



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

**CONFLICT AND CHALLENGES IN ESL ACQUISITION:  
AN INVESTIGATION WITHIN FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRANT COLLEGE  
STUDENTS' ENVIRONMENT IN CAPE TOWN**

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UNIVERSITY *of the*  
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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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## Declaration

I, Mercy Chuwa LIMEN, declare that the thesis *Conflict and Challenges in ESL Acquisition: An Investigation within Francophone Immigrant College Students' Environment in Cape Town* is my personal work and has not been submitted for degree or examination in any other university. All sources I have cited or quoted have been indicated and fully recognized by a complete list of bibliographical references.

I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that is one's own. Therefore, each significant contribution to this thesis is my own interpretation. I therefore declare that this thesis is my own work.

Signature  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 14 November 2023



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## Abstract

The complexity of second language acquisition (SLA) by young adults as seen through the lenses of students with different needs and objectives has a tremendous language conflict potential to the acquirers. Languages spoken both at home, within communities, social gatherings, and at learning institutions of which a specific language is the medium of instruction, differ from one ethnic group to another and from one society to the other. South Africa as a multilingual and multicultural society is hosting migrants with similar characteristics of a multilingual and multicultural background. This is an indication that SLA is unavoidable by the immigrants who are the minority. Acquiring English as a second language (ESL) is of paramount importance for their academic success.

The current study focuses on French-speaking immigrant college students (FICS) in Cape Town. These immigrant college students interact closely with speakers of different languages in South Africa. This might have a significant influence in their SLA in the form of language conflicts and challenges. FICS may be semi proficient in various languages they encounter including English; however, fully proficient in none. This study is therefore established on the assumption that language contact resulting in language conflict plays a significant role towards SLA by French-speaking students within their Cape Town environments.

Using a qualitative research methodology and the theoretical underpinnings of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, this study investigates the language conflicts and identifies the types of challenges encountered by FICS in Cape Town. The research instruments for data collection consisted of participants' observation and semi-structured interviews. These were supplemented with individual narratives. A random sampling technique was implemented for selection of participants, whereby the sample represents the target population. The recorded interviews were transcribed to identify the emergence

of themes. The analysis of these themes resulted in the research findings, conclusion, and recommendations.





## Keywords

1. Codeswitching
2. ESL Acquisition
3. French-Speaking students
4. Medium of Instruction
5. Multilingual Society
6. Second Language Acquisition
7. Social Identity
8. Sociohistorical Approach
9. Students' Environment
10. Translanguaging



## List of Abbreviations

**DHET:** Department of Higher Education and Training

**ESL:** English Second Language

**FICS:** French-Speaking Immigrant College Students

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second language

**SA:** South Africa

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development



## Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to God Almighty for giving me life, hope, good health, strength, and the wisdom to walk through this path successfully and not giving up.

My dear husband Lawrence Melad ETINZOH, without your support, I would not have had the peace of mind to write this thesis. Words cannot convey how I appreciate and cherish you, for the endless support you gave me throughout this journey.

To my beloved son McBright Nkwengwa LIMEN and my siblings: Aloysius LIMEN, Ransom Fotso LIMEN and Glen Boma LIMEN. You have shown me endless love and respect. Without you, I would not have gathered the courage to go through this process. You are my inspiration; I could not afford to let you down by giving up.

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# Chapter 1:

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. PRELIMINARIES

This chapter introduces the research study focusing on French-speaking immigrant college students (FICS) in Cape Town. Section 1.2 provides the rationale and background of the study. Section 1.3 outlines the research problem. Section 1.4 contains the aims of the study. Section 1.5 articulates the research questions. Section 1.6 details the delimitation of the study area. Section 1.7 introduces the research methodology paradigms that will be detailed in the appropriate chapters. Section 1.8 reports on the significance of the study. Finally, the organization and the structure of the current thesis are detailed in Section 1.9.

### 1.2. RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

There are about 1500 to 2000 different indigenous languages spoken in the whole of Africa by different ethnic groups as a family or in their community (Mboning *et al.*, 2020: 51). Therefore, these different ethnic groups are bound to come in close contact with one another for common reasons such as academic or socialization. Others leave their home country and migrate to other countries in search of greener pastures; they interact with those in the host country for various reasons.

As a result, these immigrants come into close contact with speakers of different languages. These speakers of different languages have their own social identities and cultural background that differ from one another. Moreover, individuals within these language groups may have more than one home language, which they speak. Therefore, because of the interaction between these speakers, second language acquisition is inevitable especially to the minor population (Hilliker & Washburn, 2021).

South Africa, being a multilingual society, accommodates thousands of immigrants coming from various countries around the globe (Vandeyar & Catalano, 2020). Amongst these immigrants are Francophone students who are exposed to other languages within their environments in Cape Town (Kemende & Nomlomo, 2019). Thus, from a socio-historical perspective there could be a conflict between these various languages. Francophone immigrant students speak their home language. For many of these students, the home language is French, the language of communication at home with their families (Kemende & Nomlomo, 2019). Outside their homes they encounter other languages in the community such as English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, among others, with friends and at colleges where they study.

This study investigates how French-speaking immigrant college students negotiate their social identity and ethnicity, as well as their cultural background in the process of acquiring English L2 for academic purposes within their environment in Cape Town. In addition, the aim of the study is to carry out research that will entail investigating the language conflicts/challenges encountered within Francophone immigrant students through language contact within their environment in Cape Town.

According to Nelde (2017), language conflict is a phenomenon attributed to contact linguistics whereby language borrowing and language interference is evident. As such, they could be positive or negative influences of interference among speakers of these languages. The conflicts amongst others could be in the form of codeswitching, mixed language, or language transfer. Therefore, the current research seeks to explore the influence of these language conflicts on the French-speaking students within their Cape Town environment.

As stipulated by Nelde (2017), language contacts have always resulted to inevitable conflicts between speakers of those languages caused by various reasons that this study seeks to unveil. However, Lucas (2015) ascertains those languages influenced one

another. Therefore, no single language is exclusively free of influence from other languages. Due to the many languages spoken within French-speaking students' environment in Cape Town, English and African languages are continuously in contact with one another (Neto, 2020).

These French-speaking students faced difficulties to construct a proper sentence in English while in college due to the pattern of exposure and interaction of these other African languages within their environment (Mata, 2016). As indicated by Neto (2020), while these African languages enrich and contribute to language diversity in learning institutions and increase social identity within students, it posed as a challenge to the French-speaking students when faced with academic activities due to language contact where language borrowing and interference play a vital role in the process of acquiring English L2. This brings about conflicts within these different languages especially when the languages do not have the equivalent articles system (Sun, 2016), thereby making learning difficult to French-speaking immigrants who must acquire English L2 for academic purposes.

Moreover, the significance of this study is to create awareness to policy makers at the Department of Higher Education for the need for an institution where French-speaking immigrants and others acquiring English as L2 for academic purposes can do a transitional course in English before enrolling in colleges (or other tertiary institutions such as universities) to compete with their peers. This would lead to language conflict or challenges encountered by French-speaking learners no longer being a challenge to both students and lecturers. In fact, often students get confused when writing English and lecturers most of the time penalize students by implication since the sentences are not well constructed due to conflicting ideas.

### 1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

According to Creswell (2009), when a researcher has identified a specific problem, the research focus will have to be on that specific aspect of interest. The current study has identified that French-speaking students enroll to study at a private college in Mowbray, Cape Town, without necessarily taking into consideration the language implications or the language aspects of it. In so doing, they ignore the fact that “language has an important role to play in the discovery, identification and storage of disciplinary knowledge” (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021: 1).

On the other hand, English language proficiency is not necessarily a requirement for admission in South African tertiary institutions of learning. Often students are admitted without prior English language testing. English language testing or assessment is often the custom prior to enrolment of foreign students in a number of higher education institutions in major English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia (Douglas, 1990; Oliveri & Wendler, 2020).

It is indeed an observable fact that South African higher education institutions, especially private colleges, do not establish that non-English immigrant students might not be able to understand the method of teaching and learning, given that the medium of instruction is English, which is a foreign language to them. On arrival in Cape Town, non-English immigrant students who might not have learnt sufficient English in their respective countries of origin (or elsewhere) are at the mercies of “picking up” words in English amidst the numerous languages spoken in Cape Town (Nitta, 2006; Boekstein, 2010; Thompson, 2022). This makes them neither proficient in English, nor meeting up with their academic activities on time. Hence, they might face language conflicts and challenges while learning English as L2 for academic purpose.



#### 1.4. AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The current study seeks the following three primary aims:

- (i) to determine the various challenges encountered by French-speaking college students in the process of SLA,
- (ii) to explore how they negotiate through language conflicts, and
- (iii) to find out ways to empower students in terms of language and literacy education in this contemporary society of ours characterized by diversity in all its complexity (Ahmad *et al.* 2018; Cummins, 2016).

Moreover, by investigating language conflict and challenges faced by French-speaking immigrant college students within their Cape Town environment, this study may – as a subsequent aim – contribute to expanding researchers’ and scholars’ views on language conflict with reference to SLA. In addition to the different indigenous languages in South Africa, there are numerous immigrants’ languages as well. Speakers of these languages come in close contact with one another for academic or socialization purposes. A result of this inter-ethnic interaction is the unavoidable aspect of contact-induced language change. Hence, bringing about conflict among these contact languages especially to the French-speaking immigrant college student who are in the process of acquiring English L2 for academic purposes.

Furthermore, as a further subsequent aim, the results of this study may help to understand how policy makers in the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) could prevent or minimize these challenges. Hence, the study also aims at understanding how language conflict impacts the academic performances of the French-speaking students with the aim of proposing a possible solution and to create the possibility for further research on this topic.

## 1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of this study is outlined as follows:

What are the language conflicts and challenges encountered within Francophone immigrant students' environment in Cape Town?

The sub-questions formulated from the main question are the following:

- (i) What are the languages in the students' environment (learning institution and community)?
- (ii) How proficient are the students in all the languages of their environment?
- (iii) What is the impact on the students' language acquisition?
- (iv) What is the impact on the student's language subject performance?

## 1.6. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY AREA

The current study focuses on a private college in Mowbray, Cape Town. The selection of this college is established on the criteria that the college registers an important majority of French-speaking students into their programs. This study limits its participants to Francophone students from four different African countries namely the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) and the Republic of Gabon. The four countries are located in central Africa.

Cameroon is the only of the four to have both English and French as official languages. English is used only in two provinces (North-West and South-West provinces) as sole official language (Ndille, 2016; Biloa & Echu, 2008). French is the sole official language in the other eight provinces. In addition to English and French, Cameroon has over 273 native languages (Eberhard *et al.*, 2023; Kouega, 2008; Echu, 2004). According to the

website of the Presidency of Cameroon, the official percentage of French and English speakers is estimated to be 70% and 30% respectively<sup>1</sup>. The Cameroonian participants of this study are all originally from the French-speaking side of Cameroon. Each of these participants also has knowledgeable proficiency of at least one native language of Cameroon.

In Congo (Brazzaville) over 55 languages are recorded (Eberhard *et al.*, 2023). French is the sole official language even if the Constitution has since 2015 recognized Lingala and Kituba as “national vernacular languages” (Bagamboula, 2022; République du Congo, 2015; Massoumou, 2006 & 2001; Mfoutou, 2000; Queffélec & Niangouna, 1990). Apart from the official language, the Congolese participants of this study also have knowledge of the two national vernacular languages.

Although Gabon has recently joined the Commonwealth Organisation of Nations (Yates, 2022; Révauger, 2022), French remains the sole official language of the Republic of Gabon (Mavoungou *et al.*, 2022; Nyangone Assam *et al.*, 2016; Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, 2011 & 2017) co-existing with 40 native languages (Eberhard *et al.*, 2023) and a number of foreign languages (Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, 2005a, 2006a & 2007). Each Gabonese participant in this study has sufficient proficiency in at least one native language of Gabon.

In DR Congo, which has more than 210 languages (Eberhard *et al.*, 2023), French is also the official language of the State within a “complex macro-sociolinguistic structure” (Kasanga, 2012: 49). Kasanga (2012: 49) indicates that the “structure can be simplified into a triglossic structure”: French > National Languages > Ethnic Languages. In fact, the four major regional languages, namely Ciluba, Kikongo, Lingala and Swahili have the constitutional status of national languages (López Palma, 2008 & 2022). Each of the four competes with French as lingua franca at regional level. Ciluba dominates the southern

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.prc.cm/en/cameroon/presentation>

regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo-Kinshasa), Kikongo the entire west of the country, Lingala the north and Swahili the eastern regions of the country. For the current study, the participants originally from Congo-Kinshasa have either Lingala or Swahili as first language and French as second language.

This choice of the designated private college is based on a preliminary observation which shows that these are the main African French-speaking countries that have a majority population in the college. The choice of participants originating only from the abovementioned four African countries is based on the following two criteria:

- (i) Compared to West Africa, Central Africa is the African region with the most influence of French language (Mavoungou, 2013a & 2013b; Connell & Zeitlyn, 2010; Connell, 2007; Renou, 2002).
- (ii) Based on a preliminary observation, the four countries provide the biggest numbers of Francophone immigrant students in the designated college.

In addition, the delimitation of the study are as follows:

- (i) This study pinpoints Krashen (1982)'s hypothesis of the acquisition-learning distinction that indicates two methods of acquiring L2, which are informal and formal. Both methods are important in SLA, but the formal is suitable for academic purposes.
- (ii) The current research will focus on the aspect of SLA in a multilingual/translingual setting. This will highlight the difficulties of learning a second language in such an environment. However, it will also indicate that SLA though difficult to achieve in such a context, is achievable with some challenges.
- (iii) Underlining factors such as students' background that include sociocultural, historical, and social identity would be taken into consideration.

- (iv) The significant factors of language contact such as language transfer, language borrowing and codeswitching among others is of utmost importance to achieve the aim of this study.
- (v) In line with the demographics, the current study will focus only on the French-speaking immigrant college students who have never been in an English-speaking setting for more than twelve months
- (vi) This research will not consider French-speaking students who have been in South Africa for more than a year but are still struggling with English.

### **1.7. NOTES ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this section, I wish to clarify that this study is predominantly empirical research. As such, conclusions of the study will strictly be drawn from concretely reliable evidence. The research design adopted for this empirical study is a qualitative research design, which is outlined in detail in Chapter 5.

However, two important chapters in this study follow principles of non-empirical research, i.e. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. The research methodology adopted for these two chapters is that of systematic literature review. Section 2.1 in Chapter 2 gives an overview of the systematic literature review research methodology.

### **1.8. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is significant because it focuses on one of the critical societal elements which is SLA and social interaction. Students encounter problems such as language conflict and other challenges when acquiring a second language. This might be because of among others, cultural differences, insufficient competence, or performance issues. In the observation of ESL acquisition, there is often emphasis on social interaction and the

importance of communication between the non-native speakers and native speakers. Hence, non-native speakers, in the process of acquiring a target language, for both communication and academic purposes turn to construct new identities as speakers of the target language. In this context, as Taqavi and Rezaei (2021: 395) put it, “Language is considered as a site of identity construction”.

Therefore, it is necessary for research such as this be carried out. Similarly, it is important for academic institutions and lecturers to implement proper procedures and pedagogic approaches that enhance understanding and meaning-making for non-native speakers. As ESL acquirers, it is critical for students to build their self-esteem and be comfortable with their classmates and taking part in classroom activities when using the target language.

Understanding a target language will enable students to have self-confidence and reduces the level of language conflict and challenges that may emanate in the process of ESL acquisition. ESL acquisition students portrayed their personal experiences through social interaction which is in line with Vygotskian sociocultural theory “views language-mediated learning as a process where taking part in socially mediated activities is very important” (Semeon & Mutekwe, 2021: 4). Hence, this study is important because it has the potential to contribute to the teaching and learning skills of both teachers and learners in the academic domain.

## **1.9. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

The layout of the current study’s thesis contains six chapters.

Chapter 1, which is the current chapter, introduces the thesis with the study rationale, the research problem, the aims of the study as well as the research question. The delimitation of the study area and the significance of the study are also contained in this chapter.

Chapter 2 outlines the literature review following systematic review methods and principles.

Chapter 3 makes a short systematic review of the French language and Francophone immigrants in Africa.

Chapter 4 presents the theoretical underpinning of the study.

Chapter 5 provides the research design and the research methodology of the present qualitative study.

Chapter 6 is about data presentation and analysis.

Chapter 7 provides of the findings of the study and their analytic discussion.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis and provides recommendations.



## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

As posited by Paul and Criado (2020), literature reviews contribute substantially to research as they provide a wide-ranging overview of literature related to concepts, methods, subjects, and amalgamate previous studies to support the foundation of knowledge. This chapter presents a review of relevant literature on scholarly work done in the aspects of language conflicts and challenges that exist in the process of ESL acquisition, in a multilingual/translingual context by French-speaking college students.

I would like to indicate here that, although, these students have a common identity as 'Francophone immigrants' with French as their lingua franca, they are from diverse indigenous background from a sociocultural perspective. By this, I mean that they speak different mother tongues<sup>2</sup>. To give a firm understanding of this study, I discuss the notion of ESL acquisition using theories related to prior research in the domain that views SLA by adults as a social practice. This entails interacting and coming in close contact with speakers of the target language either for academic purposes or by means of socializing.

To navigate the path of negotiating identity, being one of the sociocultural phenomena in SLA, I will review concepts that deal with language transfer, borrowing and codeswitching as linguistic aspects that trigger challenges and conflicts within L1 and L2. I will also look at the sociohistorical approach in SLA. This will enable this study to identify some linguistic components that exist in both French and English as I explore debates of scholars in relation to the aspect of ESL. Finally, I will focus on sociocultural theories that view social interaction as practice at both learning institutions and

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<sup>2</sup> Although in some countries such as Gabon, African languages are still widely spoken, French has become the mother tongue of many younger generations (cf. Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, 2011; Mabika Mbokou, 2008 & 2012).



communities, which form a solid foundation for the SLA. Hence, some scholars in social theories view the act of acquiring/learning language as a process of social interaction (Loewen, 2020)

## **2.2. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The concerns of this section are the following:

- (i) the presentation of the systematic review as research methodology used for Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this study,
- (ii) the presentation of textual analysis as additional methodology,

Sub-section 2.2.1 deals with an outline of the systematic reviews. Sub-section 2.2.2 is about textual analysis, a literary study methodology I used to complement the systematic review methodology in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of the study.

### **2.2.1. Systematic Review Approaches**

I used systematic review as the main methodological approach to build up the literature review contained in the current chapter. This means that this study is based on the review of previous primary research works. According to Peters *et al.* (2015: 141), “Reviews of primary research are becoming more common as evidence-based practice gains recognition as the benchmark for care, and the number of, and access to, primary research sources has grown. As more authors are conducting reviews to integrate research findings, various review types have evolved with their respective methodologies developing in precision and clarity”.

It has to be understood that systematic reviews are a type of evidence synthesis which formulate research questions that are broad or narrow in scope, and identify and

synthesize data that directly relate to the systematic review question (Tawfik *et al.*, 2019; Peters *et al.*, 2015; Colquhoun *et al.*, 2014). Reading from Grant and Booth (2009), and from Booth *et al.* (2016), it can be said that there are over 30 types of systematic review.

Inspired from both Grant and Booth (2009: 94-96), and from Booth *et al.* (2016: 16-19), the list below gives a non-exhaustive summary of a few systematic reviews.

- (i) Mapping review/systematic map
- (ii) Meta-analysis
- (iii) Mixed studies review/mixed methods review
- (iv) Qualitative systematic review/qualitative evidence synthesis
- (v) Rapid review
- (vi) Systematized review

It is important to note that there is not always consensus on the boundaries and distinctions between the approaches listed above. The purpose of the list above is simply for display, and not necessarily for the sake of choosing one of these approaches. Hence, the need for an overview of each approach is not of great importance.

The specific type, which is not contained in the list above, but used for the present chapter, as well as in Chapter 3, is known as systematic search and review (McGowan & Sampson, 2005). It combines methods from a 'critical review' with a comprehensive search process (Grant & Booth, 2009). This review type is usually used to address broad questions to produce the most appropriate evidence synthesis. This method may or may not include quality assessment of data sources.

Research shows that systematic review methods are not recent approaches. According to Clarke and Chalmers (2018: 121), as the principles and practice of evidence-based medicine "have become more accepted and widespread over the last few decades, there has been an accompanying tremendous growth in the number of systematic reviews and

wider recognition of their value". In fact, systematic reviews have been often applied mainly in the biomedical or healthcare context.

However, as presented in Adèr (2008) on methodological quality, systematic reviews can be used in other areas where an assessment of a precisely defined subject would be helpful. Kamphuis *et al.* (2015) and Bilotta *et al.* (2014) and have shown that systematic reviews may examine clinical tests, public health interventions and environmental interventions. Petticrew and Roberts (2006) also observed the use of systematic reviews in social interventions, adverse effects, qualitative evidence syntheses, methodological reviews, policy reviews and economic evaluations. Petro *et al.* (2018), September *et al.* (2016) and Bearman *et al.* (2012) are studies illustrating the implementation of systematic review research designs in sociology and higher education research fields. In addition, the works by Al-Hamzi *et al.* (2020), Bergenholtz and Gouws (2016), Nyangone Assam *et al.* (2016), Ndinga-Koumba-Binza (2005b, 2006a & 2011) have implemented systematic review methods in the field of linguistics and language studies,

As indicated earlier, the method used in the current chapter, as well as in Chapter 3, is that of systematic search and review. The main motivation for this choice was to be able to conduct a review of the literature in a broad range of data, documents and sources. We agree with the view that "the systematic review and the synthesis of evidence to be at the core of evidence-based practice" (Peters *et al.*, 2015: 142).

Another motivation for the choice of systematic search and review method is its ability to combine with textual analysis, a method mostly used in literary studies. The necessity to the systematic search and review method with the textual analysis method finds its ground on the fact that the object of study review is less data but more texts.

### 2.2.2. Textual Analysis

Hawkins (2018) defines textual analysis as a methodology that involves understanding language, symbols, and/or pictures present in texts to gain information regarding how people make sense of and communicate life and life experiences. More importantly, Belsey (2005: 160) asserts that

*“textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism, where cultural criticism includes English, cultural history and cultural studies, as well as any other discipline that focuses on texts”.*

McKee (2003: 1) goes far as to say that textual analysis is a way “to gather information” or simply a “data-gathering process”. For McKee (2003: 1), “When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that may be made of that text”. It is known in discourse analysis that a text may be in a written format or spoken format. In the context of the present study, all texts subject to the systematic search and review as well as to textual analysis were written academic publications.

The rest of the sections in this chapter and the entire Chapter 3 proceed from the methodological approaches highlighted in the current section.

### 2.3. THE ACQUISITION-LEARNING DISTINCTION: THROUGH THE LENS OF ESL

The purpose of this section is to understand the distinction between acquisition and learning through the lens of the English as Second Language (ESL). According to Terrell (1977: 327), learning is “the conscious process of studying and intellectually understanding the grammar of L2” while acquisition, on the other hand, “refers to the unconscious absorption of general principles of grammar through real experiences of communication using L2”. This gives support to the view by Aljumah (2020) who argues

that L2 can rightly be defined as a “non-native language that is broadly used for purposes of communication, commonly as a medium of education, government, or business” (Aljumah, 2020: 200). It is on this premise that this study lays its focus.

In addition, Terrell (1977) indicates that no-one has ever given a comprehensive description of the “grammar of a language” nor is grammar being taught to anyone. As such, the term “learning” should also be included with the process of acquiring L2 (Terrell, 1977). Both language acquisition and learning, like any other social phenomenon, has its own challenges. Therefore, language conflict and challenges are attributes that seems to emanate when a child is acquiring L1 or individuals learning an additional language (L2). Hence, I wish to highlight aspects of both language acquisition and learning that relates to my work.

Additionally, concepts relating to ESL acquisition would give a richer view on language conflict and challenges encounter by Francophone students in environments in Cape Town where English is used as the sole medium of instruction. Although there have been debates from L2 researchers regarding SLA by adults, it will be unfair to stipulate that children are faster learners than adults are (DeKeyser, 2019). Adults can quickly “pick up” words when they are in close contact with speakers of different languages, and still maintain their accent, whereas children take time to learn a L2 in a foreign land and their accent completely change to native speaker as they stay longer (DeKeyser, 2019; Raskumaran, 2020).

The innate pattern of children as elaborated by Chomsky (1999) is one of the characteristics of language acquisition. It gives a child the ability to comprehend words naturally underpinning his or her mother tongue without being conscious of the process. Moreover, a child acquires L1 in practice by means of interacting both verbally and by means of semiosis with his or her family member or care giver (Hussain, 2017). On the other hand, learning a L2 in this context is the process of individuals learning an

additional language although they might be speaking more than three different languages (including different dialects). A person learning a L2 differs from a child acquiring L1 based on the circumstances surrounding the processes; learners' environment and characteristics such as age, gender, and social factors (Nor & Rashid, 2018)

However, Krashen (1982) identifies in the Acquisition-Learning Distinction hypotheses two distinct and independent ways in which adults can develop competence in acquiring a second language. These ways include the subconscious and the conscious. They are also known as the informal and formal ways of acquiring a language whereby the former represents the acquisition process while the latter represents the learning process. Klein (1986) establishes the difference between the two terminologies, acquisition and learning, in which he ascertains that 'acquisition' implies unplanned learning while 'learning' is planned. This distinction can be applicable to Francophone immigrant students who acquire and learn English in South Africa both subconsciously and consciously.

According to Aljumah (2020), scholars who are experts in the field of L2 acquisition came to the realization that the notion of 'acquisition' is linked with the L1. However, Klein (1986), Krashen (2018), Tan and Shojamanesh (2019) and several scholars used the term 'acquisition' for L2 as well. At this point, I am inclined to agree that the term acquisition can be used when discussing SLA because of its analogy to learning a language. Hence, this study will use both terms when referring to ESL acquisition.

#### **2.4. LANGUAGE CONFLICT VS LANGUAGE CHALLENGE IN ESL ACQUISITION**

Although, in a person's repertoire exists vocabulary, which constitutes that of second languages acquired by the person (Blommaert & Backus, 2013; Bell, 2006), a proficient multilingual/bilingual person should have the ability to speak in one of those languages

at a given time based on the communicative event (Calafato & Simmonds, 2023; Thompson, 2009). For this to be achieved, one's system of language must choose words from the target language, whilst words from the non-target language must be ignored. Often, in such circumstances, there is effective selection of the language that the bilingual speaker intends to speak (Ditone & Tiv, 2023; Göncz, 2021).

However, occasionally, an expression of the non-target language encroaches, leading to the development of articulation errors because of cross-language (Weich, 2023; Lamsal, 2013). Hence, there is an indication that within the mind of a multilingual/bilingual person, words from diverse languages are in competition. Therefore, such intervention amid languages may be described as language conflict which may pose as a challenge to SLA (Van Heuven *et al.*, 2008).

According to Van Heuven *et al.* (2008), most human beings are approximately fluent in more than one language. For instance, French-speaking students may be fluent when speaking their vernacular<sup>3</sup> as well as when speaking French<sup>4</sup>. However, ESL proficiency specifically is usually considered as substitute for the success and integration of migrants in the receiving country.

De Fina and King (2011) describe language conflict as the inability to communicate with the target language either verbally or non-verbally in a coherent and cohesive manner. Wilson (2020) also establishes that the diverse opinions of a target language among individuals acquiring the language and speakers of the target language may lead to language conflicts and disagreement. French-speaking students may not share or have the same passion that French may represent to English, which is the target language. As

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<sup>3</sup> This may be their tribal language streaming from their ancestral background also known as their ethnicity.

<sup>4</sup> Described in this context as the lingua franca used in their country of origin.

a result, French-speaking students may be “tag-switching” when communicating in English because of the lack of sufficient vocabulary for ESL (Stockwell, 2021).

However, the fact that Francophone students identify the importance of the English standard of native speakers may enable them to believe that they might not be able to attain such level. This may influence their approach towards ESL acquisition. Hence, it might be a challenge to Francophone students (Henderson *et al.* (2012). ESL students then need some sort of motivation to learn English, to implement it for academic purpose, and to make progress by using every other opportunity at their disposal to obtain English proficiency.

Francophone students acquiring ESL may encounter among others challenges such as obtaining English accent, understanding conversation from English native speakers, especially when they speak fluently and faster. Other challenges can be learning to construct grammatically correct sentences in English and the fact that most words in English cannot be translated word for word from French to English and managing their filters when speaking English (Aydoğan, 2016; Toubot *et al.*, 2017). According to Liang and Fung (2021), there are numerous ESL acquisition challenges for adults, which range from social, cognitive, to motivational factors.

## **2.5. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (SLA)**

This section aims to provide an understanding of the concept of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as well as the theoretical underpinnings of SLA as a phenomenon of study. Klein (1986) posits that SLA is a process of vast intricacy with varieties of different elements involved, making it difficult for scholars to come up with concrete explanations of the term. Raskumaran (2020), on the other hand, establishes that new theories in SLA have proven that adults could understand a L2 using the same method in which a child



would use to master his/her native language. The later argument concurs with Krashen (1982) language acquisition hypothesis of a process like the way children cultivate skills in acquiring their first or home language.

I can perceive some elements of similarities from the above arguments between the old and new theories of SLA, which is the focus of this study. Peker and Okaynak (2020) argue that, in as much as the Krashen Monitor theory indicates how SLA occurs, it does not define the level of experience that difference students bring to class from their input or output observations. French-speaking students might have more to offer in class than they are offering. However, their inability to write or speak a grammatically correct statement in their early days as students in Cape Town stands as a hindrance to enabling them to showcase their talent.

When these students communicating in English, it may sound rudimentary because they had acquired it unconsciously or informally, without the rules of the language. L2 acquisition is one of the challenges faced by immigrants. The immigrants' attitude towards the host language and the native speakers will determine the degree of interest towards acquiring the language (Denizer, 2017; Klein, 1986). French-speaking students' coming in close contact with languages spoken in South Africa especially English, which is also used as the medium of instruction, is not a matter of choice but of necessity. As such, they must demonstrate a high degree of interest towards acquiring English L2. Moreover, the different languages are always in close contact including French as South Africa is characterized with a diverse language and sociocultural setting. Therefore, some of the words acquired come naturally with experience from previous knowledge and frequent interaction with speakers of English (Loewen, 2020).

### **2.5.1. The Natural Order Hypothesis**

Terrell (1977) ascertains that one gets motivated to learn a language when there is a need to do so. It is imperative for French-speaking students to learn English to enable them to succeed in academics as well as interact within their Cape Town environment. Therefore, Francophone students may go the extra mile to acquire/learn English. The application of the natural approach technique in classroom by the teacher will enable these students to express themselves and interact in classroom activities without being judged.

As a point of clarification, the above statement is just an assumption that I made based on personal experience, which this study seeks to validate. The natural approach to L2 will enable students to interact or communicate in class using the target language incorrectly but meaningfully. Hence, the natural approach is an ideal starting point for novices in English as L2 (Krashen, 1983). For instance, Peker and Özkaynak (2020) argue that languages might be acquired with ease if the person acquiring the language is exposed to natural traces of language.

### **2.5.2. Comprehensible Input**

Patrick (2019) asserts that the Input Principle<sup>5</sup> upholds that acquisition occurs when learners can obtain messages from the target language with the knowledge of interpreting them. Therefore, what they receive from the target language is identified as the Input. As such, Input is a requirement for all languages' enhancement processes, input helps in facilitating the developmental process of acquiring a language, irrespective of whether it is a first or second language.

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<sup>5</sup> As established by Krashen (1982: 20-29).

In addition, Peker and Özkaynak (2020) emphasize the importance of Input when they posit that language acquisition can only occur through one method and that is when the learner is able to receive comprehensible input and decode the message to initiate meaning. It is a salient fact that French-speaking students need to have a high level of comprehensible input for ESL to enable them to produce a high level of comprehensible output.

### **2.5.3. Comprehensible output**

As argued by Zhu (2019), the comprehensible output hypothesis may enable French-speaking students to be able to observe the gap between their home language level and that of the target language without correction. In the context of this study comprehensible input relates purposely to listening and communicating with the target language by French-speaking immigrant students, while output is primarily for speaking and writing the target language. Moreover, it is of great importance to note here that input is a precondition for output in language acquisition (Zhu, 2019). Peker and Arslan (2020) agree with Swain (1995) in defining comprehensible output as constructing a grammatically correct sentence. However, Peker and Arslan (2020) argue against Swain (1995)'s definition of comprehensible output by indicating that the definition does not give accountability of what constitute a correct, grammatical sentence/message.

Halliday (2019: 334), for instance, posits that “there is no intrinsic value in the various expression features that characterize the standard variety of a language”. The above arguments are an indication that French-speaking students acquiring ESL do not have to speak or write grammatically correct sentences in their early stages of acquisition. They may use their own language to negotiate meaning. The implication is that a student may articulate a form correctly in a social context. Conversely, a student may generate a different variation of that same form in a different context. A good example would be

communicating with friends outside school and communicating with a lecturer. There are different forms of diglossia that exist in different social contexts. Since output relies on individual differences or social context, comprehensible output is not a steady occurrence, but an attribute of change. Therefore, a comprehensible output for an ESL learner may not be a comprehensible output for a different learner (Peker & Arslan, 2020)

#### **2.5.4. Social interaction**

According to Duff (2019), several recent methods of SLA are based primarily on social interaction as well as other concepts such as cultural and linguistic ties. These involve humans with emotions that are involved in learning a second language through various means for a particular purpose. This purpose may be either to associate within a given community or to attain academic success. Therefore, advocates of certain theories are adding the term “social” to some theoretical methodologies that are classified as social theories. These various theories that characterize both first and second language acquisition comprise of innateness, behaviourism, and interactionist. The latter, which is the focus of this section, indicates the significant role played by the interlocutors in enabling the process of second language acquisition by adults through social interaction (Mulyani, 2019).

In the perception of SLA, the concept of social interaction emphasizes the importance of communication between the non-native and native speakers of the target language. Social interaction between both parties will enhance the non-native speaker acquiring the target language. Hence, mutual negotiation of meaning is established. Both parties will ensure that his/her interlocutor understands what they are saying even if it means using other means to ease understanding, such as signs, amongst others (Mulyani, 2019). This may be challenging to the French-speaking students especially if there exist overwhelming presence of arbitrariness in both languages between the form and meaning. Loewen

(2020) concurs when he establishes that from the standpoint of sociocultural theory, social interaction plays a significant role towards the developmental process of those acquiring L2.

Although social interactions may enable the acquisition of ESL, the approaches ESL learners use during the course of interactions may influence the efficiency of the outcome. For example, ESL learners may simply react to conversations with gestures such as nodding their heads to either disagree or agree with what their interlocutors are saying. This is because they may feel uncomfortable to disrupt a discussion for clarification purposes. Hence, those having conversations with an ESL learner may be of the assumption that they fully comprehend the content being discussed when that may not actually be the case (Ribeiro & Jiang, 2020). However, it may be of great importance as a form of intervention to encourage French-speaking students who are ESL learners to disrupt a discussion as a means for language negotiations to be established. I would like to indicate here with some high level of certainty that French-speaking students acquiring ESL may obtain proficiency in English faster if they are interacting with native speakers of English frequently and cultivate the habit of negotiating meaning.

## **2.6. LANGUAGE VARIATION AND LANGUAGES IN CONTACT**

Language contact results in contact-induced language change, which occurs when the minority who are not native speakers of a given community interact with native speakers (Lucas, 2015). This is the case of French-speaking college students who must acquire ESL for academic purposes. Moreover, Dekoke (2016) identified immigration as one of the striking factors that causes language contact nowadays. Language contact is contextualized in the perspective of pragmatic borrowing, and language transfer and how these aspects manifest in ESL acquisition (Coronel-Molina *et al.*, 2017). Language contact has many features including, among others, language transfer, borrowing, and

codeswitching (Boas & Höder, 2018). Contemporary Cape Town, being a place of rich sociocultural and language diversity, still has English as the dominant language used in learning institutions as well as in economic and political settings. Hence, coming in close contact with English is unavoidable (Dowling *et al.*, 2019).

Young adults, who could study outside their country of origin and with the intention of acquiring the target language for academic and communicative purposes, are exposed to a different language and sociocultural environment. Comparatively with the target speakers, immigrant students may probably have more of a *raison d'être* to have constructive and meaning interaction in the target language. This will facilitate their ability to acquire the target language faster than anticipated and grasp a culture different from theirs. However, assimilating oneself into different linguistic boundaries and culture may be challenging for French-speaking college students and may lead to numerous levels of anxieties, particularly at the beginning of the process to acquire ESL. This may be due to lack of English proficiency and the differences in culture including other variables necessary for the acquisition process such as the inability to interact with speakers of the target language fluently amongst others (Schwieter & Jackson, 2021).

Moreover, amidst these difficulties, contact with speakers of the target language is much easier for the French-speaking college students. This is because they are the minority and are in close contact with native speakers everywhere they go (Schwieter & Jackson, 2021). Onosson and Stewart (2021) argue that multicultural languages are reflected as a unique example of language contact. The reason is that they are created for expressing oneself using a target language. In addition, linguistic variations and interferences found in Francophones' use of English may be due to language contact (Muntendam & Muysken, 2022).

## 2.7. LANGUAGE CODESWITCHING, TRANSFER, AND BORROWING

Catabay (2016) establishes that codeswitching is when a speaker switches between two languages while in conversation with their interlocutors. This aspect has led to the increase of scholarly work in the domain of English Second Language (ESL) in relation to teaching and learning (Mahdi & Almalki, 2019). As for French-speaking college students, it is necessary to acquire English not only for academic purpose, but also to enable them to socialize with different groups of people without letting language be a barrier to socialization.

However, just like any other person living in South Africa, codeswitching is normal and has become a common practice. It is common to hear a bilingual or multilingual speaker alternate between languages during a conversation (Shartiely, 2016). This may be a challenge to acquire ESL by French-speaking college students because there are other languages that a native speaker in Cape Town codeswitches along with English, making it difficult for a novice acquiring ESL to differentiate between a grammatically correct and wrong sentence in English (Yang, 2019). Furthermore, Smolak *et al.* (2020) posits that because of the rampant growth in multilingualism in our various societies, it is a likely occurrence that the bulk of the world's inhabitants are native speakers of more than one language. Therefore, codeswitching is a universally occurring model of multilingual language manifestation that commences in the early stages of second language acquisition.

According to Yang (2019), it is a general phenomenon in the domain of ESL acquisition that the mother tongue or the home language of many students would easily hinder their learning of a L2. There is the use of multiple languages mutually in day-to-day interaction due to people migrating from other parts of Africa into South Africa (Wildsmith-Cromarty & Balfour, 2019). As a result, it has influenced language acquisition by French-

speaking college students through language transfer both in a positive and negative ways.

According to Yang (2019: 1), the term 'language transfer' is "the influence resulting from the similarities and the differences between the target language and any other language that has previously (and perhaps imperfectly) been acquired". These similarities and differences are the cause of language conflict among speakers when they are in close contact. For instance, French, English, and Afrikaans have words that are similar and understood by speakers of these languages like "*table*" in English, "*tafel*" in Afrikaans and French "*table*". French-speaking immigrant college students would assume that such similarities might be used when constructing sentences in English, hence, negative transfer of languages because of conflicting views is an aspect of a sociohistorical approach.

## **2.8. MULTILINGUALISM/TRANSLINGUAL PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Like some other cities in the world, life in Cape Town is blended with the combination of culture and history as well as different languages and accents (Van der Merwe & Davids, 2006; Bénit & Morange, 2006; Bekker & Leildé, 2006; Mongwe, 2006; Sun & Huang, 2018). In an environment like this, everybody learns from one another to form progressive and diverse interactions with different individuals from several cultural backgrounds (Sun & Huang, 2018).

The diversity in languages, cultures, history and ethnicities among others, are the vital characteristics of interpersonal communications and it enhances the structures of a community in various perspectives. Multilingual/translingual practices are some of the values that enrich the community structures of Cape Town in particular, and South Africa in general (Ferreira-Meyers & Horne, 2017). Multilingualism practices have always been



in place. In present days the perspective of the concept of multilingualism has taken a different dimension.

Although these practices portray the rich culturally diverse structures of the community, it becomes problematic towards SLA because of the failure to integrate such practices in the school community for teaching and learning purposes (Ferreira-Meyers & Horne, 2017). However, it highlights the richness of such a society since every language has a social part to play when it comes to bilingual/multilingual settings (Maluleke, 2019). As indicated by Heugh and Stroud (2019), numerous questions have been asked by Cape Town community-based platforms about the issue of promoting English as the medium of instruction above African languages in a multilingual society such as South Africa. French-speaking college students are faced with the challenges that are attributes of a multilingual/translingual community outside school and a monolingual school community in terms of the medium of instruction, which is solely English. They are often devoid of the necessary and appropriate tools as English L2 acquirer to empower them academically.

Moreover, multilingualism/bilingualism has a broader scale, which reflects the society and therefore has an impact on its inhabitants as well due to numerous immigrants with diverse languages (Vandeyar & Catalano, 2020). Furthermore, D'Souza *et al.* (2021) establish that one should not be astonished by the assertions that speaking more than one language increases one's intellectual abilities, and thus controls their reasoning faculties. This is because words in both vocabularies are triggered when using language. Hence, there are possibilities that bilingual speakers depend on their intellectual ability to observe and restrain the triggering of words in the non-target language when engaging in a conversation.

## 2.9. IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

According to Ali and Mujiyanto (2017), in the event of SLA, it is impossible for a student to completely disengage himself or herself from their sociohistorical and cultural contexts that they depend on to connect with others using the source of knowledge constructed from the background of those context, which is also known as their sociocultural identity. However, Huda *et al.* (2017) ascertain that when students learn other cultures in school and their environment, it enables them construct a new identity and at the same time negotiate their own identity.

As Champion (2019) argues, there are different types of identities that a student could construct. French-speaking college students coming from a typical French-speaking background with different values are exposed to different types of identity constructs in the process of acquiring ESL for academic purposes. These identities among others, include race and gender. They are also exposed to translanguaging =or codeswitching, which are common practices in Cape Town (Ferreira-Meyers & Horne, 2017). In addition, Léglise and Migge (2021) indicate that identity is a model that aligns the consciousness of self-affiliation with a particular social perception, beliefs, class amongst other at a given time and geographical location involving those given by others.

Therefore, identity construction comprises the ways in which individuals negotiate and renegotiate these perceptions. This is carried out during communications via methods of identification and variation, which include the construction of momentary affiliations to embrace and understand a different culture (Léglise & Migge, 2021). This can be metaphorically described as a “marriage of convenience” (Léglise & Migge, 2021). Hence, I would like to assume that French-speaking college students might encounter language conflicts and challenges in this process of identity construction. However, the current study is focused on investigating the above assumption.

Moreover, Taqavi and Rezaei (2021) have investigated it amongst Azerbaijani bilinguals. They found that there is a definite language choice and identity construction interaction processes in family and friendship domains. Family here may represent the community, and friendship may include the learning place such as school or college where long-time friends and relationships are often established. In their study, Taqavi and Rezaei (2021: 395) conclude that with a statement I already quoted in the previous chapter, i.e. “Language is considered as a site of identity construction” (Taqavi & Rezaei, 2021: 395).

## **2.10. SOCIOHISTORICAL APPROACH IN ESL ACQUISITION**

Ali and Mujiyanto (2017) establish that learners cannot completely disconnect themselves from their sociocultural and historical background when learning a second language. Since French-speaking college students are coming from a Francophone origin and setting, it is a natural phenomenon that they will use or apply their background context when acquiring English L2. Although it may help them understand the content and exchange identities with speakers of various languages, it does not enable the French-speaking college student to acquire English L2 quickly or proficiently within a shorter period to be able to perform well in school activities independently. However, both English and French, share some common sociohistorical components linguistically (Singleton & Pfenninger, 2018).

Sociohistorical in this context involves the social and historical component associated to the characteristics of group of languages, speakers of those languages as well as their country of origin. Garaeva and Ahmetzyanov (2018) argue that the bond between a language and the history of the country is very compelling and influence each other significantly. The history of the country will entail the general practices and beliefs of the country. It further involves how French-speaking college student may incorporate such practices as English L2 acquired in a multilingual context blending with a rich diverse

sociocultural and historical setting. Moreover, Pasternak *et al.* (2020) in view of a critical discourse perspective, establish that vocabularies in language are not neutral but are significantly influenced regionally, including time as factor (Pasternak *et al.*, 2020).

## 2.11. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This literature review has drawn attention to the different ways in which ESL can be acquired for both academic and social purposes by French-speaking college students. It also highlights the issue of language conflict and challenge due to language contact, language transfer, language borrowing as well as codeswitching, among others.

It can be assumed that these language conflicts and challenges may be the reasons which explain why some French-speaking college students may take longer to complete their academic process, and in some cases, why they drop out of school. This assumption was already mentioned in Wunseh (2018). There are many students, immigrants, or nationals, who complete their studies without being particularly proficient in English due to the manner in which they acquire ESL and how contact-induced language changes in the process.

Furthermore, the student's sociohistorical background plays a vital role where SLA is concerned. Hence, the issue of identity construction and negotiation may be in consideration since it is part of the acquisition process. The literature review also pinpoints factors such as multilingualism/translingual practices in Cape Town that could pose a challenge to SLA by French-speaking college students.

## Chapter 3:

### FRENCH IN AFRICA AND IN SOUTH AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines on a brief history of the French language in Africa as a whole, with special attention on Francophone immigrants in South Africa. The aim of this chapter is to establish that the presence of the French language in South Africa is not a phenomenon of recent immigration as it is often popularly believed nowadays. Neither is it neither a phenomenon due to the opening of South Africa to the rest of the world in 1994 at the end of Apartheid.

This chapter contains five sections, including the current section 3.1. Section 3.2 provides an outline of the status of French in Francophone African countries. Section 3.3 provides a brief historical account of the French language in South Africa. Section 3.4 gives an overview of the state of African Francophones in Cape Town. Section 3.5 concludes the chapter.

#### 3.2. THE STATUS OF FRENCH IN FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICA

The Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo-Kinshasa) and the Republic of Gabon are among the 26 French-speaking countries in Africa. The French language was brought into French-speaking African countries by colonialists such as France, Belgium, amongst others (Lekogo, 2008). Since then, the French language has continued to dominate in many of its former territories, most particularly in Africa (Wunseh, 2018).

In Cameroon where eight out of ten provinces are French-speaking, compared to the two English-speaking provinces, indicates the influence of French language in the country. In addition, with the numerous ethnic languages that characterized these countries, French

is the official language (Mavoungou, 2013b & 2013c). This means that the language of teaching and learning or the medium of instruction is in French. This is so because the French colonizers initiated the education systems as well as the social systems to align with their own structures or systems (Wunseh, 2018). That is, the education system in French colonies in Africa must be a clear reflection of that in France. This gives meaning to Ndinga-Koumba-Binza (2005b: 67)'s claim that Gabon's current language policy turns out to be an extension of the language policy inherited from colonial France. The same can be said for Congo-Brazzaville and for the eight French-speaking provinces of Cameroon. Congo-Kinshasa, which is a former colony of Belgium, also seems to have inherited its language policy from colonial Belgium (Meeuwis, 2011 & 2007; Bokamba, 2008; Fabian, 1986 & 1983; Yates, 1980). It is nowadays said Congo-Kinshasa is about to overtake France as the largest French-speaking country in the world in terms of the number of the speakers of the language (Kasongo, 2023; Mazrui, 2004).

It is possible to draw the conclusion that the colonization of Africa by France (or by Belgium in the case of Congo-Kinshasa) imposed the use of French as the language of teaching and learning, meanwhile, the African languages of those colonized countries are neglected in the educational structure. Africans who could not speak French were described as ruffians and bush people, amongst other names (Wunseh, 2018).

### **3.2.1. The Assimilation of French in Africa**

A character trait of the social culture of French-speaking African countries is assimilation. This is the result of the "direct rule" colonial policy of France. According to Crowder (1962: 12), "French assimilation is based on the revolutionary doctrine of the equality of man and at the same time on the assumption of the superiority of European, and in particular, French civilization". Thus, the French, when confronted with people they considered barbarians, believed it their mission to convert them into French men. This

implied a fundamental acceptance of their potential human quality but a total rejection of African culture as of any value.

In the colonial campaign and propaganda of colonizers, Africans were considered to be a people without history, without any civilization worthy of the name, constantly at war with one another and fortunate to have been put in touch with the fruits of French civilization. Consequently, French books describe the conquest of Africa as "*la paix française*"<sup>6</sup> and her early administration as "*l'œuvre civilisatrice*"<sup>7</sup> (Madubuike, 1975: 89).

It is relevant for this study to clearly define the meaning of French assimilation. This is to establish a clear understanding on how French colonization degraded the most cherished African values such as the different languages and identity by imposing French as the official language. This may be part of the explanation why Francophone African immigrants find it very difficult to integrate in English-speaking countries (Dreyer, 2015). The extension of French language from Europe to French-speaking African countries is characterized by the imposition of using French as the sole official language in the academic or administrative domains.

In the quest to educate and assimilate students in Africans into French philosophy of life and culture, learning institutions mandated learners to learn the French language (Cohen 2003; Boulard 1999; Fumaroli 1992; Trudeau 1983). Success in school and probability to enter the job market during the period of colonialism and its administration were severely drawn to French proficiency (Wakely 2000; Spencer 1971; Garcia 1971) This action by the colonialist has played a significant role to most immigrants from French colonies in Africa to have French as their second language and also as an official language. Therefore, when they migrate to other English-Speaking countries like South

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<sup>6</sup> Translation: "French peace".

<sup>7</sup> Translation: "Civilizing deed".

Africa, they are obliged to learn the target language in order to achieve a smooth integration into the system (Wunseh, 2018).

It is amazing to see how the French language, being a foreign language, has taken dominion over African languages by becoming the official language in many countries such as Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa and Gabon, (Brown, 2015; Mfoutou, 2000 & 2012; Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, 2011). This was due to the easy adaptation of French language by the postcolonial generation who had formal education in French language after the abolition of colonization. They did not experience any challenges when learning French, this generation regarded French as a noble language and some of them even restricted themselves from their first languages.

For instance, the eight French provinces in Cameroon regards their provinces as superior to the two English-speaking provinces (Emmanuel, 2008; Anchimbe, 2005; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997). Moreover, this postcolonial generation grew up with the notion that recognized French, as the language of the privileged ones. Hence, it was labelled it as the language with potentials. The primary characteristics of the postcolonial generation, particularly those living in metropolitan cities is that they gave French the room to enter their homes through their parents' doctrines after they obtained some level of formal education. However, some of them still speak their first language from time to time or when need be. Such generation when migrating to an English-Speaking country like South Africa (Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, 2006b) will need some level of support in order to integrate into the system.

### **3.2.2. The Appropriation of French in Africa**

After having been assimilated into the French culture and philosophy, Africans proceeded with the adoption of the French language. This started, at the attainment of



independence, with the decision to set up the French language as the sole official language of the new independent nations. Lafage (2002) mentions the concepts of “appropriation of French” to refer to the indigenization of lexical terms through semantic shifts or extension, the creation of lexical particularities and the rise of specific language varieties of French in African soil.

Ndinga-Koumba-Binza (2011) believes that French is no longer a foreign language in Gabon. This can be said of Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa where Cameroonian French and Congolese French are extensively described, recognized and standardized. Mavoungou *et al.* (2022: 1982) agree with Zabus (2007) that this foreign language appropriation as a form of indigenization. Zabus (2007), in fact, demonstrates the indigenization process, which is more visible through novels and other works of fiction. According to Zabus (2007: 4-8), the indigenization is both in the text and in the context.

Mavoungou *et al.* (2022: 183) believe that this appropriation can be referred to as a form of "decolonizing French as a foreign Language" (Nel & Ferreira-Meyers 2020: 1). It is therefore not surprising that the participants of the current study consider French as their language despite being able to speak a few African languages of their respective countries of origin. According to Mabika Mbokou (2012: 172), the majority of the younger generations in Gabon, especially those in urban areas, have French as their initial language or mother tongue. This is certainly the case for many French-speaking African countries. Then, when these young Francophones immigrate to other countries such as South Africa, they indeed travel with their first language.

### 3.2.3. Medium of Instruction in Central Africa

As indicated previously in this study, French remains the official language and the language used as the medium of instruction in Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa and Gabon. After independence, the abovementioned countries decided to maintain French – the language of their colonial master as the sole official language for administrative, socio-economic, and political purposes (Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, 2011).

Although Cameroon obtained its independence in 1960, it still upholds the values and culture instilled in the system by their French colonial master. This is reflected in the manner in which French language has dominated the system of education amongst others (Wunseh, 2018). Furthermore, French was introduced in Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa and Gabon through the process of the scramble of Africa and colonization. In addition, evangelists also played a vital role of bringing French into Africa. Since then, French has been used for official purposes and has remain the language of teaching and learning (Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, 2011).

The language in education policy in each of the four countries is an exact continuation of the language in education policy of the colonial era. For Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon and the eight French-speaking provinces of Cameroon, the sole medium of instruction is French from the foundation phase of schooling to the university level studies. This was the policy in the French colonial empire. The policy was based on two decrees of the colonial French government. The first decree was the Villets-Cotterêts decree of 1539 by the king of France who forbade the use of any other language in all official and administrative domains in the French territories (Trudeau, 1983; Fumaroli, 1992, Boulard, 1999; Cohen, 2003). Then, the decree of the 14<sup>th</sup> February 1922) commanded formal general education to be exclusively in French and the religious education regarding Bible teaching and any religious training ought to be in native languages (Spencer ,1971; Garcia, 1971; Judge, 1993a & 1993b; Wakely, 2000).

The language in education policy in Congo-Kinshasa slightly diverged from the Belgian colonial epoch. In fact, during the Belgian colonial era, French was the medium of instruction in schools run by the government while the schools run by the confessional religious organizations favored African languages as language of teaching and learning (Meeuwis, 2013; Katsuva, 2006).

Mputubwele (2003: 275) emphasizes that, in the period of the Congo Independent State as private property of the Belgian King Leopold II, State-governed schools were “largely restricted to Europeans” and thus used French as medium of language. While the language of education in most schools for indigenous children was an African regional language depending on the region. Then, as a Belgian colony, “there was no clearly planned objective for languages in Belgian colonial policies. Before the Second World War, the little education to which Congolese children had access was carried out in vernacular languages” (Mputubwele, 2003: 275). Beyond the basic education or primary school, Meeuwis (2013) indicates that the medium of instruction in all Congolese secondary schools and in all institutions of higher education has always been French until the present day.

### **3.3. A HISTORY OF FRENCH IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In this section, I wish to show that French has a history in South Africa. In fact, the presence of the French language is not a recent phenomenon in South Africa. As shown below in sub-section 3.2.1, the Huguenots were the first French speakers to come to South Africa when they arrived as refugees. Sub-section 3.2.2 gives brief outline of present-day immigration of Francophones to South Africa.

### 3.3.1. The French Huguenots in South Africa

It is a fact that European settlers in South Africa were not all from the same European nation although it is believed that Portuguese and Dutch arrived first (Noble, 1877). One group of the European settlers widely mentioned in South African history was a religious group of French Protestants known as the Huguenots. It is reported that as early as 1671 and more during the years 1688 and 1689, a group of immigrants from France called the Huguenots set sail from France to the Cape of Good Hope South Africa. They were the first French settlers on the soil of South Africa (Coertzen, 2011). This is an indication that Francophone immigrants from different African countries are not the first French-Speaking group of immigrants to be in the country.

Dreyer (2015) suggests that the first Huguenots entered South Africa in 1671 and that before the century could come to an end, hundreds of them had settled themselves in the surrounding area of Franschhoek. It is also reported that Maria de la Queillerie, the wife of Jan van Riebeeck, Dutch navigator and first Commander of the Cape Colony, was actually the first French Huguenot to settle in South African when she arrived in the Cape with her husband in 1652 (Van Leden, 2014; Mees, 1952; Godée Molbergen, 1912).

There is evidence that the Huguenot were French and spoke French. As evidence, these French settlers in the Seventeenth-century left written notes (Johnson, 2007). There are also a number of French writings in most places where they settled such as Franschhoek in the Western Cape province of South Africa. Other evidence that can be mentioned is the numerous Afrikaans names and surnames of French origin. Rosenthal (1975: 41) believes that French is “another major source of family names in South Africa”.

According to Coertzen (2011: 46), “amongst the 36 largest families of European descent in South Africa, there are nine Huguenot surnames, namely Nel, Du Plessis, Coetzee, Fourie, Du Toit, Le Roux, Viljoen, Marais and Du Preez”. Hence, we see that the surnames “Nel”, “Du Plessis”, “Fourie”, “Du Toit”, “Le Roux”, “Marais” and “Du Preez” have

retained their French spelling although some like “Du Toit” are now pronounced differently. “Viljoen” is derived from French “Villion”<sup>8</sup>, while the origin of “Coetzee” is unclear but often thought to be derived from Couché, and thus suggesting a Huguenot origin (Zwart, 2018). Several other surnames have also undergone various modifications in spelling (Rosenthal, 1975). Rosenthal (1975: 41-42) gives the following list as illustration to spelling modifications.

<b>Original in French</b>	<b>Currently in Afrikaans</b>
Bruere	Bruwer
Goucher	Gous
Hugod	Hugo
Lombard	Lombaard
Mesnard	Minnaar
Nortiers	Nortje
Pinard	Pienaar
Retif	Retief
Rousseau	Rossouw
Senechals	Senekal
Therond	Theron

**Table 1:** *Some modified French surnames*

Apart from surnames, there are also many other Afrikaans names or first names of French origin that undoubtedly confirm the presence of the French language in the long history of South Africa. The following which are very common in South Africa can be noted as illustration: “André”, “Etienne”, “François”, “Jacques”, “Jean”, “Leon”, “Louis” and “Michel”.

Johnson (2007) reports that many French travellers visited South Africa for some extensive periods in the seventeenth century, even before the arrival of Huguenots. According to Johnson (2007: 526-527) most famous French travellers include:

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<sup>8</sup> cf. <https://huguenotsociety.org.za/>

“Etienne de Flacourt (1607-60), who visited the Cape en route to Madagascar in 1648; Jean Tavernier (1605-89) in 1648; Guy Tachard (1651-1712), the Abbe François-Timoleon de Choisy (1644-1724), the Chevalier Alexandre de Chaumont (1640-1710), and the Comte Claude de Forbin (1656-1733), members of King Louis XIV's delegation en route to Siam in 1685; Simon de La Loubere (1642-1729), leader of the second delegation to Siam in 1687; Guillaume Chenu de Chalezac (1672-1731), the Huguenot "French Boy" who was shipwrecked and lived among the Xhosa of the Eastern Cape in 1687-88; and Francois Leguat (1637-1735), who stopped on his way to France's Indian Ocean islands in 1691”.

The French language has been present in South Africa for a couple of centuries. Present-day Francophone immigration to South Africa has some similarities with the immigrants of the seventeenth century: Some arrived as refugees like the Huguenots, some were just on the look for greener pastures, and some others came to settle in search a new life or a new beginning.

### **3.3.2. Modern-Day French Immigration to South Africa**

In present day South Africa, there are lots of French-speaking immigrants from different parts of the world, most especially in African countries. Unlike the Huguenots who came to South Africa to take farmlands and have supremacy over native populations (Johnson, 2007), the current French-speaking immigrants have no such ambitions although most of them are out for greener pastures and to obtain a sound education. Most French-speaking immigrants to South Africa in the present day are African immigrants.

These French African immigrants come from different countries such as Gabon, Congo Brazzaville, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, France, Belgium amongst others. Francophone Africans immigrants could be more interested in migrating to South Africa because the country is among the limited countries that have more opportunities to offer on the continent (Lekogo, 2008). According to Lekogo (2008) as

from 1994, South Africa has seen a massive arrival of thousands of foreign nationals from French backgrounds entering the country typically for touristic purposes, business drives, or to visits their families who already reside in the country. All these movements in and out of the country especially by French-Speaking visitors give room for French to be constantly spoken in South Africa. Hence, the need to create more facilities to accommodate Francophones in the country.

#### **3.4. AFRICAN FRANCOPHONES IN CAPE TOWN**

Most African countries, especially those from French-speaking African countries, have been pushed to pave their ways to South Africa. This is by virtue of the socio-economic and political instability in some African countries. Hence making it their second home of comfort (Wunseh, 2018). Statistics have proven that lots of African countries post-independence restored the sentimental attachment they had with their ethnic languages. Although intense and serious attention was given to the local languages, academic and administrative activities still operated in the foreign language of the colonizers. This is the case of Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa and Gabon amongst others with numerous ethnic languages. French remains the official language in these French-Speaking African countries. It is significant for this study to state that the influence of French and its origin have been closely attributed to class. Hence, the consequence of French's dominance is perceived in the manner of articulation, which, in turn classified such individual of being a superior class (Ndinga-Koumba-Binza, 2005a).

This is one of the factors that make it difficult for Francophone Africa immigrants to acquire the target language. French-speaking immigrant students in South Africa are struggling with identity issues and language conflict and challenges because they are used to the dominating and powerful attributes of French language as in the case in their

countries of origin. Therefore, constructing new identities and communicating with the target language is a nightmare to most of them, especially as South Africa is rich in language diversity and has a multilingual setting (Lekogo, 2008).

### **3.4.1. South Africa rich educational system**

South Africa in the past attracted Francophone African migrants with its rich educational system as well as a well-structured economic and political status. Since then, South Africa has been receiving migrants due to such legacy. For instance, the academic facilities of South Africa have attracted many Francophone immigrants to move into the country. In addition, language can also be classified as one of the pull factors that contributed to the influence of Francophone African to migrant to South Africa. English is a global language, and to be well equipped for the job market, one has to be familiar with it. Therefore, Francophone immigrants see South Africa as the country that will provide them with the opportunity to learn English in the process of gaining a sound education.

### **3.4.2. Francophone African migrant's vs the locals**

Francophone African migrants encounter serious language barriers in South Africa, which is labelled as one of the challenges experienced in the process of studying. They find it difficult to integrate in the system, hence, the locals find it difficult to embrace them. Although Francophone migrants live in the same community as the locals, as well as having social interaction with them, they most at times encounter inequality and harassments that influence their identity construction negatively (Atabongwoung, 2022). This is compounded by negative views that interpret the existence of Francophone immigrants in South Africa as economic threats to the locals. The locals assume that Francophone African migrants, after obtaining quality education in South Africa, will at



the end steal the jobs of South African locals. This idea among other things, has caused insecurity among the locals, hence, pushing them to discriminate among the migrants (Matsilele & Mpfu, 2022). This action is not only witnessed by Francophones in the communities they live in, but also a practice that is displayed in the academic settings by both the administrative staffs and students.

Francophone African students are not getting the assistance they are supposed to get to enable them to overcome the language barrier they are facing in classrooms (Atabongwoung, 2022). The connection that exists between South Africans and Francophone African migrants indicate that Francophone African migrants confront frequent indirect forms of discrimination and inequality. This societal ill has caused most of the migrants to remain connected to their families back home and elsewhere. They depend on support from online sources and paid extra English courses in order to acquire English language, sufficient to construct a new identity and negotiate the existing one simultaneously. Hence, practicing multilingualism in the process (Atabongwoung, 2022).

### **3.4.3. Francophone African immigrant language problem**

It is a fact that the overall South African community is more inclined to English, i.e. English language is the most used language for government administrative purposes and the medium of instruction. Thus, making it the official language made it problematic for French-speaking students to adapt to the system at the initial stages of their academic journey. This is because French is used as the medium of instruction in their various counties of origin. Francophone African migrants have all undergone difficult moments at the beginning, both within and out of the college environment. Francophone migrants find it very challenging expressing themselves during lectures. They have doubts and questions to ask the lecturer but are unable to ask due to language barriers. This has

caused some of them to repeat some modules just because they could not interpret the content accurately.

### **3.5. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

Conclusively, this chapter gives a brief history about French language and Francophone immigrants in Africa. This history is relevant to this study because it explains why there are some stresses of French language heritage in South Africa, but it did not come from French African countries. Rather it originated from the first French settlers called the Huguenots, who visited South Africa as travellers and settled in Franschoek. Their legacies are still much recognized in South Africa through surnames like de Klerk, du Toit, Hugo, le Roux amongst others.

The existence of the Huguenots did not provide grounds for French language to have influence on English language. Decades after the departure of the Huguenots, then come the Francophone immigrants in Africa who paved ways to South Africa for economic, political, and educational purposes. Their existence in South Africa is characterized with many challenges such as language barriers amongst others. This is because French is the official language and the language used as the medium of instruction in their countries of origin. As such, having dominion over them. However, Francophone African immigrants' college students are striving to overcome such challenges against all odds. The following chapter is about the theoretical framework of this study.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is about the theoretical framework adopted for this study. The theoretical underpinnings of this study come within Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which is also known as the interactionist approach. Section 4.2 gives an outline of the theory. Section 4.3 provides an overview of the Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, which is also considered in the process of second language acquisition. Section 4.4 reflects on the consideration of sociocultural theory within ESL acquisition. Section 4.5 concludes the chapter.

#### **4.2. VYGOTSKY'S SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY**

The theory advocates language learning as a process where social interaction amongst individuals or groups of people is paramount (Wertsch, 1985). According to Semeon and Mutekwe (2021: 4), Vygotskian sociocultural theory "views language-mediated learning as a process where taking part in socially mediated activities is very important".

In addition, sociocultural theory has numerous aspects, extensively acknowledged strong points such as it highlights the wider socio-cultural as well as the historical background of activities carried out by humans in any given society. The theory does not perceive individuals as secluded objects; rather, it offers a better-off viewpoint by concentrating on the flexible relationship that exists amid oneself and others. It shows the abilities of immigrant students acquiring language from a society while reconstructing their identity. The theory creates awareness of language diversity among individuals within society (Polly *et al.*, 2018).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, also known as interactionist approach, reflects on second language acquisition perceptions as portrayed by Krashen's (1982) language acquisition/learning approach, which elaborates on two methods of acquiring language: one being subconscious and another being conscious. Language acquisition as indicated by Krashen (1982) is the ability for a second language acquirer to subconsciously acquire a language without being aware of the general rules of the language. This is the situation with FICS when they first set their feet in the host country, South Africa. They start "picking up" English words and perceive it from a sociocultural background perspective through interacting and socializing at both school and outside school environments. As such, they use those words to construct sentences irrespective of errors committed in the process for communicative purposes whilst negotiating the construction of their identity construction.

On the other hand, learning a language is a conscious process and the speaker is aware of the grammatical rules of the language (Krashen 1982). The later process also occurs via interaction with teachers and schoolmates, and it becomes more complicated when French-speaking college students start their academic career within their Cape Town environment because they are already acquiring English L2 via the former process while reconstructing their identity. Norton (2013: 4) describes identity to be the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future. According to Guo and Gu (2016), identity construction involved in the process of SLA is the relationship of power in a social setting. Power in this context will mean how French-speaking college students are able to ignore their inability to speak English and engage in interactive conversation with speakers of English home language. However, none of these processes are without challenges to the French-speaking college student, hence language conflict becomes unavoidable.

### 4.3. VYGOTSKY'S ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

Shabani *et al* (2010: 86) explain Vygotsky (1978)'s Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) as “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer”.

The ZPD was identified by Vygotsky to define the present or definite mental level of progress of the learner and the subsequent level achievable through the use of guidance assistance, environmental support, and competent methods to facilitate learning (Shabani *et al*, 2010). In this study, ZDP is the distance between the level of achievement in learning English by Francophone immigrant college students as determined by their personal efforts and the level of potential development in the actual learning of English language through the use of other means such as online platforms amongst others.

### 4.4. SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY AND ESL ACQUISITION

“Meaning is embedded in cultural conceptions of context, and in this respect the process of acquiring language is embedded in the process of socialization of knowledge” (Ochs, 1988: 3). According to Ortiz *et al.* (2020) Culture is usually defined as the general norms that characterized one's values and beliefs as well as how s/he perceives the world based on what s/he has acquired by being affiliated with a particular group, community, or organization. You might be wondering why I must start this paragraph by reviewing the definition of culture. My primary objective is not to explain what culture is. It is to establish the cultural importance of the intention to acquire ESL for academic purposes by Francophone students in a country like South Africa, which is characterized by complex varieties and variation of languages.

According to Loewen (2020)'s view through the lens of Sociocultural Theory (SCT), students do not necessarily have to be acquainted with the language of teaching and learning for effective teaching to occur. This study is also focused on the above argument. Meanwhile, Ma (2020) posits that there is a substantial variation between the SCT and other theoretical perspectives regarding language learning. The SCT underlines the cohesive character of both the individual (this individual is embedded with some cultural values, which portrays his/her identity) and social components in the process of learning. The concept that supports Vygotsky sociocultural theory focuses on the philosophy around the development of human ways of reasoning. As such, human consciousness has risen (Lantolf *et al.* 2018).

In addition, the theory highlights the importance of the amalgamation of biological (most especially in L1), social and cultural components in the process of learning. It underlines the sociocultural occurrences, which play a vital part in the individual mental development in acquiring ESL (Rahmatirad, 2020). This study seeks to understand how Francophone students' level of ESL may have progressed within the period they have been in Cape Town, as compared to when they were in their home country.

This study also explores the challenges encountered during the process of acquiring ESL and the conflicting views that surround their own language (mother tongue) with that of the target language. The understanding of this language evolution by Francophone students may revolve around sociocultural and identity construction processes, which create some sort of intervention to enhance their mental development. With some degree of plausibility, I will indicate here that Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development supports the above affirmation.

Moreover, Lantolf *et al.* (2018) argue that although Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) does apply significantly in classroom setting, it has a more vital role to play in the human developmental process holistically. However, there is a twist in the

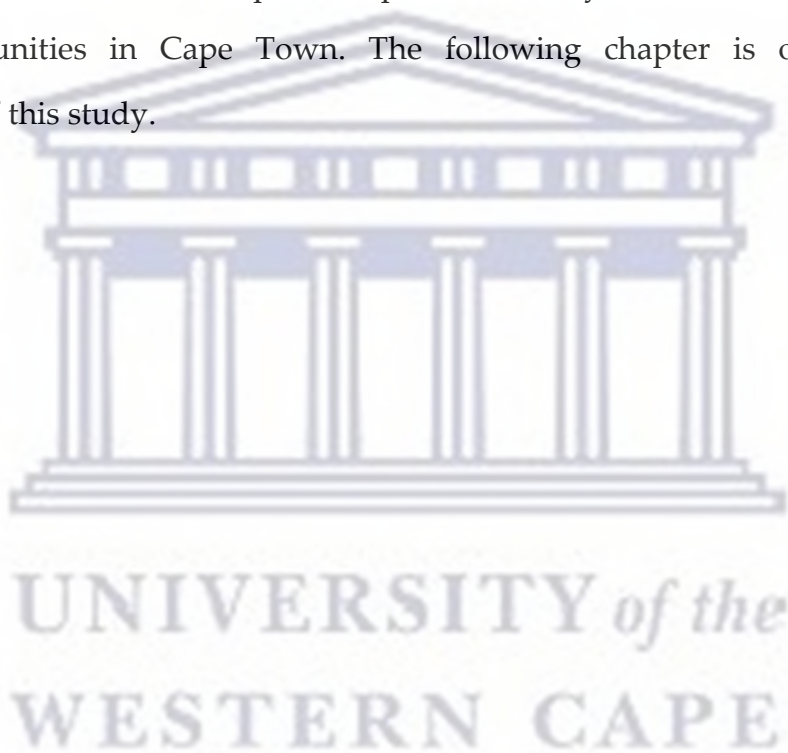
ideology of ZPD when Lantolf *et al.* (2018) established that Vygotsky's ZPD is not "Zone of Proximal Learning" which means that it is applicable both in academic and social context. Now, I infer a degree of concurrence in the ideologies of Vygotsky's ZPD and that of other scholars in SLA. FICS may construct cohesive sentences if exposed to opportunities of learning ESL using the appropriate tools with the assistance of speakers of English, rather than acquiring ESL haphazardly.

Lasmawan and Budiarta (2020) argue that Vygotsky's notion of students' capacities to mental development can be split into two different categories, which include, the "level of actual development and potential development" which is applicable in the ZPD. Vygotsky suggests that the objective of ZPD is to pinpoint and enhance the mental functions of students that are in the process of acquiring a target language, instead of those who have already acquired it. Therefore, it indicates what a student can accomplish individually without intervention from those who are speakers of the target language or through interaction with peers who are more proficient with the target language (Xi & Lantolf, 2021).

#### **4.5. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this chapter clearly defines the theoretical framework associated to this study. The theoretical underpinnings of this study come within Vygotsky's sociocultural theory also known as interactionist approach. SLA can only take place successfully through social interaction, and from the support given to the acquirers. Since "Language is considered as a site of identity construction" (Taqavi & Rezaei, 2021: 395), French-speaking immigrants, by trying to acquire ESL, are constructing a new sociocultural identity as speakers of English.

Due to the lack of a sufficient support system to easily acquire English, Francophone immigrant college students are using all means possible to learn English. Hence, reaching their ZPD which is that point where efforts have to be made individually or collectively to successfully acquire English. SLA can take place in two forms; that is, formal and informal. The formal is strict on grammatical errors while the latter is not. Therefore, for French-speaking immigrant college students, in order to be proficient in English, have to use the formal method in the acquisition process as they interact socially within their various communities in Cape Town. The following chapter is on the research methodology of this study.





## Chapter 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, existing and relevant scholarly literature supporting this research topic was reviewed. The focal point of the current chapter is on the research methodology used in this study. Since the aim of the current study is to investigate the ESL acquisition conflicts and challenges within Francophone Immigrant College Student's Environment, for academic purposes and socialization, the methodology used is the relevant strategy for a successful outcome of the findings of this study. This is due to the subjective nature of the study, based on the variation that exists within individual personal experiences. However, the sampling technique enabled this study to select participants who played the role as representative of the larger population, experiencing such language conflicts and challenges.

Nayak and Singh (2021) establish that methodology is a research approach that interprets both ontological and epistemological ideologies into strategies that give an understanding on how to carry out research including values, processes, and methods that are predominant in research. There are multiple types of research methodologies, without any recognized research methodology pertinent to all research problems. As such, the selection of a particular research methodology differs on the theory that pilots the research activity, which, involve the opinions about the nature of what is known as reality and humankind (ontology), the notion of knowledge that enlightens the research (epistemology), as well as the way such knowledge may be obtained (methodology) (Nayak & Singh, 2021). The latter justifies the purpose of this chapter. Through the lenses of an anthropology, this study investigated the conflicts and challenges of ESL acquisition by Francophone students, and for each day throughout the process, as the researcher, I

could experience a phenomenon made more fascinating and comprehensible as I engaged with my study and the participants.

The research approach of this study is qualitative in nature. Why a qualitative approach? It is qualitative because it will give the current study the opportunity to obtain a deeper and richer understanding of participants' reactions towards the conflict and challenges encounter as ESL acquirer through a semi-structured interview (Creswell & Poth, 2016). As the researcher, I have a philosophical assumption about language conflicts and challenges in Cape Town that has ignited some level of curiosity in me to carry out research on the issue. As indicated by Mahat-Shamir *et al.* (2021) qualitative research approach enabled me as the researcher to bring in my own subjective views on the subject matter as well as understanding the circumstances as they unfold in the process through engaging in the participants' world. The framework of the current chapter focuses on the different phases involved in the design and application of the methodological strategy concocted for the current study. In addition, research ethics and the limitations are highlighted.

## 5.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

According to Pham (2018), there exist major theoretical perceptions that are considered as the basis of research approach. Among these are positivism, post-positivism and interpretivism (qualitative approach). The first two are classified under the quantitative approach and the latter is a qualitative approach perspective. For a better understanding of *the reason d'être* in which I establish this study's approach, I will give a vivid explanation on the following major theoretical perceptions as indicated above. Positivist viewpoints lay emphasis on objectivity and detachment when it comes to the hypothesis or theory testing, indicating both the researcher and the study of research as separate and

independent constructs. In this paradigm, the researcher's function within this logical perspective is that of objectivity and dissociation. The methods used to accomplish the research goal of this approach are primarily those that enable the process to be objectively quantifiable, hence, reflecting towards a deductive dimension.

Although positivism and post-positivism are occasionally placed as categories in a single paradigm, the number of differences does exist in their ontological and epistemological perceptions. As highlighted by Kelly *et al.* (2018), post-positivism as a model suggests an epistemological and ontological gradual developmental process in interpreting the world. This approach also underlines the epistemological perspectives that the result of research includes an approximation of truth as opposed to complete truth as indicated in the positivism standpoint. However, Kelly *et al.* (2018) indicate that it should be noted that post-positivism is not a refutation of the positivist belief. Instead, it is an eligibility to attain an approximation of the truth by highlighting theoretical testing and guide research approaches in the attainment of this goal. Moreover, the principal view is that both positivism and post-positivism are more often associated with deductive approach or quantitative methods of collecting and analyzing data.

Therefore, it was of no importance to use quantitative approaches in this study, due to the nature of sensitivity and subjectivity of the topic. Although Francophone college students have a common problem, which is acquiring ESL for academic and social purposes, this study established that they encounter different types of conflicts and challenges in the process. This is because of the differences in how they negotiate their identities and sociocultural beliefs. This means that each participant has a different narrative base on the personal experiences. This is evident in the findings of the current study.

Interpretivism, or the qualitative approach on the other hand, involves an immense collection of methods and approaches, which range within the various research subjects.

The epistemological standpoint within the interpretivist model is one of subjectivity based on personal 'lived experiences' (Kelly *et al.*, 2018). Although, Kelly *et al.* (2018) indicate that the ontological viewpoints of this paradigm suggest one of personal 'lived experiences', sociocultural stance and meaning though recognizing the potential for a range of realities.

However, Rahman (2020) and Silverman (2020) argue that interpretivism, in other words the qualitative approach, does not have its own theory or model nor a clear set of approaches or practices that are aligned to it. As indicated by Kelly *et al.* (2018) this study made use of the qualitative approach which gave the platform for the collection of rich data from participants based on the conflict and challenges they encounter in their journey of acquiring ESL within their Cape Town environment. Therefore, the research approach implemented for the purposes of this study was the inductive approach, predominantly qualitative and recommended for the research topic.

### **5.3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND RATIONALE**

According to Sileyew (2019), research design is envisioned to provide a proper structure for a study. However, Dannels (2018) refers to research design as a strategy used to provide the fundamental structure to incorporate all components of a qualitative study to obtain trustworthy outcomes, which are bias free and can be extremely generalized. It provides elements that collate the research work collectively. In other words, the research design of a study influences the selection of participants, data collection method and analysis, among others. Moreover, irrespective of how complex the data collected may be, the conclusions established by the researcher may be pointless without the implementation of a proper research design. Expressly, a

research design is a strategy or structure that pilots the researcher to obtain materials or data to answer the research problems.

The current study focuses on an empirical approach, which relies on naturalistic observation of participants through case studies, semi-structured interviews, and personal narratives (DeMatteo *et al.* 2021). To meet the objectives of this study, qualitative research is used. The central characteristic of qualitative research is that it is typically suitable for small samples as is the case of the current study, where Francophone students 'are the minority, while its results are not measurable and quantifiable. Its major advantage, which also forms parts of its variation with quantitative research, is that it suggests a comprehensive explanation and exploration of the research topic, without restricting the possibilities of the research and the nature of participant's responses (Alias *et al.* 2020). This study made use of a qualitative design because it enables the study to obtain a thick narrative of the experiences of Francophone students at a private college as they encounter conflict and challenges through acquiring English second language for academic and social purposes.

As established by Alias *et al.* (2020) there are numerous types of designs that may be used in qualitative research, which include amongst others participant observation, ethnography and case study. Case study is used as the research design for this study. Farquhar *et al.* (2020: 2) define case study research as "a form of empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within a real-life context... through circumscribing the area of study to a single or to a small number of units". Thomas (2021) suggests that case studies offer the richest, the most stimulating study that an investigation can offer.

Similarly, Fàbregues and Fetters (2019) establish that case study is a research design that includes a severe and holistic investigation of an existing occurrence in a real-life setting. Case study uses many approaches and various data sources to investigate, illustrate or

support a particular case within a given period(s) and time pertaining to an experience, individual, group, organizations amongst others. As indicated by Fàbregues and Fetters (2019), a unique element of case study is its emphasis on the actual descriptions of the research case and the background aspects, connections and methods guiding it.

In addition, Rashid *et al.* (2019) indicates that qualitative case study is a research approach that facilitates in the search of a phenomenon within some specific setting through different means of data collection, and exploration of information is carryout through arrays of lenses to uncover various aspects of the phenomenon. A real-time experience is investigated in case study within its naturally occurring context; with the notion that context will enhance variation.

Through the sociocultural theory lenses, the current study investigates a case of Francophone students at a private college in Cape. The ESL acquirers are members of a minority group, who may be experiencing conflicts and challenges in the process of acquiring the target language. As argued by Wang and Zheng (2021), a case study will enable this study to carefully, investigate the variation in conflicts and challenges encounter by Francophone College students whilst acquiring ESL for academic and social purposes. Qualitative data for this study will be obtained from participants in the form of a semi-structured interview at a private college and it will be recorded using a smart phone. The reason for the semi-structured interview method of collecting data is that it has proven to be both useful and accommodating to both the researcher and the participant (Thomas, 2021). The current study will also collect data by observing participants' interaction with teachers and classmates within the compose environment as well personal narratives.

The data collected for this study will be thematically analyzed. To understand the language conflict and challenges of Francophone college students, the content of the recorded interviews is taken into consideration (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). The recorded

data collected via semi-structured interview will be decoded and transcribed. This will enable this study to identify prominent themes, ideas, and patterns in the data. All recordings will be transcribed according to categories that will give way for this study to identify patterns within the data. As such, the categories for identifying patterns within the data will emerge as themes. In addition, data collected via observation will be analyzed as well, to enhance the validity of the research outcome.

#### **5.4. SAMPLING AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

Sampling is a technique used by researchers to select a smaller number of participants who will represent a certain population to serve as the subject of the research. There are two main approaches to sampling, these include probability, which is also referred to as a random sampling and non-probability sampling, also known as a purposeful sampling (Sharma, 2017). Bengart *et al.* (2018) maintain that choosing a sampling method obliges researchers to make some choices that will be for the interest of the research. Hence, the most prominent of those choices is choosing between using a probability or non-probability sampling techniques.

Tracing from the past, Bengart *et al.* (2018) argue that probability sampling has been the principal paradigm for many years. However, due to its benefits in terms of cost and convenience, non-probability sampling has continuously gained momentum in educational research. With probability sampling techniques, the selection process of the sampling population is random; where every subject of the target population has an equal probability of being selected as a representative of the sample. Moreover, with a probability sampling technique it is possible to detect all possible samples of a given subject that can be drawn from the population even before the real selection process begins. Conversely, in non-probability or purposive sampling, individual judgement and

convenience, instead of a random process, determine the sample subject from the population. Therefore, the sample subject is more constrained than the target population and individuals do not know the probabilities of being selected as participants (Bengart *et al.* 2018).

The purposive sampling technique, which is a type of non-probability sample, is used to select the participants for this study. This is due to the reason established by Campbell *et al.* (2020) that purposive sampling is best used to align the sample to the aims and objectives of the research topic, hence increasing the rigidity of the study and reliability of the data and outcomes. Purposive sampling will enable this study to obtain rich data from participants. To achieve the aim of this study, which is exploring ESL acquisition conflicts and challenges encountered by French-speaking college students within their Cape Town environment, as the researcher, I will be judgmental when selecting the sample subjects. This is because the target population is the minority, and the subject sample will serve the purpose of the study. According to Bhardwaj (2019) in purposive sampling, the subject for sample is deliberately selected. It is also known as “judgmental sampling”. Campbell *et al.* (2020) identify four characteristics of purposive sampling which are: “credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability”.

Purposive sampling, however, has its strengths and weaknesses. Some of the strengths are, since selecting the subject sample done through the judgement of the researcher based on the topic, there will be no problems and thus selecting the sample becomes suitable. Moreover, because the selected samples were the appropriate respondents for the specific study, it was easier to obtain the actual results, as participants have suitable experience and have a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter. In addition, with purposive sampling, the researcher may be able to generate favorable outcomes because the researcher can communicate directly with the target population. On the other hand, the weaknesses of this sampling approach are that the researcher is liable to make



mistakes in judgement, low level of trustworthiness and high bias level, lack of the ability to generalize research outcome.

The current study uses the purposive sampling technique because Francophone college students are the minority. It will be easier for me to have a better judgment when selecting the subject sample from the target population. The participants of this study are French-speaking college students who are novice in the process of acquiring ESL for academic and social purposes. The participants that were selected for this study all come from a typical French background.

#### **5.4.1. Participants' Selection**

As mentioned above, this study made use of purposive sampling technique to select eight French-speaking students from a private College in Cape Town, from four different countries namely: Cameroon, Congo (Brazzaville), DR Congo and Gabon as participants. The French-speaking students are specifically those who are new in Cape Town and have not been in an English-speaking setting for more than three months before migrating to Cape Town. The participants are four female students and four male students.

#### **5.4.2. Participants' Profiles**

**Participant 1** (P1) is a young man from Congo Brazzaville. He speaks French, Lingala, and Kituba; he is learning ESL for academic and social purposes and has never been in an English-speaking environment for more than three months before migrating to Cape Town. He is a first-year college student studying Electrical Engineering.

**Participant 2** (P2) is from Congo-Kinshasa; she is in her early twenties. She is a first-year college student studying Business and Finance. She speaks French and Lingala and has

not stayed in an Anglophone setting for more than three months before moving to Cape Town. She is learning ESL for both academic and social purposes.

**Participant 3 (P3)** is a male student from Congo Brazzaville. He speaks French, Kituba, and Lingala, he is learning ESL for academic and social purposes and has not lived in an English-speaking community for more than three months before migrating to Cape Town. He is a first-year college student studying Communication.

**Participant 4 (P4)** is from the Democratic Republic of Congo; she is in her early twenties. She is a first-year college student studying Electrical Engineering. She speaks French and Swahili and has not stayed in an Anglophone region for more than three months before moving to Cape Town. She is learning ESL to pursue her academic career.

**Participant 5 (P5)** is from Cameroon in his early twenties. He speaks two languages: French and Nufi dialect from Bafang. He has never been to any English setting for more than three months before moving to South Africa to pursue his academic career. He is a first year Business and Finance student in a college in Cape Town. He is currently learning ESL for both academic and social purposes.

**Participant 6 (P6)** is a young Cameroonian woman in her early twenties; her first languages are French and Bafeuk dialect from the Ewondo clans. She is a first-year Communication student in a college in Cape Town. She had never been in an Anglophone setting for more than three months before moving to Cape Town. She is learning ESL as that is the medium of instruction in college.

**Participant 7 (P7)** is a Gabonese man in his late twenties. He is a first year Electrical Engineering student in a college in Cape Town. He speaks French and Nzebi and has not stayed in an English-speaking environment for more than three months before moving to Cape Town. He is learning ESL for academic and social purposes.

**Participant 8 (P8)** is from Gabon. She is in her early twenties. She speaks French and Fang and is learning ESL for both Academic and social purposes. She is a first year Business and Finance Student in a college and has not been in an English-speaking region for more than three months before migrating to Cape Town to further her studies.



	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7	Participant 8
<b>Labels in the Analysis</b>	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
<b>Country of Origin</b>	Congo (Brazzaville)	DR Congo	Congo (Brazzaville)	DR Congo	Cameroon	Cameroon	Gabon	Gabon
<b>Age</b>	21	21	23	22	24	24	28	23
<b>Gender</b>	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>First Language</b>	Kituba	Lingala	Lingala	Swahili	Nufi	Bafeuk	Nzebi	Fang
<b>Second Language</b>	Lingala	French	Kituba	French	French	French	French	French
<b>Third Language</b>	French	English	French	English	English	English	English	English
<b>Fourth Language</b>	English	--	English	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Current Language of Instruction</b>	English	English	English	English	English	English	English	English
<b>Year of Study</b>	First Year	First Year	First Year	First Year	First Year	First Year	First Year	First Year

*Table 2: Participants' Profiles*

## 5.5. RESEARCH METHODS

For this study, in order to gain a better understanding of the conflicts and challenges, encountered by French-speaking college students in the process of acquiring ESL, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight students from an entirely French-speaking background, who have never been in an English-speaking setting for more than three months before moving to Cape Town. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at participants' residences. Francophone student participants are from Cameroon, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Congo-Kinshasa. In addition to the use of semi-structured interviews as a research method, this study also focuses on obtaining naturalistic data through participants' observation in the college environment, classroom participation, and interaction with both peers and teacher. Furthermore, personal narratives by participants on their experiences as ESL acquirer for both academic and social purposes is used as a method for data collection in the current study.

### 5.5.1 Data Collection Instruments

The current study makes use of different methods of collecting data, which brings about the notion of triangulation. Noble and Heale (2019: 2) argue, "Triangulation, by combining theories, methods or observers in a research study, can help ensure that fundamental biases arising from the use of a single method, or a single observer are overcome." It is for this reason that the current study uses different methods for data collection. For this study to achieve credibility in exploring and explaining the complexity in the behavior of the different participants involved, the use of multiple methods resulting to triangulation is inevitable (Noble & Heale 2019). Although Noble and Heale (2019: 2) indicate four types of triangulations, only the "data triangulation, which includes matters such as periods of time, space and people" is applicable to the

current study. Similarly, Campbell *et al.* (2020) discuss four types of triangulations, of which only the data triangulation is relevant to this study as previously indicated.

#### **5.5.1.1. Interview**

According to De la Croix *et al.* (2018), carrying out interviews is the easiest method of collecting data for qualitative research, and it is an efficient way of speaking and paying attention to participants. Moreover, a successful interview enables the researcher to gain in-depth perception into participants' experiences, perspectives, feelings, and beliefs towards the research topic. Getting into participants' life reality is the best way of obtaining rich data (De la Croix *et al.* 2018).

De la Croix *et al.* (2018) indicate that an interview may be structured in nature, implying that the questions are precisely the same, and modelled on the same method, for all the participants. Another type is the open-ended interviews, which are generally like a collective conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. An open-ended interview begins with a question; however, the sequence of the interview is very much reliant on the responses of the interviewee. While a semi-structured interview is placed between the two previous methods. Here, the interviewer asks the participants some questions that focus on the main ideas but give more possibilities to pursue the participant's own line of reasoning, which may lead to other new themes in the research process.

Ahlin (2019) in line with the above review, also describes semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection that comprise a series of survey questions that all participants will have to provide answers to, however, integrating chances for more comprehensive study into new themes that may develop during the process. As indicated by Ahlin (2019) the research questions can be open-ended, which means the manner of answering the

questions by the participants is not limited and data is directly collected from the participants. Alternatively, the questions may be close-ended with specific structure given to participants who choose a response option.

Similarly, Imamura (2020) maintains that semi-structured interviews give room for the researcher to collect reflective data on participants' personal experiences. During this process, the researcher can gather more information from their close interactions with participants. As qualitative data embodies an extensive variety of possible categories, completely different data classifications can emerge. It is for these reasons that the current study made use of semi-structured interviews to obtain an in-depth understanding of participants' viewpoints and perspectives on their experiences as ESL acquirer for academic and social purposes.

#### **5.5.1.2. *Limitation of Interviews***

The responses of interviews are sometimes partial and inaccurate. This might occur when there is a relationship that exists between the participant and the researcher or in the event where the participant does not want to give information that will tarnish the image of an organization or a course. In addition, some participants do not actually understand the level of privacy regarding their details even though their identity is kept anonymous, and their responses are used only for the purpose of data collection. Participants in this study were at first not comfortable participating in the interview for fear of expressing their minds that might affect their studies. However, after reading the ethic consideration documents that I presented to them, they were more comfortable participating in the interview.

I noticed that some of the participants did not actually understand my questions, so their responses were off topic. At that point, I had to rephrase the questions and ask them again

before I could get the responses that I needed. Participants narrated their experiences without any fear or favors. This is because I made it as an open conversation between the participants and me. I also narrated my own experiences in L2 acquisition to make them feel better and relax, because this let them know that it is normal to encounter challenges when acquiring any L2. This is especially true for adults because they have many things to consider, such as negotiating identity among others.

In addition, the participants knew that I was a master's student, for them it was all about me completing my program. Therefore, their responses from the interview were somehow straightforward according to what I observed; they were trying to give answers that will be relevant to my work. However, in the process I tried to make them be as honest as they could because their responses will help this study to propose recommendations that might be taken into consideration by the authorities involved that could be of help to French-speaking students in future.

### **5.5.1.3. Participants' Observation**

According to Ciesielska *et al.* (2018) observation as a way of collecting qualitative data is one of the best research methods in the field of social sciences, however, it is also very diverse in nature. Ciesielska *et al.* (2018) indicates that observation may be considered as the foundation of an ordinary social life for nearly everyone. Similarly, Mustapha (2020) describes observational technique of data collection has a tool that some researchers will refer to as field study and is briefly defined as "the study of people acting in the natural causes of their daily lives" (Mustapha, 2020: 31).

As such, Pope and Allen (2020) argue that one important aspect of using observational technique is because one cannot be certain of the information given by participants by using other methods such as interviews and questionnaires. It is based on Pope and



Allen's (2020) argument that the current study employs participant observation as a method of collecting data. Since the research topic, which is aimed at investigating language conflict and challenges by Francophone immigrant college students, embodies human behaviour and personal experiences in a social-cultural context, obtaining first-hand information through participant observation, may enable this study to address the research questions (Pope & Allen, 2020).

Ciesielska *et al.* (2018) identify three types of observations. Participant observation is where the researcher endeavors to understand a certain culture or behavior to have in-depth perception of these categories either as a participant or as a detached observer. With the non-participant observation, the researcher attempts to comprehend the participant world, relationships, and interactions in a different manner, without any predominant classifications and expectations. Whereas in indirect observation, the researcher depends on observations done by others, particularly scholars on different types of research works, demos amongst others.

The current study will focus on participant observation as one of the methods of data collection. Mustapha (2020) discusses four types of participant observation; complete participant is when the researcher only allows him/herself to be acknowledged as a participant in a specific activity. Secondly, participant-observer method, in this case the researcher participates completely with sample participants however, makes his/her intention known. Thirdly, the complete observer method is when the researcher observes a social process by detaching him/herself from both the participant and any activities involved. This means that the researcher does not participate at all. Lastly, the observer-as-participant, with this technique the researcher makes known of the present of him/herself as well as interacts with sample participants during the process avoiding any kind of deception.

As discussed above, the participant observation entails the researcher to participate in the process of data collection and interactions aligning with the research question to obtain a rich and comprehensive background of the observed realism. The current study will make use of the observer-as-participant method. This method of data collection will enable this study to have a clearer understanding of the conflicts and challenges encountered by Francophone college students in the processes of acquiring ESL for academic and social purposes. This is because I, as the researcher, will interact with sample participants in the observation process. Furthermore, it is ethical to make the participant aware of the researcher's intention to safeguard the interests of both parties involve (Manolchev & Foley, 2021).

### **5.5.2. Personal Narrative**

As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, the current study is aimed at investigating language conflicts and challenges by Francophone college students in the process of acquiring ESL for academic and social purposes. Therefore, the use of personal narratives by student participants will enable this study to understand how participants negotiate and construct their personal identity by narrating their personal experiences in spoken form through storytelling (D'Cruz *et al.* 2019). Personal narrative, in which the purpose is to give room for each participant to tell his/her story, also requires the researcher to have certain skills to be able to centre the interview on getting out narratives from participants that will help to answer the research questions by adding more meaning to their personal experiences (D'Cruz *et al.* 2019).

As established by Benjamin *et al.* (2020), the Dialogical Self Theory states that an individual personal identity can be identified as a construct connecting various varieties of one's existence through time and space in a logical narrative presented by that

individual. Since human beings are characterized by storytelling, to have an insight into various individuals and their life experiences, it is of utmost importance for researchers to start with their personal narrative. The current study seeks to use such an opportunity to obtain comprehensible data from participants by means of being part of the participant world through his/her life story (Benjamin *et al.* 2020).

## 5.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Establishing rich and intuitive interactions with the data collected for a research study is essential for the interpretation of qualitative research data Ravindran (2019). There are various proposed approaches to use as data analysis methods in qualitative studies. The data analysis method in general can shift the researcher from labelling the experience to conceptualization and construction of themes devoid of losing the participant narratives and perceptions, which are the main reasons for collecting the data. This is because qualitative methods comprise data collection by means of sharing one's life experiences. As such, the current study deems it indispensable to record data and systematic observation rather than taking down notes as participants give their various narratives. Therefore, as the researcher I must listen to the recordings, reflect on them, compare data to bring forth categorized themes (Ravindran 2019).

The data of this study is analyzed through the lens of Vygotsky sociocultural theory and social interaction as a practice of acquiring ESL by French-speaking students for both academic and social purposes. The above also is a reflection from the theoretical lens of interpretative epistemology of knowledge construction that is peculiar to this study done around the narratives of French-speaking student personal experiences as they embarked in their odysseys of acquiring ESL for both academic and social purposes (Ravindran 2019).

The data collected for this study is thematically analyzed. To understand the language conflicts and challenges faced by French-speaking students, the content of the recorded interviews was taken into consideration (Denzin *et al.* 2017). The recorded data collected via semi-structured interview is decoded and transcribed. This enables the researcher to identify prominent themes, ideas, and patterns in the data. All recordings were transcribed according to categories that gave way for the researcher to identify patterns within the data. As such, the categories for identifying patterns within the data emerged as themes. In addition, data collected via systematic observations were analyzed to enhance the validity of the research outcome. This study also made use of the research questions as part of data analysis for the emergence of themes; this is to prevent the study from deviating from the research topic.

The philosophical underpinning guiding the data analysis of this study is the interpretivism paradigm. It is one of the fundamental paradigms in a qualitative research methodology as it provides richness in the insights of the research findings due to participant's narratives of their personal experiences (Kelly *et al.*, 2018). The birth of the interpretivism paradigm emanated through the criticism of positivism ideologies.

Coined with subjective views, the philosophy of interpretivism considers variances among others such as changes in one's social realities due to changes in time and place, cultural differences and circumstances (Bonache & Festing, 2020). Since the French-speaking students are exposed to different social realities in terms of language culture and diversity in their Cape town environment, an interpretivism viewpoint is necessary as a method of analyzing data for the current study.

As opposed to positivism, which believes in the existence of an objective society that can be characterized by ideas and hypothesis, the interpretive phenomenological method affirms that we do not live in a particular social reality. However, we live in numerous socially constructed interpretations of social reality (Bonache & Festing, 2020). Hence,

participants in the current study have different, however, similar experiences as they navigate their path to acquire ESL fluently for both academic and social factors. As such, the current study explores a highly subjective method, which is the interpretivist approach to analyze the data.

Moreover, interpretivism as a paradigm adopts that reality is subjective and can vary between individuals. Consequently, this leads to the notion that those participating in a research interview would likely not give general interpretations of life experiences. Therefore, the data gathered and analyzed for this research work, is less likely generalized via implementation of the interpretivist paradigm because data were largely reliant on specific contexts, viewpoints, and values (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020)

In addition, Al-Ababneh (2020) ascertains that using the interpretivism paradigm as discussed above would empower researchers to contemplate various aspects such as participants' behavior relating to their personal life experiences. This would enable a close to accurate analysis of the reality of data, taking into consideration the norms and philosophies of the interpretivist researcher. The interpretivist paradigm facilitates the method of data analyses of the context of this research work as it is situation as exclusive considering the subjective nature of the topic as well as participants (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020)

It is important to recall here that the main research question of this study is outlined as follows:

What are the ESL acquisition conflicts and challenges encountered by French-speaking students' environment in Cape Town?

Equally necessary to be repeated here are the sub-questions. The sub-questions, formulated from the main question are the following:

- (i) What are the languages in the students' environment (learning institution and community)?
- (ii) How proficient are the students in all the languages of their environment?
- (iii) What is the impact on the students' ESL acquisition?
- (iv) What is the impact on the student's ESL subject performance?

### 5.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Carrying out research procedures without getting permission from all participants may have consequences leading to the questioning of the legitimacy of the outcomes and information claims that may result from the research work. Therefore, it is imperative to uphold the ethical procedures that pertain to research methodology to prevent violation of the participant's legal rights in all aspects. In line with research ethical protocol, the data collection process of this study will be conducted in agreement with the ethical guidelines as indicated in the researcher's disciplinary association with the University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, and the Department of Language Education to be specific. Bertram and Christianse (2014: 66) argue, "It is important that all research studies follow certain ethical principles". As part of the requirement of any research studies and ethics protocols, participants will be given a consent form to sign. In addition, participants will remain anonymous, and information obtained from the students will be kept confidential.

In concurrence with the above argument, Ngozwana (2018) maintains that ethics refer to any decent or appropriate manner implemented during research, which includes preventing any harm that may originate during the study. Ethics consideration in small-scale qualitative research include informed consent, participants' ability to pull out from the interview at any given point in time, as well as participants' privacy. The notion of

informed consent implies that a person has the right to decide whether to s/he will participate in a research procedure after being aware of realities that may possibly change their judgements.

Furthermore, according to Harris *et al.* (2019), before starting the data collection process of this study, this study obtained ethical clearance from the University of the Western Cape. This is aimed at protecting participants while gathering the correct data relevant to the research topic. The data of this research study will provide authentic and reliable information about language conflicts and challenges encountered by Francophone college students in a private college in Cape Town in the process of acquiring ESL for academic and social purposes. The validity of the current study will be realized through audio recordings that will be monitored continually during the interview process. The interpreted decoded and transcribed recorded data will be compared with the original recordings to match recorded patterns.

#### **5.8. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

The collection of data for the current study was restricted to Francophone college students who have not been in an English-speaking setting for more than three months before coming to Cape Town. Francophone students are from Congo-Kinshasa, Congo-Brazzaville, Cameroon, and Gabon. Due to the current pandemic (COVID 19) that has caused the entire world to evolve into new practices such as travel restrictions, online learning, social distancing, the wearing of masks amongst others, only eight students participated in the study and all restriction protocols were followed. This study limited the number of times to visit the school for participant observation.

In addition, the current study observed limited interaction between French-speaking students and their classmates and friends due to restriction that was observed in the

college as part of the COVID 19 protocols. Students only came in when necessary and were not allowed to stay long on the college premises for preventives purposes. I could only observe interaction with the few classmates and friends that were present in college during the days of my observation. However, I was able to collect sufficient data to enable this study to achieve its aim and objectives.

It was not easy understanding what participants were saying during the interviews and personal narratives because of the French in them. I had an advantage because am coming from a country where the national languages are French and English, so I was able to make sense of what they were saying based on my background. Where participants could not express themselves in English, I advised them to say it in French, which I then translated to English. This also gave them some level of confidence to say what was on their mind. At first, it was not easy, but it was a success in the end.

## **5.9. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

The current chapter is based on research methodology. Nayak and Singh (2021) established that methodology is a research approach that interprets both ontological and epistemological ideologies into strategies that give an understanding on how to carry out research, including values, processes, and methods that are predominant in research. There are various types of research methodologies, without any recognized research methodology pertinent to all research problems. Hence, the research methodology used in this study comprises the research approach which is qualitative in nature. This gave room for me to be one-on-one with the participants, and as such be part of their personal experience. The research design and rationale enable the current study to justify the importance and relevant of the research topic.



In addition, the current chapter elaborates on the various sampling and sampling techniques used, as well as its relevance in answering the research question. Furthermore, other tools such as participant selection, research method, data analysis, ethics, and research limitation are discussed in this chapter as ways of answering the research questions. With this approach, I was able to establish proper grounds for the research questions to be answered and not misunderstood by participants. In the following chapter, I will present the data followed by analyzing it to find out if the research questions have been answered.



## Chapter 6: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented the methodology applicable for the current research study, in terms of the sampling techniques and tools used for data collection as well as the research design. The current chapter will present and analyze primary data collected by means of semi-structured interviews, participants' observations, and personal narratives by participants of their experiences regarding the conflicts and challenges in ESL acquisition. This chapter is in two sections. The first section deals with data collected using the different approaches as indicated in the methodology, whereas the second part is on data analysis. The study uses a narrative method as a technique for analysing the data.

Joyce-Bernard (2019) argues that qualitative data analysis usually entails the process of preparation and organization of data for analysis. This process involves breaking down data into themes via coding, summarizing the codes and representing the data by means of among others narration and discussion Wang *et al.* (2019). This study applied a practice that made maximum use of the data collected from French-speaking college students' direct narratives of individual experiences, attitude/judgements and information gathered from the semi-structured interviews. French-speaking college students revealed their backgrounds history and difficulties as well as their interest towards ESL acquisition as they struggle to navigate their path through educational and social activities as far as English Language is concern (Ferri & Magne 2021).

Furthermore, Islam (2020: 10) defined data analysis "as a process of cleaning, transforming, and modelling data to discover useful information". This is to say; the main drive of data analysis is to obtain valuable materials from data enabling the study to

propose and recommend, and possibly establish conclusions based upon the data analysis. As the researcher, I will indicate here that whatever decisions we make in our daily life are by means of retrospect or the advantage of taking that specific decision. This action is none other than analyzing our situation to make decisions based on it (Ferri & Magne 2021).

The current study made use of the qualitative research design as expatiated in the previous chapter. Hence, the data analysis of this study is enlightened by the above research method. According to Selvi (2019), qualitative research data analysis includes classifying the data into similar themes, models, directions, and connections to understand the situation or happenings. For this study to give a logical narrative of the data collected, since the various methods used are intertwining, the research questions mentioned in Chapter 1 were observed while analyzing the data. These questions include the main research question, which is repeatedly outlined as follows:

What are the ESL acquisition conflicts and challenges encountered within French-speaking college students' environment in Cape Town?

Also, the sub-questions are the following:

- (i) What is the ESL acquisition challenges in the students' environment (learning institution and community)?
- (ii) How exposed are the students in all the languages of their environment?
- (iii) How does ESL acquisition influence the students' attitude?
- (iv) What is the impact on the student's language subject performance?

## 6.2. PRESENTATION OF DATA

Learning a language is a very essential element of human society. It is possible to practice the language as a means of communication in a natural setting. That is at home with the family, in the community or in an organized setting such as a school (Halimovna, 2020). Proficiency in a target language is very important for the target learners especially if that is an important factor for achieving their goals. For this study to examine how French-speaking college students affiliate themselves to their academic activities and socialization, this study focuses on the way the students redefined their identity as Francophone by embracing bilingualism through ESL acquisition.

To achieve this, the current study observes a face-to-face interview with the students individually, personal narratives of their life experiences, as well as the researcher's subjective observation of the students at the college, since the French-speaking students were aware of the challenges they encounter in acquiring ESL especially at school. They felt neglected and left out by their classmates, this acted as a driving force for them to put efforts using the shortest time possible to learn ESL to be eligible to obtain success in their academics.

Achieving proficiency in a target language gives the learner some level of confidence, which could be either positive or negative. It can be positive when the target learner feels like they belong, and they feel bold and courageous to challenge their interlocutors and achieve academic excellence. It could be negative because some target learners might see the target language as an obstacle to their education in the host country. This might act as a barrier to their academic success. The French-speaking college students apprehend ESL acquisition with various difficulties. They see these difficulties as a threat to their education as well as to their immediate environment. They wish that they could acquire ESL without any difficulties. However, that is not the case as they battle in the process of acquisition. A careful analysis of the records from the collected data for the current study

evidently portray the conflicts and challenges encountered by French-speaking college students' participants in the process of ESL acquisition. This is represented in the face-to-face interview and personal narrative data communicated below.

### **6.2.1. Interview Data**

The face-to-face interviews, with French-speaking college students' regarding the conflicts and challenges they encounter in ESL acquisition within their Cape Town environment, shed light on their personal experiences in their quest to acquire a new language as a channel to succeed as students in a college, as well as to associate themselves with the community at large. Data collected demonstrates that the French-speaking students had similar experiences acquiring ESL for both academic and social purposes. It also indicates that all the eight French-speaking participants were new to ESL acquisition and have not stayed more than three months in an English-speaking environment before coming to Cape Town. The data collected also shows that all participants had French as their medium of instruction in their home country. However, Congolese and Gabonese participants establish the fact that other languages, such as Lingala and Spanish respectively were thought in some of the schools, which they attended.

The recordings from the interviews reveal that all the participants had to record lectures and use others means such as Google translate to understand the content. However, they all indicated that the content of the subjects was not an issue, rather, the language was. When asked how competent they were with ESL as college students, three of the participants, P1, P3 and P8 had similar things to say.

They all had to individually delay their studies just to acquire the basics in English for a start. The most pertinent issue, which they all noted, is acquiring

the basics informally from friends and flat mates. All three students independently realized that most of the vocabulary acquired was for socialization purposes, and not enough to assist them in their studies (P1, P3 and P8, interviews, 4/11/2021).

P4 on the other hand responded to the question by indicating that:

I have zero competent in English. For me to understand what is said in English, I have to first process it in French, then use “mot-en-mot” translation into English. This came with some language conflicts, which posed as a challenge because some of the words used in English might not necessarily mean exactly the same thing in French when translated in the above manner (P4, interview, 4/11/2021).

e.g. *Cul de sac* in French is translated as “bag-bottom” as a denotative meaning.

*Cul de sac* in English is a traffic sign meaning “dead end” as a connotative meaning.

In line with the examples, P3 also gave example of ESL conflict encounter at the ATM.

He said:

Some of the terminologies at ATM machines is quite different when translated into French (P3, interview, 4/11/2021).

Furthermore, responding to the question P7 replied:

I could only imagine what is said in English but could not reply. I had to enrol to an online English course and sometimes watch cartoons just to have some basic knowledge in English (P7, interview, 29/10/2021).

The above remarks suggest that French-speaking college students are facing ESL conflicts, which pose as a challenge or a barrier to acquire ESL to enable them to complete their school program on time. To understand the subject matter, deliver through English

as the medium of instruction, the students must be proficient in English. However, the above comments indicate that the students are faced with some challenges of obtaining proficiency in English due to lack of assistance from the college, language conflict between French and English as well as contact with many other languages. As mentioned above by P1, P3 and P8, most of the ESL words they acquire through close contact and by “picking up word” was not good enough to help them understand the content knowledge of college subjects. It also did not empower them to be able to participate in classroom discussions. That means they could not even do their assignments properly and were not able to obtain a pass mark in their exams (P1, P3 and P8, interview, 4/11/2021).

Although, French-speaking college students encounter different types of challenges as they acquire ESL, I observed that they find English interesting and are determined to achieve proficiency in English. I also observed their vulnerability towards native speakers of English. They are afraid that they might not speak English fluently like native speakers. As such, they are indifferent to learning English if not for academic purposes. When asked about their attitudes toward acquiring ESL, P5 replied:

I am sometimes confused when learning English because of the other languages I hear around me. There is Afrikaans, Xhosa and lots more languages spoken by people in my community. Since am a novice in English, I sometimes take some of the words to be English words. When I construct a sentence using such words in school, my classmates laugh at me. This makes me feel so bad learning English, I am thinking of giving up learning English and go back to my country since I cannot succeed in this college without English (P5, interview, 26/10/2021).

In line with the question, P6 replied:

I know I can never speak English like South Africans because of my accent. So, I do not want to stress myself too much learning English. The more I tried to learn English, the more I hear Afrikaans and Xhosa around me. When I am at home, I speak only French and “Bafeuk” my native language. Since I am still learning English, I mix up all the different words that I have learn in one construction assuming they are English words. It really makes me look stupid when laughed at by my friends. However, that would not stop me from learning English. I have a positive feeling towards this, I came to study in South Africa and English cannot make me give up because, I knew I had to learn English in order to succeed. By the way, I learn my fathers’ dialect from 18 years upwards and I can speak it well. Learning English will not be a problem (P6, interview, 8/11/2021)

Responding to the question, P2 replied:

I have a positive feeling towards learning ESL. First, and most importantly, I have to obtain proficient in English in order to pass in college and be relevant in the job market. The only problem I have learning English is that it sometimes clashes with French. I always try to converts or translate words into French in order to make meaning out of them. In the event of such practice, I most often do not have the exact meaning right because of the differences that exist in context meaning of some words between French and English. I like English, I will do all my best to study it to enable me validate my courses at the college. Although I have strong French accent, I will try to learn how to speak English fluently like an English native. Meaning, I will have to learn a new accent. My French accent is not the only challenge I have acquiring ESL, other languages spoken in my environment are also distracting me. Remember! There are many other languages spoken in Cape Town, besides South Africa languages are foreign languages like Portuguese. This appears to me as a conflict towards ESL



learning because; I sometime use them as English words. To me that is a big challenge (P2, interview, 28/10/2021).

The above statements demonstrate how French-speaking students are in close contact with other languages beside English within their various Cape Town environments. Moreover, it indicates that they are speakers of their various mother tongues. Hence, there is conflict between ESL and other languages such as Afrikaans, which suggest a challenge in ESL acquisition. This has influenced French-speaking students' attitude towards acquiring English both negatively and positively. While P6 is focusing on negotiating her identity to acquire ESL, P2 aimed at constructing a new identity by obtaining proficiency in English. P5 on the other hand, is thinking of dropping out from college with the pretext that acquiring English is problematic to him. I observed that French-speaking students' environment had a vital role to play in their ESL acquisition quest. When asked what ESL acquisition challenges they encountered in their environment (college and community). P1 replied:

Since I am exposed to other different languages beside English, I have the challenge of differentiating English words. Especially listening to my Xhosa classmates and friends, even my Portuguese classmate. This is because they switch when speaking. There is conflict between the languages (P1, interview, 4/11/2021).

Meanwhile, all the other participants had similar responds besides P7 who went further to maintained that:

Although the other languages I hear every day in my environment in Cape Town is conflicting with English, I have decided to embrace it as a challenge for me to put in more effort and time to acquire proficiency in English (P7, interview, 29/10/2021).

The comments above indicates that French-speaking college students are facing ESL challenges within their Cape Town environment. It is very important for French-speaking students to acquire ESL and further gain proficiency in it. This will help in building their confidence hence, elevating their self-esteem since they will have the capability to communicate fluently in English and excel in their academics and be ready for the job market. P2, P8, P7 and P6 indicated that they would pursue a career in Cape Town after obtaining their certificates. It was obvious to me that the students were not given any support from the college, when asked the level of support they get P1 replied:

I have delayed my studies just to learn English because I did not understand a word in English when I got here. College authorities told me that a mentor would assist me, which did not happen. I felt the college is out to make me fail so they can get more money from me (P1, interview, 4/11, 2021).

Alternatively, P3 had a different experienced, his response was:

My lecturer was so patient and considerate with me; I also got help from the college authorities, which I am making use of it. I do not have pressure at school therefore; I am putting more time to learn English. First thing first (P3, interview, 4/11/2021).

Acquiring L2 by adults is not as easy as during childhood. Acquiring ESL by French-speaking college students require supports from both the college and the community to reduce some of the challenges that come in the process. This support is what some of the French-speaking students do not have. Therefore, it is in their hands to negotiate and construct their identities to integrate in society as well as to gain proficiency in English for academic purposes.

As adults, they have acquired other languages at childhood, acquiring ESL indicates that they would conflict with the other languages already acquired. This is because at the

initial stage of acquisition, French-speaking students are unable to use English without code switching or language transfer. Hence, this will hinder their performance in school. I notice that French-speaking participants code-switch and make use of language transfer during the interview. Asking about their performance in subjects at college, P5 replied:

I have not started performing well in school because I do not yet understand the subject content due to language barrier. Although, I do Google Translate when it comes to assignments, yet I still lack cohesion in constructions. This is due to the French in me (P5, interview, 26/10/2021).

Replying to the question, P1 said:

When it comes to classroom assessments, I do not score a pass mark. However, I do have pass marks with my assignments because my friends assist me (P1 interview, 4/11/2021).

Responding to the question, P8 replied:

I am not expected to perform well at this stage because; I am still struggling to learn proper English. I do not want to speak mix English (i.e. French and English at the same time) for me that will be poor English (P8 interview, 4/11/2021).

In the same light, P3, P6, P4, P7 and P2 all share the same views as the other participants. It is difficult to talk about subject performance when the receiver does not understand the actual subject content. There is bound to be misinterpretation of words in such instances, especially when the medium of instruction is in the target language. This is the case of French-speaking participants at a college in Cape Town.

Interviewing participants face-to-face was necessary. I was able to explore further by engaging with participants into giving me more information about their personal experiences as ESL acquirers. All participants are still struggling to communicate fluently

in English, coming face-to-face with them was an important factor for me. At that moment, I engage with participants and be part of their world. As such, I was able to gather enough materials needed for the current study.

### **6.2.2. Observation Data**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the observer-as-participant is a technique used whereby the researcher makes known of his/her presence, as well as interacts with sample participants during the process, avoiding any kind of deception (Mustapha 2020). All eight participants were first year college students. Three of them are studying Business and Finance, two are studying Communication while the other three are doing Electrical Engineering. With the medium of instruction being English, French-speaking participants barely speak English. Hence, there exists a conflict of language between the medium of instruction and the participants' ability to establish meaning of the subject content. Since there exists a mutual relationship within the sociocultural domain between English, learning and meaning-making, it is of utmost importance for French-speaking students to acquire English. English is important to internalize thought. Therefore, learning English in this context is a dynamic practice that is facilitated via social interactions with objects, people, and environment. Thus, constructing meanings are usually established and motivated by the learners' culture, background, and knowledge of the target language.

During the Business and Finance lecture, I observed P5, P8 and P2 sitting together separately from the other students. They communicated amongst themselves in French while the lecture was going on in English. From what I observe, they were trying to make meaning from what is being said by interpreting it in French. I also observed that the

lecturer was not bothered with what was going on between the three participants, though, they were discussing while lecture was in progress.

I noticed that they were able to do some calculations, although I was not sure if the answers were right. Although French-speaking students are in the process of acquiring English while studying, it is important to note that meaning can be made from a context depending on the knowledge that the learner has on the subject matter. French-speaking learners could identify the figures and subsequently do the calculations based on their prior knowledge in French. This is because they could understand the figures and signs of the subject matter.

After the lecture outside the classroom, I could see some level of frustration on P5's face. I heard him telling both P8 and P2 that he wishes English was as simple as French, so his challenge was that English was not as easy French. He said English is complicated, but he is happy with that day's lecture because he could relate to the figures. Both P8 and P2 also exercised some element of frustration based on the language of instruction. I followed them carefully without being a nuisance, and I noticed that they were only chatting in French and did not talk much with other students even at the library. I heard P2 exchanging greetings in English with other students.

Meanwhile, P7, P4, and P1 in the Electrical Engineering class had similar behaviors. However, all three of them had their recordings on while the lecture was going on. I noticed that P7 kept on asking a student close to him to interpret certain terminologies. He went further to ask to explain what those words mean in French if they had the same meaning in English. I heard the student telling P7 that it means the same thing but not in the subject context. I observed that P7, P4, and P1 could process some of the words based on their social background, however, not on the cultural background. This is because of the differences in context, indicating the conflict of meaning in contexts that exist between English and French. In as much as P7, P4, and P1 could not completely understand the

language of the medium of instruction, I observed that French-speaking students could express meaning differently in various manners by using their French skills. They were still proactive in class by asking their classmates to interpret words in context for them.

I also noticed that by trying to understand the meaning in context, P7, P4, and P1 were trying to negotiate and reconstruct their social identity in the process. Understanding and speaking the target language boosts the speakers' self-esteem, this will aid in increasing the level of social interaction by the speaker. French-speaking college students need to obtain competency in English to increase their self-esteem in classroom as well as to achieve academy success.

Furthermore, P3 and P6 had nothing to say during lectures. I observed that they were both recording the lectures and were silent throughout the lecture. However, the lecturer was from time to time asking both students if they were okay, to which they responded by nodding their heads. I noticed that the lecturer was at least concerned about them though he did not do anything language-wise to assist them. Outside the class, I observed that both P3 and P6 went straight to the library to listen to the recordings.

I realized that while P3 was listening and using Google Translate, P6 was writing it down. Out of curiosity, I approached them and asked how easy the process was for them. P3 responded by saying that it is very challenging studying this way. However, they must do what they can do to understand the lecture. P6 added by saying that they will give it to one of their classmates to read it and correct whatever mistakes they find. By so doing, they are learning gradually.

The above observation of French-speaking college students seems to confirm the sociocultural perspectives of L2 acquisition, which indicate that learning is an effective process that is negotiated across social interactions with different items, objects, and people within the learners' environment. French-speaking learners use objects such as

phones and laptops to translate what they have recorded during the lecture. It is quite challenging for them, but through such forms of social interaction, they can decode words for proper understanding.

Both the classroom and school environment observation enabled me to gather data that I was not able to gather during the interviews. I was able to realize how difficult it was to learn English for the French-speaking students. I noticed how they (P3 and P6) put in extra time to interpret what was lectured in class. While their other classmates were busy studying, they were busy translating the recordings. As mentioned by French-speaking students, the entire process is challenging for them.

### **6.2.3. Narrative Data**

The collection of data through personal narratives or storytelling in qualitative research is a tool used to describe human life experiences. Furthermore, narration is the action done by a participant when telling a story of events that they encountered in their lifetime. Narratives for the person listening are comprehended if the speaker has delivered the general idea, which in turn makes meaning (Gallardo, 2019). As mentioned in the previous chapter, 'The Dialogical Self Theory' states that an individual personal identity can be identified as a construct connecting various varieties of one's existence through time and space in a logical narrative presented by that individual (Benjamin *et al.* 2020).

In the current study, participants' personal narratives are used and described to establish models and attribute to conflicts and challenges encountered by French-speaking college students, in the event of ESL acquisition for both academic and social purposes. After the face-to-face interviews and observation, I decided to use storytelling techniques to gather more information. This is because I observed that engaging in conversation with

participants without asking formal questions gave them the freedom to narrate what they are going through without thinking of grammatical errors and poor sentence construction. I was able to be part of the participants' world by narrating my own life experiences in L2 acquisition as an adult. This gave the participants the courage to narrate to me some of the things they are facing as French-speaking students. For instance, P5 narrates that:

Although I feel welcomed at school and the community where I live. However, I have lost my self-confidence. This is because; I am unable to express myself in a manner in which I want to, due to language barrier. Most at times when I speak with my French accent, mixing French and English together people asked me which dialect am speaking. That makes me looks stupid in front of them. Besides, the fact that I will have to repeat first year is very traumatizing for me, I know that am not a stupid person. Most of the Xhosa students in the college also code-switch when speaking but nobody laughs at them. Maybe is because they think they can speak English better than I do. I wish English was the lone language spoken around me that would have been easier for me to learn faster. There are too many languages around me including my mother tongue and French. All these are delaying me to achieve proficiency in English (P5, personal narrative, 26/10/2021).

Our society, especially the environment in which one lives in, has a very important role to play when it comes to L2 acquisition. Social interaction is a practice that facilitates L2 acquisition. However, P5 finds it difficult to interact with classmates and friends within his Cape Town environment for fear of being laughed at, due to poor ESL communication skills as indicated in his personal narrative above. Since English is the language of teaching and learning in the college where French-speaking students attend, it is of great importance that they gain proficiency in English to excel in their academic activities.



Coupled with the various contact languages by French-speaking students, both the college authorities and the community are not making it easier for them to achieve their aim of gaining English language proficiency. According to P5, he faces challenges in terms of L1 interference and code switching in the process of writing and speaking English respectively.

French-speaking students encounter language conflicts in their quest for ESL acquisition in similar ways but different experiences. P2, faces similar challenges to P5; however, she was able to ignore all the laughter in pursuit of proficiency in ELS. P2 narrates:

Although my brain is confused because I am exposed to different languages around me, I am determined to learn English so I can prove to my family and friends that anyone can learn any language at any stage in once life as long as you are determined (P2, personal narrative, 28/10/2021).

P8 is using every means possible to learn proper English. her main fear is that she would not want to lose her French accent; however, she would like to write and speak English as well as native speakers. This means that she will reconstruct and renegotiate her identity.

I know my strength and limitations; therefore, I am aware of how much effort I can put in to be able to speak English as a native speaker. I noticed that the Xhosa and Colors do not speak proper English because of the influence of their L1. I have come across people back home who could not speak French initially but learn and could speak just like a French person. Therefore, it is very possible to speak any L2 as native speaker of that language (P8, personal narrative, 4/11/2021).

P7's personal experience is one of cultural stigmatization. He said he had lived in an environment where if you do not speak the target language you are treated like an

outcast. This means, he sees himself as an outcast among his classmates. That is his biggest challenge; acquiring ESL to him is a means to regain his self-esteem and to integrate himself within his Cape Town environment (P7, personal narrative, 29/10/2021)

The above personal narrative from P7 describes the relationship that occurs between language and culture. French-speaking students' cultural background has an important part to play when it comes to L2 acquisition. How they perceive ESL will determine the type of effort they will put to learn English. P3's personal experience is different. While others are having difficulties with their class work and other college activities due to language challenges, P3 is getting assistance from both his lecturers and classmates. As such, the challenges he is facing relate to language transfer thereby causing conflicts within the various languages in his repertoire. P3 narrates that:

At times, I do not even understand what I am saying due to the different languages I use at once. Personally, I have experience language conflict from childhood; my family is a multilingual family. We speak about three different languages back home that is, my mother's language, my father's language and French. Truth be told, I learned proper French in school not from my parents. Therefore, I believe that I can learn English here at the college and online. It is not a new practice for me. However, it is not easy for me because English is complicated with the tenses in my own opinion (P3, personal narrative, 4/11/2021).

P1 has the same experience as P3 because they are brothers and grew up in the same home. The only difference with P1 is that he does not get support from the college authorities like his brother. He claims that they just want to drain money out of him by making him fail his courses (P1, personal narrative, 4/11/2021).

Learning a new language can be intimidating to some people especially college students whose classmates and friends are speakers of the target language. Moreover, pressure from lecturers who do not consider the vulnerability of French-speaking students is also an issue to the students. P6 narrates her personal experience in acquiring ESL as that of rejection, she said:

I feel rejected by both the college community and where I live. This may sound harsh but that is actually, how I feel. I do not want to express myself this way because of the fear of being treated worse. I wish to learn English and gain proficiency in it no matter what (P6, personal narrative, 8/11/2021).

P4 could not really express herself because she was frustrated. According to P4, she was informed that the college would assign a student assistant that will assist her with whatever difficulties she would be facing academically. However, the student assistant was not able to help her because neither of them could understand each other. For communication to be successful, both parties involved need to make meaning of what they are saying. This was a big challenge for P4, while she struggles with English using Google Translate, the student assistant was struggling to adapt a possible means of communication.

### **6.3. DATA ANALYSIS**

The data analysis of this study is guided by the research questions supporting this study. The study is centered on how French-speaking students' battle to embrace a new language culture to integrate and be recognized as members of both the college and community where they live. It also focused on the different methods they are applying to navigate paths toward gaining proficiency in ESL. This study observed various

comments from participants, including the methods that they apply to negotiate and construct new identities as an ESL acquirer. Driven by the objective of obtaining a comprehensive opinion of ESL acquisition experiences of the student participants, this study analyzes both the interviews and personal narratives. The semi-structured interview responses and rich data gathered from participants' personal narratives of their experiences were used as a yardstick to identify the emergence of similar themes. The themes were evaluated, and possible conclusions drawn based on the data collected.

- (i) French-speaking college students' encounter language conflicts and challenges of learning ESL
- (ii) Constructing ESL identity through social platforms
- (iii) French-speaking students' experiences in their Cape Town environment of ESL acquisition
- (iv) Negotiating for proficiency in ESL

### **6.3.1. Language conflicts through language contact**

French-speaking college students encounter language conflicts through language contact. French-speaking students come across language conflicts at a sociolinguistics and cultural level, within their Cape Town environment, both as migrants and as the minority group. The use of their home languages in a society that has a dominant language that is the medium of instruction when they are at college can generate conflict. This is because their L1 will obviously dominate L2, which is the target language at that given point in time. Hence, the cultural perception of French is transferring to ESL in the process of acquisition (Gobang, 2021).

During childhood, children learn different languages based on how they were raised. Some children are raised in a multilingual family while others are brought up in a monolingual family. Children raised in a multilingual family tend to speak more than one language and experience different language cultures. Therefore, the children are likely to experience language conflicts as adults in the form of code switching and language transfer (Insabralde & Prestes, 2021). This occurs especially when they must learn a second language, which is the majority language as migrants for both academic and social purposes, and to integrate within a given society.

French-speaking student participants, from a multilingual background, are in South Africa as migrants for academic purposes. To achieve their aim, they must learn English, which is the majority language (in this context English dominates the other languages the participants speak or hear) and the medium of instruction. The process of ESL acquisition by the French-speaking students is very challenging, and one of the challenges encountered by participants I observed during data collection is language conflict. Since they are in a multilingual environment in addition to their multilingual background, they are always in close contact with other languages beside English. This phenomenon is one of the factors that is hindering them to gain proficiency in English language. As mentioned during the interview, P2 said:

I wish I could be able to differentiate correctly between the proper English words and words from the other languages spoken by my friends and classmates when I am around them. It seems as if it is difficult for them to construct a proper sentence without codeswitching. Hence, it is difficult to learn English through social interaction due to the level of codeswitching practice by native speakers (P2, interview, 28/10/2021).

P2 is experiencing what the other French-speaking student participants are experiencing regarding language interference in ESL acquisition. It is important to note that the

repertoire of L2 learners includes vocabulary in both the first and second language, which is manifested either when they communicate verbally or non-verbally (Hjetland *et al.*, 2021).

French-speaking students who are learning ESL for academic and social purposes are depending only on the ESL vocabulary that they have been able to acquire, as they struggle to acquire more ESL words for proficiency. They are faced with challenges because of their multilingualism. This might lead to their inability to attain a certain level of the target language vocabulary as their classmates or friends who were exposed to the target language at a younger age. This is the reason why the student participants confessed that they are not happy with the outcome of their academic results during their first year in college.

Language transfer, borrowing, codeswitching among others are some elements caused by language contact (Boas & Höder, 2018) that P5 was able to identify and avoid when having a conversation with his classmates. P5 applies this technique to learn English the hard way. He would rather not say the word in French if he does not know the English version, P5 said during his personal narrative that:

I prefer to search the word using Google, then translate it just to avoid saying it in French, that way I am able to increase my English vocabulary as well. I want to learn English the proper way; I do not want to practice what my classmate are doing. Code switching all the time that will spoil my constructions in English (P5, personal narrative, 26/10/2021).

The data collected from the interviews and participants' personal narratives, show that codeswitching, language borrowing, and language interference due to language contact as indicated by Shartiely (2016) is a practice that is evident even in a college in Cape Town where the medium of instruction is English. However, French-speaking students are

familiar with such practice because they are also from a multilingual setting. The challenge they are facing is that they must let ESL dominate their first language and they are putting effort in doing so. For example, P7, P8, and P1 said they would practice the habit of speaking only in English even when they are with their friends from the same sociocultural background. This concurs with Lantolf *et al.*'s (2018) argument I mentioned before, that Vygotsky ZPD is not "Zone of Proximal Learning" which means that, it is applicable both in academic and social context.

This study indicates that the language conflict and challenges encountered by French-speaking students in ESL acquisition are because of codeswitching, language transfer, language borrowing among others due to language contact. By identifying the elements that generate conflict in ESL and taking measures to avoid them would enable French-speaking students to acquire ESL faster thereby obtaining proficiency in ESL. This will facilitate their integration into the labor market and gaining greater opportunities that society can offer them.

### **6.3.2. Constructing ESL identity through social platforms**

As indicated before, since "Language is considered as a site of identity construction" (Taqavi & Rezaei (2021: 395), all eight participants use similar approaches to construct a new social identity as they negotiate proficiency and integration in ESL. Although they all have different social backgrounds and life experiences, they all share common experiences when it comes to acquiring EEL for both academic and social purposes. However, all eight participants encounter challenges while learning. They use social platforms such as Google Translate, online English classes, watching children's cartoons and English documentaries.

This suggests that French-speaking student participants are willing and ready to use all material available to achieve competency in ESL and become part of the Anglophone communities as they perceive it. Although they are welcome in their different Cape Town environment, the data from the interviews and personal narratives shows that French-speaking college student will feel welcome only when they are fully integrated. This implies being competent in ESL. Therefore, using different means to achieve such objectives is inevitable to them.

ESL identity construction is very important to French-speaking students because it will enable them to build a high degree of self-esteem within their Cape Town environment. Participation in classroom activities is very important, it ignites the spirit of formal learning and increases the desire to get more information on the topic discussed in class. Deficiency of ESL vocabulary has created a vacuum that exist between French-speaking students and classroom/discussion participation. As such, they must depend on any means possible that will assist them in learning ESL for competency so that they can participate in classroom activities like their other classmates who are speakers of English. Moreover, participants in this study indicated that they do not want to speak English like their South African classmates and friends i.e., they want to avoid codeswitching, and language transfer during communication. Therefore, using platforms such as Google Translate, online English tutorials among others are measures implemented by French-speaking students to achieve their aim. For P4, she gets more confused when she must “pick up” English words from conversations because the level of conflict between L1 and L2 is obvious and effectively used by interlocutors.

I sometimes ask myself, how is it possible for me to learn proper English if I have to learn in an environment where codeswitching, and other language cultures are practiced? The only solution that I could think of is learning through social



media. Especially in a time where face-to-face learning is restricted due to COVID 19 (P4, interview, 4/11/2021).

Since all eight participants in this study sees ESL as a site of identity construction, they use social platforms that will enable them to speak like native speakers of English. As cited earlier, Léglise and Migge (2021) indicate that identity is a model that aligns the consciousness of self-affiliation with a particular social perception, beliefs, class amongst others, at a given time and geographical location involving those given by others. This is the reason why French-speaking students have chosen to use social platform to achieve competency in English because they want to affiliate themselves with native speakers of English.

I want to speak English as an expert, so I need to learn English from those who are native speakers of English (P8 interview, 4/11/2021).

Acquiring ESL and speaking like native speakers of English by French-speaking students is considered as constructing an identity that will lead to competency and therefore reduce the level of language conflict that exist between L1 and L2. Using social platforms by French-speaking students for identity construction shows that learning a second language implies adopting a new identity.

### **6.3.3. Experiences in Cape Town environment of ESL acquisition**

As established earlier, Mulyani (2019) indicates the significant contribution of interlocutors in enabling the process of second language acquisition by adults through social interaction. Although participants in this study do not solely rely on the school authorities and their friends to learn ESL, it is important to note that in the aspect of SLA, the concept of social interaction emphasizes the importance of communication between the non-native and native speakers of the target language. However, French-speaking

students' experiences within their environments in Cape Town as ESL acquirer are that of discontentment.

Due to the multilingual nature of South Africa, everybody is likely to speak more than one language in addition to the different languages spoken by foreigners leaving in the country. This implies that French-speaking students are not only exposed to the target Language (English) but are also in close contact to many other languages. Since languages might be acquired easily if the acquirer is exposed to the natural traces of the language (Peker & Özkaynak, 2020), this study shows that participants find it difficult to identify the natural words from their interlocutors, the natural words of English. Meaning, in both college and out of college environments, conversations are done in more than one language at a time. P3 is one of the participants who is fortunate to get assistance from his teachers and classmates, however, he still faces problems "picking up" English words from conversations happening around him.

It is difficult for me to grasp English words as I listen to discussion because it is all mixed up with other languages. I also face the same problem at college when am with my friends (P3, interview, 4/11/2021).

All eight participants have the same experiences when it comes to learning English within their Cape Town environment. They encounter the challenges of differentiating between the proper English and the poorly constructed English used by speakers of English. P1 narrates to me an experienced he had when he used a word thinking it was a proper English word he had learn from his friend.

I was very ashamed of myself when I used a word, which I cannot tell you in the wrong context when I realized afterwards. This is because it was used alongside Xhosa so I thought they were all English words (P1, interview, 4/11/2021)

Social interaction and the environment have a vital role to play when it comes to SLA. Participants in this study are facing challenges in achieving competency in ESL not because they do not interact with speakers of English, but because English is used alongside other languages in their Cape Town environments. It is difficult for someone without any knowledge of the target language to be able to differentiate between the correct and incorrect words in context of the target language during the early stages of acquisition.

#### **6.3.4. Negotiating ESL proficiency in academic context**

As mentioned above, participants in this study use different social platforms to negotiate for competency in ESL. This is because they want to acquire proper English and the best way to do so according to them, is to learn from native speakers of English. They make use of the various social platform tools that are mentioned above for obtaining proficiency in English. This study reveals that Francophone college students' participation in academic activities using ESL will improve by their involvement in negotiating for competency.

P8, P5, and P2 were mostly on their phones translating the recoded lectures after classes, they spent another two hours just searching for the right words and putting them in writing. They wanted to get the proper translation to be efficient in their school activities.

We do this all the time after each lecture, and we believe that it is really working for us. Although it time consuming, because we have to process it in French to make meaning and back to English to establish the concept (P2, personal narrative, 4/11/2021).

All eight participants negotiated ESL competency as they use different approaches to construct sentences in French and immediately obtain responses, which assisted them to

see where they are lacking in the target language. It is a practice that motivates participants in this study to have the ability to believe in themselves that one day they will become speakers of ESL and excel in their academic career and affiliate with native speakers of English.

#### **6.4. CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

The current chapter is based on the presentation of data and analysis. The analysis of data is informed by the research approach of this study, which is qualitative in nature, and the research questions are mentioned in the first chapter of this study. The various tools used for data collection were face-to-face interviews, participant observations, and participants' word of mouth personal narratives. With this approach, I was able to detect if the research questions were properly answered or misunderstood. In the following chapter, I will write down a summary of the findings of the study and a discussion will follow thereafter.



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## **Chapter 7:**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

This study investigated the conflict and challenges encountered within French-speaking students in ESL acquisition within their Cape Town environment. English is used as the medium of instruction in a college where French-speaking students attend. Hence, it is mandatory for them to acquire English for the purpose of completing their academic program as well as to enable them to integrate into their Cape Town environment. The current chapter deals with the findings resulting from data collected for this study, followed by discussion of the findings. It concludes with a summary of the findings.

#### **7.2. FINDINGS**

The overall findings of this study showed that French-speaking students overcome all obstacles and challenges to acquire ESL and to gain proficiency in English for both academic and social purposes. Since learning a new language is perceived as an asset for constructing new identity, French-speaking students through social interaction can construct a new identity as they acquire ESL.

The various finding elaborated below indicate the importance of adapting English language as a tool to resist bilingualism, the importance of language policy in identity construction, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), environmental influence on L2 acquisition, and the impact of language contact in social interaction.

### 7.2.1. The adaptation of English language and resistance to bilingualism

Although Cape Town is portrayed as a cosmopolitan and multilingual society, English still dominates the communicative exchanges within the city. Most Capetonians are bilingual, pairing English and Afrikaans for some, English and Xhosa for others and English and any other South African language for some others. At the same time, immigrants would appear tempted to use bilingualism as they acquired English. This leads to understanding that the adaptation of English language makes it a tool to resist bilingualism in a multilingual society.

According to the findings of this study, multilingualism, which is one of Cape Town's characteristic traits, is also one of the challenges that French-speaking students are facing. Most people they meet, if not all, speak more than one language in any given conversation. That means they also exhibit different accents and have different cultural backgrounds. This supports the argument that describes Cape Town as being blended with the combination of culture and history as well as different languages and accents (Van der Merwe & Davids, 2006; Bénit & Morange, 2006; Bekker & Leildé, 2006; Mongwe, 2006; Sun & Huang, 2018).

However, P5 and P2 like the rest of the French-speaking students are determined to acquire ESL for academic purposes. According to them, speaking mostly in English, though incorrect will enable them to achieve their aim faster. As indicated by Vandeyar and Catalano (2020), bilingualism in a multilingual society has a huge impact on immigrants. This is true especially in the case where the medium of instruction is in the target language like the case of French-speaking college students. Resisting bilingual practices and stick to speaking only English at school and with friends will help French-speaking students to increase their English vocabulary. P7 also mentioned that watching English documentaries and listening to only English videos helps him to improve on his English language.

French-speaking students identify that speaking French most of the time with friends or classmates from the same French background is detrimental to them as they struggle to acquire ESL for both academic and social purposes. Hence, adapting to English speaking more often will enable them to put more effort and time to study English. French-students see bilingualism practices as a hindrance to achieve competency in English. However, it should be noted that avoiding speaking their first language is not a form of rejecting their identity but a means to acquire ESL quicker. Therefore, French-speaking students are not trying to be monolingual, rather they are trying to survive by learning the target language, which is also the medium of instruction,

Moreover, Klein (1986) and Denizer (2017) earlier argued that immigrants' attitude towards the host language and the native speakers will determine the degree of interest towards acquiring the language. French-speaking students' attitude towards English is a positive one based on acquisition determination. The findings of this study show that French-speaking students are willing to invest their time and money to acquire English. This is evident in the interview with P7; he indicates that he enrolled in English online short courses and spends more time watching English cartoons, among other strategies.

French-speaking students devoted more time in learning and speaking English, subsequently resisting bilingualism in the process. This concurs with Raskumaran's (2020) argument regarding new theories in SLA which justified that adults could understand a L2 using the same method in which a child would use to master his/her native language. Avoiding speaking their native or first language, French-speaking students act as if they are learning a first language. Conversely, this practice is manifested only at school and with their friends. P6 said she speaks Bafeuk dialect when she makes a call back home, as do P4, P1, and P5 who speak their dialects when having a conversation with their families. This justifies that although learning a new language as an immigrant, they cannot deviate from their ancestral roots. This supports what Ali and

Mujiyanto (2017) suggest about the fact that learners cannot completely disconnect themselves from their sociocultural and historical background when learning a second language.

### **7.2.2. Language conflict and identity construction**

The findings of this study show that French-speaking students are experiencing a high degree of language conflict in the form of codeswitching, language transfer, language borrowing, among others. This is on the side of both French-speaking students and whoever they come in close contact with. As earlier indicated, De Fina and King (2011) refer to language conflict as the inability to communicate with the target language either verbally or non-verbally in a coherent and cohesive manner. French-speaking students are unable to speak ESL fluently yet, this is so because they do not yet have enough ESL vocabulary in their repertoire that will enable them speak ESL as native speakers of English.

Moreover, French-speaking students are not yet proficient in ESL and cannot make constructive sentences in English without errors. For this to be achieved, their system of language must select words from the target language, whilst words from the non-target language must be ignored. P2 in her interview said it is difficult to understand English words without her first processing them in French. On the same note, P4 also indicated that she could not speak completely in English without borrowing words from French to complete the missing phrases, when she could not obtain suitable English words for such phrases. This explains why their first language is dominating ESL in the process of acquisition. This causes language conflict in terms of construction as well as articulation.

In addition, in her interview, P5 gave a good example of language conflict in terms of communication in writing when she quoted two similar phrases and spellings with



different meanings in French and English. The phrase *cul de sac* in French is translated as “bag-bottom” and the same phrase means “dead end” in English. Furthermore, P3 also said that he finds difficulties using the ATM due to some of the directions written in English, which when read and interpreted mean something else in French.

Although French-speaking students are experiencing language conflicts because they already have other languages in their repertoire, constructing a new identity as they struggle to acquire ESL for both academic and social purposes is inevitable. However, it does come with challenges such as adaptation and unavailability of the necessary resources to assist them learn the target language.

French-speaking students use different methods and tools to learn English because they want to speak English the proper way, as native speakers. P7 mentioned in his interview that he is learning English online as well as through watching English cartoons and documentaries. This is because he wants to speak English as well as native speakers, hence, constructing a new identity as a native speaker of English. This is in line with Huda *et al.* (2017) who says that when students learn another language culture both in school and their environment, it empowers them to construct new identities and at the same time negotiate their own identity.

### **7.2.3. English Language Acquisition and Vygotsky’s ZPD**

The findings of this study show that French-speaking students can acquire ESL at a faster rate if they get the necessary support needed. However, since Lantolf *et al.* (2018) argue that Vygotsky’s ZPD is not “Zone of Proximal Learning” meaning it is applicable both in academic and social context. Hence, French-speaking students are using different platforms to acquire English. The various platforms as indicated by French-speaking

students provide them with the support system they need as far as learning English is concerned.

Online English courses assisted P7 to be able to grasp the basic concepts of the fundamental aspects in English with regard to verb conjugations. In addition, during the interview with P3, he mentioned that he is getting support from both the school authorities and his classmates. This has enabled him to have advantage over his fellow French-speaking peers who do not have the opportunity to get such assistance. It is obvious that Vygotsky's ZDP is functional within French-speaking students as they seek aids via other means to acquire English. It is obvious if a learner gets assistance or support in learning something, that learner will do better and learn faster than if the learner is struggling alone.

French-speaking students struggle on their own to learn ESL especially for academic purpose, apart from P3 who gets supports from both the school authorities and classmates. This is problematic for them because they must cope with school activities as well as creating time to acquire the target language. Amid all this, they are faced with the challenge of giving up their academic career, as P5 confessed in his interview that he just feels like abandoning everything and going back home. French-speaking students, if given the necessary support needed, might not be thinking of giving up on their studies and returning to their country.

It is of great importance for any L2 acquirer to go through a scaffolding process when acquiring a target language used as the medium of instruction. Although this will not eliminate all the challenges they encounter in the process of acquisition, it will however minimize them and give the learners some sense of belonging and motivation. Moreover, it will also minimize the language conflict that might occur during the process of acquisition due to the lack of interest towards the target language.

#### **7.2.4. Environmental influences on L2 acquisition**

The current study, as established in chapter one, also investigates the environmental influences on ESL acquisition of French-speaking students in a college in Cape Town. Environmental influences in the present context represent all the factors that are present in the environment that can influence French-speaking participants' engagement in learning ESL for both academic and social purposes positively and negatively. L2 learning cannot exist in vacuum; hence, there are contextual elements that involve L2 learning such as the environment. This is because acquiring a language depends on social interaction. In addition, environmental factors in this context are described as those variables surrounding participant's immediate environment that influences them acquiring ESL.

The finding of this study demonstrates that the college, teachers, the interaction pattern in class, participants' residential areas, family, interlocutors, and the community at large influence participants' ability to learn the target language. Participants in this study demonstrate elements of frustration and discouragement towards learning the target language due to the reaction of people around them. P1 showed some degree of disappointment because the school authorities, as promised, could not assist him. On the other hand, P4 indicated that there is a lot going around her as far as languages are concerned, therefore, slowing down the process of her acquiring ESL. Furthermore, during my period of observation, I noticed that French-speaking students were not participating in classroom discussions due to the language barrier. Hence, the classroom environment was not friendly towards them in terms of communicating through the target language.

Additionally, the findings of this study also justify the conflict and challenges that exist between French-speaking participants' environment in terms of languages and the target language. It is true that language is seen as a site of identity construction (Taqavi & Rezaei, 2021: 395) but French-speaking students are faced with the challenge of constructing L2 identity within their environment due to the numerous languages they are in close contact with. During her interview, P6 confessed that she sometimes cannot differentiate between the target language and other languages spoken by her interlocutors. This proves that the environment has a vital role to play as far as learning the target language is concerned. Moreover, P8, P3, and P1 said they could not resist speaking their first languages when having a conversation with family from home. This elucidates how their immediate environment also acts as deterrence towards the target language.

However, this study also found out that, though there are numerous environmental factors in the domain of languages that have negative impacts to French-speaking students' ESL acquisition, they are some environmental factors that also influence the positive aspect in ESL acquisition. Subsequently, participants in this study aimed at using such positive aspects to enable them acquire ESL for both academic and social factors. Some of these factors include engaging in conversation using only the target language more often; spend more time with native speakers of English, preventing the use of language transfer, language borrowing and code-switching during conversations.

#### **7.2.5. Language anxiety and social influence towards ESL acquisition**

“Language anxiety is defined as the worry and negative emotional reaction when learning or using a second language or foreign language” (Sevinç, 2018: 3). It is also the emotions display by L2 language learners due to their incapability of being themselves

and to associate accurately with speakers of the target language because of the inadequacy in the target language (Sevinç, 2018). The findings of this study prove that French-speaking participants are experiencing language anxiety as they associate socially with their classmates and friends. They fear getting mocked due to the mistakes they might make in their attempt to speak in the target language.

In addition, the current study finds out that participants avoid having conversations with their classmates as well as not asking questions in class due to the language barrier. This is a big challenge to them, as P5 mentioned during his personal narrative that he would love to ask questions in class concerning the subject content, but it is unfortunate that the lecturer might not understand what he is saying due to his poor grammatical knowledge in the language of teaching and learning. French-speaking learners suffer the challenge of fear when having to use ESL for communicative purposes. This is illustrating that French-speaking participants, who are members of the community of immigrants, continuously encounter challenges associated with L2 acquisition in various social contexts.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also demonstrated that elements of both social life and language consequently raise anxiety within the minority group who at the same time are acquirers of the target language. The case of French-speaking students who experience a situation of language conflict with the use of English as the medium of instruction. Therefore, they suffer from language anxiety when speaking ESL with native speakers. This is because their accent is different, and they do not have mastery of the target language. As a result, they have low self-esteem and are not motivated.

### 7.3. DISCUSSION

Vygotskian's sociocultural theory "views language-mediated learning as a process where taking part in socially mediated activities is very important" (Semeon & Mutekwe, 2021: 4). This study has given an in-depth insight into the various perceptions of how French-speaking students at a college in Cape Town encountered language challenges and conflicts in the process of ESL acquisition through socially mediated activities such as social interaction, Google Translate and online lessons for both academic and social purposes. The study shows that ESL acquisition for French-speaking students occurs through social interaction with their environments, which include the college, residential area, the community, and various online social platforms.

The language challenges within the current context involve the different struggles and difficulties faced by the French-speaking students in the process of ESL acquisition while the language conflict includes both the behaviors of French-speaking students towards acquiring ESL and how they struggle with other social linguistic elements such as codeswitching, language transfer, language borrowing, among others. Moreover, L2 acquisition as proven by some L2 theorists, such as Krashen (1982) among others, indicate that the input determines the output as established by Krashen (1982: 20-29) input principles, which suggests that acquisition occurs when learners can acquire vocabularies from the target language with the ability of understanding them. As one of my lecturers used to say "garbage in, garbage out".

P6, P5, P8, and P4 are all doing their best to avoid "picking-up" inappropriate English words from their immediate environment. They are using all the necessary resources at their disposal to build up a strong ESL identity by means of utilizing tools such as Google Translate, online English programs and minimizing the use of codeswitching, language transfer and language borrowing. They aimed at speaking English like native speakers of English and they are striving to construct new identities that would enable them to

integrate themselves with the college community as well as their immediate surroundings. Therefore, they make sure that their input is reflecting their output. In addition, social interaction with native speakers of English and constantly being in close contact with English is the strategy used by participants in this study to obtain proficiency in English and overcome language conflict and challenges.

French-speaking students can only produce what they have acquired so far in terms of sentence constructions, utterances, and meaning making in English. The most effective way they use to measure their progress in English, is using only words from the target language frequently. P7 is working on his accent; he practises speaking using an English accent. This implies he is already constructing a new identity as a native speaker of English. It is in line with Léglise and Migge's (2021) assertion that identity is a pattern that aligns the consciousness of self-affiliation with specific social insights, beliefs, and language, amongst others at a given time and place involving those given by others. French-speaking students have been identified by others who are the majority as Francophones; therefore, they find it difficult though they are practicing it, to speak mostly English in a multilingual context using an English accent. French-speaking students feel like a "square peg in a round hole" within their Cape Town environment in their quest to affiliate themselves with the majority group.

In terms of sociocultural aspects, as mentioned in this study, Cape Town is blended with different socio-cultural backgrounds due to the existence of different ethnic groups, as well as foreign nationals that spice up the community of Cape Town. In other words, I will clearly state here without any doubt that a college in Cape Town can be describe as being embedded with a system of languages where each of these languages have their own unique characteristics in terms of their origins and manner of articulation. As such, in line with Sun and Huang (2018) in such a system, everybody turns to learn from one another to form progressive and diverse interactions with different individuals from the

various sociocultural backgrounds that form the system. However, there are conflicts between the various sociocultural backgrounds due to their differences in ideologies, manner of articulation and linguistic backgrounds especially, from the minority group who feel that they are marginalized through the target language. Hence, it is important to emphasize the importance of language as a sight for identity construction. French-speaking students' have constructed new identities as speakers of English to fit in within their Cape Town environment.

Moreover, it is also important to note that regardless of such rich language diversity in the system, a college in Cape Town still implements a single language, which is English as the sole language of teaching and learning, causing French-speaking students from different sociocultural backgrounds to come up with strategies to acquire English to succeed in their academic career. Subsequently, French-speaking students have derived possible means to acquire the target language, which, off course is by means of social interaction with speakers of the target language, who are also bilingual/multilingual speakers in nature. With such characteristics, they are prone to switch between languages when having a conversation. Thereby, making it difficult for French-speaking students to acquire English smoothly.

This study reinforced Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which demonstrates a flexible relationship that exists between oneself and others in a society where communication takes place by default. Due to the many language challenges and conflicts faced by French-speaking students in the process of ESL acquisition, they still manage to communicate in the target language. This is because language does not only have a cultural or symbolic importance. There is sovereignty in language (Barnes, 2023; Viatori & Ushigua, 2007). French-speaking students demonstrate this aspect when they confess how frustrated they become when they are unable to express themselves fluently in English but then they still manage to communicate. Hence, from the findings of this study



I observed that it is not the concept of language acquisition, which triggers conflict but rather whether and to what extent speakers of the target language disregard or disadvantage those learning the target language because of their identity or their sociocultural background.

In addition, the above finding supports Wilson's (2020) argument, which advocates that the diverse opinions among individuals acquiring the language and speakers of the target language may lead to language conflicts and disagreement. Moreover, that causes language anxiety within French-speaking learners. Since language is power, Francophone participants in this study do not have the target language ability to overcome their negative emotions. Hence, they are face with the challenge of the fear of not being able to successfully construct new identities as native speakers of English without support from the college authorities and their community as supported by Vygotsky's ZPD.

The work of Xi and Lantolf (2021) demonstrates how Vygotsky advocates that the aim of ZPD is to pinpoint and develop the mental functions of students that are in the process of acquiring a target language, instead of those who have already acquired it. Participants in this study apart from P3 received little or no support from the college authorities as far as English language acquisition is concerned. However, they seek support via social online platform such as online learning, Google Translate, English documentaries, and many more. Those platforms are relevant in assisting French-speaking learners to acquire English and be proficient in it.

Therefore, French-speaking learners implemented ZPD to measure the existing or actual level of how they have developed in acquiring English language, as well as identifying the next level they are willing and capable of reaching using mediating symbolism, environmental opportunities, and native speakers who could be of great assistance to facilitate the acquisition process. It has been established that the minority group learns

the target language properly during social interaction or via collaboration with speakers of the target language. It is via such collective struggles accompanied by more resources that acquisition takes place and new vocabularies in the target language are constructed.

#### 7.4. CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The current chapter deals with the findings and discussion of this study. I was able to answer the research questions and discuss their relevance. The findings of this study are underpinned by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which establishes a flexible relationship that exists between oneself and others in a society where communication takes place by default. In a society like Cape Town, where multilingualism and bilingualism are common, issues like language challenges and conflicts form part of the social ills (Vandeyar & Catalano, 2020) faced by French-speaking students in the process of ESL acquisition. Though participants in this study still manage to communicate in the target language, it is difficult for them to concentrate on one language at a time. This is because language does not only have a cultural or symbolic importance. There is power in language.

Participants in this study display a high level of language anxiety as described by Sevinç (2018: 3) as the "worry and negative emotional reaction when learning or using a second language or foreign language". Due to the insufficient English language vocabulary, participants in this study encountered various language conflicts and challenges which include linguistics variations, identity construction, cultural differences, language contacts, and others. Participants also displayed various emotions due to their incapability of being themselves and to associate accurately with speakers of the target language because of the inadequacy in the target language (Sevinç, 2018). Therefore, participants reached their ZPD which is described as the gap that exists between what a

student can do without guidance and what the student can do with guidance. Therefore, they used methods such as online learning, Google Translate, watching of English documentaries, amongst others to acquire ESL (Xi & Lantolf, 2021).

Vygotskian's sociocultural theory "views language-mediated learning as a process where taking part in socially mediated activities is very important" (Semeon & Mutekwe, 2021: 4). Hence, participants in this study took part in some social activities such as social interaction in the process of ESL. The next chapter will focus on the conclusion of this thesis with some recommendations on what could be done in future to enable French-speaking students to limit language conflicts and challenges when studying using a target language.



## **Chapter 8:**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **8.1. PRELIMINARIES**

The current chapter is intended to draw the study to a conclusion. The chapter comprises two main sections. In section 8.1, I provide a summary of the study. In section 8.2, I suggest a few recommendations that should be considered in South African colleges.

#### **8.2. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The importance of immigrant students acquiring L2 (target language) for academic and socialization purposes cannot be overstressed. Since language is the major resource used for learning, every country has their own language policy that emphasizes the specific language/s used as the medium of instruction. The findings of this study demonstrate how immigrant students with a French background in a college, are facing many problems in writing English, the medium of instruction, insufficient vocabulary, inadequate spelling skills, first language interference, and the inability to comprehend the grammatical structure. Language conflict is a vast topic embedded with various linguistic elements and individual's attitude towards another language/s. It shows how individual hassle in the process of searching the correct words to use in L2 acquisition and how they battle to embrace another language through identity construction.

Language challenges involve all the difficulties and problems encountered by immigrant students in the process of identity construction and social integration as they embark on L2 acquisition. The sociocultural approach observes the relevant of social interaction and integration through personal levels of identity integration in L2 acquisition, and the interpretivism approach considers variances among others such as changes in one's social

realities due to changes in time and place, cultural differences, and circumstances in acquiring a second language.

As per the framework of this study, French-speaking immigrant students' ESL acquisition conflicts and challenges are believed to have generated from the varieties of languages they are in close contact with through social interaction, as well as the languages they had already acquired during childhood. This is an indication that French-speaking students dwell within a multilingual setting although they are mostly bilingual and lack support to acquire the target language from the college. Hence, as established by Wilson, (2020) the diverse opinions of a target language among French-speaking students acquiring the language and speakers of the target language generated language conflicts and disagreement.

French-speaking students struggle to acquire ESL because they are exposed to other languages different from the target language. The current study indicated that French-speaking students have not been in an English-speaking environment for more than three months prior to migrating to study in Cape Town. Therefore, differentiating English words with words from the other languages is a challenge to them. However, while participants in this study retain their background as Francophones, they are determined to break all boundaries including constructing new identity in order to acquire ESL to fulfil the main purpose of migrating to Cape Town, which is academic. Therefore, it can be concluded that French-speaking students find it difficult to acquire ESL fluently in their Cape Town environment because of the effect of multilingualism and language diversity. As such, the existence of language conflict contributes to raising challenges to their education endeavors. However, by means of social interactions and the utilization of different social platforms they can engage in the acquisition process.

### 8.3. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcomes of this study lead to various implications and recommendations. A few of these should be mentioned in this concluding section of the study. The first implication of this study falls under the discipline of second language acquisition and the conflicts and challenges attributed to it. Hence, the first recommendation is that lecturers should be able to accommodate students with little or no proficiency in English when planning lectures and during the lecture proceedings. Lecturers must understand that L1 helps to understand L2 when both languages are cognate languages, since learners use L1 knowledge to process and understand what is taught in L2.

On the contrary, L1 becomes a hinderance to the learning process when both languages are totally different systems (Farooq *et al.* 2020). This situation makes it difficult for the students to understand the subject content in L2. Therefore, it is necessary that non-English speakers in colleges, where the medium of instruction is English, should be given more attention by the college authorities.

The second implication of the current study relates to the use of devices during the lecture for the purpose of participation and comprehension. Lecturers should allow the use of laptops or phones during lectures to search for words in English in order to ask and answer questions. This will give some sense of belonging and will enable the students to take part in the lecture rather than just being a silent audience.

A further implication relates to the institution language policy. It is a fact that, although South Africa is a multilingual and multicultural nation, most colleges – especially private ones – have no stated language policy (Zikode, 2017; Nudelman, 2015; Leibowitz & van Deventer, 2007). They use only English as medium of instruction. Therefore, it is recommended that college authorities should implement a plan of action that will accommodate non-English speakers in their policy. Since they are open to accept students

from all language backgrounds, they should be able to assist those that are unable to understand the medium of instruction. This assistance should be through an inclusive language policy as well as through language support infrastructures such writing centers, translation services, and language laboratories.

Another recommendation in this regard is that colleges should have a compulsory one-year English program for non-English speakers. The program can be a transitional program aimed at empowering the students in terms of English language proficiency (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

Finally, this study is limited to investigating the conflicts and challenges encountered by French-speaking students in a college at Cape Town in the process of acquiring ESL for both academic and social purposes. I recommend that future studies can consider expanding on the effect of the conflicts and challenges of ESL acquisition on French-speaking students' performance in terms of the input and output in relation to vocabulary, grammatical structure, and L1 interference. The findings may help in identifying more gaps in the field of second language acquisition.

Finally, it can be ascertained that the South African education system has the capability or resources to come up with policies that can facilitate Francophone immigrants' integration into the system easily and faster. This can be done by employing more French lecturers or individuals who can act as interpreters to Francophone immigrants during their early stages of English language acquisition. French language was brought into Africa during colonization by French-speaking colonial powers such France and Belgium. French has surpassed local languages in most French-speaking Africa countries. This could explain why Francophone immigrants in Africa find it difficult to integrate in English speaking African countries such as South Africa.

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## APPENDICES: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTED

### Appendix 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What are your feelings living in Cape Town?
2. How would you describe the community you live into somebody who has never been live there before?
3. Is your present community different from the one back home? How are both communities different?
4. How do you find the different languages spoken in Cape Town? Are you familiar with any of the languages? If yes, which one and how?
5. What are the different languages spoken in your neighbourhoods? What is the main language you speak at home with your family?
6. How do you interact in college with friends, classmates and teachers?
7. Do you understand and can interpret words and sentences in English? If not, how do you cope with college studies?
8. Are you learning English? How? In a formal or informal setting?
9. Does your sociocultural background help you to understand English?
10. Are there any historical similarities in terms of linguistic tiles in both English and French?
11. Do you code switch when speaking?
12. How is codeswitching a problem in acquiring English L2?
13. Do your teachers code switch when teaching in class?
14. How would you describe the language setting in your Cape Town Environments?
15. How “picking up” English words does affect your proficiency in English?
16. Do you learn about different language cultures when interacting with speakers of different languages?

17. How does coming in close contact with different languages hinder your academic career?
18. How do you negotiate your identity by accepting the identities of speakers of different languages?
19. How would you prefer to acquire English L2?
20. Do you have any suggestions on how the policy maker can help French-speaking students to acquire English L2 within a shorter period for academic purpose?



## Appendix 2: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

1. Is the College environment language friendly?
  - How many different languages are spoken on campus.
  - Are the students friendly?
  - How do they demonstrate their sociocultural background?
  - How intense is the use of codeswitching?
2. How proficient are student in English?
  - Do they student speak English correctly?
  - Are the teachers qualified enough to teach in English?
  - What language is mostly spoken by the students?
3. Does the College have a support system for English L2 acquisition?
  - Are there any facilities for SLA?
  - Are the French-speaking students treated differently due to language barrier?
4. Does the College promote different cultures?
5. How does the administration manage diversity?
6. How do other French-speaking students who can read and write English proficiently reacts towards the fresh men?
7. Is there a cordial relationship between French-speaking students and other students?

### Appendix 3: TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWS

Q= Question

R= Response

#### Interview 1- Participant 7

1. **Question:** What is your country of origin? What are your feelings living in Cape Town?

**Response:** Gabon. At first, I find it difficult living in Cape Town because it was a new environment and different languages and culture. That made me miss home for some time.

2. **Q:** How would you describe the community you live into somebody who has never lived there before?

**R:** Hmm! I think the community is friendly however; they are not open to strangers

3. **Q:** Is your present community different from the one back home? How are both communities different?

**R:** Off course! Difference in culture and the various official languages. Gabon has only one official language that is French; I heard South Africa has 11 official Languages, which, I find it funny. That is just my humble opinion.

4. **Q:** How do you find the different languages spoken in Cape Town? Are you familiar with any of the languages? If yes, which one and how?

**R:** As I said before, 11 official languages sounds funny to me unlike in Gabon we have only one official language. I would say I have heard people speaking English before but I could not understand what they were saying. I am from a French



background so I am familiar with French and they are people speaking French in Cape Town.

5. **Q:** What are the different languages spoken in your neighbourhood? What is the main language you speak with your family?

**R:** You know besides the 11 official languages, they are different dialects spoken in South Africa. I do not know all the different languages spoken in my neighbourhood but I speak French and Nzebi with my family.

6. **Q:** How do you interact in college with friends, classmates and teachers?

**R:** From the way am speaking you can tell that am facing challenges to communicate. I have friends with French background, I barely chat with my classmates besides those from Congo who speak French that I interact with them. As for my teachers, they know that I do not speak English fluently so they try to understand me.

7. **Q:** Do you understand and can interpret words and sentences in English? If no, how do you cope with college studies?

**R:** When I first came here, I could not understand or interpret any English words. I had to struggle to line English through online courses, by watching English cartoons and documentaries. I most of the times use google translate.

8. **Q:** Are you learning English? How? In a formal or informal setting?

**R:** Yes! I am learning English from people around me like in school in order to interact but I want to speak proper English so I enrol in online English courses and I also watch English programs.

9. **Q:** Does your sociocultural background helps you to understand English?

**R:** Not at all. I am typically from a French background and our culture is different from that of South Africans.

10. **Q:** Are there any historical similarities in terms of linguistic tiles in both English and French?

**R:** I will say there are some words I see in English that have the same spelling and meaning in French. E.g. table, radio, soccer and many others. I think English and French may have something in common.

11. **Q:** Do you code switch when speaking?

**R:** When I first arrived here, I knew nothing in English. When I started attempting to speak English almost all my sentences were full with French words then I will describe using my hands. At least I can communicate now a bit better so I try not to code switch.

12. **Q:** How is codeswitching a problem in acquiring English L2?

**R:** It is a very big problem oh! It does not help me to learn English quicker. I do not want to be in a situation where French will be over shadowing my English when I eventually become fluent in English. I do not want to replace English words with French words in the process of code switching.

13. **Q:** Do your teachers code switch when teaching in class?

**R:** No!

14. **Q:** How would you describe the language setting in your Cape Town Environments?

**R:** For me it is very confusing because I hear different types of languages but my only interest is English because that what they use in college.

15. **Q:** How “picking up” English words does affect your proficiency in English?

**R:** I sometimes pick up the wrong words that do not apply to the context that I use it for. Especially the slangs. It is not good for Standard English but good when interacting out of school.

16. **Q:** Do you learn different language cultures when interacting with speakers of different languages?

**R:** Yes! I do. That is where the problem lies in learning English. I face lot of problems learning English because there are different English speakers with different tongues around me. It makes me confused.

17. **Q:** How does coming in contact with different languages hinder your academic career?

**R:** I have spent more time learning English in order to cope in college. These other languages around me are making it difficult because I get confused with identifying English speakers.

18. **Q:** How do you negotiate your identity by accepting the identities of speakers of different languages?

**R:** I try not to frequently use my French accent when speaking. This will help me to adopt an English accent.

19. **Q:** How would you prefer to acquire English L2?

**R:** I was hoping the college will help me in learning English but it is not happening. I am learning English through online courses and many other social media. I want to learn English in an official manner.

20. **Q:** Do you have any suggestions on how policy makers can help French-speaking students to acquire English L2 within a shorter period for academic purpose?

**R:** I will say that the college should have a transitional program for those who do not have any idea in English to start from there before engaging into the actual school program. That is what I will suggest.



## Interview 2- Participant 3

1. **Question:** What is your country of origin? What are your feelings living in Cape Town?

**Response:** Congo Brazaville. I have mix feelings, I like here but the only thing that I do not like is that am struggling with English. It is making me feel bad and always think about Congo.

2. **Q:** How would you describe the community you live into somebody who has never live there before?

**R:** I live in a student area and for me it is ok, everyone is friendly and accommodating in one way or the other. It is a multilingual and multiracial community.

3. **Q:** Is your present community different from the one back home? How are both communities different?

**R:** In Congo, we speak Lingala, Kituba and French but here there are many languages and English is the main one use in school. That is the major problem am facing here especially when English is the only language use in college.

4. **Q:** How do you find the different languages spoken in Cape Town? Are you familiar with any of the languages? If yes, which one and how?

**R:** First, I will say there are many languages spoken here in Cape Town I am confused because I do not know how to differentiate them. I am familiar with Lingala, Swahili and even English but I have never been in an English environment before I came to South Africa

5. **Q:** What are the different languages spoken in your neighbourhood? What is the main language you speak at home with your family?

**R:** I told that there many languages spoken around me like English, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, Swahili, Portuguese, Bangladesh and lots. I speak Lingala, French and Kituba with my family.

6. **Q:** How do you interact in college with friends, classmates and teachers?

**R:** I use google translate to translate from French to English so I can get the right words, it very difficult and frustrating for me. It is difficult for me to participate in classroom discussion because of language barrier.

7. **Q:** Do you understand and can interpret words and sentences in English? If no, how do you cope with college studies?

**R:** I have already told you before that I am struggling with English so I use google translate.

8. **Q:** Are you learning English? How? In a formal or informal setting?

**R:** Yes, I am definitely learning English from my classmates and friends; I also listen when people are having a conversation just to learn something from it. I do not attend any English classes but I read English dictionaries and watch English programs. I mostly really on internet to learn English.

9. **Q:** Does your sociocultural background helps you to understand English?

**R:** Not at all, we have different culture.

10. **Q:** Are there any historical similarities in terms of linguistic tiles in both English and French?

**R:** I have noticed that they are some words that are spell the same in both English and French and they have the same meaning in context. Sorry I think of any now.

11. **Q:** Do you code switch when speaking?

**R:** Definitely! I can speak three different languages fluently and English is the fourth though am still in the process of learning it. Yes, I do switch from one language to the other that is really a mess.

12. **Q:** How is codeswitching a problem in acquiring English L2?

**R:** Let me be honest with you, code switching is bad for someone like me who is still learning English because reduces my chances of becoming fluent in English. Words from the other languages just pop in when am struggling to find suitable words in English.

13. **Q:** Do your teachers code switch when teaching in class?

**R:** No!

14. **Q:** How would you describe the language setting in your Cape Town Environments?

**R:** It is very diverse and unique. It is multilingual in nature and everyone I have come across is bilingual.

15. **Q:** How “picking up” English words does affect your proficiency in English?

**R:** It affects it because I sometimes pick up the wrong words and use it wrongly.

16. **Q:** Do you learn different language cultures when interacting with speakers of different languages?

**R:** Of course, I have learnt a lot about other people’s language culture through social interaction.

17. **Q:** how does coming in contact with different languages hinder your academic career?

**R:** It does because it prevents me from learning English faster and become proficient in it. I wish I were around people who only speak English that way I will learn it faster.

18. **Q:** How do you negotiate your identity by accepting the identities of speakers of different languages?

**R:** I try to speak like them and I do that only with English because that is my target.

19. **Q:** How would you prefer to acquire English L2?

**R:** I prefer to attend English for beginners' classes. I think I will do so when lockdown regulations are lifted and everything is normal.

20. **Q:** Do you have any suggestions on how policy makers can help French-speaking students to acquire English L2 within a shorter period for academic purpose?

**R:** I think that they should lay emphasis when students are applying to study in their colleges to learn English and present a certificate before admission.

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a stylized building facade with columns and the text "UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE" below it.

UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE



### Interview 3- Participant 4

1. **Question:** What is your country of origin? What are your feelings living in Cape Town?

**Response:** Congo DRC. Am happy that am studying although I do not do well because of language issues and am sad because I miss my family.

2. **Q:** How would you describe the community you live into somebody who has never live there before?

**R:** Very busy in terms of the different languages that are spoken and different cultures. For me it is a friendly community.

3. **Q:** Is your present community different from the one back home? How are both communities different?

**R:** We do not have many immigrants in Congo DRC; therefore, there are not many different languages spoken as it is in Cape Town. I can also understand the language use as the medium of instruction in my country that is French whereas am struggling to understand English here and it is the language use as the medium of instruction.

4. **Q:** How do you find the different languages spoken in Cape Town? Are you familiar with any of the languages? If yes, which one and how?

**R:** They are many but I am familiar with Lingala, Swahili and French because they are spoken in my country.

5. **Q:** What are the different languages spoken in your neighbourhood? What is the main language you speak at home with your family?

**R:** They are many, isiXhosa, Swahili, English, Afrikaans and others. I am familiar with those ones I told you before.

6. **Q:** How do you interact in college with friends, classmates and teachers?

**R:** I use google translate to communicate in English and speak my languages with those from my country.

7. **Q:** Do you understand and can interpret words and sentences in English? If no, how do you cope with college studies?

**R:** At first, I could not. With the help of google translate and listening to English conversations both at school and out of school, I can now manage to express myself in English. I do record lectures and use google translate to understand them.

8. **Q:** Are you learning English? How? In a formal or informal setting?

**R:** Definitely, I am learning English. I use online platforms like wold search, online courses and many others to learn English. I also learn from friends and when people are discussing around me I pick up words.

9. **Q:** Does your sociocultural background helps you to understand English?

**R:** I will say yes because where I come from we like to interact with people even strangers. That is helping me to feel free, associate with others, and learn from them.

10. **Q:** Are there any historical similarities in terms of linguistic tiles in both English and French?

**R:** Yes, there are some words that are spell the same in both English and French but they do not have the same meaning Cul de sac in French is translated as “bag-bottom” Cul de sac in English is a traffic sign meaning “dead end”. I cannot remember other examples now.

11. **Q:** Do you code switch when speaking?

**R:** You can tell that I code switch because you can hear me using some French words now

As we are discussing.

12. **Q:** How is codeswitching a problem in acquiring English L2?

**R:** It is because it allows me to substitute English words with words from my other languages. That is not good for someone learning a language because it does not give room for me to think of English words, their words just pop in.

13. **Q:** Do your teachers code switch when teaching in class?

**R:** No, they do not but they also do not care whether I understand the content or not.

14. **Q:** How would you describe the language setting in your Cape Town Environments?

**R:** It is multilingual in nature; too much use of code switching that makes it difficult to learn proper English.

15. **Q:** How “picking up” English words does affect your proficiency in English?

**R:** I sometimes do not get the words correctly; sometimes those speaking English do not speak Standard English that can spoil my English.

16. **Q:** Do you learn different language cultures when interacting with speakers of different languages?

**R:** Yes, I do. Especially when I am trying to speak like native speakers of English.

17. **Q:** How does coming in contact with different languages hinder your academic career?

**R:** It does because I get confused learning English words.

18. **Q:** How do you negotiate your identity by accepting the identities of speakers of different languages?

**R:** I try to speak in a way that they will understand me'

19. **Q:** How would you prefer to acquire English L2?

**R:** By attending a proper English lesson class for those who are still learning English.

20. **Q:** Do you have any suggestions on how policy makers can help French-speaking students to acquire English L2 within a shorter period for academic purpose?

**R:** I will like them to organise English workshops for French students during the first year of studies.



## Interview 4- Participant 6

1. **Question:** What is your country of origin? What are your feelings living in Cape Town?

**Response:** Cameroon. I am ok, just that English that the language use in college is difficult for me because I cannot speak it.

2. **Q:** How would you describe the community you live into somebody who has never been live there before?

**R:** Full of people with different nationalities, culture and languages. It is a blended society.

3. **Q:** Is your present community different from the one back home? How are both communities different?

**R:** I will say it is different because we have two official languages French and English but here there are 11 official languages with English as the medium of instruction in the college.

4. **Q:** How do you find the different languages spoken in Cape Town? Are you familiar with any of the languages? If yes, which one and how?

**R:** I am not surprise with the different languages because we also have many different dialects in my country. The only problem is that it makes it difficult for me to learn English. Yes, I am familiar with French and I have heard people speaking English before but I did not understand what they were saying.

5. **Q:** What are the different languages spoken in your neighbourhood? What is the main language you speak at home with your family?

**R:** isiXhosa, Zulu, Lingala, Portuguese, English, Swahili, Chinese, French I cannot remember all now. I speak French and Bafeuk

6. **Q:** How do you interact in college with friends, classmates and teachers?
- R:** Through google translate and sign language
7. **Q:** Do you understand and can interpret words and sentences in English? If no, how do you cope with college studies?
- R:** I can try now, but I could not when I first came here. I record lecture notes and I use google translate to understand the lecture.
8. **Q:** Are you learning English? How? In a formal or informal setting?
- R:** I have to learn English; I do not have any choice. I learn by reading English dictionaries, through google translate, I watch English programs and I learn from my friends.
9. **Q:** Does your sociocultural background helps you to understand English?
- R:** Yes, because my country is a bilingual country although I do not speak English but because I am from a country where English is, an official language motivates me to learn it so I can finish my study and go back home and work in the English region.
10. **Q:** Are there any historical similarities in terms of linguistic tiles in both English and French?
- R:** Yes, I have come across words that are use both in English and in French; sorry I cannot think of any now.
11. **Q:** Do you code switch when speaking?
- R:** That is a funny question because I have been using some French words as we are talking. Yes, I do code switch.
12. **Q:** How is codeswitching a problem in acquiring English L2?

**R:** It makes me confuse between English words and the other languages that I speak. It prevents me from trying very hard to search for English words.

13. **Q:** Do your teachers code switch when teaching in class?

**R:** No, they use only English. However, I am worried because they do not border to find out if I can understand what they are saying or not.

14. **Q:** How would you describe the language setting in your Cape Town Environments?

**R:** For me it is rich and poor at the same time. Rich because there is diversity and poor because it is difficult to find someone speaking English without code switching except in class when the teacher is lecturing.

15. **Q:** How “picking up” English words does affect your proficiency in English?

**R:** When I pick up random English words without knowing their actual meaning, it destroys my English.

16. **Q:** Do you learn different language cultures when interacting with speakers of different languages?

**R:** I do because French is different from English so are their expressions different, I learn different expressions from other languages.

17. **Q:** How does coming in contact with different languages hinder your academic career?

**R:** It distract me from learning English faster and accurately.

18. **Q:** How do you negotiate your identity by accepting the identities of speakers of different languages?

**R:** I try to speak the way native speakers of English are speaking but the same time maintain my standard as a francophone.

19. **Q:** How would you prefer to acquire English L2?

**R:** In a formal setting.

20. **Q:** Do you have any suggestions on how policy makers can help French-speaking students to acquire English L2 within a shorter period for academic purpose?

**R:** I will say they should initiate English programs for non-English speakers to all colleges to assist them acquire English before engaging into their proper academic programs.





## Interview 5- Participant 1

1. **Question:** What is your country of origin? What are your feelings living in Cape Town?

**Response:** Congo Brazaville. Great. I am enjoying the diversity.

2. **Q:** How would you describe the community you live into somebody who has never live there before?

**R:** It consists of people from different nationalities and different accents. There are multiples of languages spoken within the community.

3. **Q:** Is your present community different from the one back home? How are both communities different?

**R:** I can understand the languages that are spoken in my community back home but here is different because there are many languages and it is difficult to learn them all.

4. **Q:** How do you find the different languages spoken in Cape Town? Are you familiar with any of the languages? If yes, which one and how?

**R:** There are many and I am familiar with French, Lingala and Kituba. I am starting to be familiar with English because I get support from school as well.

5. **Q:** What are the different languages spoken in your neighbourhood? What is the main language you speak at home with your family?

**R:** I do not know all the languages but there is English, Portuguese, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa and many more. I speak Lingala, Kituba and French.

6. **Q:** How do you interact in college with friends, classmates and teachers?

**R:** My teachers and classmates understand my challenges in English and they give me all the necessary support I can get. I use google translate and English dictionaries to master English word. I also record lecture notes.

7. **Q:** Do you understand and can interpret words and sentences in English? If no, how do you cope with college studies?

**R:** I am trying although I am still learning. I record lectures and use google translate to help me understand the lecture.

8. **Q:** Are you learning English? How? In a formal or informal setting?

**R:** Yes, I am from my teachers, classmates and friends and on the internet.

9. **Q:** Does your sociocultural background helps you to understand English?

**R:** I will say yes because I interact socially with everyone.

10. **Q:** Are there any historical similarities in terms of linguistic tiles in both English and French?

**R:** Yes, but I cannot remember any examples now to give you.

11. **Q:** Do you code switch when speaking?

**R.** Yes, like every other person I have met in South Africa.

12. **Q:** How is codeswitching a problem in acquiring English L2?

**R:** I will say it slows down the process and it makes me not to know when someone is speaking English or another language.

13. **Q:** Do your teachers code switch when teaching in class?

**R:** No

14. **Q:** How would you describe the language setting in your Cape Town Environments?

**R:** It is multilingual and everybody there speak more than one language. It is very diverse.

15. **Q:** How “picking up” English words does affect your proficiency in English?

**R:** I sometimes pick the wrong words and it is not good for someone like me who is learning a new language. It makes me say the wrong words.

16. **Q:** Do you learn different language cultures when interacting with speakers of different languages?

**R:** Sure, for instance, there are certain exclamation sounds that I make which, is normal in my language but in Xhosa, it is very bad sound to make. They will say you are rude if you make such sound.

17. **Q:** How does coming in contact with different languages hinder your academic career?

**R:** It does not help me to learn English as quick as I can thereby making me to have poor makes in my courses.

18. **Q:** How do you negotiate your identity by accepting the identities of speakers of different languages?

**R:** I try to speak in a way they can understand. Since am learning English, I try to speak like an English person.

19. **Q:** How would you prefer to acquire English L2?

**R:** By attending a proper English lesson for beginners.

20. **Q:** Do you have any suggestions on how policy makers can help French-speaking students to acquire English L2 within a shorter period for academic purpose?

**R:** I will really wish that they should tell all colleges accepting foreign nationals to make sure that they present a certificate that proves that they have learn English in order to attend English lectures and understand the content.



## Interview 6- Participant 8

1. **Question:** What is your country of origin? What are your feelings living in Cape Town?

**Response:** Gabon. At least am studying so am happy being here.

2. **Q:** How would you describe the community you live into somebody who has never been live there before?

**R:**

3. **Q:** Is your present community different from the one back home? How are both communities different?

**R:** We do not have many foreign nationals back home as compare to South Africa. There also many different languages here as compare to where I am coming from.

4. **Q:** How do you find the different languages spoken in Cape Town? Are you familiar with any of the languages? If yes, which one and how?

**R:** I do not have problem with the different languages, my challenges relate to how people mix different language at once when talking. I cannot differentiate between English and other languages. I am familiar with French because it is one of my language.

5. **Q:** What are the different languages spoken in your neighbourhood? What is the main language you speak at home with your family?

**R:** Sorry there are many of them, let me name a few. Afrikaans, Lingala, Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho and Swahili. I speak Fang my dialect and French.

6. **Q:** How do you interact in college with friends, classmates and teachers?

**R:** I use Google translate.

7. **Q:** Do you understand and can interpret words and sentences in English? If no, how do you cope with college studies?

**R:** I am still in the process of learning English, I try to interpret and understand some words in English. I use other means such as google translate and I record lectures.

8. **Q:** Are you learning English? How? In a formal or informal setting?

**R:** I am learning English from my friends and classmate and through internet.

9. **Q:** Does your sociocultural background helps you to understand English?

**R:** Not really but I think there are some English words that are also use in French.

10. **Q:** Are there any historical similarities in terms of linguistic tiles in both English and French?

**R:** As I just mentioned, there similar words use both in English and French.

11. **Q:** Do you code switch when speaking?

**R:** Yes, but I hate it especially now that I am struggling to learn English.

12. **Q:** How is codeswitching a problem in acquiring English L2?

**R:** It makes it difficult for me to learn English from others when they switch from one language to the other.

13. **Q:** Do your teachers code switch when teaching in class?

**R:** No

14. **Q:** How would you describe the language setting in your Cape Town Environments?

**R:** It is very diverse and rich.

15. **Q:** How “picking up” English words does affect your proficiency in English?

**R:** Actually, I do not use them correctly at times.

16. **Q:** Do you learn different language cultures when interacting with speakers of different languages?

**R:** Many, I have learnt many things in terms of perception and beliefs.

17. **Q:** How does coming in contact with different languages hinder your academic career?

**R:** It makes me not to different between English and other languages. I get confused when studying.

18. **Q:** How do you negotiate your identity by accepting the identities of speakers of different languages?

**R:** By pronouncing English words as native speakers of English do.

19. **Q:** How would you prefer to acquire English L2?

**R:** In a well organised English lesson class.

20. **Q:** Do you have any suggestions on how the policy maker can help French-speaking students to acquire English L2 within a shorter period for academic purpose?

**R:** We should be given the opportunity to do our schoolwork using the language we know best.

## Interview 7- Participant 5

1. **Question:** What is your country of origin? What are your feelings living in Cape Town?

**Response:** Cameroon. I like here although I am facing some language problems. I know I am originally from a country where English and French are the official language but I have only been in French-speaking areas.

2. **Q:** How would you describe the community you live into somebody who has never been live there before?

**R:** Lively with many different languages spoken from different nationalities

3. **Q:** Is your present community different from the one back home? How are both communities different?

**R:** Yes, because there are many different nationalities speaking different languages as compare to back home where we have few foreign nationals. However, we have various ethnic languages spoken by various tribal glans

4. **Q:** How do you find the different languages spoken in Cape Town? Are you familiar with any of the languages? If yes, which one and how?

**R:** There are many and I am familiar with French.

5. **Q:** What are the different languages spoken in your neighbourhood? What is the main language you speak at home with your family?

**R:** Afrikaans, Swahili, Xhosa, Lingala, Portuguese, Sotho, Chinese, Lebanese and many others. The mainly speak French and Nufi dialect.

6. **Q:** How do you interact in college with friends, classmates and teachers?

**R:** I use google translate to communicate.



7. **Q:** Do you understand and can interpret words and sentences in English? If no, how do you cope with college studies?

**R:** I do understand a little bit now unlike when I first arrive here I knew nothing. I records lecture notes and I also use google translate to understand the meaning in English

8. **Q:** Are you learning English? How? In a formal or informal setting?

**R:** Of course, I am learning English; I reach English dictionaries, watch English programs and watch English for beginners' tutorials in the internet.

9. **Q:** Does your sociocultural background helps you to understand English?

**R:** Yes. I like to socialize and through that, I interact with speakers of English. I learn in the process of interacting with them.

10. **Q:** Are there any historical similarities in terms of linguistic tiles in both English and French?

**R:** There are words that are used in both French and English with the meaning and spelling the same. The only difference with those words is the suffixes, these is because like English, French has many suffixes. This does not mean that I can speak English fluently. Examples will be table and la table, passion and la passion and many more.

11. **Q:** Do you code switch when speaking?

**R:** Yes, I most of the time realise that I am using more French words that English words when having a conversation. This is because they keep saying "sorry" meaning they do not understand what I am saying.

12. **Q:** How is codeswitching a problem in acquiring English L2?

**R:** It is because it does not give me the chance to search for English words in my repertoire. French words keep popping up as I struggle with English.

13. **Q:** Do your teachers code switch when teaching in class?

**R:** No. Unfortunately, they also do not border if I understood the subject content or not. I have a big challenge in learning English especially as the school authorities do not assist us.

14. **Q:** How would you describe the language setting in your Cape Town Environments?

**R:** It is diverse and reach characterise with code switching, language transfer, language borrowing and many more.

15. **Q:** How “picking up” English words does affect your proficiency in English?

**R:** Random picking of words lead to language conflict between existing languages in my head and it also contribute in making pick and use words wrongly within context.

16. **Q:** Do you learn different language cultures when interacting with speakers of different languages?

**R:** Yes, I do, they are some slangs that does not mean bad in French however, means something bad in Xhosa. I do not know how to explain it but they have different meaning base on the different culture.

17. **Q:** How does coming in contact with different languages hinder your academic career?

**R:** It slows down the process of learning English faster as compare if English was the only Language I hear all the time.

18. **Q:** How do you negotiate your identity by accepting the identities of speakers of different languages?

**R:** When I am speaking English, I try to speak like native speakers of English. Although I still have strong French accent, I am trying to learn and speak English like native speakers of English.

19. **Q:** How would you prefer to acquire English L2?

**R:** Through an English, course design for beginners like me.

20. **Q:** Do you have any suggestions on how the policy maker can help French-speaking students to acquire English L2 within a shorter period for academic purpose?

**R:** I will say they should ensure that all schools admitting French-speaking students should have English short courses for them to start with before doing the actual program for which they apply. This will at least enable them to have the basic knowledge in English for communication.



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## Interview 8- Participant 2

1. **Question:** what is your country of origin? What are your feelings living in Cape Town?

**Response:** I am from DR Congo. I like it here I miss my family too.

2. **Q:** How would you describe the community you live into somebody who has never been live there before?

**R:** It is not bad for me I like Cape Town

3. **Q:** Is your present community different from the one back home? How are both communities different?

**R:** Yes, back home I feel free. I understand the language and am with my family. Here is different people different language.

4. **Q:** How do you find the different languages spoken in Cape Town? Are you familiar with any of the languages? If yes, which one and how?

**R:** They are many languages. I understand Lingala and French. I can try in English.

5. **Q:** What are the different languages spoken in your neighbourhood? What is the main language you speak at home with your family?

**R:** There is English, Afrikaans, Swahili, Xhosa, Portuguese plenty of them. I speak Lingala and French.

6. **Q:** How do you interact in college with friends, classmates and teachers?

**R:** I try to speak English because I want to learn. I also records lecture and listen after class.

7. **Q:** Do you understand and can interpret words and sentences in English? If no, how do you cope with college studies?

R: Off course, I manage to understand and speak English. You can see we are speaking in English now. I try to learn.

8. Q: Are you learning English? How? In a formal or informal setting?

R: Yes, I am learning English. I use google translate, read books and listen to people talk

9. Q: Does your sociocultural background helps you to understand English?

R: I will say yes because sometimes I interpret using French to understand.

10. Q: Are there any historical similarities in terms of linguistic tiles in both English and French?

R: I think so because they are some words in French that have the same meaning in English

11. Q: Do you code switch when speaking?

R: Yes, I do especially when am speaking English I normally use some French words without knowing.

12. Q: How is codeswitching a problem in acquiring English L2?

R: It is because it makes me confuse with words to use. I forget myself most of the time and speak French.

13. Q: Do your teachers code switch when teaching in class?

R: No!

14. Q: How would you describe the language setting in your Cape Town Environments?

R: Very diverse. Too many different languages.

15. Q: How “picking up” English words does affect your proficiency in English?

R: When I hear others speak I use the words sometimes wrongly

16. Q: Do you learn different language cultures when interacting with speakers of different languages?

R: Yes, because they are some things that the Xhosa person will say that is not serious in my language but is serious to them.

17. Q: How does coming in contact with different languages hinder your academic career?

R: It makes me not to learn English quickly. That is why I fail some courses.

18. Q: How do you negotiate your identity by accepting the identities of speakers of different languages?

R: I try to change my accent when I am speaking in English. I want to speak like an English person.

19. Q: How would you prefer to acquire English L2?

R: I will like to read books that are more in English and interact more in English so that I can learn it well.

20. Q: Do you have any suggestions on how the policy maker can help French-speaking students to acquire English L2 within a shorter period for academic purpose?

R: Please they must add English for beginners in all colleges. Especially for foreigners from French country like me.

## Appendix 4: TRANSCRIPTION OF OBSERVATION RESULTS

### Day 1 at college

I observe the following during Business and Finance lecture from participants P2, P8 and P5:

- They were seated separately from the rest of the students.
- They were discussing among themselves in French, while lecture is going on in English.
- They were trying to understand the content in French.
- The lecturer did not pay attention to what they were discussing. Rather, he continued with the lecture.
- They were able to participate in the activities going on (calculations).
- After lectures, I notice participant one was expressing regrets of not understanding English better.

### Day 2 at college

I observe the following during Electrical Engineering class from participants P7, P4 and P1:

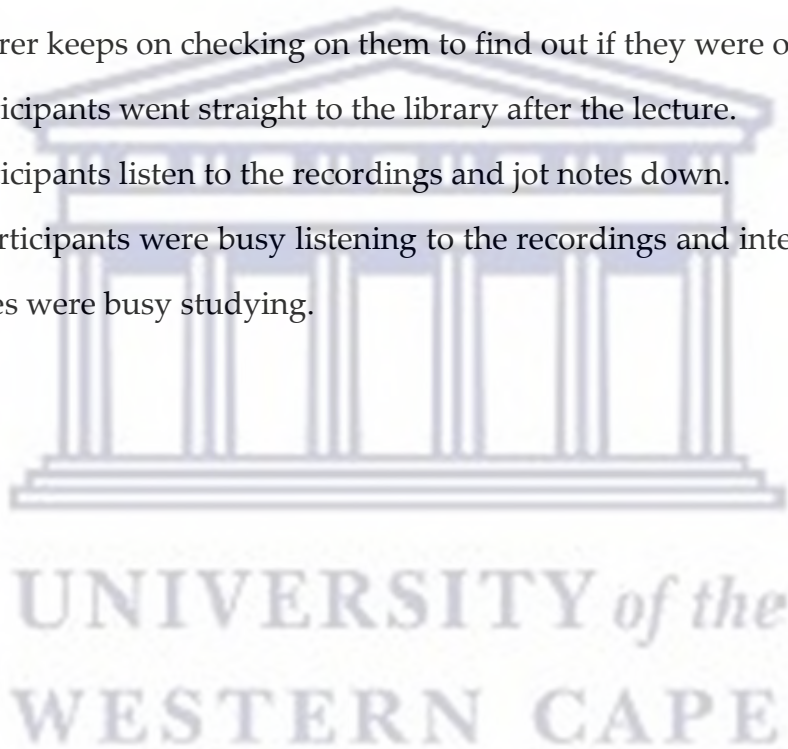
- All three participants were recording the lecture.
- Participant four keeps on asking one of his classmates to explain some of the words to him.
- Participant four also explain what the words mean in French and ask the classmate to confirm if it is the as in English.
- I observe that participants four, five and six understood words from their social cultural background. However, those worlds did not apply to the context of the subject.

- They express meaning using their social background.

### **Day 3 in the classroom then in the library**

I observe the following during communication class from participants P6 and P3:

- Both participants were quite throughout the lecture. However, they were recording the lecture.
- The lecturer keeps on checking on them to find out if they were ok.
- Both participants went straight to the library after the lecture.
- Both participants listen to the recordings and jot notes down.
- While participants were busy listening to the recordings and interpreting it, their classmates were busy studying.





## Appendix 5: PERSONAL NARRATIVES

### Participant 5:

- Although I feel welcomed at school and the community where I live. However, I have lost my self-confidence. This is because; I am unable to express myself in a manner in which I want to, due to language barrier. Most at times when I speak with my French accent, mixing French and English together people asked me which dialect am speaking. That makes me looks stupid in front of them. I repeat first year, I don't like, I know me am not stupid. Most of the Xhosa students in the college also code-switch when speaking but nobody laughs at them. Maybe is because they think they can speak English better than I do. I wish English was the only language around me that would have been better for me to learn faster. There are many languages around me including my mother one and French. All these are delaying me to learn English (personal narrative, 26/10/2021).

### Participant 2:

- Although my brain is confused because I am exposed to different languages around me, I am determined to learn English so I can proof to my family and friends that anyone can learn some language at any stage in once life as long as you want to (personal narrative, 28/10/2021).

### Participant 8

- I know what I can do. Therefore, I know of how much effort I can put in to be able to speak English as English person. I noticed that the Xhosa and Colours do not speak good English because of their language. I have come across people back home who could not speak French first but learn and could speak just like a French person. Therefore, it is very possible to speak any language as native speaker of that language (personal narrative, 4/11/2021).

### Participant 7:

- I live in environment if you do not speak the language you are treat like nobody. Now I see myself as nobody in my classmates. (Personal narrative, 29/10/2021)

**Participant 1:**

- I think they just want me giving money no assistance to teach me English. Am tired because I fail courses (participant personal narrative, 4/11/2021).

**Participant 3:**

- At times, I do not even understand what I am saying due to the different languages I use at once. Personally, I have experience language conflict from childhood; my family is a multilingual family. We speak about three different languages back home that is, my mother's language, my father's language and French. Truth be told, I learned proper French in school not from my parents. Therefore, I believe that I can learn English here at the college and online. It is not a new practice for me. However, it is not easy for me because English is complicated with the tenses in my own opinion (personal narrative, 4/11/2021).

**Participant 6:**

- I feel rejected by both the college community and where I leave. This may sound bad but that is actually, how I feel. I do not want to express myself this way because of the fear of being treated worst. I wish to learn English good (personal narrative, 8/11/2021).

## APPENDICES: RESEARCH DOCUMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

**Appendix 6: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**Appendix 7: PERMISSION LETTER**

**Appendix 8: CONSENT FORM**





4 August 2021

Ms MC Limen  
Language Education  
Faculty of Education

**HSSREC Reference Number:** HS21/5/51

**Project Title:** Conflict and challenges in ESL acquisition: An investigation with French-speaking students' environment in Cape Town

**Approval Period:** 30 July 2021 – 30 July 2024

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

**Please remember to submit a progress report by 30 November each year for the duration of the project.**

*The permission to conduct the study must be submitted to HSSREC for record keeping purposes.*

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse events and/or termination of the study.

*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*

**Mercy C. LIMEN**

117 Anderson Goodwood Estate  
Goodwood, Cape Town 7460  
Tel.: 081 778 0649  
Email: 3757873@myuwc.ac.za

**The Princial: Damelin College Mowbray Campus, Cape Town**

12 Upper Liesbeek Rd, Mowbray, Cape Town, 7700,  
South Africa

Dear Sir/Madam

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT DAMELIN COLLEGE MOWBRAY CAMPUS**

Please accept this letter as a request for permission to conduct research at your institution. I am currently enrolled for the Master degree in Language Education at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). My topic is “*Conflict and Challenges in ESL Acquisition:*

*An Investigation within French-Speaking Students' Environment in Cape Town.*”

The study is targeting Francophone immigrant students at Damelin College Mowbray Campus, but data will be collected from selected 10 to 20 students as participants. The methods of data collection will be interviews and observation. I would like to assure you good office that no classes will be interrupted during data collection process. Let me also assure you that information/ data collected will be held in stickiest confidentiality and ethics. Data will only be used for research purposes.

I also wish to ensure that during the data collection process all physical distance and preventive measures will be maintained according to the COVID-19 rules set by the South African government and health authorities.

I intent to start as soon as all ethical issues are cleared. I would be happy to answer any question or concern that you have in whatever means.

Yours faithfully

  
.....

Ms MC Limen

## CONSENT FORM

**Researcher:** Ms. Mercy C. Limen

**Contact details:**

Tel.: 081 778 0649

Email: [3757873@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3757873@myuwc.ac.za)

**Title of Research Project:**

*Conflict and Challenges in ESL Acquisition: An Investigation within French-Speaking Students' Environment in Cape Town*

As a participant in this study, I hereby acknowledge the following:

	YES	NO
1. The researcher has explained to me the purpose of the study. She also gave me an undertaking to keep anything said confidential.		
2. I understand that information received as part of this study will solely be used for this research purpose.		
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any stage without giving any reasons and without any consequence.		
4. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone by the researcher.		
5. I undertake not to repeat anything that occur during the research project outside this group.		
6. All potential risks have been explained to me.		
7. I give permission to be interviewed.		
8. I give consent to participate in the study.		

**Participant's name:** .....

**Participant's signature:** .....

**Date:** ..... **Place :** .....