student permits and concessions made in terms of matriculation requirements. Foreign students, who wish to

gain South African matriculation certificates are expected to write English as a first language, yet little or no assistance is given to them to meet this enormous challenge.   I was curious to see how foreign learners perceived the South African learning milieu and how they negotiated the challenges that it poses.   My choice of methodology arises from this desire to "give voice" to these students who up to now have been marginalised within the South African education system.

1.2   Statement of research question

How do foreign students experience learning English in South Africa?

1.3   How the study is organised

A more detailed analysis of the structuring of the content is discussed in the methodology chapter.   On a more general level, however, this study is organised according to Carspecken's "five stages for critical qualitative research".   The first chapter introduces the roots of the study and the "value orientations" which led to its inception.   These value orientations are, however, debated throughout the thesis.   The addendum contains the "primary record of monological data"(ibid 1996:41) which was captured during the first stage of the research. Other relevant data is contained in the literature chapter (chapter 3).

In chapter two I outline my methodology: phenomenology with a critical slant.   Although the

data gained from my respondents is primary, I analyse it in terms of external data. I summarise the development of phenomenology and critical theory and find the roots of both in structuralism. I then attempt to show how the two methodologies can be wedded once more in the ideas of Merleau - Ponty. In this study, what the respondents say about the phenomenon (learning English in South Africa) is examined along with reason why they say it.

In chapter three I attempt to summarize the literature concerning the learning of English as a foreign language and as a second language. Three areas are focussed on. Firstly, I summarise the international literature concerning ESL/EFL. The debate about the relative merits of full immersion of the foreign students into a monolingual situation and bilingual/multilingual education (also known as two-way immersion) forms a substantial part of this literature. I also describe the phases through which bilingual education has developed internationally as well as research done on host hostility and "culture shock". The provisions for teaching foreign students in Canada, Australia and Israel are discussed in some detail, while education in the United Kingdom and USA is also touched upon. I illustrate how, in general, international literature has a negative focus, regarding foreign students as "problem students" and research is rarely from the perspective of the learners themselves - an issue which I wish to begin to remedy in this thesis.

Chapter four reflects the second and third stages of research. A "preliminary reconstructive analysis" is made in the summaries of the respondents' data. A "Dialogical data generation" (ibid 1996:43) occurs in the meeting with respondents and confirmation of themes. Thereafter general themes are identified. Practically the chapter consists of summaries made

of what each respondent said in the interviews, followed by a summary of common and individual themes.

Chapter five encompasses the final two stages of research: "The relationship between the social site of focussed interest" and other specific sites bearing some relationship to it is analysed by comparing the identified themes to the literature and, finally, these "system relations" (ibid 1996 :43) are used to explain the findings.

In chapter six I draw some personal conclusions about the data, highlight areas that were not covered by the literature and, thereafter, suggest further research.

Chapter 2:   Research approach

> But they are all academic, every single one of them, and it's *sheer* intellectual
> naivete to think we do understand.   Worse, it makes us lose sight of why we
> are actually doing what we are doing.   The purpose of doing jigsaw puzzles is
> not to appreciate the artwork of the finished picture.   It's to get the pieces
> together (Hayden 1983:187).

These words by Torey Hayden summarise my problems with more traditional educational
research approaches.   As a teacher I am concerned with the journey that each individual
learner undertakes towards learning - a journey that is never entirely completed.   I wish to
examine how individual learners experience learning (putting the "pieces" together), rather
than how the completed process can be generalised to confirm or refute a particular
educational theory ("the artwork of the finished picture").   I find that academic theories of
teaching and learning tend to ignore the full import of the phenomenon they study.   Rather
than generalise teaching and learning, I wish to individualise them by focussing on the
phenomenon itself through the eyes of those who have experienced it.

Kuiper (1997) describes qualitative research approaches in education as effective since they
are "appropriate to the social setting in which education takes place" (1997:2).   Education
can never be seen as a finished product to be quantified and examined from cast-iron
theoretical positions.   There is a constant dialogue between learners and teachers and
between both parties and theoretical approaches to education.   Theories are reviewed,
re-invented and combined by the teachers and learners in the dynamic class situation.

The phenomenon that I wished to study, namely how recent immigrants from other African countries experienced their integration into South African schools, required a focus on the respondent. I wished to allow the respondents to "express [their] subjective feelings as fully and as spontaneously as [they] choose or [are] able" (Cohen and Manion, 1989:309). I, therefore, decided to use the research tool of the non-directive interview to obtain data from the learners.

To process the data I required an approach that would not impose my or any other theoretical position upon the data. I specify "an approach" rather than "a method" that would imply a definite view on how "reality" should be organised. I wished to focus upon the experience of the learners of personal transformation within their context of being foreigners experiencing English within the South African educational system. These learners' voices have not been heard before and since, as Campbell states "phenomenology has become a way of researching *the gaps* in the discipline, those areas which previously were not considered important to research (1998:3). I decided that this would be a useful approach to follow.

2.1   Phenomenology and understanding

The phenomenological approach has been described in great detail and applied in a variety of different studies (Borbasi 1996, Ehrich 1996, Giorgi 1970, Spinelli 1989, Valle and King 1978 and many more). In this chapter I will merely touch upon those aspects of the approach that are useful for my research.

Campbell places phenomenology in terms of Habermas's categories of human interest that underscore knowledge in "the column under understanding of some defined response to human behaviour" (1998:2).   This understanding can only take place if there is a focus on the phenomenon itself, rather than on the subject or the object (in this case the South African education system) that he/she interacts with.   The phenomenological approach is an exploration of the *essence* of experiences.   The duality of subject and world is thus collapsed into *the thing itself*, which is studied by focussing on the contents of the mind towards the object.   Hirschberger describes how this occurs.   He states, "According to Kant, man has no direct contact with the noumenal world: his experience and reasoning are confined to phenomena, objects cannot exist in themselves, but only in us" (1976:193).

Husserl, the founder of the phenomenological approach, discovered that the contents of his mind consisted of such acts as remembering, desiring, and perceiving and the abstract content of these acts, these he called *meanings* (Husserl: 1931).   These *meanings* enable an act to be directed to an object and Husserl sees this *intentionality* as the essence of consciousness.   Phenomenology focuses on those basic components of the meanings that make intentionality possible as well as how these meanings are built up in the course of experience.   In my study I will have a dual focus: what aspects of South African education the learners have experienced, as well as why they have attached particular meanings to these experiences.   The purpose of the research is to examine the dialogue between the learners' experience and the *object* they are experiencing.

Is it, however, possible to focus solely on this dialogue?   Surely it is influenced by outside factors?   Can the phenomenon   *in itself*   be isolated from the circumstances that produce

it and the point of view of the researcher who examines it?

2.2   Phenomenology and objectivity

According to the Collier's Encyclopaedia,   Husserl outlined "a neutral field for enquiry, with no presuppositions of any kind the descriptive analysis of meaning and meaningful ("intentional") experiences along with the objects meant was the primary theme" (1990: 666). This separation of the researcher and the researched should, I believe, be striven for to prevent the imposition of theories in an inductive way on the data.

Sharpe (1971) highlights two basic phenomenological concepts: *epoché* (the suspension of judgement as to the truth or otherwise of the phenomena studied) and *eidetic vision* (the search for the *eidos* (essentials)) of the phenomena.   Both these concepts prescribe the role of the researcher as someone who should *bracket* his/her own personal beliefs, background and theoretical position in order to gain a fuller insight into the phenomenon examined. Bracketing, however, does not imply negation. Shank suggests that "the researcher's own assumptions or background is acknowledged, but should be made explicit in order to separate it from the main research account" (1995:4).   This aspect is particularly pertinent in my research since, as I have often taught foreigners, I have many assumptions concerning their experiences.   These assumptions should be bracketed and only reviewed after a full examination of the data from the learners is made.

2.3   Phenomenology and description

Van der Mescht states that "an insistence on a descriptive rather than an interpretative stance, is a natural corollary of the notion of bracketing" (1996: 47 - 48). In bracketing his/her own reality, the researcher suspends judgement and maintains a picture of knowledge "that consisted of describing the world, as it was, but not of going beyond it or criticising it" (Kolakowski 1978). Campbell (1998: 4) states that this descriptive approach is "in contrast to the scientific method....both poetic and interpretative" but adds that "those working from an emancipatory view of the role of research express dissatisfaction that it does not go beyond interpretation". This criticism will be examined in greater detail later.

Hycner (1985) suggests that with due note given to bracketing, the researcher should condense the interview data into *natural meaning units* (nmu's) and cluster these into themes to eliminate redundancies. A summary of these themes should thereafter be verified with the participants in the interview. Finally the summarised descriptions are interpreted and given symbolic value. For me the most problematic aspect of phenomenological research arises at this point. As Shank states: "Knowledge is relative to the person involved (not only the researched, but also the researcher), social phenomena need to be described and explained in cognisance of the explainer or describer's basic assumptions" (1995:5). It is possible and indeed vital for the researcher to bracket his/her assumptions during the initial analysis of the data, but when interpretations are made and value is assigned to certain parts of the data, I contend that bracketing is impossible.

2.4   The problems inherent in the phenomenological approach

The phenomenological approach constantly focuses on the fact that the researcher needs to be "objective", but what about the researched? Husserl himself in describing the concept of "gewahren" mentions the fact that "every perception of a thing has...a zone of background intuitions or background awareness" (1931: 143).   I contend that this background or the implicit values behind the subjects' experience do not necessarily manifest themselves openly. The subject is not aware that he/she is experiencing a phenomenon in a particular way because of the hegemonic discourse in which he/she is grounded. Researchers are also unaware of the implicit values in the description because of their   backgrounds.

This can result in what Marxists call "false consciousness". As Satré states: "La conscience et le monde sont dormé d'un même coup" (1947:32).   [The world view of a subject is influenced irrevocably by his/her learned responses].

Freire   posits the view that the teacher/researcher should be a "transformative intellectual" (1972: 55)   who reflects on the reasons for a particular intentionality as well as increasing the scope of his/her perceptions of the implications of these intentionalities.   In this process the researcher observes "previously inconspicuous phenomena" (1972: 55).   According to Freire objective social reality does not exist by chance, but is the product of human action.   The researcher should thus have a dual focus including both action and reflection.   These together constitute praxis that leads to transformation.

In my research it is not sufficient to give voice to immigrant students. I need to examine their background and the reasons for the themes that arise from the data.   These students are powerless and oppressed in South African society, both as Africans and as foreigners. It is

naïve to believe that this oppression has not radically influenced their world view.

Society as an active agent is neglected in a pure phenomenological approach, since it concentrates on the phenomenon itself. As Kolakowski states, "perception cannot be isolated from its social genesis, both it and the object are a social and historical object, but society as a whole is an active element in the process" (1978: 352).

The researcher's own experiences should be bracketed, not purged, since any theory without these "practical residua" cannot be used for practical ends. I cannot escape the fact that I am a teacher whose interest in this topic is determined by the fact that I wish to improve the learning situation for foreign learners. As Kolakowski states: "theoretical activity cannot escape from practical interest" (1978: 389). Therefore, if themes are to be interpreted in a phenomenological study, they cannot be examined without acknowledging the practical purpose for which they are examined. The possible implications that they may have on the researcher and the researched should also be considered.

2.5   Phenomenology and Marxism

I stated at the beginning of the chapter that, as a teacher, I am concerned with the description of individual progress rather than generalisations or theory of educational activity. This is what drew me to the phenomenological approach - an approach that describes rather than prescribes. The teaching and learning activity does not, however, exist in a vacuum.

Teachers and learners react in certain ways and follow certain methods because of their socio - historical background.   Examining this background leads us back to theory (reasons for and philosophies underpinning behaviour).   As the Marxists state, "theoretical activity cannot escape from practical interest: the subject - object relationship must involve some degree of *interest* and no part of human knowledge is intelligible except in relation to the history of the human race..." (Kolakowski: 1978 : 389).

Although I was concerned with the immediate dialogic transactions between the immigrant students and their world (consisting of teachers, other students, learning material, classroom situation and general South African community), these students have a history which to a certain extent guided their responses.

The concepts of *interest* and *reality* as "the product of human action" (Freire: 1972: 27) lead me to an examination and comparison of Marxism to Phenomenology.

Both Marxism and Phenomenology have their origins in Structuralism a "method of studying society...[an] organic view that sees reality as an organism...[the] parts are real only in their relationship to each other" (Palmer 1997: 2).   This is true of both schools of thought. Phenomenology examines *essences* that arise out of a dialogic *relationship* between the subject and his/her personal reality (*Lebenswelt*).   Marxism, on the other hand, is concerned with a *reflexive relationship* where man produces social reality "which in the inversion of the praxis turns back upon them and conditions them" (Freire 1972 : 27).

Traditional Structuralism resembles Phenomenology in the fact that it is synchronic

(ahistorical).   Structuralism examines the permanent structures behind things. Phenomenologists, however, although not subscribing to what Jacques Lacan calls "the symbolic order" (Palmer 1997: 27) (an unchanging order), do believe that a level of truth can be derived from the subjective reality of *individuals*.   This *truth* is not generalisable, but does illuminate the universal human condition.   Individual truth is valid because of the actions that arise out of it.   Marxists oppose Phenomenology's focus on the individual's reality and follow Structuralism's concept of "disappearance of [the] subject" who is "spawned by" and absorbed back into the general structure.   Marxism, unlike Structuralism and Phenomenology, is intensely historic and questions whether the products of consciousness (Phenomenology's *essences*) and the truth about social reality can be grasped by immediate consciousness.   Marxists posit that there is an underlying structure that determines social reality and that it must be grasped if social reality is to be understood (Palmer 1997 : 28). It is, therefore, necessary to wed the individualistic and anti-individualistic, synchronic and diachronic (historical) when melding Phenomenology and a critical or Marxist approach.

An effective synthesis of these two philosophies can be found in the work of Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy enables me to examine both the social structure and power relations at school and within the broader community that impact on these learners as well as the "image of [wo]man depicted by his/her ideas" (Ricoeur 1967: 159).   The two philosophies complement each other as Spurling states, "the Marxist Phenomenologist can no longer be characterised as a perpetual beginner who "takes for granted nothing that men learned or otherwise, believe they know".   The researcher examines the individual data and then contextualises it and "looks to Marxism to find some kind of body of knowledge that

will enable him to understand the contemporary world" (Spurling 1977: 92).

Both Phenomenology and Marxism are concerned with the concept of truth or *reality*.

> In the same way that Phenomenology reveals the intentional genesis of phenomena, Marxism challenges those assumptions that designate certain social or historical phenomena as "natural" by disclosing their root in human praxis (Spurling 1977: 93).

Both philosophies are, therefore, seeking a hidden truth; a truth not clearly discernible because a certain amount of *alienation* has taken place. Phenomenology and Marxism both aim at transcending this alienation and, therefore, are philosophies of "freedom".

A number of theorists have claimed that Marxism and Phenomenology are basically incompatible, most notably Aron (1969) and Schmeuli (1973). Their concerns are based upon three main points:

2.5.1 The subjects in phenomenological studies are narrating "unfinished history" and, therefore, no universal truths can be drawn from their narration. As Aron states: "The Marxists and the existentialists come into conflict at the point where the tradition of Kierkegaard cannot be reconciled with that of Hegel" (Aron 1969: 86). According to Kierkegaard *essences* are arrived at by thought and logic, while *existence* is discovered through decisions - always of a moral and religious character (Collier's Encyclopaedia 1990: Vol 14: 76 - 77). Hegel, however, believed that "every individual is a son of his period, so philosophy is nothing but its period comprehended in thought" (Collier's Encyclopaedia

1990: Vol 12: 9 - 11). Hegelian philosophy, like Phenomenology, would accept the *truth* of the subjects' utterances, since their thoughts are direct manifestations of history. Marxists, however, like Kierkegaard, believe that although the individual's reality/ truth is constituted by society or history, the individual's truth cannot be regarded as reality. "False consciousness" can pervert the subject's view of *reality* and there is a *true reality* which exists outside of the individual's reality.

2.5.2   There is a concern about the confusion between *individualistic concepts* and *holistic concepts*. Schmeuli questions our ability to "talk about collective actions without imputing conscious intentions on the part of individual persons" (1973: 141).

Merleau-Ponty answers this confusion by defining the difference between *self-creation* and *transcendence*. *Self-creation* implies individuals creating their own reality while *transcendence* implies moving beyond reality. He states: "I am the absolute source, my existence does not stem from my antecedents or from my physical and social environment, instead it moves out towards them and sustains them" (1962: 131). This transcendence is, however, not self-creation since "once my existence institutes a situation for me in the world, then, of necessity, I have to inhabit it and reckon with the limits and obligations it imposes on me" (1962: 132). History or culture do not define or determine existence according to Merleau-Ponty, but because all existence has a general or social dimension, it follows that there is no life outside of a tradition. It is, therefore, essential to first examine the individual reality (and bracket all assumptions of the researcher), but later an examination of this reality in terms of social and historical "reality" is useful.

Merleau-Ponty further decries the perceived dichotomy between individualism and holism as "crude" since it ignores the fact that the terms *individual* and *society* are both abstractions and are merely "two poles of an intentional and dialectical relationship that makes of man an inherently social being" (Schmeuli 1973: 94 - 95).   The link between these philosophies can be found in Freire's word "praxis" which directs our attention away from the individual or the action and focuses us on the combination of the two: the phenomenon itself.

2.5.3   Theorists are often concerned with the notion of "historical responsibility".   If subjects constitute their reality, how can this be reconciled with the Marxist idea of an outside force (Capitalism) which oppresses the subject?   This reconciliation can be found in the Marxist concept of *alienation*.   "Alienation means self-estrangement, a condition in which [wo]man no longer recognises him/herself as autonomous...his/her existence is dictated from outside" (Schmeuli 1973: 97 - 100).   This alienation resembles descriptions of Van den Berg (1972), Giorgi (1970) and others' patients who manifest a disturbance in their mode of "being - in - the - world".   The only difference is that Marxist alienation is a historically conditioned form of alienation based on exploitation, rather than an individual alienation.

Both Marxism and Phenomenology demand that values be concrete.   For example, Marxists see Capital, not as a thing, but a social relationship between persons mediated by things. Truth for Marxism as for Phenomenology is a totality (Schmeuli 1973: 100 - 118).

2.6   Practical methodology

I have used the guidelines suggested by Hycner (1985) on how to conduct a phenomenological study to structure my research methodology. At every point, however, I have considered how a critical dimension can be added to the methodology.

2.6.1 Hycner suggest that the reasearcher should first identify participants from written protocols. Schmeuli states that the search for the "unique core of existential meaning" is a search for "the structure that will tie together all these partial perspectives" (1973: 100). In order to tap into the way meaning is constructed socially, I have interviewed all my subjects in pairs. The subjects interviewed together are of the same background, age and attend the same educational institution. Rather than recording the perceptions of one respondent, my focus is on recording a three-way interaction: respondent to respondent and respondents and object (the South African Educational system). Addendum A contains the interview with H and Y together. Addendum B the interview with P and A, while Addendum B contains B and E's interview.

2.6.2 I then conducted intensive non-directive interviews with the participants. The interviews in my study are generally non-directive. This means that there is "minimal direction or control exhibited by the interviewer and the freedom (for the respondent) to express his/her subjective feelings as fully and as spontaneously as he/she chooses or is able" (Cohen and Manion: 1989). There are also not specific set questions, but the interview is guided by Van den Berg's four questions which he used to describe his patient's lived-world:

What is the relationship of oneself and objects?

Here the focus of my questions is on the respondents' relationship to the learning

material, classroom situation and curriculum in general.

What is the relationship of oneself and one's body?

My questions in this regard focus on the respondent's perception of him/herself in terms of power and self - image.

What is the relationship of oneself and other people?

Here I focus on how the respondents experienced the attitudes of South African learners, teachers and the general community towards them and how they gauged their own progress in comparison to others.

What is the relationship of oneself to one's past?

In this regard I asked respondents to compare their learning environment to that in their country of origin as well as their attitudes towards learning language.

2.6.3   The interviews were then carefully transcribed and checked for missing details with the participants.   In the transcription I also made additional notes describing the school environment, level of English proficiency of the respondents and academic assistance the respondents were currently receiving. The statements of respondents can, therefore, later be contextualised and, as Spindler states in his introduction   "the significance of events [can be] seen in the framework of relationships of the immediate setting being studied but is pursued, as necessary, into contexts beyond" (1982: 2). This assists in adding a critical dimension to the methodology.

2.6.4   Notes suspending my interpretations as much as possible and entering the world of the individual respondent interviewed were made.   The important phenomenological concept of *epoché* is vital at this point.   This concept involves "the suspension of judgement as to the truth or otherwise of the phenomena studied" (Sharpe 1971: 46).

2.6.5   I listened to the interviews for a sense of the whole and then delineated units of general meaning which should condense what the participants have said, but still be as close to their own words as possible.   From this point onwards in this dissertation the narratives of the different participants are separated so that individual points of view can be gauged.   The *natural meaning units* are based on the meanings that can be derived from the narration.   A nmu can comprise a whole paragraph or merely one word.

2.6.6   I attempted to eliminate redundancies, cluster units of relevant meanings and determine themes from these clusters.

2.6.7   I then wrote a summary of each respondent's narrative and conferred with the respondents.   I modified the themes and summaries and identified general and unique themes for the narratives.   This stage epitomises the phenomenological concept of *eidetic vision* which is a search for the essentials.   In terms of critical phenomenology, however, these essentials need to still be judged against socio-historical reality.

2.6.8   I then contextualised the themes: At this stage research into the learner's past situation, the South African political position with regards to foreign students as well as the curriculum and language policy will be reviewed in terms of the themes arising out of the

respondent's data.

2.6.9   Finally I made a composite summary and interpreted the research.   Although this chapter is dedicated to the research approach used in this thesis, the   approach is constantly debated throughout the work.   As Brenneman and Stanley state, the purpose of discussion of approach/ method is "to demonstrate the use of such an interpretative tool, [but] to reflect back upon the method even as it is being used" (1982: 21).   At this stage I also confirmed the themes more widely by conducting a workshop with a larger group of respondents and asking them to confirm or refute findings.

2.7   Choice of specific respondents

Through my work as an ESL/EFL teacher in Pretoria I have come into contact with many foreign students.   In choosing my respondents I had certain criteria in mind.   Firstly, I wanted respondents who were of a common origin.   I have taught a large number of Angolan students and was interested in the affect that a cataclysmic event like a civil war could have on foreign learners learning a new language. In my literature chapter and later I illustrate how schooling has been disrupted in Angola and the affect that this has had on the students.   I thus selected respondents who were either Angolan, or had spent a substantial part of their schooling in Angola.

In order to gain a mature perspective not only of their experiences in South Africa, but also in Angola, I wanted adult respondents, but I also wanted to examine how schools in South

Africa responded to foreign students. I, therefore, chose respondents who were older than seventeen and younger than thirty-five. Although I was chiefly interested in the respondents' experience of South African schools, I also wanted to see how they experienced South African society in general. School pupils are, generally, relatively sheltered from the more brutal side of everyday life. I, therefore, decided to include adults in my study who are attending an adult education centre.

All my respondents attend private institutions. This was not by design, but merely because I was afforded easy access to these institutions due to the fact that I had been employed at all of them at some time. I was careful not to include any respondent in my study who had been taught by me at the time of the interview. In this way I attempted to avoid the study becoming an examination of my own practice. From observation it also became clear to me that the majority of students of Angolan origin in Pretoria attend private institutions in the city centre. No official figures are, however, available to support my observation (see chapter 3).

There is a pair of respondents from three institutions. P and A (the two young men) are both the same age and attend the same inner city school. I chose these particular students because they were articulate and willing to take part in the study. H and Y (the two young women) attend the same Catholic private school. I chose them because they both had attended school in Angola, but were of Russian/Ukrainian origin. I thought that their perspective as outsiders in both South Africa and Angola could give me a unique perspective on the subject. They are also both very articulate and are highly successful students. As I will point out in chapter 3, the literature seems focussed on the deficiencies rather than on the strengths of foreign students, so I wanted to show how high achievers experienced learning

English in South Africa as well as weaker students. B and E attend the adult education centre, are of similar age and in the same class. At the time of the interview they were not very proficient in English. I chose them, above other more proficient respondents because they were still in the initial stages of learning English and I felt that their perspective could illustrate much of what the other respondents had already experienced. I gained written protocols from twenty-five possible respondents before settling on the three men and three women chosen (I attempted to be gender representative) for the reasons described above.

2.8   Research ethics

Ideally Phenomenology is "an attitude that enfolds both the interpreter and his object of interpretation and that enables the interpreter to leave his own world for a moment, cross into the world of the 'other' and return with a knowledge made possible by his crossing" (Brenneman Yarian, & Olsen 1982: 25). The power of Phenomenology to allow the researcher to enter the world of "the other" is also, conversely one of its weaknesses. Despite the fact that the respondents may be willing and even happy to tell their story, the research question, analysis of data and interpretation thereof remain the province of the researcher. Campbell (1998: 12) asks the following pertinent questions: "Do I have the right to appropriate someone else's story? Where is the (respondent) in this thesis and how is he/she represented?"

To try to address some of these questions as well as the issue of power with regards to my respondents the following procedures were followed:

* Firstly all my respondents are eighteen years old or older. This ensured that they could give informed consent themselves.

* Although two of the respondents were prior students of mine, none were being taught by me at the time of the interview and hopefully all felt free to decline.

* All the respondents had been taught in South Africa for at least nine months before the interview and reflected back on their experiences.

* Summaries were shared with all the respondents and a final workshop with the respondents as well as other learners from similar backgrounds was held to confirm or refute my conclusions.

* Constant consultation with the respondents was needed to ensure that they perceived none of the information revealed as personally harmful to them. This aspect is especially pertinent because of the xenophobia which many of these learners already have to contend with (refer to chapter 1).

* All the respondents had vested interest in the research and saw the project as an opportunity to examine their own language learning.

Despite the enthusiasm of all my respondents, I have been aware throughout this project of the great responsibility that I have towards my respondents who are relatively powerless in South African society. My purpose in this thesis has been to "give voice" to them, not to impose yet another label on them from outside. To avoid irresponsible depiction I have constantly examined my own assumptions, attempted to contextualise respondents' statements by referring to background information and repeatedly questioned learners both individually

and in a workshop situation as to the validity of my interpretations. I hope that by means of

triangulation I have fulfilled my responsibilities towards the respondents as well as towards

the data.

2.9   Symbolism

> Phenomenology is a creature of ambivalence. Like the serpent who lives in
> both water and on land, or the salmon who dwells in both salt and fresh water,
> phenomenology crosses boundaries. Correspondingly, as the serpent and
> salmon are charged with power in their symbolism, so phenomenology is a
> highly controversial discipline whose limits are vague, resisting the rigours of
> definition.

These words by Brenneman, Yarian and Olsen (1982:93) summarise for me the central

metaphor of this thesis. Since I am concerned with the emotions and perceptions of my

respondents, these perceptions are best clothed in symbolism to make them "charged with

power". The approach is similarly ambivalent, yet powerful: at the same time interpretative,

yet critical and to a certain extent emancipatory. My respondents are also "serpent[s] who

live in both in water and on land". On the one hand they are all educated people of high

status in their home countries, yet in South Africa they are relatively powerless. The title of

this thesis thus encapsulates a recurring metaphor in this thesis: "The serpent both in water

and on land".

Chapter 3:   Literature   Study

Becoming bilingual is a way of life. Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a second language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling and acting…   The learning of a second language is a complex process involving a seemingly infinite number of variables (Brown, 1994:1).

This statement by Brown in chapter one of his book summarizes my dilemma when compiling a Literature study for this thesis. The experience of immigrants learning English in South Africa is a rich and complex one and it is very difficult to decide which variables to focus on. My choice of literature is, therefore, derived directly from my methodology (hence the unusual placing of literature study *after* methodology chapter).

Ratner (1991: 3) states: "Phenomenology…is insufficient, it stops at the individual level and ignores the social character of individual psychology". Since this phenomenological study has been undertaken in a critical spirit, I wish to examine variables that pertain to the respondents both as individuals and the "social site of focussed interest" (Carspecken, 1996:41) where they find themselves situated .   My literature study can, therefore, be divided into three main sections:

*   International studies of immigrant learning

*   South Africa as "social site of learning"

*   Learner background as variable

3.1   The international perspective

3.1.1   The dominant focus of international literature on the learning and teaching of foreign students seems to be a negative one as Eisikovits and Beck(1990: 177)   state:

> The bulk of writing consists of statements of national education goals…the few empirical studies available address the issue of educational achievement, generally concentrating on impediments…   There are also a few reports on instructional techniques….

Often articles that focus on the learners' experience of learning in a foreign country are found in psychology and social work periodicals rather than educational publications.   This is probably because of the view of the foreign student as a   "stranger" rather than as part of the educational establishment.   Their concerns are thus perceived as deviations from the norm.   Foreign students are regarded as less able than students from their host country are and they are expected to change, to be *assimilated*   if they wish to learn the target language and take up a role in the host society.   This view assumes a dominant hegemonic society to which the foreigner wishes to gain access.   Cheetham (1972:3) summarises the point of view with the words: "The simplest and most unsophisticated view of the immigrant is that of a stranger lost in an alien, but not necessarily unwelcoming world who will, in the course of time, find his/her feet in the new situation" .

The onus is thus placed on the foreigner to adapt or leave the country.   The literature is concerned with the interests of the host society: how the host society legislates foreign students and how the host society intends to remediate "learning problems" of foreign

students.   The interaction modality underpinning this kind of research reflects what Bhatnagar (1981) calls the "assimilation model".   There is thus a negative focus on deficiency rather on the achievements of foreign students.

Bhatnagar states that: "Assimilation refers to the adoption by the immigrant of the mannerisms, language, traditions, cultural mores and values of the host society.   Over a period of time, the immigrant becomes indistinguishable from the members of the host society.   His or her original language and culture are all but forgotten" (1981:15).

Of course, as societies have become more and more multicultural this view has been challenged by schools and communities where the previous hegemony is no longer valid. In countries like the United Kingdom there are more students of foreign origin in some schools than people of British descent! Critical linguists like Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) and educational theorists like Cummins (1988) have, challenged the assimilation model. Cummins judges the efficiency of any program for foreign students be it bilingual or all English "by the extent to which it generates a sense of empowerment among culturally diverse students" (1998:1). Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins have written extensively in an aptly named journal *Minority Education: From shame to struggle*. These attempts to change the focus of research and a discussion of how subsequent modes of thought concerning the treatment of foreign students developed is examined in greater detail in 3.1.4 of this dissertation.

3.1.2   As previously mentioned, the fact that narratives of foreign students' experiences are often placed in psychology or social work periodicals suggests to me that foreign students are perceived to be a social *problem* rather than merely part of the tapestry of the educational

system. Most articles, therefore, reflect the problems of foreign students rather than their successes. A number of different studies (Bhatnagar 1981, Cumming 1991b, Eisikovits & Beck 1990, Smilansky & Neo 1985, Tatar and Harenczyk 1996 and many more) describe phenomena called "cultural shock".

Culture shock is a common experience for a person learning a second language in a second culture. "Culture shock refers to phenomena ranging from mild irritability to deep psychological panic and crises… Persons undergoing culture shock view their new world out of resentment and alternate between being angry with others for not understanding and being filled with self-pity" (Brown 1994:170).

Manifestations of this phenomenon are cited in much of the literature. It is difficult to gauge the intelligence of immigrant students (this fact is cited in Cheetham 1972 and Smilansky and Neo 1985) and students often have problems adjusting to the teaching methods in foreign countries. In countries like the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada foreign students tend to mistake the informal atmosphere in schools for "a total lack of discipline". This is described in detail by Cheetham (1972:39 - 40).

Coelho (1998) and many others see "culture shock" as merely a stage in the development of the foreign students which leads eventually to full "acculturation". This discourse does not take into account whether the foreign students "feelings of discomfort, dislocation and alienation" (Coelho, 1998:27) might arise directly from the actions of the host society. It also does not examine whether it is indeed desirable for the foreign student to become fully acculturated into the host society.

3.1.3   Cheetham (1972: 43) describes the phenomena of immigrants invoking "insecurity, envy and hostility" from their poor working class neighbours when they succeed in their studies.   Coelho (1998: 16) describes the plight of immigrants in Canada and elsewhere who are   the first target of prejudice and discrimination in times of unemployment and economic recession.   She describes myths and misconceptions like "immigrants take people's jobs, cause pressure in the housing market and are a drain on the social services".

Coelho further relates how the media acerbates the situation by using language that alarms the host society like "flood", "wave" or "influx" when referring to immigrants.   Bhatnagar outlines two further interaction modalities besides assimilation/acculturation.   These are *adjustment*   which "refers to the process through which the immigrant learns to live in harmony in his/her new environment" and *integration* which   "implies adjustment on the side of both the immigrant and the host society" (1983:15).   These two modalities are, however, rarely reflected in the literature which seems focussed on "monistic assimilation" with a dominant culture in which immigrant minorities need to adapt with "complete abandonment of the old ways and their replacement of the new' (Kovács & Cropley, 1975:10).   This view is, however,   challenged by teaching programmes that encourage two-way bilingualism and/or a mulitilingual/multicultural approach to the curriculum.   Unfortunately, as I will discuss in greater depth later, financial and other constraints have led to a return to English-only programmes in the USA and elsewhere.

3.1.4   Although Coelho (1998), Eisikovits & Beck (1990) and others refer to teaching in "multicultural schools", the teaching programmes in these schools are a far cry from what

South African publications refer to when using the same terms. Often international literature is referring to schools with a dominant culture and language into which a small group of foreign students from a variety of different cultures are assimilated. Students from "other cultures" are generally in the minority. Although some inner city schools in places like London and New York have large immigrant communities which outnumber natives, the language of the country is still the hegemonic one.

This is unlike South Africa where, although the lingua franca is English, there are large groups of students with other home languages in most inner city schools. South Africa resembles other post-colonial societies in this regard where the language of power is not the language spoken by the majority. South Africa is, however, unique in that its constitution specifically prohibits discrimination on the grounds of language (clause 8.(2)). This clause has translated into the recognition of eleven official languages and the encouragement of additive bilingual policies in the education system (Heugh 1995). The focus in South African schools is thus on bilingual/multilingual education and assistance in learning English for the diverse South African citizens. There is very little or no provision made for the reception of foreigners. When we refer to "multicultural schools" in the South African context, we are referring to schools consisting of students of different South African cultures. Usually, when the term is used internationally, it refers to schools with immigrants of different cultures.

Internationally there are a variety of models for the reception of foreign students. Initially most countries favoured "withdrawal", where foreign students were placed in a bridging class for a period of time until their language skills enabled them to compete with their host peers.

This practice still continues in some programs like the Israeli Ulpan where foreign students are not only exposed to an extensive language course, but also to a program of cultural exposure (Eisikovits and Beck 1990).

In other countries like the USA or UK, resource teachers were used to assist foreign learners on a "limited withdrawal" basis. These types of programmes have, however, fallen into disrepute with the advent of bilingual/multilingual education.

Devlin (1997: 9) summarises four phases in the development of bilingual education. The first phase he calls the "language mismatch explanation of school failure". This view is consistent with the 1953 UNESCO statement that the "best medium of instruction is the child's mother tongue". From this point of view came the practice of governments encouraging initial literacy in the mother tongue of students. In South Africa this international trend was used to justify apartheid education and the Bantu Education Act stipulated that mother-tongue medium of instruction be extended in black primary education. Janks (1990) outlines the negative effect that this had on black education in South Africa: Apartheid legislators could now justify ethnically dividing schools. The abrupt switch to English/Afrikaans medium of instruction in secondary schooling led to increasing failures, and students without secondary schooling left school with little or no knowledge of English. Finally, Janks   (1990: 244) states that the knowledge of English that had been built up by the mission schools prior to Bantu Education was eroded by the switch in medium of instruction.

Internationally this practice was equally unsuccessful. A great deal of the literature reflects on the negative effect that this "transitional" approach to bilingualism had on the fluency of

students in their mother-tongue (once the transition had been completed) as well as on their academic progress in the target language and in general (Cummins 1991a, Dolson 1985, Porter 1990, Ramirez 1992a and others). The view that basic literacy skills should be acquired in the mother tongue and then transferred to the target language with no maintenance of the mother tongue has fallen into disrepute. Using the mother tongue as merely a means to facilitate learning in the target language has become associated with "subtractive bilingualism" a term coined by Cummins (1981a). He states that in contrast to subtractive bilingualism, "additive bilingualism...results when students add a second language to their intellectual tool-kit, while continuing to develop conceptually and academically in their first language" (Cummins 1998:2).

Luckett added the term to the South African vocabulary in her paper for NEPI in 1992. South African policy makers, however, clung to the practice of an abrupt change of medium of instruction until the 1990's as reflected by Janks (1990), Murray and Van der Mescht (1995) and Alexander (1999a).

Phase two is described by Devlin (1997: 4) as the "socioeconomic status explanation of school failure". This facet of bilingual theory came to light in longitudinal studies like that of Lambert and Tucker (1972) which illustrated how students of high socioeconomic status performed equally well in their home and target languages after complete immersion for their primary education. Phase two seems to negate phase one. Many educationalists started to doubt whether bilingual education was needed at all. This was especially relevant in countries like Australia where foreign students came from a variety of different language backgrounds and bilingual education was not always feasible. Taft and Cahill (1981:25) in their article

about immigrant education in Australia outline the traditional expectations of host societies

when foreign students are learning English:

> Until recent times, the official policy [in Australia] concerning the absorption
> of immigrants was one of total assimilation or Anglo-conformity. No
> possibility of a long term linguistic or cultural rival was admitted the quicker
> the assimilation to the pre-eminent Anglo-Saxon core culture the better.

In countries like the USA, UK, Canada and Australia English was seen as a part of an

assimilation process that leads to greater social acceptance of the immigrant. Taft and Cahill

also reflected the differences between the academic performance of immigrants to Australia

from Northern European countries and Southern European countries. They show that,

generally, students whose parents have high academic qualifications and come from families

with a higher socio-economic status perform better than students from a lower

socio-economic status. Immigrants even tend to perform better, generally have higher

aspirations and attain higher qualifications than Australians of a similar socio-economic class

(Taft and Cahill 1981).

Devlin (1997) calls phase three the "two language interaction explanation" of school

performance. Cummins (1978a, 1986), Cummins and Swain (1986), Spolsky & Shohomy

(1996) all suggest that the conflict raging about the viability of bilingual education can be

resolved by examining the "conditions and timing of instruction in the second language" as

well as the "nature of the mutual interaction between the two languages" (1997:10).

Cummins (1998) decries the practice of "transitional bilingualism" since he states that it

"almost by definition aspires to monolingualism rather than bilingualism" (1998:5).

Cummins is, however, concerned that a suitable level of proficiency be achieved in the second language. He reiterates that "superficial conversational fluency is not a good indicator of long-term academic growth in English" (1998: 3- 4). For Cummins an early exit from bilingual programs is likely to lead to academic disaster in both languages. His "developmental hypothesis" (1998) suggests that second language competence is best achieved by developing the first language in parallel with the second language. Popular opinion that students who start a language at a younger age are necessarily more proficient than later starters was also disproved by researchers such as Skutnab-Kangas (Skutnab-Kangas & Cummins 1988). Whether students are exposed to a second language in an additive or subtractive manner is more telling than the chronological age of exposure. It is interesting that Cummings refers to research done by Malherbe (1946) in South Africa arguing strongly for the benefits of bilingual education (then Afrikaans/English bilingualism), yet these programs were removed by the apartheid regime in the 1950s. Obviously bilingual education has always been a contentious political issue both in South Africa and abroad.

In phase four, or the "political status/historical status explanation of minority group failure" (Devlin 1997: 11), the relationship between the foreign student learning the language and the host society is added to the equation. Cummins suggests that minority parents should be involved actively as "partners in their children's education" and that the instruction itself should "build on the bilingual student's personal and cultural experience" (Cummins 1998: 5). Ideally theorists like Cummins (1988) and Porter (1990) believe that a two-way bilingual or dual immersion programme would be most beneficial for both foreign students and host society. Dual immersion is "particularly appealing because it not only enhances the prestige of the minority language, but also offers a rich opportunity for expanding genuine

bilingualism to the majority population" (Porter 1990: 154). Citing seminal research such as the Ramirez report, Cummins (1998: 2) concludes the following about dual immersion:

> It has been demonstrated that sustained promotion of children's primary language can be an effective route to academic excellence and literacy in two languages, second it has unequivocally refuted the notion that intensive exposure to English is the best way of teaching language minority children.

Practically, despite its obvious benefits, bilingual education can be difficult to achieve. Immigrants come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds and it is sometimes a near impossible task to accommodate all the languages in a bilingual program. Taft and Cahill (1981) refer to the huge variety of languages represented in Australian schools. Although special extra-mural language schools and subject teaching of minority languages are encouraged by the Australian school authorities, full-scale dual immersion programs are clearly impossible in such a multilingual situation.

Levin and Riffel (1994) refer to the fact that even in a country like Canada with two dominant languages, true bilingual education has only been achieved in one province: New Brunswick. Multilingualism is accommodated by special heritage language schools operating outside of regular school hours and a few schools offering bilingual programs in languages such as German and Ukrainian. The translation of school communications and a curriculum which is "aimed at pointing out to students the multiple origins and cultural backgrounds of Canadians and promoting appreciation of cultural differences" also contribute to a multicultural awareness. Levin and Riffel, however, describe this as "superficial recognition" and describe several instances where cultural practices that oppose the status quo are discounted and

devalued.   They also refer to a long history of demeaning and devaluing of aboriginal culture and language in the "name of Anglo conformity".

Israel, as possibly the most multicultural society in the world, has been a leader in the education of foreign students and practices many of the ideas inherent in bilingual/multilingual education. This is despite the fact that "Hebrew is the dominant language", "a major component in Zionism and Jewish Nationalism" and the "official" language policy supported "monocentricism" (Spolsky and Shohomy 1996). This policy was and still is reflected in the compulsory one- year bridging course or Ulpan offered to immigrants. To a certain extent Israel resembles South Africa with Arabic and Hebrew as "indigenous" languages as well as large numbers of immigrants with "foreign" languages. South Africa, however, still presents more challenges with its eleven official languages with the same status (on paper anyway) which need to be accommodated.

Policy in Israel has, however, adapted to the changing views on language acquisition. Spolsky and Shohomy point out that the new   language-education policy of the Israel ministry of education issued in April 1996 advocates "literacy goals in Hebrew and Arabic in the two major sectors" as well as "maintenance in the languages of immigrants".   Additive bilingualism in a number of languages is encouraged. In the Arab sector mother-tongue education is encouraged, but Hebrew is optional from grade one and compulsory from grade two. For Hebrew speakers Arabic is required from the seventh grade and optional from grade five. Schools are also permitted to offer French in lieu of Arabic, while new immigrants are exempt from this requirement (this reflects the inequalities in Israeli society where Arabs are expected to conform in a hegemonic Jewish society). English is a compulsory foreign

language, while French is optional or required if in the place of Arabic. School-leavers from diverse backgrounds are, however, accommodated by a clause that permits them to take their final exams in their language of choice.

In general, however, the literature emphasizes a need for a "planned program of reception and support" for foreign students (Coelho 1998:1).   Coelho advises the following procedure for receiving foreign students:

*   Establish a procedure for welcoming

*   Designate a team responsible for reception - The ESL teacher should form   part of this team.

*   Use the home language whenever possible

*   Assess student's linguistic and academic background

*   Choose appropriate program - withdrawal or limited withdrawal (1998:57)

Although Coelho's suggestions are not standardised practice it is clear that internationally a great deal of effort is taken to integrate foreign students into the mainstream schools. Whether equal effort is taken to "educate the host community for life in a culturally diverse community" is less certain   (Coelho, 1998:1).

3.2   South Africa as social site of learning

Although there is little or no "planned program of reception and support" (Coelho, 1998:1) for immigrants in South Africa at present, it is important to examine the South African educational and political situation in general to determine how it influences the treatment of foreign students in our schools.

3.2.1   South Africa has a long history of suppression of multilingualism.   Janks (1990) describes the situation in South African education during the apartheid regime where an inherently multilingual/multicultural society was artificially divided.   "Divisions were legislated into the school system" and "mother-tongue speakers of English (were) schooled separately from speakers of other languages.   English and Afrikaans pupils were educated separately, but required to take the other language as a second language for all twelve years of their schooling" (1990:243).   Black children were required, after the Bantu Education Act of 1953 to take their mother-tongue as medium of instruction up until their fifth year of schooling and then to switch abruptly to English or Afrikaans as medium of instruction retaining their mother-tongue as a subject.   This practice, as previously mentioned, is internationally associated with subtractive bilingualism.   Janks discusses the opposition towards this policy in South Africa in some detail.   Black parents saw it as a "form of oppression" designed to give their children an inferior education (they were justified in this opinion, since it formed part of the apartheid regime's policy to educate African children for menial labour) and later research like "the Threshold Project" (cited in Janks 1990) illustrated how this policy led to academic failure.   There were considerable negative consequences arising from this policy:

*   Primary schools could now be ethnically divided

* The switch from mother tongue to English/Afrikaans in secondary schools was a failure

* Students without secondary school education left school with little knowledge of English

* Knowledge of English, built up by English mission schools prior to Bantu education, was eroded (Janks 1990:224).

3.2.2 Already in the eighties when the "People's English" movement under the aegis of organizations like the NECC (National Education Crises Committee) was discussing a possible new educational system for South Africa, there was an awareness that classes in the "new South Africa" would be multicultural and multilingual. Despite the fact that English had been one of the languages of the oppressors "antagonism against English (as colonial language) has been played down in black politics… (it is seen as) a vehicle for ideologies of freedom and independence" (Heugh cited in Alexander 1989:57).

In 1996 when LANTAG presented its final report to Dr Ben Ngubane (then minister of arts, culture, science and technology) the focus had shifted towards "equalizing South African languages but acknowledging the commercial viability of English(es)" (LANTAG 1996:147). This has translated in practice into integrating children from a variety of cultures and languages into previously white English-medium schools. The medium of instruction has remained English, despite the fact that in many of these institutions the majority of students are not mother- tongue English users. Township schools have also not changed much in the past five years with English as the medium of instruction in grade 5 (previously called standard 3).

The concept of "additive bilingualism" has, however, gained more ground in the past five years. The focus of this concept is to promote all the languages in South Africa while at the same time promoting "the use of English as linking language" (Alexander 1989:54). Educationalists (like Alexander, Heugh, Luckett) intended to implement the concept by using "mother-tongue instruction in the first four/five years at school with English as a subject. English would be introduced as medium of instruction gradually and mother-tongue would be taught as a subject later" (Alexander 1989:66).

The chief shift from the previous situation is that languages would be gradually introduced, rather than the drastic change from mother-tongue to English that was utilized in township schools. Mother-tongue English speakers would be introduced in the same way to other South African languages. As Alexander states, "eventually all students will have a sound knowledge of the lingua franca (English) as well as a sound knowledge of one or more of the other languages other than their home language". Unfortunately, as I describe in greater detail later, by the time the legislation went through it had been watered down to such an extent that, although the government advocated additive bilingualism, school governing bodies could in practice choose their language policy and didn't have to change. Despite the fact that many schools have not changed, there is a growing mulitilingual awareness in most South African schools.

It is into this multilingual situation that foreign students are introduced. Currently in previously white schools or private schools, foreign students are introduced to English as medium of instruction, Afrikaans as second language and one of the African languages as

third language.   In township schools foreign students are first introduced to one of the African languages as first language, then abruptly they shift to English in the fifth year of schooling and Afrikaans is introduced as a subject.   With additive bilingualism, foreign students are exposed to a number of different languages outside of the classroom.   Legislation concerning the language requirements for foreign students will be discussed below.

3.2.3   The first piece of legislation that affects foreign students is that concerning study and residence permits.   Student permits are only granted if students have a residence permit or if a study permit is issued by the place of learning applied to by the foreign student. Institutions are expected to provide all the relevant documentation and this is endorsed by the immigration services.   Institutions are also expected to inform immigration services when the studies have been completed or when the student is no longer performing as required (Government Gazette vol. 406, 1999:34).   This in effect places the foreign student at the mercy of the learning institution and whatever language requirements the institution dictates.

There are, however,   certain concessions made to foreign students in terms of the matriculation examination and this tends to influence the treatment of foreign students by learning institutions.   Foreign students are permitted to write their mother-tongue "in lieu of English or Afrikaans second language", but are still expected to pass English or Afrikaans HG as a first language to gain their matriculation certificate (Government Gazette vol. 354, 1994:16 - 18).

3.2.4   Host hostility is perhaps even more pronounced in South Africa than elsewhere. Post-1994 South Africa has been left with a legacy of social problems that are not easily

resolved. After liberation a "more moderate - if not progressive - immigration policy might reasonably have been expected to result" (Reitzes, 1997:2). Unfortunately poverty, unemployment, crippled health services and beleaguered education services have resulted in South Africans directing their hostility towards foreigners rather than the root causes of the problem. This is sadly consistent with trends all over the world.

> As in Europe, xenophobia here finds fertile ground in mass unemployment. The accusations are that "they" take our jobs, "they" use our facilities, "they" don't pay taxes, in short "they" are part of the reason liberation has not lead to prosperity (Sunday Times, 13 September 1998: 19).

Problems in the rest of Africa have resulted in large numbers of people from other African countries applying to immigrate to South Africa, "accompanying this influx is an apparent rise in xenophobia… anti - foreigner sentiment at times expresses itself in violent attacks on those who are assumed by South African citizens to be illegal immigrants" (Reitzes, 1997: 3). A number of these violent incidents have been described in the press in the past two years. Perhaps the most brutal attack recently was when two Senegalese and one Mozambican were killed on a train near Pretoria by local immigrant bashers (reported in the Sunday Times, 6 September 1998 & Sunday Times, 13 September 1998).

Isolated violent incidents are, however, merely the tip of the iceberg for immigrants from other African countries. "The story repeated over and over again is one of exclusion, hostility, ostracism and denigration" (Sunday Times 13 September 1998: 19). Black immigrants from other African countries seem to bear the brunt of this hostility. The reason for this probably lies in the fact that legal African immigrants are a recent phenomenon in South Africa. Up until 1994 all legal immigrants were white. The previous regime actively promoted white immigration by "encouraging recruitment of immigrants, subsidizing the passage and initial economic accommodation of selected immigrants" (Couper 1990: 71 - 72). Africans were only allowed into the country as migrant workers on limited contracts.

These measures were part of Apartheid policies aimed at the "maintenance of the numerical position of whites relative to the other groups in South Africa" (Couper 1990: 91). The focus was to integrate immigrants as swiftly as possible into white South African society. These immigrants were on a high socio - economic level in contrast to immigrants in other countries, since they were placed in skilled positions, black South Africans already filled unskilled jobs.

Strangely this history has not led to black hostility against white immigrants. This hostility is reserved for black immigrants who are seen as a threat by the large pool of poor South Africans. According to African immigrants, "post - apartheid South Africans are seen as the biggest racists on the continent. The only thing different is that now it is not white on black, but black on black" (Sunday Times 13 September 1998: 19).

3.2.5 As previously mentioned, the South African classroom situation is currently a multicultural, multilingual one and teachers have becomes accustomed to working with students who have extremely varied levels of English proficiency. The new South African curriculum - Curriculum 2005 - also focuses on group work with groups of varied ability levels. Teachers are encouraged to teach skills rather than facts and focus on constructing "communities of learning". Language teaching in the Curriculum 2005 (South Africa's answer to OBE) has taken on not only a communicative slant, but also a critical dimension (Curriculum 2005: A user's guide 1999).

3.3   Learner background as variable

Since I decided to limit my respondents in this study to students who have received most of their schooling in Angola it is important to make some comment about these students' social and educational backgrounds. Very little literature is available on education in Angola.

Literature on the country seems to focus either on pre-liberation Angola or the causes and course of the civil war - both topics not particularly relevant to this study.

I did, however, find one article on the subject from 1992. Extensive communication with members of the Angolan community in South Africa, however, confirms that the situation has not changed much since then. In 1992 already there was a huge logistic problem to provide education for the growing school-age population. There were "2,7 million people between the ages of five and fourteen. Of these more than half" had not been accommodated in schools (Hurlich, 1992:51).

The following factors have negatively impacted on education in Angola:

War related factors:
* Impaired transportation system disrupts the distribution of school supplies
* Dislocation of population has overburdened schools in urban or safe rural areas
* Drafting of teachers into the army has disrupted classes
* Many schools have been closed due to attacks against the population

Other factors:
* Insufficient state investment (less than ten percent of the national budget)
* The colonial powers who did not consider education for Africans as important left little infrastructure in place
* Illiteracy levels are high
* Politics prevents some students who wish to study abroad from gaining acceptance
* The rate of students repeating grades is very high - 50% of students
* Most students hold down jobs while studying, this impacts negatively on their performance
* There are few properly qualified teachers
    (Paraphrased from Hurlich, 1992: 51 - 53).

All these factors have resulted in many Angolan students seeking to complete their schooling in South Africa. I was unable to acquire exact figures for the number of Angolan students currently in South Africa, but these figures must be large if we consider that in one inner city school in Pretoria in 1998 there were 45 Angolan students out of a school of 660 pupils (Picard 1998).

This literature and related studies will be discussed in greater detail when the data obtained from my respondents is discussed.

Chapter 4: An attempt to condense experience

This chapter consists of an attempt to gain an *eidetic vision* by condensing data gleaned from each individual respondent. From these summaries I will suggest general and unique themes for the interviews (Hycner: 1985). Some information about each respondent is included to assist in later contextualisation of the data. These summaries are what Van den Berg (1972) calls a *description* of the respondents' interaction with the phenomena.

4.1   Interview 12/3/99   : H

4.1.1   H is a grade 11 pupil at a multiracial Catholic independent school in Pretoria. English is taught as a first language and is the medium of instruction. H has attained high marks so far and will write the IEB (Independent Examination Board) examination in the year 2000. There are no special programs for foreign students and she has been immersed in the general classroom. She was born in the Ukraine, but spent a substantial amount of time in Angola before coming to South Africa. H is eighteen years old. H was interviewed together with Y (Addendum A) and her natural meaning units are contained in Addendum D.

4.1.2   H was born in the Ukraine but moved to Angola when she was eight years old. She spent four and a half years there. She came to South Africa three and a half years before the interview (H1). She only learnt Portuguese when she was twelve years old (H2), although she had picked up some vocabulary from communicating with Angolan people (H3). She did not, however, feel proficient in Portuguese at that stage. She attended a Russian school in Angola for the first four years that she spent there and also spent a year back home in the Ukraine (H4). When she was twelve years old she started attending a Portuguese-medium

school in Angola where she remained for two years (H5). H had taken English as a subject from the third grade both in Angola and the Ukraine, but she states that the levels of instruction varied greatly (H6). In Angola they were only taught English from the seventh grade and the level of instruction was lower than that in the Ukraine (H9).

She describes the level of instruction she received in the Ukraine as "second language", but states that it is not on the level that second languages are taught in South Africa. H does not feel that the English instruction she received prepared her adequately for the challenges she faces in South Africa (H7). In the Ukraine she was exposed to a comprehensive English program. An audio- lingual as well as grammar-based program was followed. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills were taught (H8 – H9). The program in Angola was much less comprehensive and started from scratch in grade 7 (H10).

H's feelings about her level of proficiency in English have changed since she came to South Africa. In Angola she felt extremely proficient compared to her peers (H10 – H11). In South Africa, however, she is less certain of her abilities. She was particularly uncertain when she wrote her entrance exam, but was pleased when she was accepted (H13). She believes that this can be subscribed to the distinction between "first" and "second" language teaching. She describes it as a "great jump" from learning English as a foreign language to learning English as a first language in South Africa. Here she was also exposed to English as a medium of instruction for the first time. She was uncertain about pronunciation and experienced communication problems (H14 – H15). She still feels that she lacks vocabulary (H20), although she is one of the best students in her class (H23). She is not satisfied with her English proficiency despite the fact that she performs well comparatively (H24). She feels that her peers use a poor level of vocabulary (H20).

H is dissatisfied with the lack of focus on grammar in South African schools (H21). She also finds that there is a vast disparity between spoken English and that used in the literature studied in class. She finds the literature particularly challenging (H20).

She is positive about her South African peers. She states that in comparison to her reception in Angola, she felt accepted in South Africa. H found South African students "patient" and helpful. She subscribes the fact that she fitted in with greater ease in South Africa to Angola to the fact that South Africans are more accustomed to foreign students and, therefore, more understanding (H18 – H19). She initially did not find multilingualism distracting since she focussed on learning English and found that the majority of students spoke English anyway (H15 – H17). She does, however, later agree with Y that she struggles to socialise with South African students. She believes that this is a result of cultural differences and a difference in interests. She describes herself and Russian people in general as more serious than South Africans and more interested in culture and literature (H25). In Angola she also struggled to socialise with her peers, but had older friends with whom she could communicate (H26).

H did not actively choose to come to South Africa. She developed health problems (allergies) in Angola (H12) and was sent to this country by her parents. Her mother chose the country because of its proximity to Angola and H was merely informed of the decision. She does, however, see the importance of coming to South Africa in order to learn English. She describes English as a valuable language to learn for her future (H12 – H13).

4.2   Interview 12/3/99 : Y

4.2.1   Y attends the same school as H and is in the same class. Her country of origin is Russia and she has also spent a number of her schooling years in Angola. Her results are excellent, but she is less verbally proficient than H. She is now eighteen years old. Y was interviewed together with H (Addendum A) and her natural meaning units are found in Addendum E.

4.2.2   Y spent her first three grades at Angolan schools. Then, when war broke out in Angola, she was sent to her grandparents' home in Russia. She spent five years of her schooling in Russian schools. She returned to Angola in the eighth grade and spent just over a year there. She has been in South Africa for the past two years (Y2). She first learnt English in Russia when she was in the fifth grade. She was taught grammatical structures, but no oral work was done. She also was not taught English spelling (Y6). Her prompting of H to remind her that grammar was taught, reflects Y's belief that grammar was an integral part of their language learning.

Y is not particularly confident of the level of either her Portuguese or English. She states that her schooling in Russia was on a high level and comments that she knew the Russian school system well (Y2), but she believes that the Portuguese she learnt in her senior schooling in Angola was not on a very high level (Y3). Y seems to believe that proficiency in a language requires a thorough knowledge of formal grammar as well as an understanding of the literature and an ability to spell correctly. She admits that she can speak and be understood in Portuguese, but does not classify herself as proficient. She states that when she came to South Africa she struggled to communicate in English (Y6). She was frequently misunderstood because of her pronunciation and her peers used H as a translator to communicate with her (Y7). Y says that she still doesn't speak well and that this is as a result of incorrect pronunciation (Y7). She feels that her vocabulary is also inadequate (Y21). Y states that there is a huge difference between the standard of English as she was taught in Angola and the Ukraine and the standard of English in South Africa. Although she

found the work difficult in the beginning, she feels that it is becoming even more challenging as she proceeds with her schooling (Y21).

She finds the education situation in South Africa more congenial than that which she experienced in Angola. She states that the classes were very full there, about fifty students per class, and that this hindered effective learning. In South Africa she knows what the teachers expect of her and is assisted to complete assignments because of the smaller classes (Y5). In the beginning she struggled to understand anyone, but later understood the teachers better because of their willingness to speak slowly so that she could understand (Y10). Multilingualism does not bother Y. She states that she is used to people speaking a number of different languages and has the ability to "tune out" the distractions and focus on learning English (Y8).

Y initially experienced her South African peers very positively. She mentions their helpfulness and friendliness. She implies, however, that this initial friendliness was false, masking a negative attitude towards foreigners, especially Russians (Y11). She does not feel integrated into the school community and feels unable to behave naturally (Y12). She finds the people in South Africa very different from the people she was used to in Russia and Angola (Y13). She feels that her South African peers are hedonistic and lack foresight and a future vision (Y14).

Y also experiences polarisation within the student community. She states that students of similar backgrounds and races stay together and that the students don't mix socially (Y15). Y believes that people communicate on different levels. Younger students are not ethnically or

culturally divided because they communicate on a more basic level. Older students are polarised initially because of linguistic barriers, but later because of differences in lifestyle and ideals (Y16 – Y19). When Y was first in Angola she socialised naturally because she was young, later she experienced similar alienation to what she feels in South Africa. She feels that she cannot communicate with Angolan or South African students because of their focus on teenage romance and socialisation, rather than on their futures and other "important things" (Y20).

She does, however, admit that her own attitude has contributed to her feelings of alienation. She states that when she first came to South Africa, she cultivated an unapproachable image, which could have lead to her rejection by her peers (Y13). She states that "if people want you and if you want to be accepted you will be. Or be rejected" (Y17). She has clearly identified attitude as a primary catalyst for social acceptance or rejection. She indicates her willingness to change in her statement that she is currently attempting to assimilate. She, however, qualifies the statement with the addition that this is a cosmetic change ("on the outside") to gain greater acceptance (Y19).

Academically she feels under increasing pressure. She feels that her knowledge built up in South Africa is inadequate to achieve her goals. She believes that specialised skills that she lacks are required (Y22).

4.3   Interview   17/3/99 : A

4.3.1   A is a student at an inner city independent school in Pretoria.   This is a multiracial institution, but the majority of the students are black.   Students are taught on both first and second language levels. The medium of instruction is English. He scraped through grade 11 with very poor results and is currently in matric.   At the end of the year he will sit for the Gauteng Education Department examination.   P's country of origin is Angola.   There are no special programs for foreign students at the school.   He was immediately immersed into the general classroom.   A is eighteen years old.   A was interviewed together with P (Addendum B) and his natural meaning units are contained in Addendum F.

4.3.2   At the time of the interview A had spent a year in South Africa (A1).   He received three months instruction in English in Angola prior to coming to South Africa (A2).   In Angola he was exposed to conversational English as well as written exercises and tests.   An English-only policy was followed in the classroom. He states that the standard of instruction was not very high.   He believes that English in Angola is not taught well because the teachers are "foreigners" and English is not their mother tongue.

A seems ambivalent when assessing his own level of English.   On the one hand he states that learning English is not "very difficult" (A9) and that in grade 11 his standard of work was similar to   that of the South African students (A13), yet he concedes that he is struggling with English in grade 12 (A14).   A is perpetually optimistic, convinced that a "good attitude" (A9) will inevitably lead to improvement.   He compares his own level unfavourably with South African students because he observes that he needs to do extra homework and research to

compete with his peers. Although he later comments most favourably on his teachers in South Africa, there does seem to be an element of blame in his statement that his poor performance in grade 12 is because no extra assistance is given to him (A14).

Generally, he describes the teaching in South Africa as "better" than that in Angola (A6). He is positive about his teachers and mentions with appreciation the extra work and help they give him (A7). This seems to contradict his feelings mentioned earlier (A14). A's distinction between his grade 11 and 12 English instruction clarifies the matter. In grade 11 he received a great deal of help form his teacher in the form of translations and explanations. He even states that his teacher helped him "too much" (A16). In grade 12, however, the teacher focuses on the average student (A15) and he is expected to work more independently. Although he does not seem sure that all the extra assistance in grade 11 was a good thing, he appears to feel alienated and abandoned by his matric teacher.

A admits that some of the South African students are helpful, but in general he experiences them as arrogant and impatient. He experiences the way they speak to him as particularly hurtful (A8). This alienation is probably heightened by the fact that he feels academically inferior to them (A13 – 15).

A finds poetry the most challenging aspect of the English curriculum (A10). The language and concepts used in poetry are unfamiliar to him and thus incomprehensible (A10 – 11). Thematically the poetry is also extremely difficult for A to comprehend. The poems are either from South Africa, or written a long time ago. A lacks the background needed to interpret poetry adequately.

On the whole, A is more negative at the time of the interview than when he was a newly arrived foreign student.

4.4   Interview   17/3/99 : P

4.4.1   P attends the same school and the same class as A.   He is also eighteen years old and comes from Angola.   He, however, had prior exposure to English before coming to South Africa.   P's results in grade 11 were good (in the top third of the class) and will also write the GED examination at the end of 1999.   P was interviewed together with A (Addendum B) and his natural meaning units are contained in Addendum G.

4.4.2   P came to South Africa in 1997, two years before the interview (P1).   He had previously been in Namibia for four years where he was exposed to English in a special ESL classroom (P2, P6).   He had also received rudimentary instruction in English in Angola (P5). The English instruction in Namibia was communicatively based.   He was taught vocabulary in different contexts and taken on field trips where he used the language practically.   He was given simple instructions and expected to execute them (P6).

P's opinion about his level of English proficiency is constantly in flux.   In Namibia he struggled in the beginning but later became more confident (P6).   When he first came to South Africa, on the other hand he felt very confident.   He was much more proficient than his compatriots and was used as an interpreter and representative by the teaching staff (P8).   He

also felt that he could hold his own with the South African students and there is even a note of superiority in him describing their mode of speech as abrasive (P9).   In matric, however, he feels less confident.   He describes it as "hard work" (P14) and outlines his difficulties.

P is very clear about his motivation for coming to South Africa.   He is driven by instrumental motivation (Brown 1994) and sees his studies in South Africa purely as a means to an end: He specifically came to South Africa to learn English because he does not believe the standards of instruction are high in Angola (P2).   He sees English as a key to employment and even his choice of school was motivated by its reputation for good instruction (P3).

P sees himself as a favoured student.   He describes his treatment by the teachers as different to that usually meted out to Angolan students.   His proficiency in English is seen as a sign of leadership and he describes how he is expected to reprimand other Angolan students and dole out punishment (P8).   He also feels favoured above the South African students.   This is implied by his disparaging remarks about their level of English and persistency in communicating in their mother tongue (P9 – P13).

He appears to be alienated from his South African peers.   He indicates that some of the South African students find him and his mode of speech intriguing (P9), but he does not seem to respond to their overtures.   He finds the fact that South African students regularly code-switch between English and their mother tongue particularly disconcerting (P10).   He believes that this is the primary reason why South African and foreign students do not socialise together.   He also blames this phenomenon for the fact that Angolan students do not develop their English sufficiently (P10).

Just as he disparages multilingualism on the playground, P resists any multilingualism in the classroom. He rigidly believes in an English-only policy and sees English as the "only" viable option for the classroom (P13). He finds the formal register expected in written work difficult to achieve. He feels that the standard of English expected from a matric first language pupil is extremely high, comparable to that of tertiary institutions (P14 – P 15).

P driven by his ambition and not greatly concerned with the reactions of his South African peers.

4.5   Interview 21/4/99   : B

4.5.1   B is thirty-one years old and is attending adult education classes in Pretoria. At the time of the interview there was no special program for foreign students and she was integrated in the same class as semi-literate South Africans. She was preparing to write the IEB level 4 adult education examinations. She is a qualified teacher and studied at a teacher's training college in Angola. Her English proficiency is extremely limited and this has lead to a disjointed interview with many translations from her mother tongue required.

4.5.2   B has been in South Africa for a year and two months (B1 – B3). She came to the country because her husband had a job in South Africa and it was important for their marital harmony to stay together (B6). She took English as a subject at secondary school and was taught the English alphabet, basic grammar and some vocabulary (B7 – B10). As an ex-teacher herself, she gauges the level of instruction as similar to the level Portuguese is taught in South Africa. She describes the level as second language level (B10 – B12).   B has a

dispute with E about the level of English instruction that they received and later conceded that it is possibly a lower level than second language. As well as Portuguese, they also learnt their mother-tongue as an oral, but not a written language. In secondary school they could choose between a number of European languages from English to Spanish. Learning so many languages led to them only gaining a rudimentary grasp of each of them (B11 – B20). B was interviewed together with E (Addendum C) and her natural meaning units are contained in Addendum I.

When she first came to South Africa, it was only for a holiday. Already then, however, she felt that she lacked proficiency in English. She could only greet in English and struggled to ask for what she needed when her husband was at work (B21). Her inability to communicate motivated her to find a language school when she moved to South Africa permanently. She chose the adult education centre largely because of the inexpensive classes (B22). She struggled at first to understand her teacher and fellow students because of their pronunciation (B25). She is currently satisfied with her proficiency because she understands and is understood by others (B26 – B27).

She is happy with her teacher (B240), but she does not socialise with the other students. She feels that her relationship with her South African peers is only good because she avoids them as much as possible and only exchanges platitudes with them (B28 – B29).

Language is a barrier in her communication with her peers. She does not always understand them when they speak English (B23) and dislikes it when the other students use their mother tongue. She feels strongly that an English-only policy should be followed to facilitate more effective language learning (B28).

The most challenging part of the curriculum for B is the use of verbs and fluency in verbal communication (B30 – B31).   Generally, she is satisfied with her progress (B27).

4.6   Interview 21/4/99 : E

4.6.1   E is twenty-nine years old.   He works as a hawker in central Pretoria.   He is an illegal immigrant.   He attends the same centre as B and is in the same class.   He also intends writing the IEB examinations, but as yet has a limited English proficiency.   He also comes from Angola.   His natural meaning units are contained in Addendum H.

4.6.2   He says very little, perhaps because of his precarious position in the country at this time.   He generally confirms or refutes statements made by B, sometimes vehemently.   At the time of the interview he had been in South Africa one year and one month.   He came to South Africa to study and improve his qualifications.   He wishes to earn more money in his own country after studying in South Africa (E1 – E4).

Like B, he learnt English in secondary school along with a number of other languages.   He believes that the standard of English teaching was very low (E6 – E11).   He only learnt English from his third year of secondary school, but states that if he had attended university he would only have chosen one language other than his mother tongue (E12 – E13).   He did not struggle with English when he first came to South Africa.   He believes that this is as a result of an English course with tapes and books that he followed independently before coming to

South Africa (E14).   He is currently satisfied with his standard of English, although he was

concerned before coming that he would struggle to communicate (E21).

He dislikes the fact that his South African peers use their mother tongue in class and

experiences it as "noise" (E17).   He says that "they" don't "like us" and describes threatening

and derogatory attitudes that he has experienced while selling goods as a hawker (E18).   On

the other hand he describes the attitude of his fellow learners towards him as "good", but does

not elaborate (E19).

E's biggest problem is verbal communication.   He is comfortable with his written work, but

struggles to speak fluently (E20).

4.7   General themes for the interviews

The following themes were common to most of the interviews and are, therefore, characterised as general themes.   All the respondents described their English instruction in Angolan schools as inadequate.   The only two who were satisfied with their level of English when they first came to South Africa were P and E.   P had received comprehensive training in Namibia and E had completed an audio-lingual course independently.

All the respondents describe difficulties in communicating with South Africans and initially experienced feelings of confusion and panic.   The two primary reasons cited are pronunciation (both theirs and the South Africans) and lack of vocabulary.

At some stage, after the initial settling in period, all the respondents felt themselves competent in comparison to their South African peers and a plateau of satisfaction was reached.

Stress and feelings of inadequacy followed satisfaction when students progressed and more complex skills were required.   The respondents struggled with vocabulary, spelling, specialised skills (like interpretation of poetry), as well as verbal fluency and pronunciation and, therefore, experienced feelings of inadequacy.

All the respondents had problems with, and comment on, the difference between learning English as a foreign language (third language) in their own country and learning English as a second language in South Africa.   They had not been exposed to English from an early age and had taken English merely as another subject like History or Geography rather than as a

full second language course.   The high school students are also faced with the enormous difference between EFL learning and first language learning!

Although B and H did not come to South Africa specifically to learn English (B followed her husband, H came for health reasons) they, like the others, mention the importance of coming to South Africa in the process of learning English.   South Africa is thus seen as a gateway to English and opportunity.   All the others have a strong instrumental motivation to learn English, which they see as a key to good employment opportunities.

All the learning institutions are private and carefully chosen for price and reputation.   None of the respondents seem to have even considered state institutions.

The respondents are all positive about the instruction they have received in South Africa. Teachers are characterised as patient and friendly and classes small and user-friendly.   The secondary school learners, however, criticise certain aspects of the instruction.   H and Y feel that a more grammar-based approach is preferable, while P and A are dubious about the use of translation in the classroom and feel that they require more support now that they are in matric.

Generally the respondents deplore multilingualism both in the classroom and in social circumstances.   They feel alienated and excluded.   Although Y and H state that it does not really bother them, they later mention it as a polarising factor.   The other respondents experience it as "noise" and believe that it hinders rather than facilitates learning.

The respondents' South African peers have shown a variety of attitudes towards them. These range from the experiences of racism mentioned by Y and E to the polite curiosity and later indifference mentioned by B, H, P and A. The respondents believe that their different languages as well as cultural and ideological differences cause this polarisation.

4.8   Specific themes in the interviews

P, H and Y have the distinction of having experienced relocation twice. H and Y, who were born in Russia, prefer the learning milieu in South Africa to that of Angola, while P seems to feel that his success in South Africa is due to his good training in Namibia.

Only E has been exposed to the wider South African community, where he has experienced extreme hostility. H, Y, P and A only experienced the relatively sheltered environment of private boarding schools where there were many other foreign students. B as a housewife is isolated and mainly socialises with other foreigners. E, in contrast with the other respondents, is positive about the attitudes of his fellow learners, possibly because their attitudes appear positive in comparison with the community in general.

Only Y mentions that age can play a role in acceptance of foreigners by their peers. She feels that the younger the foreign student, the easier assimilation takes place.

B and Y both refer to the fact that they have to pretend to be someone else in order to be accepted by South African students. Change and a degree of insincerity is required in order

to assimilate and, therefore, be accepted.   There is no indication that they even imagine that the South Africans will change to accommodate them and a mask, therefore, guarantees their safety.

A theme particular to A's narrative is that a good attitude leads to success.   Despite any setbacks, A is convinced that he can achieve if he maintains a positive attitude.   This links up to a certain extent with the previous point.   In both cases the foreign student believes that if he/she changes, eventually his/her circumstances will improve.   The above-mentioned themes are now synthesised with contextual information in an attempt to gain a composite summary.

Chapter 5: A construction of truth

In this chapter I attempt to construct "truth" by merging the information I have gleaned from the respondents with the literature about Angola, the South African education milieu and the phenomenon of foreign students learning English. At the end of each section, I assign symbolic value to each of the themes. This is the most dangerous part of the research. By attempting to creatively interpret the respondents' *lebenswelt* I aggressively enter his/her reality and appropriate it for my own purposes.

This is not, however, the first opportunity that I had to pervert the essence of the narrative. As Campbell states, even in the initial stages of the research, while gathering the data, the authority of the researcher is such that the "narrative can be shaped" (1998:3) according to what the respondent thinks the researcher wants to hear. To attempt triangulation at the earlier stage of the research I focus on consensus between the respondents, rather than on what each respondent states in isolation. When interpreting the merged data I attempt to gain consensus between the literature and the joint vision of the respondents and my own hitherto bracketed observations.

5.1 *Because my country is not good to learn English* (P4)

In general all the respondents were dissatisfied with their experiences of learning English in Angola. This is especially pertinent in the interviews with students who had learnt English in

other milieus as well as in Angola. P, for example, contradicts himself when he states that "the basic things I... I... I... studied in Angola" (P7) and then later states that he had to start from the beginning when he learnt English in Namibia (P8). He obviously is not sure that he acquired even the most rudimentary skills in Angola. P can describe in great detail the methodology followed by his teacher in Namibia, but seems uncertain about the methods followed in Angola. All that he is clear about is that the standard of English in Angola was poor (P3).

H and Y are equally uninspired by the instruction they received in Angola compared to that received in Russia. The key word in both their narratives is "level". H sees the level of English in Angola as less "serious" than that in Russia (H6) and both H and Y mention that English only forms part of the curriculum from secondary school level in Angola (Y and H10). B and E also focus on level of instruction as a reason for their lack of proficiency. They emphasise that English was only taught in secondary school (B18, E5, E10) and then only as one subject amongst a multitude of others (B19, B29, E9 -E13).

Y and H enthusiastically describe the methods followed by their English teachers in Russia. H states that vocabulary, comprehension and audiolingual methods were accompanied by grammar instruction (H8). The two Russian respondents, however, do not entirely agree with each other about the value of a grammar-based method. H seems to feel that grammar is of cardinal importance and she criticises the South African methods because of a lack of formal grammar in the English curriculum (H21). Y, on the other hand, sees the primacy of the grammar-based in Russian schools as part of the reason why she struggled to communicate in

English when she first came to South Africa. She believes that "conversation and spelling" lead to greater communicative competence (Y6).

A, who learnt English only for three months in Angola before coming to South Africa describes a comprehensive methodology: He was given practice in speaking, listening and writing (A3) and was only permitted to speak English in the English classroom (A2). His opinion of the instruction in Angola is, however, equally damning. He disparages the Angolan system when he remarks; "the English in Angola is very poor...it is not proper English...not proper English like South Africans"(A5). A obviously has a standard against which he measures the quality of the instruction as well as the quality of the brand of English spoken itself. South African English is labelled as superior because it more closely approximates this external standard. A gives a reason for this perceived inferiority in the fact that English is taught in Angola by "foreign people", not mother tongue users of the language (A5). The fact that a different variety of English is taught in Angola to what is taught in South Africa is also reflected in the fact that H struggled to understand her South African peers due to differences in pronunciation (H14).

Y gives an added reason for the ineffectiveness of English instruction in Angola: the large classes. She feels that she lacked individual attention and was not always clear about what the teacher expected of her (Y5). The issue of communicative competence is, I believe, relevant to this issue. All the respondents struggled to "convey and interpret messages" during their initial introduction into the South African school system (Brown 1994:227). They ascribe this lack of success to the paucity of the instruction they received in Angola. The literature seems to confirm the fact that education is not functioning optimally in Angola.

Scarcity of resources, confrontational politics and an unstable population as well as all the other circumstances related to civil war, do not provide the optimum environment to learn a new language (Hurlich 1992:51).

The respondents' view of their own proficiency in English is coloured by what they view as proficiency. In other words, what do they regard as communicative competence?

H does not regard having attained basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) as having attained communicative competence (Brown 1994:227). She describes students who have learnt English as a second language as non-proficient practitioners (H7). Although, in the past she was satisfied with her hard-won grammatical and basic discourse competence, she now feels inadequate because of her lack of sociolinguistic competence (evidenced in her alienation from her South African peers) and strategic competence. H struggles to interpret poetry (H20) because she lacks the background information and is unable to sustain comprehension through "guessing" and compensate for "breakdowns in communication" due to her lack of strategic competence (1994:228).

Y makes a clear link between linguistic or organisational competence and general communicative competence. In her opinion, she knows "a lot about Russian" because she knows "grammar" (Y3). She does not feel confident about her ability in Portuguese despite an ability to understand and be understood because she is not satisfied with her writing or ability to analyse poetry. Y expects all levels of competence to be complied with before she will define herself as proficient.

This confirms the view of Cummins who feels that students "quickly acquire considerable fluency in the target language" yet take much longer to attain the higher academic skills in the language of native-speakers (1998:2).

Both P and A initially felt confident, but had this confidence shattered when faced with the challenge of a first language syllabus and the higher level of skills required. H describes the difference between these two levels as "a big jump"(H27), while Y complains of a hidden curriculum of specialised knowledge that South Africans are aware of, but which she has no prior knowledge of and is suddenly expected to display. Cummins symbol of a single "language balloon" with a mouthpiece for each language is obviously not shared by these respondents (Devlin 1997: 11).

They do not seem to realise that CALP skills can be transferred between languages. Of course these students have not been exposed to a structured or dual bilingual program. They have simply been immersed into English classes, although most of their fellow students are not English speaking. P, A, H and Y do, however, all take Portuguese (second language) as a subject in the afternoons, but this is merely as an alternative to Afrikaans or one of the African languages. There is no structured program linking what they have learnt in English to the skills already acquired in Portuguese. Their peers have also not been exposed to Portuguese in a dual immersion program.

P and A were exposed to comparative language practices like translation and examination of commonalities in the beginning of their grade 11 year (A 16), but this was on a very basic level when they, along with their South African counterparts, were starting to learn English.

The South African students who struggled with English have now been placed into a second language English class where communicative competence is stressed (Janks 1990:249),while P and A were expected to comply to a first language syllabus that focusses on literature and analytical skills.   H and Y were introduced at an earlier stage to the first language syllabus. They do, however, also feel that the level abruptly changed.

E and B are relatively satisfied with their own progress although they desire greater oral fluency (E20, B31), but are not as yet concerned with acquiring skills in literature and more complex levels of strategic competence. Their BICS match or exceed their South African peers (E21, B27) and they have already attained CALP skills in their mother tongue (B was a teacher and E has completed a matric equivalent). Their South African peers at the adult education centre have had little formal education and thus still need to acquire CALP skills in general.   My experience as an adult facilitator is that foreign students who attend adult education centres tend to become complacent about their proficiency in English.   They are able to complete academic tasks quicker than their South African peers and this often leads to a neglect of their lack of oral fluency.   This observation can, naturally, not be empirically verified and should be bracketed as my own opinion.

5.2 *English is a very useful language* (H21)

My respondents have no intention of immigrating to South Africa. Learning English is, therefore, not part of their assimilation process as new immigrants. Rather, they wanted to learn English and came to South Africa specifically for that purpose (H12, P3 - P4, A4, E4). H, Y, P and A are all in South Africa on student visas. Their study permits have been endorsed by their particular institutions and seem to accept the stipulation outlined in Government Gazette 406 that "a study permit would not be a ground for acquiring permanent residency" (April 1999). Although not on a study permit, E also cites study as the main reason he came to South Africa (E4) and intends to leave the country as soon as he has attained his goals. E is a hawker only to support himself while he furthers his studies. B came to South Africa to be with her husband and originally wanted to study English to be able to communicate better on a practical level. In subsequent conversations, however, I have ascertained that she now wishes to attain qualifications in English so that she can get a job as a translator. Her basic integrative motivation has transformed into instrumental motivation (Brown 1994).

Taft and Cahill (1981:25) in their article about immigrant education in Australia outline the traditional expectations of host societies when foreign students are learning English:

> Until recent times, the official policy concerning the absorption of immigrants was one of total assimilation or Anglo-conformity. No possibility of a long term linguistic or cultural rival was admitted…the quicker the assimilation to the pre-eminent Anglo-Saxon core culture the better….

In countries like the USA, UK, Canada and Australia English is part of an assimilation process that leads to greater social acceptance of the immigrant. In South Africa, however, English is not the mother tongue of the majority, but merely one of eleven official languages. The value of English within the South African context is as "a linking language" and "lingua franca" (Alexander 1989: 54). Also, as previously mentioned, the foreign students in this case don't necessarily want to become part of the "core culture"since as Cheetham states,students who are only in a country to complete their studies "experience many of the strains of adjustment that immigrants do", but since they are only in the country temporarily are unlikely "to complete acculturation" (1972: 33).

The fact that my respondents are instrumentally motivated rather than integratively is probably also as a result of the multilingual environment into which they are being integrated. English is not the mother tongue of the majority of their South African peers; therefore, it facilitates communication, but not integration into the group. Because English is a lingua franca rather than a hegemonic language, English is mainly used as a second language and variants are excepted rather than viewed as "mistakes" (Mpepo 1998: 83). Code switching is also an accepted practice, not only among students in social circumstances, but even in the classroom as a teaching resource (ELTIC 1997: 38).

Taft and Cahill enthusiastically refer to the concept of "Education for a Culturally Pluralist Society". This is where students from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to "be … aware of their own cultural and linguistic heritage" while at the same time having an "understanding of the fundamental similarities … and an acceptance of other socio-cultural groups" (Taft & Cahill 1981: 30). Alexander (1989), Heugh (1998), ELTIC

(1997) and many more refer to strategies to be implemented in order to make South African institutions more "multilingual". It is clear, however, that their concept of multilingualism differs greatly from what is meant by writers like Taft and Cahill. Strategies like incorporating language awareness activities and respecting language variety (ELTIC 1997: 37), are all aimed at redressing previous inequalities and "equalising South African languages" (LANGTAG 1989: 147). South African resembles other previously colonised countries like India in this respect in that different Englishes gain acceptance. In Australia and other English speaking countries, however, English is inviolate although an attempt is made to accommodate other languages and cultures.

The respondents are not enamoured with the multicultural class situation in South Africa. P, A, B and E dislike the use of languages other than English in the classroom and even socially. They describe feelings of confusion and exclusion rather than equality. H and Y do not often hear languages other than English, are used to multilingualism and are strategically able to "tune out" the other languages and focus on English (Y8). They do not, however, feel integrated and language and culture seems to play a role in this polarisation. Although P and A initially experienced their teacher's multilingual strategy of translation positively (A16), they now feel that their knowledge is inadequate and have hardened their attitudes and seem to blame multilingualism for this lack as well as the social exclusion of Angolan students in general.

Another challenge that foreign students in South Africa have to face is the philosophy of additive bilingualism. In this regard foreign students are very much at the mercy of their educational institutions who have the power to decide subject and mark requirements since

they can inform the immigration services if a students is not satisfactorily performing his or her curriculum of study (Government Gazette 5434: 16 - 18). In effect educational institutions have the power to deport foreign students. Many foreign students are faced with learning Afrikaans and Sepedi/ Zulu or Xhosa for the first time as well as English. My respondents, however, were not faced with this dilemma. Their institutions took advantage of sub-clause (bb) in Government Gazette no 5434. This clause stipulates that foreign students are permitted to take their mother tongue as a second language in lieu of Afrikaans or any of the African languages "provided such an immigrant also passes English or Afrikaans first language higher grade" (December 1994: 16 - 18).

Although multilingual strategies will probably assist in making South Africans feel more accepted, foreign students seem to feel just as alienated or more than in a predominantly English milieu. In my opinion this situation will only improve when xenophobia in and out of South African classrooms is addressed. While racist incidents like those mentioned in my literature review occur in South Africa and until schools develop co-ordinated programs for students to develop anti-discriminatory awareness it will be difficult for any teaching strategies to make a real impact (Vally quoted in Brauteseth 1999).

5.3   *They want to see if we know English, the English of Universities…* (P15).

All the respondents indicate that at some point in their schooling in South Africa they experienced stress because of a sudden "jump" in level. They seem to go through three phases in their language learning experience. The first stage is akin to what is called "culture

shock" in the literature. At this stage cultural and social differences result in a lack of communication. H, Y, E and P, who had substantial prior instruction in English, describe the "mild irritability" (Brown 1994: 170) of uncertainty during entrance exams (H13), misunderstandings due to pronunciation (Y6) and having to fulfil the role of interpreter for less proficient peers (P6, Y describing the role of H). A and B, who were less proficient initially, describe a total inability to communicate (B21) and an intense motivation to perform better despite the odds (A9).

In the beginning the learners immediately feel that something in their previous English instruction was lacking. H describes the instruction of English in the Ukraine and Angola as "second language" instruction, but she concedes that it was not like second language instruction in South Africa (H7). She also feels that in South Africa English is taught on a higher level. Y describes an initial inability to communicate. This, according to Mpepo (1998) is more characteristic of learners of English as a foreign language than second language learners. In South Africa most city dwellers regard English as their second language, while more rural students have been taught English as a foreign language due to past policies and the fact that they had little or no exposure to English in their immediate environment. Discussions with A and P revealed that many of their classmates were South Africans from the rural areas with extremely limited English proficiency. They were thus not the only students learning English "as a foreign language". This study does not, however, intend to suggest that ESL teaching is necessarily on a lower level than ESL teaching, many EF courses, most notably those run by the TOEFL institutes require a much higher level of proficiency than any second language course. Rather, I wish to show that the emphasis is different. A mentions the fact that English in Angola is taught by "foreigners" and not by mother tongue

speakers of the language (A9). This implied criticism reflects the EFL obsession with the British/American norm (Mpepo 1998:83). The method described by P is also, I believe, rather EFL than ESL. It lacks the focus on written work found in the English second language syllabus in South Africa.

After a very short while, the respondents move on to a second phase characterised by feelings of satisfaction with their level and even superiority to their peers. The transition between learning English as a foreign language (in Angola) and learning English as a second language (in South Africa) does not seem to be too traumatic for my respondents. Perhaps this is because they have already gained academic skills in their mother tongue and merely transfer these to the new language after acquiring the rudimentary communicative skills in the EFL classroom (this links with Cummins' view of the "language balloon" with two mouthpieces). Many South African students, on the other hand, lack these academic skills because of apartheid education and limited resources and learn them for the first time in the senior English classes.

To a large extent English has been used as a language of exclusion, division or domination in South Africa. Because most South Africans were denied access to English-medium institutions for so long, certain variants in the language have developed and become accepted practice among certain communities of practice. Code switching is also widely prevalent. These communication strategies are accepted within the South African community, but are viewed with disapproval by the foreign students in my study.

My respondents all felt that they had surpassed their South African peers at some stage and in some way speak more "correct" English. This view is reflected by P (P9 – P13). A feels that he equalled his South African peers in grade eleven. H and Y agree that their level of English is comparable to their South African counterparts, but still feel inadequate because of variations from "standard" English in their pronunciation and vocabulary. H mentions that the level of English spoken by South Africans is lower than what is expected in the more formal classroom situation (H20). B and E feel that their written English is more proficient than their peers, while their spoken English is less proficient (B27 – B31, E21). Sadly this is not reflected in their final stage of development. Language "acculturation", like social acculturation never takes place.

H, Y, P and A have to undertake a further transition: the transition to English first language. This is dictated by government specifications for matriculation requirements. As previously mentioned, foreign students in South Africa may take their mother tongue as a second language in lieu of a South African language provided they also pass "English or Afrikaans first language higher grade" (Government Gazette 1994: 16). Unlike South African students who may take their mother tongue as a first language and any other language as a second language, foreign students are forced to present their second language on a first language level in order to pass matric and gain university exemption. It is at this stage that extreme anxiety is experienced, rather than in the initial stages learning English in South Africa.

H, Y, P and A all mention the difficulties involved in literature, the formal register required in essays and their lack of vocabulary. Y summarises their dilemma with the words: "What was fine in other years is not enough anymore, some special knowledge is needed". B and E

have not yet had to face this problem. Their academic skills enable them to rise above their South African peers who are on an ABET level 3 level both academically and communicatively. The school pupils, however, have to compete with mother tongue speakers of the language and are not given the choices open to South Africans who are not English speaking.

5.4   *It's sad if... you don't make any friends at all* (Y19)

As previously mentioned, acculturation or assimilation will never occur with my respondents due to the fact that they are in South Africa to learn English and will leave when their goal has been reached. Eisikovits and Beck's concept of *integration* which "implies adjustment on the side of both the immigrant and the host society" (1990:178) and Taft and Cahill's (1981) concept of "Education for a Culturally Pluralist Society" is hindered in the South African by both the host society and the foreign students themselves.

The respondents have experienced different levels of host hostility. H describes South African students as "friendly", "patient" and more accustomed to dealing with foreign students than the students she had dealt with in Angola (H18). Her statement is, however, interesting when contrasted with that of Y who concedes that South Africans appear friendly in the beginning, but feels that this helpfulness masks their true feelings of resentment towards foreigners.

These statements reveal firstly the phenomenon remarked on by Cheetham (1972) and Tatar and Harenczyk (1996) of treating the foreign students as a helpless stranger.   The powerless foreigner thus poses no threat to his/her host peers and a helpful attitude is evidenced. Cheetham, however, further observes that "paradoxically" if foreign students are "seen to be successes, this may cause conflict" between them and their host peers (1972:42). P reveals similar experiences when he states that South African students were "surprised" (maybe disconcerted?) by his ability to speak English. A describes an impatient and patronizing attitude from South African students (A8).

Secondly, the debate between H and Y reveals the fact mentioned earlier that South Africans are accustomed to white immigrants (although H and Y spent a number of years in Angola, they are white and originally from the former Soviet Union) and react relatively positively towards them (this reflects the statements made by Reitzes 1997). Y, however, mentions a certain antipathy which seems especially reserved for Russians. This possibly harks back to the propaganda of the apartheid period which was focused against communism and the influence of the Soviet Union.

B and E also enter into a debate about their treatment by their South African counterparts. E states that the South African students treat him well (E19), while B disputes this and states that they only treat her well because she stays out of their way (B29). Earlier, however, E describes the appalling treatment he faces every day as a hawker where he is reviled by his customer. The "gaps"in E's narrative possibly arise from his particular position. He is oppressed as a black person, foreigner and because of his lowly social position and illegal status. All these factors make him particularly vulnerable and more likely to find a less than ideal, but not openly threatening class situation as acceptable. His fear of the type of brutal

reprisals described in my literature review must be more acute than any of the other respondents. B, on the other hand, is protected from blatant attacks by her legal status, husband's position and education (she is a qualified teacher).

The attitude of the foreign student is also a crucial part of the integration equation. All the respondents refer to the fact that they feel excluded when South African students speak their mother tongues and thus form their own groups. H and Y detail the differences in culture and interests which divide them from their South African counterparts. Y, however, concedes that her attitude contributes to polarization with the words: "If people want you and you want to be accepted by people you will be" (Y17). P and A stubbornly adhere to the view that language is the chief exclusionary factor, isolating them from their South African peers. They expect the South African students to accommodate them by following an English-only policy. B and E avoid their South African counterparts as much as possible, hoping to avoid conflict in this way. Both H and Y, however, are attempting to change their behaviour (if not their hearts) in order to be more integrated. It seems that in general true integration cannot occur because of the short-term commitment of the respondents to living in South Africa and a general lack of comprehension from their host peers.

5.5   *The teachers, yes .. a good teacher* (B24)

Cheetham (1972: 39 - 40) as well as many others in the field describe the problems that foreign students have relating to their teachers who are "usually from a monolinguistic background" and not especially qualified to work with immigrants (Taft and Cahill 1981:27).

The respondents in my study do not appear to have communication problems with their teachers. All record positive experiences of the English instruction they received in South Africa. H and Y compare the teachers and classroom situation favourably to that in Angola. They praise the smaller classes and patience of South African teachers and mention that they are easy to understand because of careful slow speech. P and A describe their teacher's attempts at translation to assist them as well as weaker South African students. They initially appreciated this gesture, but later rejected it as part of confusing multilingual practices in South Africa. B and E are satisfied with the instruction they have received.

The respondents in general seem to identify more strongly with their predominantly white teachers than with their predominantly black peers. This identification is, I believe, as a result of the inequalities and division of apartheid. It is caused by xenophobia but also leads to further xenophobia. Foreign students, like white South Africans (as members of the previously advantaged race) have been exposed to a broader culture, while black South Africans were largely isolated. As students themselves, white teachers were exposed to a number of foreigners (albeit white ones), while the black students have only recently been exposed to foreigners who are not illegal immigrants or migrant mine workers. This is not, however, a particularly South African phenomenon. Cheetham (1972:57) cites Porter who describes the feelings of a Jamaican student who found the teachers helpful and kind, but describes the students as "ignorant" racists. The South African students, however, because of the strange apartheid legacy of white teachers and black pupils in formerly Model C and private schools and the fact that theses tensions have "not been resolved" results in a further division of foreign students from their South African peers.

Cheetham further suggests the fact that schools have different expectations of student behaviour in different countries. Kerr (1957) is also cited in Cheetham's book. Kerr describes the "harsh" disciplined environment that Jamaican students are accustomed to in their mother-country. Foreign students may mistake a more informal class situation for an undisciplined one and react by being "boisterous and playful, testing the limits of this new and strange classroom environment" (Coelho 1998:33). In my pilot study in 1998 I found that the majority of South African students in the school I polled resented the "playful" behaviour of Angolan students. Subsequent discussions with groups of Angolan students indicate that generally younger students become undisciplined in the freer South African environment, but older students are if anything, more dedicated than South African students. This is in line with international trends. Taft and Cahill (1981: 37 - 39), for example, report that immigrant students generally have higher aspirations and attain higher qualifications than Australians of a similar socio-economic class. Perhaps the boisterous behaviour of younger Angolans can be explained by their unsettled learning environment in Angola, as outlined by Hurlich (1992) as well as the phenomenon of "culture shock" which results in an aggressive reassertion of their identity in the face of "a threat to their sense of completeness" (Coelho 1998: 27).

In general, criticisms levelled against teachers are as a result of a system that does not fully acknowledge or accommodate the problems of foreign students. Eisikovits & Beck (1990:194). state that a positive school experience "requires that the school authorities accept the (foreign) student's problems as legitimate" and attempt to address their language deficiencies and fears. In South Africa teachers are generally accustomed to assist pupils who are "weak" in English. This is positively experienced by foreign learners. When, however,

they begin to prepare students for the matric first language examination, the emphasis changes to literature and creative writing and finishing the syllabus. It is here that Y, H, P and A experience their biggest difficulties with the change of pace, level and emphasis.

To summarize, South Africa seems to be distinguished from other countries where English is instructed by the fact that students are absorbed into mainstream classes with little or no support, following by default what Taft and Cahill (1981: 25) call an "education for assimilation" model. South Africa, differs from Australia, for example, by the fact that the immigrants are not assimilated into an "Anglo-Saxon core culture", but rather into an already multicultural and multilingual culture.   Also, there does not seem to be any conscious attempt to assimilate them, rather they are neglected because of a lack of awareness of their needs and expertise to solve their problems. Most of the countries in the literature have a homogenous population and a large immigrant population with smaller native minority groups (Aborigines in Australia, Native Americans in the USA).   In South Africa there is a diverse native population and a smaller immigrant population as well as native majority groups.   English is dominant as a lingua franca, but this dominance was challenged by Afrikaans which was actively promoted as a national language by the previous regime. Since 1994 the indigenous languages have had official status and are starting to gain more status as languages of learning and teaching, despite the increasing position of English as language of "status". South Africans have also developed a number of "Englishes" which vary from the UK/USA norm and the use thereof is steadily becoming accepted practice.   Generally the special circumstances make learning English in South Africa particularly challenging for foreign students, with the exception of the teachers' experience of weaker pupils, which often facilitates learning for foreign students.

5.6   *I don't speak ... not for me* (B21)

The observations that I made above are based on a synthesis of the respondents' narrative, the literature, discussions with groups of foreign learners and my own observations.   This entire study, as I have mentioned before, has been an attempt to "give voice" to these foreign students and fill in the gaps in the research narrative concerning foreign students.   Of course, as a South African, and a teacher, I am in a position of power with regards to my respondents and I am able to misrepresent the data as well as guide the interviews consciously or unconsciously.   To attempt to verify my data I conducted a workshop with twenty different students.   The students were divided into four groups of five students each.   In each group a more proficient student played the role of interpreter.   Each group was asked to highlight problems they experienced under four headings: South Africa in general, teachers, students and learning material.   All the responses were then put together and redundancies were eliminated.   Students were then asked to vote on what they felt were the most crucial issues. Each student was given only five votes, so they all had to focus on what they regarded as the most important aspects.   This "voting" process is represented in the graphs below.

5.7   Common concerns expressed by respondents.

South Africa in general

*   Racist abusive language used against them

*   Difficulties in attaining student permits

*   People unfriendly and uncultivated

Teachers

*   Work too fast

*   Use words other than English

*   Use unfamiliar terms

*   Expect foreign students to learn too many languages

*   Stereotype foreign students as badly-behaved

Students

*   Speak their mother tongue and ignore foreign students

*   Bossy and patronize foreign students

*   Generalize about foreign students

*   Are jealous of any success of foreign students

*   Are ignorant and narrow-minded

Learning material

*   Material reflects an alien culture

*   More modern textbooks explain things in terms of South African culture - unable to understand explanations.

*   Too little grammar instruction.

*   Texts are too difficult.

*   Expected to write on a level that they are not prepared for.

*   Not systematic

*   Too much literature

Of the hundred possible votes 15 students voted that they experienced South Africans as uncultivated and unfriendly (this seems to support H and Y's point of view that culture and interests are the most divisive factor), ten votes showed their concern about abusive and racist remarks, while problems with study permits concerned eight of the students involved. This concentrates thirty three percent of the vote on South African society in general. The rest of the votes were divided between the other three headings. The use of mother tongue in the by teachers and students gained 10 and 18 votes respectively. The students were also very concerned at being stereotyped. This kind of behaviour by teachers was seen as a problem by five students, while similar generalizations by their fellow students were problematic to six of the respondents. Three students found South African students ignorant and narrow-minded, while three and two students respectively were concerned about patronizing and jealous South African students.

Eight respondents found the level of writing expected too high, while five were concerned about too much literature (these were all senior pupils in grade eleven or twelve). Of the remaining ten votes, three were concerned with the lack of grammar instruction, two with the level of difficulty of texts, two students felt that the material reflected an alien culture, while two found the material "too South African". One vote characterized the material as not systematic enough.

The workshop seems to confirm the data gained from the respondents in that historically constructed negative attitudes towards foreigners, multilingualism, differences in culture and interest and first language standards (literature and high register creative writing) are of great concern to foreign students in this context.   I can, however, still not claim that valid generalisations can be drawn from so small a sample of respondents, especially since all 20 participants at the workshop are students at the same school.   Phenomenological research is highly contextualised, but I wished to confirm whether students in the same or similar context experienced the same concerns as my respondents.

<u>Chapter 6: A few recommendations</u>

6.1   Some "gaps" in the literature

In many ways my study confirmed a great deal of the literature on the teaching of English to foreign students. Yet there were a few aspects that seem to be unique to South Africa as a site of integration that could not be accounted for in the literature.

Firstly, the fact that foreign students are expected to attain a higher level of proficiency than South African students seems to be unique. This is of course due to the multilingual nature of South Africa and the fact that we have eleven official languages. Legislation protects the South African's right to take his/her mother-tongue as a "first" language, while foreign students must take their second language on a "first" language level. This is not to say that many South Africans who do not use English as their mother-tongue don't take and pass the subject as a "first" language.   The point I am trying to make, however, is the fact that options are given to South Africans which foreign students do not have.

A second unusual aspect is that often the foreign student lives up to the higher expectations demanded of him/her and achieves better results than the South African students. This is most unusual when compared to most of the international literature which focuses on the academic failures, rather than successes of foreign students. Of course the legacy of apartheid education is largely to blame for the poor levels of English proficiency of many South Africans.

Thirdly, international literature on bilingual education and additive bilingualism in particular does not suitably address the complexity of the South African situation. Foreign students in South Africa are exposed (in an additive way) to two or even three new languages, while (if they are lucky) they might take their mother-tongue as a "second" or "additional" language. Finally, although there are few teachers in South Africa who are especially trained for the task, their experience in helping South Africans with limited English proficiency, equips them to a certain extent to assist foreign learners.

The greatest difference between South Africa and the international literature lies, I believe, in the fact that we have made no provision for foreign students. It is essential for South African schools to become aware of the special needs of foreign learners who are increasingly part of their class composition.

6.2   Some "gaps" in my narrative

Of course each group of foreign students is exposed to different factors. My respondents all attend private institutions and are senior in age and level. Other respondents might identify numerous other concerns.

My inability to gain precise statistical data is also a cause for some concern. It is difficult to suggest solutions for schools if the numbers and spread of foreign students cannot be accurately ascertained. Hopefully when the figures become available in the new year, this aspect can be remedied.

My fear, and that of many of the private schools, is that the Education Department is not gathering this information to devise programs to assist foreign learners, but for more sinister purposes. We fear that in future the GED will only subsidise South African students and thus schools with more foreign students will be penalised. If this is the purpose of the sudden collection of data, South Africa will never develop effective programs for uplifting foreign students, because schools will attempt instant "assimilation" in an attempt to conceal foreign learners.

Another aspect which concerns me is the fact that I could gain so little information about school and life in Angola in general. A much more detailed study is needed to record the psychological effects of the war on these students and how it shapes their experience of learning a language in a foreign country.

6.3   A few recommendations

I suggest that each institution, in consultation with their foreign students, needs to plan a programme to accommodate the foreign students more effectively. Also that more empirical as well as qualitative studies should be undertaken to ascertain the views and problems of foreign students in South Africa. I believe it is essential to integrate foreign students as part of the tapestry of the South African school system.

Secondly, it is imperitive that the entry level of foreign students should be accurately gauged by some sort of objective test.   The ELIT tests used in Australia and the United Kingdom are a good example.   After the foreign student's English ability has been ascertained he can be channelled into an appropriate programme.   Tests should not, however, be used to exclude learners.   I hesitate to make any further recommendations since the nature of phenomenological research demands that the world is described rather than prescribed to (Kolakowski 1978).

On the one hand Angolan students in South Africa are weak in the fact that they are learning a new language, yet they are strong because they succeed, sometimes better than their South African counterparts.   On the one hand they are oppressed because of xenophobia and unequal opportunities, on the other hand they are survivors who have achieved against the odds of a civil war.   Most of them are comparatively more wealthy than many South Africans and their ability to move in circles with higher social status (for example communicate with teachers) makes them potential oppressors.

The adaptability of these "serpents" who "live both on water and on land" can only assist in creating a truly multicultural inclusive South Africa.

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Addendum A

Interview:12/3/99

Type: Non-directive

Language Level: Highly proficient

Country of origin: Russia/ Ukraine

Age: Both 18

Subject(s):   H & Y

School: Catholic School

Type: Multiracial Catholic Independent School, English taught on First

Language level, IEB exams (high standard).

Special Programs?   None, immersion into general classroom. Extra lessons available,

But not specifically for immigrants.

Student History: Immersion first in Angola (Portugese), then South Africa (English).

Success Rate: Excellent, but discovered certain gaps in their learning this year (grade

11).

Code: M - Interviewer, H - student 1, Y - student 2

M: Y and H right? Where did you originally come from?

H: I was born in the Ukraine in Ubitrovsk and when I was eight years old I moved to

       Angola with my parents, they were sent to work there and I lived there for four and a

       half years and then three and a half years ago I came to South Africa.

M: Ok, so you experienced having to learn Portugese at eight years old?

H: No, I learned Portugese when I was round about twelve.

M: Twelve? So..so from eight to twelve you didn't take Portugese in Angola?

H: No..I spoke to some people and I knew some words here and there, but not properly..

M: Where did you attend school?

H: I went to Russian school in Angola and there was a year in between when I went to

       Ukraine and I studied in Russian school in the Ukraine (inaudible) and when I was

       twelve..

M: Mm?

H: I went to Portugese school for two years.

M: All right and now..now you say four years ago you came to South Africa?

H: Three...

M: Three years ago, all right, now when you first came to South Africa had you taken

       English as a subject at all?

H: Yes, I did English as a subject since std 1.

M: In Angola or in the Ukraine?

H: In Ukraine and in Angola, but it was on different levels and was sometimes more

serious, sometimes less serious so.

M: Ok, If you can explain first of all, how was English taught in the Ukraine? (Silence)

the methods?

H: It was taught in second language, so it wasn't as serious as when you have Afrikaans

here, so at this level so ..at.. In std 9 people know English... they don't know English

very well.

M: Ok, mm

H: They speak a little bit, but not really um..mm..just ...mm we learn new words like

almost every day and we do comprehension and we listen to tapes...

Y: (interrupts - inaudible)

H: Grammatics ... we learn ... we listen to tapes we read, we do speeches, we write

exams...yah that's basically it...

M: OK and in Angola ... did you find the approach different from the Ukraine?

H: Um, well in Angola at .. In Portugese school they started learning English from ..

From std 5 so it was obviously a different level but...

M: So...there you felt a lot better than anybody else? (Laugh in voice) in English?

H: (Assents in mumbled laughed interruption).

M: All right! .. And then three years ago when you came to South Africa..um..first of

why..what in particular made you come to South Africa?

H: Um .. Well first of all um I couldn't stay in Angola for a long time because I had

allergy to dust so um ...they had to send me somewhere and South Africa was the

closest place to Angola first of all and secondly they had um English speaking so...and English is a very useful language (mumble) it was the best choice.

M: And did your parents come with you at that time or not?

H: My mother came she looked around the country she .. Like looked at different schools actually she had a look at one school, she didn't really know anything and then she came back and said..."Ok..you're going to stay there" and I...well "Ok fine". Then she brought me here and it was about this school...this was the second school that we knew about and saw that this was a good school and we came and I wrote the entrance exams and I wasn't all too sure I was going to get in ... I was hoping and then they said "Ok.." and then we went back to Angola for a few months until the year..the beginning of the year and she left me...

M: Right..um..how did you experience when you first arrived in South Africa...how did you first of all experience the ..um..English and the teaching of English compared to what you were used to in Angola?

H: Well obviously the teaching of English was different because of the first language um...

M: Mm?

H: I mean everything was in English and the pronunciation was a little different from what I knew...I had known so..some words were different I didn't understand them..I didn't know what they were trying to say.

M: What particular aspects besides the pronunciation did you find difficult?

H: It was fine .. (Long pause) wasn't too difficult.

M: Ok, how did you experience the fact that all the people were speaking (pause) not

English but other languages.

H: I didn't notice that too much because I was concentrating on the English ... and they

didn't ...at that time...

M: Did they mainly speak English?

H: Mainly speak English...Yah.

M: All right...and tell me, how did you experience the attitudes of the other students

towards you as an immigrant?

H: Well, they were very friendly... it was very nice because um..ok in Angola... all the

schools I went to before , they didn't have many foreigners...they hardly had any

foreigners..so and people here were, used to...you know...people who couldn't speak

properly, they were very patient...I mean, they would explain, say it again, speak

slowly...so I found they were found...accepted me. They actually helped me to...

M: Whereas you say in Angola...?

H: I ah..also found they didn't have experience with foreign people. They tried, but they

really didn't um...

M: Ok, do you feel that there is something lacking in your English ...now?

H: Vocab, very much so, there are many words...I find that in Literature half of the

words I know...I don't know very well and I find that the vocabulary that people use

here in every day language you know is very poor, they don't use a big variety of

words and then when it comes to poems and stories whatever...its difficult...So the

people are speaking a difficult level from what is expected in the classroom.

M: Ok, so you say it's particularly vocab and literature...

H: Yah, I find here they don't concentrate so much on the grammar, they do, but not so much as we do in the Russian schools.

M: And you prefer that approach, to know the grammar?

H: Mm...

M: What do you feel is your level, if you now honestly say, is your level compared to the other students in your class? In English?

H: Judging from my marks I'd say I'm somewhere near the top.

M: Ok...you're quite comfortable with your level?

H: But...I'm not happy with my level. Compared to others in my class I'm ok..I'm good enough but for myself I'm not good enough!

M: Ok I'm going to ask you (to Y) some questions. Tell me about your school career.

Y: In the beginning I was at school in Angola grade One, two and three, but then as war began in Angola, my mom sent me to Russia and I spent about five years with my grandparents , studying in Russian schools. It was for senior level schools, very different from junior school...and then when I was thirteen I went from Russia and I wasn't there..Grade seven....so I know Russian school well..I came here two years ago.

M: So would you say that your Russian and Portugese are on an equal level?

Y: I'm better in Russian, I know a lot about Russian, I know grammar, I know a lot about Russian...and I studied only one year in senior school in Angola and it wasn't like a very high level of Portugese. I can speak and everyone understands me, but the literature...I'm not very good at writing and spelling.

M: So you also experienced like Helena has two...being an immigrant twice, hey?

Y: Yes.

M: Now if you compare going to Angola and coming to South Africa?

Y: A...ok...here is easier because there are not so many people...in Angola...when I studied there, there about fifty people in the class...so it was difficult, but because it was difficult, but because there were too many people. And here I think its easier because I know what the teachers expect of me and I can do it.

M: Did you also learn English in Russia and in Angola?

Y: I started English when I was in Grade 5, but it was of course the low level. It was the grammar, but not conversation and not much of the spelling...so when I came here I couldn't speak English very well.

M: Ok, and how did you experience that first little while, this was your first school in South Africa, hey?

Y: Mm...ok, I think it was very bad...specially Helen told me (laugh) many times when I said something, they came to her to ask what did I say (all laugh). And I could feel I could not understand a lot of things people were talking around me. Now its much better but I feel I don't speak very well... pronunciation...

M: Ok....and how did you feel when you were exposed to quite a few languages here?

Y: I'm used to it, because in Angola its also not just Portugese, but a lot of National languages and I've been in a lot of places where people don't speak my language I sort of tune out and focus on the English.

M: That first while, what was particularly difficult for you?

Y: Their accent was a problem, because people speak too fast and I couldn't understand

them. And then I didn't speak much that time because it was well...I didn't speak too

much to people at the time...more especially teachers...It was difficult enough...

M: Did you understand the teachers more or the students more?

Y: Now I understand both, equally , but there was a time when I understood the teachers

better because they speak slowly especially for you to understand.

M: In terms of the attitude of the other students, how did you experience that?

Y: First, it was very nice, everybody smiling, inviting me to show what it is like, later I

saw that here especially Russians... people don't like them a lot...very much...and I

felt many people when you passed them at school, they thought...oh Russians, what

are you doing here and things like that. But I think it just gets (inaudible) I don't like

very much.

M: Do you feel part of the school now, integrated?

Y: No, I don't... In this school I feel I am like a very strange person...I can't be like I was

in the Russian school...I can't feel normal...free.

M: What makes you feel uncomfortable?

Y: Maybe because people here are very different from...all the people we've known

before in Russia and Angola...um..maybe that's why...maybe because when first I

came here I showed a very calm person...who doesn't go anywhere and now they

can't change their attitude about me.

M: How are people different?

Y: The problem here is that people don't think about their future...their life is not concerned with after school...I've asked many of the guys in my class and asked what are they going to do after school because its second last year and they don't know...

H: The difference is that our Russian people are more serious, they have more serious interests...they have different interests. They think about different things and talk about different things, they are more interested in Literature and culture and you know, just a different level...

Y: And here at the school I see that people don't mix a lot. The Chinese people in Chinese groups, Indian people in Indian groups, black people in black groups and white people in white groups and as we are two Russian girls (laugh) we also stick together.

M: Do you think that you have to gain a certain proficiency in English to integrate in a school like this?

Y: It depends on which level...if your English is very weak you would have difficulty studying, first of all and secondly people communicate on different levels, so for younger ones you don't need to have too much English...you run around...play hide and seek...jump, you don't need too much, it depends on how old you are...

Y: I think language isn't the main thing. If people want you and if you want to be accepted by people you will be. Or be rejected.

M: And you didn't experience that?

Y: I did. But my English also was weak...

M: So you don't think it was the language...?

Y: No, it was the lifestyle ideals, mind...ok now I'm trying to be more like them, not on the inside, but outside to talk more...we're trying to do it because we also want to make friends in the school its sad if you stay three years in a school and you don't make any friends at all, so now we are trying...

M: And in your first experience in Angola did you experience the same things?

Y: For me, firstly it wasn't because I was six years old and we played...but now I feel the difference because its very (inaudible) there...I have friends there, but all they talk about is the girls about guys and the guys about sport or parties and things like that, but I can't talk about things that worry me inside. About futures about careers about important things.

H: I had some older friends at home because when I was there the people...my classmates at school...they also couldn't really...but I had friends who were older than me who I could communicate with...so...

M: Practically, what do you think you still need to learn in English?

Y: Um...I need to know more words and I need to do my spelling...because English is difficult...you say one thing and you write completely different things.

M: Do you feel it's a jump from learning English at home and here?

H: A very great jump. it was difficult from the beginning, all the levels, but now its getting even more difficult, more is expected.

Y: What was fine in the other years is not enough anymore, some special knowledge is needed.

Addendum B

Interview: 17/3/99

Type: Non-directive

Language level: A - still rudimentary, P - highly proficient

Country of origin: Angola

Age: Both 18

Subject(s):   Both Male

School: Independent School

Type: Multiracial Independent School, English taught on both First and

                               Second Language level, Gauteng Education Department exams.

                               Students chiefly African.

Special Programs: None, immersion into general classroom. Extra lessons available, but

                               not specifically for immigrants.

Student History: Immersion. P - first in Namibia, then in South Africa. A - in S.A.

Success Rate: Experiencing severe problems this year (grade 12).

Code: M - Interviewer, A, P.

Z: Ok, Hello A and P, you're attending S.A. College?

Both: (Affirmation)

M: How long ago did you come (P) to South Africa?

P: Um...I came in 1997.

M: 1997...so its three years...and you?

P: Mmm last year...

M: 1998...so this is your second year in a South African school...now tell me what

         originally motivated you to come to South Africa...why...why did you come?

P: Because I wanted to learn some English and in Angola...the English is very poor

         that's all...so I decided to come to South Africa to learn more English.

M: Why do you want to know English?

P: Like because ...um..for instance in Angola if you don't speak English it is more easier

         to get a job...and so...I come to South Africa to study because my country is not good

         umm...eh...to learn, learn English and so...I apply to study at * because I hear they

         have good teachers and...

M: Ok, tell me...when...before you came to South Africa, how much English had you

         actually learnt?

P: Um...before I came to South Africa I was in Namibia in 1992...since 1992

M: So you learnt English before that...for how long about?

P: For about 4...

M: Four years? (Affirmation)And Yourself?

A: Yes, three months.

M: Three months, ok...and how had they taught you, what kind of things had they taught you?

P: Not ...basic things...because the basic things I...I...I...studied in Angola, just uh...other things more difficult...and things that I couldn't know...because I'd like to get in school.

M: Uh...and you, I mean Namibia, what kind of way were they teaching you?

P: Oh basically they started from the beginning (response mmm)...like there was a course called ESL, English as a Second Language...and like..they used to teach us things like scissors, papers...tables and chairs stuff like this...indoors and outside and they used to take us on field trips...they used to show us pictures...this is a leaf...this is a branch this is the root...a car...everything that you wanted to know from indoors ...in the class-room we...they teach us the word...this is the blackboard, chalk stuff like this, they used to send us like..go to the principal get some paper and bring it back (inaudible) so things like that...yah so we used to suffer a lot in the beginning but we got to live with it.

M: Ok...so did they use any other languages or did they just use English?

P: No, just English...and you in Angola?

A: Yah it was...it was just English because it was not allowed to speak Portugese in the English class.

M: Mmm

A: So they..they gave many tests for us to write and...many exercises and also conversations lessons and um...repetitions of some music...things like this.

M: Now your first week...your first time...* was this the first school you attended in South Africa....both of you?

Both: (Assent)

M: Describe to me your first week...how did you experience it...the other students around you...P the teachers...maybe you can tell me a story that tells how it was for you...?

P: First week that I arrived, it was like...the teachers they used to think that I didn't know how to speak English right...because most of the Angolans that were there they didn't know how to speak English...so they were surprised...with me, they used to say like to me...where did you come from? I said: From Angola...they used to say: No you can't come from Angola because we have a lot of students from Angola here who can't speak English...so I say: I went to Namibia I had to tell them the whole story. They used to treat me more differently...right...I used to like represent the Angolans. If there was any trouble with the Angolans they used to call me...if they were late...they used to call me for some exercises with the Angolan kids.

M;   How did you experience the other student's reactions towards you or...

P: They used to be surprised with me...because my English was...like different from theirs...like...the South Africans...they used to say that I talk the English as if I were singing or something the way they speak the English like...rough...right? Yah!

M: And yourself?

A: I can say that for me it was very...very difficult.

M: Was the English different from what you experienced in Angola (assent) did it

sound...?

A: Very different ma'am...the English in Angola is very poor...it is not proper

English...because...there is many foreign people there teaching English...not proper

English like South Africans...

M: And the other students and teachers...how did you find them?

A: Ah...the teacher...um...the teacher all of them were good and they helped me too much

with extra lessons and...many exercise...many works to do...yah.

M: And the other students?

A: The students...the students...also...but not all of them because they...uh...some of the

students they think they are more intelligent and you see...when I...I like to talk to him

about something they always say to me...what, what, what...yah.

M: Tell me at you school the children are speaking many different mother-tongues...

P: Yah...first of all when I came...I heard all these strange languages spoken in the class

and I thought...am I wrong? Am I speaking English...I mean do I understand any

English...so the pupils they say...so they used to say no they have other mother-

tongues there they used to speak a few English in class, but...if I'm around them...yah

they'll change they'll start speaking English but if I'm away they'll start speaking

their mother-tongues...so it was very difficult for me to cope with it...That's why,

that's why a lot of Angolans like in breaks they stay together...they also talk in

Portugese which doesn't help them much to be the same...

M: And you?
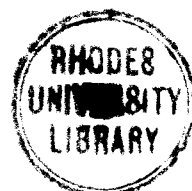
A: Um...I can say that...its not difficult, hard to...learn the English...it depends on your

what can I say?...good...

P: (Prompts) Way?

A: Yah...It depends on your way...yah, your way to study...your situation...appreciation.

M: Your teacher used to translate a lot at the beginning of the year, how did you

experience that?

A: Firstly it was good for us because we could not understand nothing and...yah could

not understand nothing and...yah it was good...because if some person would translate

for us we could understand and know what you were talking about but...mmm

M: After a while?

A: Yes, it was not so good because when we are studying English we must have just

English, we cannot speak English.

M: On an emotional level, did it help?

P: Uh...I think it's a waste of time...because as we said earlier...everyone has his mother-

tongue, but we come to learn English, not Sotho or other languages...if I want to

speak to someone from South Africa and he speaks Sotho...I address him in English,

this is the only way we can communicate with each other.

M: Now that you're in matric, what's different to what you were learning in grade 11?

A: I think matric is hard work...

M: Ok, what in particular do you find difficult in the English (long pause).

P: Its difficult because...um...they want us to write like essays...they want us to write in

high English right...um not like basic stuff, they want us...they want to see if we know

really the English, the English of Universities and Colleges...stuff like this..yah.

M: And you? Anything else particularly that's difficult for you?

A: I think it's the poem...because...the English that they use its not clear...like its

difficult.

M: Mmm

A: Yah...and sometimes we can...to understand the poem we must feel we must think it

happened to you...

P: I think its because like..some poems are written a long time ago and the English of a

long time ago its way...

A: Yah!

P: Much different from nowadays!

M: Now, when you were in grade 11, if you were to assess your level compared to the

other students, what would you say about your level?

P: Like ok...if I compare myself with the South Africans...I don't see much of a

difference.

M: And you A?

A: Because...um sorry ma'am...I can find some difficult things, but I can like improve,

yah!

M: And now in grade 12?

P: No I don't feel the same...we feel like they know more English than we do...it's a

different level they're able to cope with the English there...the teachers teach in the

middle, we have to go back to dictionaries and last year's papers and...

A: And I think Grade 12 is more difficult because last year our English teacher helped us

too much to understand the poems, and translate everything we didn't understand and

many things like that in grade 12 they don't give us this chance...we must just

interpret by ourselves.

Addendum C

Interview: 21/4/99

Type: Non-directive

Language Level: Approximately Level 4 Adult Education. Basic communicative

competence, few higher order language skills.

Country of origin: Angola

Age: 29 - E, 31 - B

Subjects: B - accompanied husband - work permit, E -illegal hawker.

Type: IEB examinations, students mainly domestic workers and labourers and

mainly South African.

Student History: Matric equivalent at home, immersion. English classes twice a week.

Success Rate: Excellent on Level 3 (grade 5 -6), but this is probably more because of

already established academic skills.

Code: M - interviewer, E - male student, B - female student

M: How long have you been in South Africa B?

B: Now, one year...two months

M: Two months? Then you came here in '97?

B: Ninety-eight.

M: The end of ninety-eight?

B: The beginning, February.

M: And yourself?

E: In...March of 1998, one year and one month...

M: So, very much the same length of time...and you come from which country?

B: Angola

M: Yes..

E;   Angola.

M: And what made you come to South Africa at all?

E: Myself is...uh...uh...(mother-tongue interspersal)

B: To...(mother-tongue)

M: To discover...?

E: Yes...to discover and to study...because in my country I was working but the money

       was not high so I intend...

M: So you intend to go back? And yourself?

B: You see my husband is here, now is five years ago, five years and I married...I don't stay there (all laugh)...a year ago...you see it is difficult for my (inaudible) you see I am a lady...a young lady and if you stay too far...um...from my husband is not good.

M: (Laugh) Ok, ok and um...where did you um.. start .where did you start learning English when you came here?

B: At school?

M: At which school, yes?

B: Not here, in my country because in my school, after the Primary school in the Secondary school, we start English.

M: So you learnt it already in school in High school. And yourself?

E: The same...

M: Now what methods did they use to teach you?

B: They teach us the alphabet, um..

E: Grammar...

B: Grammar yes...grammar yes..and the words...

M: (To B)You actually teach Portugese as a third language, do you actually think English is taught in your country in the way that you teach Portugese?

E: Yes I think it's the same...

B: Yes, yes..

M: Do you think you were taught it as a first, second or third language?

B: Second language.

E: English?

Both: (Argument in mother-tongue)

B: You see in my country I...all... speak...Portugese and the vernacular...you say the

       vernacular?

M: Yes.

B: We talk it...

M: Do you write it?

B: No..no

E: Only speak it. Then we learn English, Spanish, German...

B: (Mother - tongue) German...

E: After Primary School, we learn English, Spanish, Dutch...

M: On about the same level, would you say?

B: Level?

E: (In mother-tongue)

B: (Mother-tongue) When you first go to the secondary school you learn just English

       after...how do you say...

E: After two years..

B: You learn Spanish...and the others..

M: And all those languages, didn't they confuse you?

B: Many, many (How do I say it - In mother-tongue)...subjects.

E: But when you are at University you chose only English or only Spanish or...

M: Tell me how you felt when you arrived in South Africa.

B: When I come to South Africa its for holiday...I come to just see...its difficult..I

       say...hello, good morning or good evening...I don't speak...not for me...because I stay

alone at home, if my husband go to work...I want to get something...I don't know all

the... to ask!... I don't know...I just look the picture I say, what? (laugh) is difficult.

M: And when did you start learning English formally in South Africa?

B: August 1998, here. I was looking for a school to learn English, I don't found...then,

ok... I come here I ask if its possible...If the price is good for me.

M: And yourself?

E: It wasn't so difficult for me when I came to South Africa because at home, when I

was at home, when I...um...after work at home I learn English I go to...a cassette and a

book.

M: How did you understand the other students here?

B: For me, sometimes yes, sometimes yes

M: And the teachers?

B: The teachers, yes...a good teacher Fatima...

E: Yes...

M: When you first came to South Africa, did you hear the people?

B: The accent was a problem...because sometimes when the people speak, they speak too

fast...

M: How would you compare your level to that of the other students?

B: I know I talk to somebody...if I want to say something I know...the people they don't

know what I say.

M: And now?

E: Not so bad!

B: Yes, not so bad!

M: Now tell me, most of the other students speak other languages, how do you experience

      that?

E: I feel...because I don't understand I feel...um..a noise from..

B: I don't like it we are here to speak English, not other..Sotho...

M: Have you experienced any hostility?

E: They don't like us...because you know in the morning from eight to four o'clock I'm

      selling in front of Checkers..yah..one woman..always when she saw one foreigner she

      say....maquera... quera....

M: And in terms of the other students? How have you felt their attitudes?

E: Is good.

B: Is good because I don't talk, I just go and sit...I say hello...I say bye, bye I'm going

      now.

M: What problems do you have in terms of learning English?

B: A big problem...because I don't know how to use the verbs..I'm lazy I don't like to

      study!

E: Myself to talk...to write is no problem for me..but to talk

B: To talk, yes

E: Before I came here I was worried, these people speak English, I know only Portugese,

      but I have no problem.

Addendum D

Natural Meaning Units - H

H1.   I was born in the Ukraine in Ubitrovsk and when I was eight years moved to Angola with my parents, they were sent to work there and I lived there for four and a half years and then three and a half years ago I came to South Africa.

H1.   She was born in the Ukraine but moved to Angola aged eight. She spent four and a half years there. She came to South Africa three and a half years previously.

H2.   No, I learned Portuguese when I was round about twelve.

H2.   She only received formal instruction in Portuguese from twelve years old.

H3.   No.. I spoke to some people and I knew some words here and there, but not properly ..

H3.   She picked up odd vocabulary, but did not feel proficient.

H4.   I went to Russian school in Angola and there was a year in between when I went to Ukraine and I studied in Russian school in the Ukraine.

H4.   She first attended a Russian school and then later, for two years, she attended a Portuguese medium school before going

(inaudible)

back to a Russian school in the

Ukraine.

H5. I went to Portuguese school for two

years.

H5. She took English as a subject

from Grade 3.

H6. Three.. Yes, I did English as a

subject since std 1. In Ukraine and

in Angola, but it was on different

levels and was sometimes more

serious, sometimes less serious so.

H6. She took English both in the

Ukraine and in Angola, but at

different levels.

H7. It was taught in second language, so it

wasn't serious as when you have

Afrikaans here, so at this level so .. at

.. In std 9 people know English ..

they don't know English very well.

H7. She feels that English was

taught as a second language and

that even in grade eleven, students

are not proficient in English.

She compares the way she was

taught in Angola to the way

students are taught Afrikaans in

South Africa.

H8. They speak a little bit, but not really

um.. mm.. just.. mm we learn new

words like almost every day and

H8. Methods included the teaching of

new vocabulary, comprehension

exercises and audio-lingual

we do comprehension and we

listen to tapes ..

methods.

H9.	Grammatics... we learn.. we listen to tapes we read, we do speeches, we write exams.. yah that's basically it..	H9.	She confirms Y's point of view that grammar was taught and and states that they were formally assessed in oral and written work.
H10.	Um, well in Angola at.. In Portuguese school they started learning English from.. From std 5 so it was obviously a different level but...	H10.	In Angola English was taught on a lower level due to the fact that students only started learning the language in grade seven.
H11.	(Assents in mumbled laughed interruption).	H11.	She agrees that she felt more proficient in English than her Angolan counterparts.
H12.	Um... Well first of all um I couldn't stay in Angola for a long time because I had allergy to dust so um ... they had to send me somewhere and South Africa was the closest place to Angola first of all and	H12.	She believes that it is important/ useful to learn English.

secondly they had um English

speaking so.. and English is a very

useful language (mumble) it was

the best choice.

H13. My mother came and she looked around

the country she.. Like looked at

different schools actually she had a

look at one school, she didn't really

know anything and then she came back

and said... "OK.. you're going to stay

there" and I... well "OK fine".

Then she brought me here and it was

about this school... this was the second

school that we knew about and saw that

this was a good school and we came and

I wrote the entrance exams and I wasn't

all too sure I was going to get in.... I

was hoping and then they said "OK" and

then we went back to Angola for a few

months until the year.. the beginning of

the year and she left me ...

H13. Her mother chose the school

and she agreed to attend. It

was the second school that her

mother had visited. Her mother

chose the school because of its

good reputation. She was

concerned that she would not

pass the entry examination and

was relieved to be accepted.

They returned home and at the

beginning of the following year

she was left by her mother at

the school.

H14   Well obviously the teaching of

H14. She believes that the instruction

English was different because of the
first language um... I mean every-
thing was in English and the pro-
nunciation was a little different
from what I knew... I had known so..
some words were different I didn't
understand them... I didn't know
what they were trying to say.

of English in South Africa is
different to what she is accustomed
to because of the distinction
between "first" and "second"
language teaching in South
Africa. This is her first exposure
to English as a first language.
The pronunciation was different
to what she was used to and the
vocabulary was also unfamiliar.
This led to communication
problems.

H15. It was fine... (long pause) wasn't too
difficult.

H15. She contradicts herself and states
that it was not too difficult to
learn English. The implication is
that it was difficult, but that she
managed.

H16. I didn't notice that too much because
I was concentrating on the English..
and they didn't.. at that time ...

H16. Multilingualism does not bother
since she focusses on English
and "tuned out" other languages.

H17. Mainly speak English.. Yah.

H17. At that time her fellow students

spoke English most of the time.
She implies that this has
changed.

H18   Well, they were very friendly.. it   H18.   She experienced South Africans
       was very nice because um.. OK   as friendly, patient and accepting.
       in Angola.. all the schools I went   She contrasts their behaviour with
       to before, they didn't have many   how she was treated by Angolan
       foreigners.. they hardly had any   students. She does not elaborate
       foreigners.. so and people here   on her statement, but the implica-
       were, used to.. you know.. people   tion is that she did not find their
       here were, used to.. you know..   behaviour congenial.
       people who couldn't speak properly,
       they were very patient... I mean, they
       would explain, say it again, speak
       slowly... so I found they were found..
       accepted me. They actually helped me
       to..

H19.   I ah .. also found that they didn't have   H19.   She believes that this phenomenon
       experience with foreign people. They   can be explained by the fact that
       tried, but they really didn't um ...   Angolans are not as accustomed
                                                          to foreigners as South Africans
                                                          are.

H20. Vocab, very much so, there are many words.. I find that in Literature half of the words I know.. I don't know very well and I find that the vocabulary that people use here in every day language you know is very poor, they don't use a big variety of words and then when it comes to poems and stories whatever.. its difficult.. So the people are speaking a different level from what is expected in the classroom.

H20. H feels that she lacks the vocabulary necessary to analyse literature. She believes that the poor vocabulary used by South Africans in everyday language results in foreign students being ill prepared for the formal register expected in the English classroom.

H21. Yah, I find here they don't concentrate so much on the grammar, they do, but not so much as we do in the Russian schools.

H21. In Russian she was exposed to a grammar-based English programme, while in South Africa little or no attention is paid to grammar.

H22. Mm....

H22. She concedes that she prefers a grammar-based approach.

H23. Judging from my marks I'd say I'm somewhere near the top.

H23. She judges her level as near the top of her class.

H24.   But.. I'm not happy with my level.

Compared to others in my class I'm

OK.. I'm good enough but for myself

I'm not good enough!

H25.   The difference is that our Russian people

are more serious, they have more serious,

they have more serious interests ... they

have different interests. They think about

different things and talk about different

things, they are more interested in

literature and culture and you know,

just a different level ...

H25.   She feels that the difference

between herself and South

African students is as a result of

different interests. She states

that Russians are more serious

and more concerned with culture

and literature than South Africans.

She believes they function on a

different level.

H26.   I had some older friends at home

because when I was there the people..

my classmates at school.. they also

couldn't really... but I had friends

who were older than me who I could

communicate with.. so..

H26.   In Angola H had friends who were

older than her who she had

interests in common with. She

felt unable to communicate with

her peers.

H27.   A very great jump. It was difficult

from the beginning, all the levels,

H27.   She experienced difficulties in

the beginning learning English in

but now its getting even more difficult, more is expected.

South Africa. She, however, feels that the challenge is increasing as she progresses in her school career. She feels that there is a huge "jump" between the levels of English in Angola and that in South Africa.

Addendum E

Natural Meaning Units - Y

Y1.	(interrupts - inaudible)	Y1.	Y interrupts H and reminds her that grammar was an integral part of the English curriculum in Russia.
Y2.	In the beginning I was at school in Angola grade one, two and three, but then as war began in Angola, my mom sent me to Russian and I spent about five years with my grandparents, studying in Russian schools. It was for senior level schools, very different from junior school .. and then when I was thirteen I went from Russian and I wasn't there.. Grade seven .. so I know Russian school well .. I came here two years ago.	Y2.	She spent her first three years of schooling in Angola. Then when ware broke out she was sent to her grandmother in Russian where she spent the next five years of her education. She returned to Angola in the eighth grade and finally came to South Africa two years prior to the interview.
Y3.	I'm better in Russian, I know a lot	Y3.	She describes her Russian as

about Russian, I know grammar, I know a lot about Russian.. and I studied only one year in senior school in Angola and it wasn't like a very high level of Portuguese. I can speak and everyone understands me, but the literature.. I'm not very good at writing and spelling.

better than her Portuguese. She is well-versed in the Russian education system but feels that the Portuguese instruction she received in Angola was not on a very high level. She can speak Portuguese, understands the the language and is understood when she speaks, but does not feel confident about her written work or ability to analyse literature.

Y4.   Yes.

Y4.   She confirms that she was a foreign student twice.

Y5.   A.. OK.. here is easier because there are not so many people.. in Angola ... when I studied there, there about fifty people in the class.. so it was difficult, but because it was difficult, but because there were too many people. And here I think its easier because I know what the teachers

Y5.   She finds learning English in South Africa more congenial than in Angola. The smaller classes help facilitate learning and she knows what the teachers expect of her.

expect of me and I can do it.

Y6. I started English when I was in Grade 5, but it was of course the low level. It was the grammar, but not conversation and not much of the spelling... so when I came here I couldn't speak English very well.

Y6. She started learning English in the fifth grade, but the focus was purely grammatical without oral work or a focus on spelling. She feels that this is the reason that her English was poor when she first came to South Africa.

Y7. Mm.. OK, I think it was very bad... specially Helen told me (laugh) many times when I said something, they came to her to ask what did I say (all laugh). And I could feel I could not understand a lot of things people were talking about me. Now its much better but I feel I don't speak very well... pronunciation...

Y7. She struggled a great deal when she first arrived in South Africa. Her peers would ask H to translate when she spoke to them and she did not understand what they were saying. She feels happier about her communicative abilities now, but still struggles to speak correctly due to pronunciation problems.

Y8. I'm used to it, because in Angola its also not just Portuguese, but a lot of National languages and I've been

Y8. She is not troubled by multilinguism, since she became accustomed to hearing many

in a lot of places where people don't speak my language I sort of tune out and focus on the English.

languages in Angola and elsewhere. She tunes out the other languages and focusses on her target language, in this case, English.

Y9. Their accent was a problem, because people speak too fast and I couldn't understand them. And then I didn't speak much that time because it was well.. I didn't speak too much to people at the time.. more especially teachers.. It was difficult enough...

Y9. In the beginning she experienced accent as the biggest problem and struggled to understand when they spoke quickly.
She consequently did not commucate with the other pupils and, especially, with the teachers.

Y10. Now I understand both, equally, but there was a time when I understood the teachers better because they speak slowly especially for you to understand.

Y10. She understands the teachers and pupils equally at this time, but initially she understood the teachers more because they spoke slowly and made an effort to be understood.

Y11. First, it was very nice, everybody smiling, inviting me to show what it is like, later I saw that here especially

Y11. At first she experienced the attitudes of her South African peers as positive, but later

Russians... people don't like them a lot.. very much.. and I felt many people when you passed them at school, they thought... oh Russians, what are you doing here and things like that. But I think it just gets (inaudible) I don't like very much.

realised that foreigners, especially Russians are not popular in South Africa. She felt unwelcome and isolated.

Y12. No, I don't.. In this school I feel I am like a very strange person.. I can't be like I was in the Russian school.. I can't feel normal... free.

Y12. She does not feel integrated into the school community, on the contrary she feels uncomfortable and foreign.

Y13. Maybe because people here are very different from... all the people we've known before in Russia and Angola ..um .. maybe that's why.. maybe because when first I came here I showed a very calm person.. who doesn't go anywhere and now they can't change their attitude about me.

Y13. Her peers behave differently to people she met in Russian and Angola. She believes that this is possibly because she appeared unapproachable and isolationist when she first arrived. She believes it would be difficult to to change her peer's attitudes at this late stage.

Y14. The problem here is that people don't

Y14. Y dislikes the fact that South

think about their future... their life is
not concerned with after school... I've
asked many of the guys in my class
and asked what are they going to do
after school because its second last
year and they don't know...

African students are not concerned
about their future careers.

Y15. And here at the school I see that people
don't mix a lot. The Chinese people
in Chinese groups, Indian people in
Indian groups, black people in black
groups and white people in white groups
and as we are two Russian girls (laugh)
we also stick together.

Y15. She feels that South African
students are polarised into racial
and cultural groups and that she
too is consequently polarised.

Y16. It depends on which level... if your
English is very weak you would have
difficulty studying, first of all and
secondly people communicate on
different levels, so for younger ones
you don't need to have too much
English.. you run around... play hide
and seek... jump, you don't need to much,
it depends on how old you are...

Y16. Y states that language only some-
times plays a polarising role.
Younger students are not
influenced by language proficiency
because they communicate on a
more basic level, while older
pupils might be affected by it.

Y17. I think language isn't the main thing. If people want you and if you want to be accepted by people you will be. Or be rejected.

Y17. She does not, however, feel that language is the chief polarising agent. Acceptance has more to do with the attitude of the parties involved.

Y18. I did. But my English also was weak.

Y18. She experienced rejection, but her language was also weak and might have contributed.

Y19. No, it was the lifestyle ideals, mind... OK now I'm trying to be more like them, not on the inside, but outside to talk more... we're trying to do it because we also want to make friends in the school.. its sad if you stay three years in a school and you don't make any friends at all, so now we are trying...

Y19. Y feels that student's lifestyle and ideals influence their sociali-sation, but she is currently attempting to behave more like her South African peers. This is, however, not an intrinsic change but a cosmetic one to facilitate integration.

Y20. For me, firstly it wasn't because I was six years old and we played... but now I feel the difference because its very (inaudible) there... I have friends there,

Y20. In Angola she had no problems integrating initially because of her youth. Later, however, she experienced the same problem as

but they all talk about is the girls about the guys and the guys about sport or parties and things like that, but I can't talk about things that worry me inside. About futures, about careers, about important things.

she did in South Africa. She has friends, but struggles to communicate with them on a deeper level.

Y21. Um... I need to know more words and I need to do my spelling... because English is difficult.. you say one thing and you write completely different things.

Y21. Her greatest problems currently are spelling and vocabulary. She finds that there is a vast difference between written and spoken English.

Y22. What was fine in the other years is not enough anymore, some special knowledge is needed.

Y22. She is concerned that more specialised knowledge is required than she is capable of at her current level. Previously she was more confident, but the work becoming more challenging.

Addendum F

Natural Meaning Units - A

A1.	Mm.. last year..	A1.	He came to South Africa the previous year.
A2.	Yes, three months.	A2.	He had three months of English tuition before coming to South Africa.
A3.	Yah it was... it was just English because it was not allowed to speak Portuguese in the English class...	A3.	He was not permitted to speak his mother tongue in his first ESL class.
A4.	So they... they gave many tests for us to write and... many exercises and also conversations lessons and um... repetitions of some music... things like this.	A4.	In his previous English class he was taught conversational English as well as exercises and music. He was also tested.
A5.	I can say that for me it was very... very difficult.	A5.	He found the English difficult to understand when he first came to

South Africa.

A6.	Very different ma'am.. the English in Angola is very poor... it is not proper English... because ... there is many foreign people there teaching English... Not proper English like South Africans.. think it happened to you...	A6. He found the standard of English in South Africa very different to that in Angola. He suggests that this is as a result of English being taught in Angola by foreigners and not by mother-tongue users of the language. He believes that the English spoken in South Africa is "better" than that spoken in Angola.

A7. Ah... the teacher... um... the teacher all of them were good and they helped me too much with extra lessons and... many exercises... many works to do.. yah.

A7. He is positive about his teachers and appreciated the extra lessons and work they gave him to do.

A8. The students... the students... also... but not all of them because they... uh... some of the students they think they are more intelligent and you see... when I... I like to talk to him about something they always say to me... what, what,

A8. He is less enthusiastic about his reception by South African students. Some were kind to him, but some students were arrogant and impatient with him.

what... yah.

A9.   Um... I can say that... its not difficult, hard to... learn the English... it depends on your what can I say? Good... Yah... It depends on your way... yah, your way ... yah, your way to study... your... appreciation.

A9.   He does not think that learning English is very difficult. He believes that the attitude of the student is crucial to effective learning.

A10.   I think it's the poem... because... the English that they use is not clear... like its difficult.

A10.   He finds poetry the most challeng-ing aspect in the English curricu-lum. The language used in poetry is unfamiliar to him and, therefore, difficult.

A11.   Yah... and sometimes we can... to understand the poem we must feel we must.

A11.   He believes that identification with the material is important in in understanding poetry and this is something he struggles to do.

A12.   I think its because like... some poems are written a long time ago and the English of a long time ago its way...

A12.   Identification is particularly difficult because a lot of the poetry was written a long time ago and the vocabulary is unfamiliar.

A13. Like OK... if I compare myself with the South Africans... I don't see much of a difference.

A13. He feels that his standard of English was much the same as the South African students in grade eleven.

A14. Because... um... sorry ma'am... I can find some difficult things, but I can like improve, yah!

A14. Now he experiences some diffi- culties, but is confident that he can improve.

A15. No I don't feel the same... we feel like they know more English than we do... it's a different level they're able to cope with the English there... the teachers teach in the middle, we have to go back to dictionaries and last year's papers and...

A15. He feels inadequate in comparison to the South African students. He observes that the teachers focus on the average students and he feels compelled to do extra reference work in order to keep up with his South African colleagues.

A16. And I think Grade 12 is more difficult because last year our English teacher helped us too much to understand the poems, and translate everything we didn't understand and many things like that. In grade 12 they don't give us this chance... we must just interpret by

A16. He finds Grade 12 more difficult than Grade 11 because there is less assistance by his teacher. Explanations and translations were provided in Grade 11, but now more independent work is expected.

ourselves.

Addendum G

Natural Meaning Units - P

P1.   Um...I came in 1997.

P1.   P came to South Africa in 1997 (two years before the interview)

P2.   Because I wanted to learn some English and in Angola ... the English is very poor that's all...so I decided to come to South Africa to learn more English.

P2.   Because he does not believe the standards are high in Angola.

P3.   Like because,,, um... for instance in Angola if you speak English it is more easier to get a job... and so... I come to South Africa to study because my country is not good umm... eh... to learn, learn English and so... I apply to study at * because I hear they have good teachers and...

P3.   He sees English as a key to getting a job and he reiterates that he does not think much of the standard of English teaching in his country. He came to the specific school because of its reputation for good teachers.

P4.   Umm... before I came to South Africa I was in Namibia in 1992... since 1992 for

P4.   South Africa was not his first exposure to English, he spent

about four....

four years previously in Namibia.

P5.   Not... basic things... because the basic things I... I... I... studied in Angola, just ... things that I couldn't know... because I'd like to get in school.

P5.   He was taught slightly more advanced work in Namibia.

P6.   Oh basically in the beginning (response mm) ... like there was a course called ESL, English as a Second Language... and like... they used to teach us things like scissors, papers... tables and chairs stuff like this... indoors and outside and and they used to take us on field trips... they used to show us pictures... this is a leaf... this is a branch, this is the root... a car... everything that you wanted to know from indoors... in the class-room we... they teach us the word... this is the blackboard, chalk stuff like this, they used to send us like... go to the principal get some paper and bring it back (inaudible) so things like that... yah so used to suffer a lot in the beginning but we got to live

P6.   In Namibia he attended an ESL course. There he was taught vocabulary in different contexts and taken on field trips. They would give them simple instructions and expect them to execute the instructions. He struggled in beginning, but became accustomed to it.

with it.

P7. No, just English...

P7. Only English was spoken in the the English class in Namibia.

P8. First week that I arrived, it was like
... the teachers they used to think that
I didn't know how to speak English
right... because most of the Angolans
that were there they didn't know how to
speak English... so they were surprised...
with me, they used to say like to me...
where did you come from? I said: From
Angola... they used to say: No, you can't
come from Angola because we have a lot
of students from Angola here who can't
speak English... so I say: I went to Namibia
I had to tell them the whole story. They
used to treat me more differently... right...
I used to like represent the Angolans. If
there was any trouble with the Angolans
they used to call me... if they were late... they
used to call me for some exercises with the
Angolan kids.

P8. When P first arrived in South
Africa there were misunderstand-
ings because the teachers expected
him not to understand English.
He had to constantly explain about
his prior learning in Namibia.
When the teachers discovered his
ability to communicate efficiently
in English, they began to use him
as an interpreter and representative
for the other Angolan students who
could not understand English.

P9.   They used to be surprised with me...

because my English was... like different

from theirs... like... the South Africans...

they used to say that I talk English as if

I were singing or something the way they

speak the English. Like... rough... right?

P9.   The South Africans found the way

he spoke intriguing and compared

it to singing. He found the South

Africans' mode of speech

abrasive.

P10.   They speak their mother-tongues... so it

was very difficult for me to cope with

it... That's why, that's why a lot of

Angolans like in breaks they stay together

... they also talk in Portuguese which

doesn't help them much to be the same...

P10.   He initially found the fact that

South African students spoke their

mother-tongues at break discon-

certing. He believes that this is

one of the reasons that Angolan

students isolate themselves at

breaks and also speak their

mother-tongue. He admits that

this is not helpful in terms of

language learning.

P11.   Firstly it was good for us because we

could not understand nothing and... yah

could not understand nothing and... yah

it was good... because if some person

would translate for us we could understand

and know what you were talking about

P11.   He experienced the fact that his

English teacher in South Africa

made use of translations as helpful

at first because it facilitated under-

standing.

but... umm

P12.	Yes, it was not so good because when we are studying English we must have just English, we cannot speak English.	P12.	Later he decided that translation was not a good thing because he believes in an English-only policy in the English class.
P13.	Uh... I think it's a waste of time... because as we said earlier... everyone has his mother tongue, but we come to learn English, not Sotho or other languages... if I want to speak to someone from South Africa and he speaks Sotho... I address him in English, this is the only way we can communicate with each other.	P13.	He does not support multi-lingualism at school in general because he believes the purpose of English classes and English medium schools is to learn the the language. He feels that communication between people who speak different languages should take place in English.
P14.	I think matric is hard work...	P14.	He find matric more difficult than what he has experienced previously.
P15.	It is difficult because... um... they want us to write essays... they want us to write in high English right... um not	P15.	He finds the formal register expected in essays difficult to achieve. He feels that the

like basic stuff, they want us... they want to see if we know really the English, the English of Universities and Colleges... stuff like this... yah.

standard of English expected from a matric first language pupil is extremely high, comparable to that of tertiary institutions.

Addendum H

Natural Meaning Units - E

E1. In... March of 1998, one year and one month.

E1. E came to South Africa one year and one month prior to the interview.

E2. Angola.

E2. He came from Angola.

E3. Myself is... uh... uh... (mother-tongue interspersal).

E3. He struggles to express the reason why he came.

E4. Yes... to discover and to study... because in my country I was working but the money was not high so I intend...

E4. He came to explore the possibilities in South Africa because he wishes to study and improve his earning capacity.

E5. The same ...

E5. He agrees with B that he learnt English as a secondary school subject.

E6. Grammar...

E6. He mentions that they were

taught grammar.

E7.	Yes I think its the same.	E7.	E believes that the English was taught to him in the same way as Portuguese is taught to South Africans.
E8.	English?	E8.	He disputes B's comment that English is taught as a second language in Angola. He believes the level is lower.
Both.	(Argument in mother-tongue).		
E9.	Only speak it. Then we learn English, Spanish, German...	E9.	He asserts that the vernacular is is only used as an oral language, not as a written one. English is taught along with Spanish and German.
E10.	After Primary School, we learn English, Spanish, Dutch...	E10.	He reiterates that English is taught in secondary school along with German and he also mentions that Dutch is taught as well.

E11.   (In mother-tongue).

E11.   He confers with B to ascertain the exact stage that they started to learn English.

E12.   After two years.

E12.   He decides that classes began two years into their secondary school career.

E13.   But when you are at university you chose only English or only Spanish or...

E13.   At university only one other European language is chosen

E14.   It wasn't so difficult for me when I came to South Africa because at home, when I was at home, when I... um... after work at home I learn English I go to... a cassette and a book..

E14.   He did not struggle to communicate when he first arrived in South Africa because he had followed an English course with cassettes and books independently at home.

E15.   Yes...

E15.   He agrees with B that his English teacher in South Africa is good.

E16.   Not so bad!

E16.   He is relatively satisfied with his ability to communicate in

English.

E17.	I feel... because I don't understand I feel... um... a noise from...		E17.	He doesn't understand when his South African peers speak their mother-tongue and he experiences their speech as noise.
E18.	They don't like us... because you know in the morning from eight to four o'clock I'm selling in front of Checkers... yah.. one woman... always when she saw one foreigner she say... maquera... quera		E18.	He feels that South Africans in general don't like foreigners. He describes how he was insulted by a woman when he was selling his goods.
E19.	Is good.		E19.	He contradicts his previous statement and says that the attitude of his South African peers towards him is positive.
E20.	Myself to talk... to write is no problem for me... but to talk...		E20.	He does not struggle with written English, but he has problems with verbal communication.
E21.	Before I came here I was worried, these people speak English, I know only		E21.	Before he came to South Africa he was concerned that he would

Portuguese, but I have no problem.

struggle to communicate because he was not proficient in English, only in his mother-tongue. He is, however, more confident now.

Addendum I

Natural Meaning Units - B

B1. Now, one year... two months.

B1. She came to South Africa one year and two months before the interview.

B2. Ninety-eight.

B3. The beginning, February.

B4. Angola.

B4. She came from Angola.

B5. To...

B5. Translates for E.

B6. You see my husband is here, now is five years ago, five years and I married... I don't stay there (all laugh)... a year ago... you see it is difficult for my (inaudible) you see I am a lady... a young lady and if you stay too far... um... from my husband is not good.

B6. Her husband works in South Africa and she came to South Africa to be with him. She feels that lengthy separations are not good for a marriage.

B7.   At school.

B7.   She started learning English at school.

B8.   Not here, in my country because in my school, after the primary school in the secondary school, we start English.

B8.   She first learnt English in Angola in secondary school.

B9.   They teach us the alphabet, um...

B9.   They were taught the English alphabet.

B10.   Grammar yes... grammar yes... and the words...

B10.   They were also taught grammar and vocabulary.

B11.   Yes, yes...

B11.   English is taught in Angola in the same way as Portuguese is taught in South Africa.

B12.   Second language.

B12.   English is taught as a second language. She disputes this with E and concedes that it is taught on a lower level than second language.

Both.   (Argument in mother-tongue).

B13.   You see in my country I... all...

speak... Portuguese and the vernacular

... you say the vernacular?

B13.   In Angola the vernacular is spoken

as well as Portuguese.

B14.   We talk it...

B14.   They speak it.

B15.   No... no...

B15.   They don't write it.

B16.   (Mother-tongue) German.

B16.   They also learnt German.

B17.   Level?

B17.   She is unsure of the meaning of the

word "level".

B18.   (Mother-tongue) .. when you first go to

the secondary school you learn just

English after... how do you say...

B18.   She reiterates that English is taught

at secondary school.

B19.   You learn Spanish... and the others...

B19.   She states that Spanish is also

taught.

B20.   Many, many (How do I say it - in

mother-tongue) ... subjects.

B20.   They had many different sub-

jects.

B21. When I come to South Africa its for holiday... I come just to see... its difficult.. I say... hello, good morning or good evening... I don't speak... not for me... because I stay alone at home, if my husband go to work... I want to get something... I don't know all the... to ask! ... I don't know... I just look the picture, I say, what? (laugh) is difficult.

B21. When she first came to South Africa it was for a holiday and she struggled to communicate beyond the most basic greetings. She had to communicate through pictures.

B22. August 1998, here. I was looking for a a school to learn Englsih, I don't found ... then, OK... I come here I ask if its possible... If the price is good for me.

B22. She started formal instruction in August of the previous year. She actively sought a school where she could learn English and enquired about the possibility of studying at the adult education centre. She also enquired about the price.

B23. For me, sometimes yes, sometimes yes.

B23. She only understands the other students sometimes.

B24. The teachers, yes... a good teacher Fatima.

B24. She understands her teachers, however, and states that her

teacher is a good teacher.

B25. The accent was a problem... because sometimes when the people speak, they speak too fast...

B25. She experienced the accent of her fellow students as a hindrance to to comprehension. She also states that they speak too fast.

B26. I know I talk to somebody... if I want to say something I know... the people they don't know what I say.

B26. Her peers did not always understand her.

B27. Yes, not bad!

B27. Now she feels more confident about her ability to communicate.

B28. I don't like it, we are here to speak English, not other... Sotho...

B28. She dislikes any code-switching in the English class.

B29. Is good because I don't talk, I just go and sit... I say hello ... I say bye, bye I'm going now.

B29. She feels that the reason why the attitudes of her fellow students are positive towards her is because she doesn't communicate with them beyond the necessary greetings.

B30. A big problem... because I don't know

B30. She experiences problems with

how to use the verbs... I'm lazy I
don't like to study!

verbs and states that she is lazy
and needs to study more.

B31.   To talk, yes...

B31.   She also has problems with
verbal fluency.

Addendum J

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