

**IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION THROUGH ENGLISH
SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF
FRENCH SPEAKING STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

By

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Quinta Kemende Wunseh

July, 2014

Signed:.....



Dedication

To

My mother, Mami Nugsi Frida, who has always stood by me, no matter how strong the storm could be.

Thank you, Mami Frida, for all the sacrifices you have made for me.

God bless you.



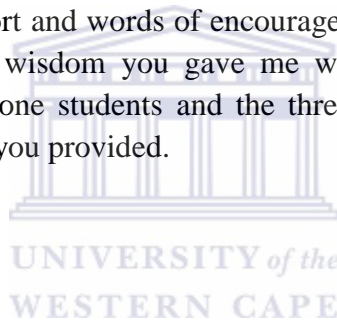
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I acknowledge, above all, the presence of God, Almighty, in my life. He has intervened in many ways and shown me His face in many situations, including my success in my M.Ed journey.

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Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to investigate how the Francophone students from Congo, Gabon and Cameroon negotiated competence and identities in English (L2) in and outside the classroom. The study also aimed at understanding the nature and extent of academic support that was made available to the Francophone students who had to learn through the medium of English (L2) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Through the lens of the sociocultural and poststructural theories, the study argues that identity construction in a second language is a fluid phenomenon which should be understood within a particular context, particularly in multilingual environments like UWC.

The study followed a qualitative research design which involved three methods of data collection, namely, observations, semi-structured interviews and student narratives. A thematic analytical framework was used to understand the Francophone students' experiences, and how they negotiated and (re)constructed competence and identity in English (L2) in the lecture rooms and in local communities.

The findings of the study indicate that English (L2) was perceived as an investment by the Francophone students. They show that competence in English (L2) was a source of voice and agency for the students. They also illustrate that there is a close relationship between (second) language learning and identity construction, and that identity is socially constructed. The study concludes that identity construction is a fluid phenomenon which should be understood in relation to the changing social context, which is embedded in language competence.

ACRONYMS

COP	Community of Practice
EMS	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
English (L2)	English second language
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institute
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MOI	Medium of instruction
SA	South Africa
SIT	Social Identity Theory
UWC	University of the Western Cape
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development



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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

Language is not just a means of communication, but it also plays different significant roles in identity construction. One can only express oneself through a given language, in a given community. Language learning entails situating or immersing oneself into the target language community. Language learning and identity construction have an unbreakable bond because one can only construct one's identity through interaction or communication with others in a given social context. We construct our identities through the narratives that we share with each other (Bruner, 1986, 1987, 1990), and these narratives can only be done by making use of language.

In light of the above, this research is located within identity construction through learning of English as a second language. It draws on Vygotsky's (1978) theory and the works of Lave and Wenger (1978), as well as that of Firth and Wagner (2007) which view language as a social practice which occurs through social interaction. These theorists claim that identity construction through second language learning is an ongoing social activity, backed up by sociocultural and contextual factors.

The purpose of the research is to examine the relationship between identity construction and English second language (L2) learning. Its focus is on how Francophone students from French speaking backgrounds, namely Congo, Gabon and Cameroon experience the use of English for academic and social purposes at the University of the Western Cape where French is not spoken by the majority of students and lecturers. It argues that identity is not fixed, but it changes according to social contexts, which are influenced by language learning factors.

1.2 Background

It is very difficult to talk about the origins of languages without referring to their histories. There can be no discussions about language learning which discernibly exclude identity and politics. Given the complexity of the language situation in Africa as a whole, it is difficult for countries to develop comprehensive language policies. This, therefore, generally leads to a situation where ex-colonial languages are used for official purposes, especially when indigenous languages are

underdeveloped and not standardized. The scramble for colonies in Africa by European countries in the 17th and 18th centuries meant that the languages of the European countries were used as tools of suppression as well as assimilation in the colonies, and these languages continued to be used by the governments of the former colonies when they gained independence. Africa as a whole has its various vernaculars which were pushed aside with the dawn of colonialism. English is one of the major colonial languages used in Africa in general, and in South Africa, in particular. The other two major colonial languages in Africa are French and Portuguese, resulting in three different post-colonial linguistic entities, namely countries which are officially Anglophone (English), Francophone (French) and Lusophone (Portuguese).

1.2.1 Medium of instruction in Cameroon, Gabon and Congo

French is the language of instruction in Gabon, Congo and French speaking Cameroon. This makes it necessary, therefore, to take a look at the origin of the French language in the socio-political histories of Cameroon, Gabon and Congo.

Cameroon is a multicultural country with a total of 249 local languages (Kouega, 2004, p. 409; Echu, 2004, p. 1). There were many missionaries who travelled to Cameroon for several reasons, but the most prominent ones were the Germans, British and French. Cameroon was annexed by the Germans in 1884 and after the First World War, the British and French took over with the defeat of the Germans. Cameroon was then divided between the two (British and French) in 1919, with the French having a larger part. As a result, French became the language of wider communication which is used nationwide in informal contexts among various ethnic groups in this country.

There are ten administrative regions in Cameroon, two of which are English speaking, and eight are French speaking (Echu, 2004, pp. 1-2). Echu (2004) states that French is mostly used as a medium of instruction in primary and higher education. For example, in the mother university, Yaoundé 1, more than 80% of lectures are taught in French (Echu, 2004, p. 7).

Even though Cameroon had its independence in 1960, it still relates very closely with France and most of the French culture is reflected in language use, business, food, dress, among other things,

which keep a picture of the French colonial days (Anchimbe, 2005, p. 5). The French language dominates in the education system.

In Cameroon, primary education lasts for six years in the Francophone system, leading to the Certificat d'Etudes primaires élémentaires (CEPE) (i.e. First School Leaving Certificate). The first four years of secondary education lead to the Brevet d'Etudes du premier Cycle du second Degré (i.e. lower sixth or Upper secondary), the next three year study leads to the Baccalaureate (General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level Certificate). At the university level, students go through a three year programme to obtain a Bachelor degree. Out of the eight state universities (i.e. Buea, Bamenda, Douala, Yaoundé I & II, Dschang, Maroua and Ngaoundere) in Cameroon, six are run under the Francophone model (i.e. Douala, Yaoundé I & II, Dschang, Maroua and Ngaoundere). The academic year runs from September to June for the primary and secondary schools, and from October to July for the universities (Bame and Tchombe, 2011, pp. 483-492).

Gabon also experienced French colonialism in the nineteenth century. She became part of French Equatorial Africa in 1866. Much of her literature is strongly influenced by France. French is the medium of instruction and the only language used in print media, television broadcasting and many other official activities (Gardenier, 1994; Giles, 1997). Presently, education is compulsory for ten years, from the ages of 6 to 16. The education system is modelled on French education and French is the language of instruction. However, primary education lasts six years in Gabon, instead of five years as it is in France, because students need an extra year to begin learning French. Secondary education lasts for seven years, from the ages of 12 to 18. It is divided into two cycles: the first lasts four years and the second cycle proceeds for three years. Certificates obtained are the same as in Cameroonian education system, even at the university level (Ivanga and Maimbolwa-Sinvangwe, 1985, p. 11).

Congo, on the other hand, became a French colony in 1883, with the coming of the French explorer, Pierre-Paul-Francois Camillie Savorgnan de Brazza (1852-1905). Presently, French is used as the administrative language of Congo. Although Congo gained her independence in 1960, she is still closely linked with France. The Congolese education system is the same as the Gabonese mentioned above (Kristof and Tom, 2011 p. 3). French is the language of instruction in education from primary school to the university.

While imperial France tried to assimilate her colonies but the imperial Britain never had such intentions. For the British, when the "natives" moved from the periphery into the centre of empire, there was no presumption of their becoming "British" or "English" in anyway (Joppke 1999, pp. 24-25). The French obliged everyone going to school to be taught in French from the first day of primary school to the university, making its African colonies follow the education system of France and speak French like all other French nationals. This made all French colonies (Cameroon, Gabon and Congo, inclusive) to have French as a dominant language in their education systems.

Considering the fact that Cameroon, Gabon and Congo have all been French colonies since the nineteenth century, and noting the fact that the French colonial rule believed in assimilation, there is a need for research on students from these countries who come for further studies in English speaking countries like South Africa. Hence this study focuses on Francophone students at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). This calls for a brief history on the language situation in South Africa to clarify the use of English language as medium of instruction at UWC.

1.2.2 A brief history on the language situation in South Africa

South Africa is a “rainbow nation” as commonly referred to by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu because of the extraordinary diversity of races, tribes’ creeds, languages and landscapes that characterize this country. English is the most commonly spoken language in the official domains. The other languages are Afrikaans, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, isiNdebele, Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi. Besides the 11 official languages, there are other African languages spoken in South Africa (Alexander, 1992). Other South African languages covered by the constitution are the Khoi, Nama and San languages, sign language, Arabic, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Portuguese, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu. There are also a few indigenous creoles and pidgins (Alexander, 1992). South African English, however, has some borrowed words from some of the indigenous languages like Afrikaans, isiZulu, Nama, etc. (Alexander, 1992).

The diversity in South Africa (SA) is accrued from the flow of people from different parts of the world, with the first groups being the Khoi and San people who have lived here for millenia. The

Bantu migrated to this region from the Great Lakes area around the 12th century. The Europeans (Portuguese, Dutch, French, German, and British) arrived in South Africa around the 17th century, mainly in search of a sea route to India while the Asians (Malay, Indonesian, and Indian) were brought in as slaves, political prisoners and indentured labourers from the 18th century (Beukes 2006). During the colonial era, 5.5 million of the South African population belonged to two major language groups namely, the Nguni and Sotho-Tswana (Beukes, 2006). The Nguni group has two major languages: isiXhosa, a language which was initially dominant in the Eastern Cape, and isiZulu, the language particularly dominant in Kwa-Zulu Natal, but also in the Witwatersrand gold mining areas. Siswati, although spoken by a small population in South Africa (SA), became the dominant language of the Kingdom of Swaziland, while another smaller Nguni language is Ndebele. During the Napoleonic wars, the Dutch lost SA to the British in the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815). This led to the tension between the Afrikaner colonialists and the British administration. With the colonization of SA by the British, English became the language of the law court and education (Beukes, 2006).

The Bantu people opposed the European settlers in many ethnic and racial wars until the democratic transformation in 1994. There were also many conflicts between the Bantu chiefdoms, as black African rulers founded powerful kingdoms and nations by incorporating chiefdoms leading to the emergence of the Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi, Venda, Swazi, Sotho, Tswana, and Tsonga tribes alongside the Europeans, Coloureds (of mixed ancestry, with many being descended from the Khoi and San) and Asians. SA, therefore, has no single culture as a result of this diversity, and the new SA is thus marked by multiracialism and multiculturalism. Although SA has eleven official languages, English is understood across the country and is the language of media, politics, business and the lingua franca of this country (Beukes 2006).

The period of Dutch colonial rule left South Africa with its own local variety of Dutch which was to develop into the hybrid variety which is known today as Afrikaans. English, however, became the language of education, the judiciary and administration during the extended period of British colonial rule from 1822 (Beukes, 2006). The freedom of the slaves by the British in 1835 sparked the Great Trek into the interior of SA by the Boers, which led to more colonization, several wars with the indigenous nations, particularly the Xhosa and powerful Zulus, as well as the Anglo-Boer War which finally led to the Union of South Africa in 1910. Naturally, all these

important historical events also facilitated the spread of the Dutch and English languages among speakers of other languages. English and Afrikaans were granted equal status in the Act of Union, and Afrikaans began to be taught in schools from 1925. The rule of the Afrikaner Nationalist Party from 1949 to 1993 was accompanied by the apartheid policy as well as the enforced use of Afrikaans, often to the detriment of English. Despite this, English continued to dominate in education and finance. However, about 70% of South Africans speak one of the Bantu languages (Alexander, 2004).

The hatred of the apartheid regime and Afrikaans as the language of the oppressor reached its climax in 1976 with 15,000 students marching on the streets of Soweto with banners bearing slogans like “Blacks are not dustbins - Afrikaans stinks” (Alexander, 1992). This led to police attacks, resulting in the deaths of many young people, while hundreds more fled the country during a period of great social and political unrest. Following the Soweto riots, schools were allowed to decide on their media of instruction (MOI). Many schools chose English, with their home languages used only during the first four years of schooling rather than six years. There was, however, a difficulty in learning English as there was an invisible boundary that separated the Africans from the native English speakers that could facilitate the acquisition and use of this language.

The education of black South Africans was problematic as very little money was allocated to them as compared to white South Africans (Alexander, 1992). This resulted in a lack of books, chairs, electricity and qualified teachers, thus leading to impoverished education not only for black children, but also for Coloureds and Asians, although the education budgets for the latter two groups were actually better than for the majority black population. It is necessary to note that while in most African countries the need for mother-tongue education was to promote these languages, the case of SA was different. Mother-tongue education was actually encouraged in order to keep blacks away from the well-established white educational and economic structures, keeping them constantly poor (Alexander, 1992). Thus the language policy at the time was severely politicized.

The indigenous languages were continuously kept separate from one another through lexical and other corpus planning manoeuvres as the apartheid government pretended to be developing these languages (Alexander 1992). The local languages could not be used in context of real power.

Bantu education was imposed on the black people and the leaders of the liberation movement supported English as the language of liberation and opposed Afrikaans as the language of the oppressor. These leaders never thought of the need to develop the African languages as much as English. English thus became the language of power as it was the only means of international communication available for the South Africans (Alexander 1992).

Given that there was no policy in favour of the African languages, no attempt was made to “develop, modernize, and spread the knowledge of the indigenous languages both for the intrinsic empowering value of such an exercise and as an explicit strategy of cultural- political resistance” (Alexander 1992). At the same time, many South Africans, as a result of the dysfunctional education system which continue to plague the country post-liberation, do not have a high command of the high status languages (English and Afrikaans) to compete for well-paid jobs. Alexander further argues that the effect or role of language, colour, and race has today affected most youths in their quest for power, position and individual progress (Alexander 1992).

The hegemony of English has influenced the language policies of schools in SA as it is taught in most schools or used as MOI. Balfour (1999) is of the view that language policies that fail to lead to the active advancements of languages by higher education institutions (HEIs) and the state seriously impede efforts by language specialists to develop such languages, and institutions are often not able to provide students with the language support they need. He says that academics should be more than committed when it comes to policy formation. The ministerial report of 2004 on the use of indigenous languages as a MOI in higher education (HE), states that there has been a move from indigenous languages to English, as English is the language of employment while the home languages are those of the poor and less technically advanced and marginalized (Balfour (1999). It further contends that HE has failed to realize that the shift to English is as a result of lack of policies that help in the development of the home languages.

Bamgbose(2003), however, states that South Africa is multilingual with the most diverse and accommodating language policy in the world. It has eleven official languages, and a significant number of minority languages. According to Bamgbose (2003), the SA constitution is the most accommodative in Africa which does not only stand for bilingualism but multilingualism with equal rights given to the official languages. The constitution encourages affirmative action for the African languages formerly marginalized, with priority given to language development. The

language clause is further supported by the Bill of Rights recognizing language as a basic human right: "Everyone has the right to use the language and participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights" (section 30 of the SA Constitution).

Despite the large number of official languages, English is the dominant language in SA (Dyers, 2008), and as a result, many parents do their best to ensure that their children are educated in English. This explains why English language is used as medium of instruction at UWC and in other higher education institutions.

1.2.3 University of the Western Cape language policy

According to (Buthelezi, 2003) SA has 23 public universities, with different language policies. The University of the Western Cape is one of the four universities in the Western Cape Province which include the University of Cape Town, University of Stellenbosch and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

The University of the Western Cape is the focus point of this study. The language policy at this university aims at "ensuring equity, social development and a respect for South Africa's multilingual heritage" (UWC Language Policy, 2003). Given the multicultural nature of the university, lectures are delivered in English, the exception being the different language departments like the departments of Xhosa, Afrikaans and Nederlands, and other foreign languages. However, lecturers of other departments who are competent users of Afrikaans and isiXhosa speaking students are "encouraged to use the language in addition to English if it is going to ease understanding" (UWC Language Policy, 2003). Students are also allowed to use the language they are most competent in, in discussions during tutorials but must give feedback in class is only in English. Lecturers and tutors are also encouraged to use the students' first language during consultation if they are competent speakers of that language. As for assignments and tasks, students are expected to use only English apart from the departments of Afrikaans, Xhosa and other foreign languages.

There is a growing number of students from neighbouring African states and from other countries like China that pursue their studies at UWC. Given UWC's language policy, these students have to learn through the medium of English, and in most cases, students experience

difficulties as some of them come with low degrees of proficiency in English. For example, many students from Congo, Gabon and Cameroon are taught through the medium of French up to university level in their home countries, as discussed above. When they register for studies at UWC, they have to adjust to a new English medium environment, and learn through its medium in their university studies.

Language is the most salient way we have of establishing and advertising our social identities (Lippi-Green, 1997: 5). Language is a tool used to identify an individual. Hence, there can be no language learning without identity construction or negotiation. Norton (1997, p. 410), emphasizing the linguistic component of identity construction, adds that every time language learners speak, they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. They are, in other words, engaging in identity construction and negotiation (p.410). In line with Norton, Block (2007, p. 40) equally states that every time language learners interact in the second language, whether in the oral or written mode, they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation.

However, there are other researchers like Cerulo (1997), who think that the process of identity construction not only defines individuals to themselves, but also to others. Besides a sense of uniqueness from others, identity construction should include a sense of collectivism. Cerulo (1997, p.386) affirms that collective identity addresses the 'we-ness' of a group, stressing the similarities or shared attributes around which group members coalesce. Identity construction through (L2) learning can equally be defined in many different ways, depending on the context, situation and the type of study.

This study draws from the sociocultural and poststructuralist view of identity construction through second language learning as these approaches portray the identity of a learner as dynamic and multiple. It is premised on the work of Vygotsky (1978), Lave and Wenger (1991) and Firth and Wagner (2007), who demonstrate that language learning is situated in social practice and social interaction. This brings to mind the fact that identity construction through second language learning is an ongoing social activity, backed up by sociocultural and contextual factors.

In light of the above, this study seeks to understand how the Francophone students negotiate competence and identities in English (L2) lecture rooms and local communities, and the nature and extent of academic support that is made available to these students. As stated earlier, it argues that identity construction in a second language is a fluid phenomenon which should be understood within a particular context, particularly in multilingual environments.

1.4 Problem Statement and Rationale for the study

Internationally, people migrate from one country to another for social, political or economic reasons and this movement can result in so many changes in terms of identity and language use. The world of today is made of fluid identities which keep changing with space and time (Manguel, 2007, p. 145). Manguel (2007) further explains that we live in a world where everything changes with an individual's constant migration from one place to another, and even the home left behind undergoes changes. This sociocultural and poststructuralist view of identity as being multiple and unstable brings to light some of the challenges faced by immigrant students in a new second language environment where they struggle to construct and negotiate their identities in the process of second language learning.

Current research has changed understandings of social affiliation, the meaning of place, and how belonging is defined (Bhabha, 1996, 2007; Castles and Davidson, 2000; Castles and Miller, 2003; Savage, Bagnall, and Longhurst, 2005). This change or shift meets with the fact that identity is seen as multifaceted and contextually constructed. Second language learning is an important aspect of affiliation and belonging.

Within the large body of literature on language and identity (e.g. Bourdieu, 1977; Gumperz 1982; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Weedon, 1987; West, 1992, Norton, 1995, 1997; Tabouret-Keller, 1997; Cerulo, 1997; Kamwangamalu, 1998; Breitborde, 1998; Norton, 2000; Bailey, 2000; Robert, 2001; Joseph, 2004, Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004), there has not been research on English second language learning and identity construction of the Francophone immigrant students at the University of the Western Cape, in particular.

In the context of my participants who are immigrant students, a renegotiation of social identity within a multilingual context like the University of the Western Cape is necessary because negotiating identity must be undertaken by anyone migrating to a new society. I am a

Cameroonian national and considering my own personal experiences learning a second language, I believe that I am in a better position to understand the difficulties Francophone students may be facing when they study in an English speaking institution. In this study, it is assumed that the French language dominance in Congo, Gabon and Cameroon makes it difficult for their nationals to study in English speaking country, where English is the main language of instruction. I explore different perspectives of looking at issues pertaining to education, language and identity in relation to how the Francophone students cope in English speaking academic and social environments. I have made use of the sociocultural and poststructuralist approaches to examine and understand how the Francophone students experience the use English second language for both academic and social purposes. Below, I define the research aims and objectives to give a clear picture of what the study seeks to investigate.

1.5 Research aims

The main aim of this study is to examine the link between English second language learning and identity construction. It investigates how Francophone students at the University of the Western Cape negotiate and construct their identities through English second language learning. Central to this study is how these students use English as a second language for academic and social purposes in a multilingual institution i.e. at the University of the Western Cape. This brings us to the objectives of the study.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The medium of instruction (MOI) at the University of the Western Cape is English. In this study, I hope to:

1. Explore and understand the language challenges faced by Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students studying at the University of the Western Cape.
2. Define and describe the relationship between language learning and identity construction within a multilingual educational context.

1.7 Research questions

Accordingly, this study will investigate the research problem with the following research questions as sign posts:

1. What are the Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students' experiences of using English as a second language for academic and social purposes?
2. How do Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students negotiate competence and identities in their English (L2) lecture rooms and local communities as they participate in oral and writing activities?
3. What academic support is available to Francophone students in order to cope with English (L2)?

1.8 Research Methodology

The data for this study was collected by means of observations, personal narratives and individual semi-structured interviews with four Francophone students (Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students). Three of their lecturers were purposefully selected and were observed and interviewed for the purpose of this study as discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. All the data was collected and used with informed consent.

This study followed a qualitative research approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) in order to understand the lecturers' experiences on teaching Francophone students in English (L2), as well as the Francophone students' experiences for using English (L2) for academic and social purposes. It made use of the snowball sampling method (Cohen, et al, 2007) to identify research participants. The sampling technique is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The study made use of a case study design in order to investigate, examine and explore the real lived experiences of the Francophone students registered at UWC. This design allowed me to use various methods of data collection, namely interviews, observations and narratives. It was chosen for its flexibility with regard to data collection methods (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, and Lofland, 2001). Chapter 3 of this thesis provides a full account of the research design, sampling and data collection strategies.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

This study is based on the assumptions that poststructuralism is the best approach to use as far as second language learning is concerned because it incorporates the sociocultural and constructivist theories, which when combined together, provide a powerful construct that helps to inform instructional practices for English (L2) learners. The Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students under study engaged in active learning process by interacting with their peers and lecturers inside and outside the classrooms.

From the sociocultural point of view, learner identity is constantly constructed throughout life and through experiences of learning. These experiences occur in formal and informal situations. At this point, the educational system is influential in the identity construction of the learner.

My study is based on the assumption that the learner's identity is both an activity-based and a role-based construct (i.e. the learning process and the role of being the learner). This study investigated how they coped with negotiation and reconstruction their identities through this process. I delimited my study to these theories because language learning and identity construction take place in a social context.

1.9.1 Summary

This chapter looked at the historical language background of Cameroon, Gabon, Congo and South Africa. While the first three African countries (Cameroon, Gabon and Congo) have French as medium of instruction, South Africa has a policy that supports broader multilingualism, with English as the main medium of instruction. The chapter discusses the research problem and the rationale for the study. It also provides the research questions that underpin this study, as well as the research methods that were used for data collection. The next chapter will focus on literature review.

1.9.2 Chapter outline

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Following this introductory chapter (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 focuses on literature pertinent to this study. In this chapter, aspects of sociocultural theory are discussed to bring out the importance of social context in identity negotiation and construction. The poststructuralist theory is brought in to clarify the role of language in identity construction.

The methodology and design for the research is presented in Chapter 3. This chapter also outlines various stages involved in the design and implementation of the methodological plan devised for this study.

Chapter 4 looks closely at raw data collected by means of interviews, observations and personal narratives. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part presents the data collected using various methods, while the second one deals with data analysis using a narrative approach.

Chapter 5 summarizes and discusses the findings of the study. Based on these findings, the current implications and future recommendations for the University of the Western Cape and researchers in the field of second language learning are brought to light. Finally, this chapter also deals with what fresh insights this thesis adds to the world of knowledge.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review literature on second language learning and identity construction in a multilingual educational context. I look at the concept of identity construction in relation to previous research in this field that views (L2) language as a social practice that plays a crucial role in the construction of identities. I also discuss the sociocultural and poststructuralist theories that refer to language as a site of identity construction because of its communicative role among people of different cultural backgrounds. It is for this reason that some scholars view all instances of language use in multilingual contexts as acts of identity construction (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Tabouret-Keller, 1997).

2.2.1 Sense of belonging

There are many notions of identity which have changed over time. Contemporary scholarship offers a variety of ways to understand identity. For example, West (1992) states that identity relates to a desire for affiliation and security. Crawshaw, Callen, and Tusting (2001) describe identity as a process of identifying or not identifying with a particular position in life, and a way of negotiating and modifying this position and attitudes towards life. According to Marx (2002), identity was originally realized as a stable and fixed entity within a person which controls his or her actions and understanding of the surrounding environment. In fact people may not only cross the borders between cultures, but they may re-position themselves and modify their previous identities without having to completely lose their old personalities. Consequently, identity is considered as changeable through negotiation and construction.

Djité (2006) concurs with Joseph's (2006) understanding of identity as a category to which a person belongs. Both scholars stress that one belongs to a number of social categories based on gender, ethnicity, nationality, cultural heritage, age, occupation and social status. Thus, identity is a process of association and opposition. It entails constant negotiation, production and performance rather than a static category of possession (Achugar, 2006, Crawshaw et al., 2001).

Erik Erikson, the twentieth century psychologist, believes that a person's identity emerges through the adolescent turmoil of the body and the resolution of future career, parental role and life uncertainties (Weiner, 2011: p. 26). This view implies that maturity is developmental and that an individual's identity is fixed. However, many other notions have come up, showing that identity is not fixed, but changes with time and context.

The environment plays a role in the individual's identity formation. For example, Wenger (2000: p. 239) believes that an individual's identity is a lived experience of belonging (or not belonging). He argues further that an individual's identity involves deep connections with others through shared histories and experiences, reciprocity, affection and mutual commitments. Wenger's definition is relevant to this study, as second language learning involves constructing new identities. A person may have other identities based on her/his gender, social class or physical ability.

Identity studies have always privileged the subjective dimension over the objective view (talking about 'I'), that is, 'the self' (Joseph, 2004). The subjective dimension brings out clearly who an individual is and involves the processes of becoming a particular person, biologically and culturally. In other words, how we experience ourselves matters. Joseph (2004) argues that an individual's identity is defined as his/her self-image, meaning that each individual's identity is not only individual but it is also collective. In other words, an individual's identity is not only considered collective because of how he/she develops relationships with others, but also how he/she is understood by others in a given social context.

Riley (2007) describes the role of language in shaping the ways in which members of a group relate to the world, to one another and to others. He defines social identity as being subjective (making self-reports) and private. Identities, therefore, consist of meanings, and specific configurations of meanings can be implemented functionally as roles through the community's communicative practices.

Bailey (2007: p. 258) views identity as a Latin term, *idem*, meaning 'the same'. Identities are constituted by socially counting as 'the same' as others or counting as 'different' from others". Bailey (2007) looks at identity to be a function of two subjective processes: "self-ascription", which implies how one defines oneself, and "ascription by others", which is how one is defined by others. The identity of an individual, therefore, is simply the way he/she considers himself/herself in relation to others in a given community or the way others consider the individual. This implies that all individuals, whether consciously or unconsciously, have multiple characteristics and allegiances (pp. 258-259). An individual's identity matters not only in terms of how he/she develops relationships with others, but also in the manner he/she is understood by others. These understandings shape, to a great extent, people's acts towards one another. In other words, identity is a social construct.

2.2.2 Social Identity

Tajfel (1978) defines social identity as the part of a person's self-concept, which is derived from being members of a social group, and the value and emotional significance that is attached to that membership. Three components contribute to a person's social identity: a cognitive component which has to do with self-categorization or awareness of a group membership, an evaluative component which is the group self-esteem and an emotional component which involves affective commitment to a group. The self is reflexive in that it looks back on itself as an object and categorizes, classifies, or names itself in particular ways that contrast itself with other social categories or classifications. An individual needs to involve himself/herself in the social structure to be part of that particular social group.

Social identity is the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002). In other words, it is an individual-based perception of what defines the "us" associated with any internalized group membership. This can be distinguished from the notion of personal identity which refers to self-knowledge that derives from the individual's unique attributes. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT) the self-concept consists of a personal identity that includes characteristics such as bodily attributes and abilities and a social identity that links the individual to salient groups (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). It is the interpersonal contexts that implicate us as individuals and intergroup contexts as group

members (Tajfel, 1978). The self-concept grows out of the evaluations of people around us. Therefore we direct our behaviour to obtain positive reactions from the significant references around us.

Kleine, Kleine and Kernan (1993) argue that individuals' social identities are linked to an internal representation of people whereby the individual performs and cultivates the identity. Different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel and act on the basis of his/her personal, family or national level of self.

In keeping with the above-mentioned points, the Identity Theory states that the self consists of role identities which are switched according to the importance of that particular role identity in relation to context (McFarland and Pals, 2005). People understand themselves and their environment through knowledge of the roles that they and people around them assume in the society (Cable and Welbourne, 1994). The same scholars claim that an individual's behaviours and their identity hierarchies are linked. In other words, the role an individual plays in a given social structure/context determines his/her identity. Life events are given different meanings, because of these identities and also due to the fact that the identity hierarchy is different for every individual. This suggests that our reactions to life-events can differ greatly (Cable and Welbourne, 1994).

In relation to the above, Stets and Burke (2000) state that the core of identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role, and incorporating, into the self, the meanings and expectations associated with role and its performance. Personal qualitative characteristics operate in identity theory in a variety of ways. For example, individuals label themselves as belonging to a particular group or subgroup when a role is based on occupation, when an identity process is investigated in a particular group, or when in a commitment process.

Concerning language learning, Block (2007) states that the identity of a language learner is theorized as multiple, and as a site of struggle, and it is subject to change. Every time language learners interact in the second language, whether in the oral or written mode, they are engaged in identity construction and negotiation. The different conditions under which language learners

speaking, reading, or writing the second language are influenced by relations of power in different sites; learners who may be marginalized in one site may be highly valued in another. The identity of a person in their second language will be different from that in their own language for a number of reasons. One of the reasons, especially for students who are learning a language, is based on the student's lack of ability to communicate at the same level as in their first language. Bourdieu (1977) in agreement with Block (2007), states that every time language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with their interlocutors but engaging in identity construction negotiation through (re)organising a sense of who they are and how they are related to the social world. In the case of this study, when the Francophone students communicate with their fellow French-speaking people, they construct their identities as nationals from the respective countries, and when they communicate in English (second language), they are negotiating new identities. This implies that they may be valued by their own Francophone colleagues and marginalized by speakers of the target language (L2).

Norton (2000, p.5), in line with Block (2007), views identity as a person's understanding of his/her relationship to the world, how this relationship is constructed in time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future. Identity and linguistic/cultural affiliation is not something fixed. It is constantly influenced by everything and everyone around us: our relationships, our readings, our thoughts and our use of language. In this way, identity can be viewed as one's potential ability. It is the social context that provides the language learner with opportunities to enhance this potential. Therefore, it is assumed that the identities of Francophone students under study are not just determined by the place and societies where they were born, but by their life experiences and influences they accumulate in their lives in various given contexts e.g. at the university and in the community.

2.2.3 Changing Identity

There is a global movement of people from one country to another, either for economic development or international cultural interaction. This is more common for people from non-English speaking countries to move to English speaking countries as English is considered the world's first language used in all domains of life. English is regarded as the language of power.

Norton's study (2000), for example, investigated identity negotiation of five immigrant women (Eva, Katarina, Felicia, Martina and Mai) living in Canada. Norton explored how the women negotiated and constructed their identities while learning English and the impact of identity construction on their personal lives. Norton's group consisted of immigrants in Canada who were all learning English and struggling to survive in a new culture and language, and their family dynamics. They were working towards a better life for themselves and their families. Norton found that the immigrants' identities were constantly changing due to the exposure to new language and culture. Eva, one of Norton's (2000 : p.25) participant, changed her position from an 'illegitimate' to a 'legitimate' speaker in the workplace, and her increasing confidence about her identity within the workplace began to affect her public life more generally. Eva made a breakthrough in relations with other staff during a company social outing when her partner provided a lift for some of her co-workers and her youth and charm were more in evidence. People began to talk to her and treated her as an interesting person, which gave her more opportunities to practise English and this enabled her to gain greater confidence to join in staff conversations. She could bring in her experience of Europe, and initiate contact with customers. Eva's sense of who she was changed, and she then began to challenge her subject position as an illegitimate speaker of English. She developed an awareness of the right to speak in her workplace. Her communicative competence developed to include an awareness of how to challenge and transform practice of marginalisation.

In addition, a second language learner has other identities based on his/her social class, gender or physical ability. For example, Norton further states that during the course of the study, the five learners were assessed by means of a cloze passage, dictation, dialogue, crossword, short essay, and oral interview. Although each of the learners had arrived in Canada with little experience of speaking English, Eva's performance on these measures was outstanding relative to that of the other learners. In terms of her knowledge of particular language forms, she was unequivocally a good language learner. For all the women, the workplace was their major opportunity to mix with Anglophones. However, they were often given the low-status, solitary jobs which no one else wanted to do and this marginalisation limited their opportunities to practise English and also reduced their confidence and heightened their anxiety and they felt reluctant to initiate conversations with other workers. Eva, who had been allocated the jobs of cleaning the floors and putting out the garbage in a fast-food restaurant, said 'When I see that I have to do

everything and nobody cares about me because – then how can I talk to them?’ (Norton, 2000: p. 63).

In Norton’s study, the other women also experienced ‘silencing’ through marginalisation in jobs and social encounters where skills and cultural resources which they had previously taken for granted, as part of who they were, were ignored or not valued. The immigrant women fought against the marginalisation in various ways. Martina, who saw her role as crucial for her family because of her husband’s lack of English, took cleaning jobs, attended English Second Language classes, borrowed her children’s books from school, watched soap operas and made superfluous practice phone calls in order to ensure she acquired enough English for her family’s survival. Another woman, Felicia, who had enjoyed a very comfortable middle-class life as the wife of a successful businessman in Peru, but whose husband had been unable to get work in Canada, refused the identity of ‘immigrant’ but explained that ‘I’ve never felt an immigrant in Canada, just as a foreigner person who lives here by accident’ (ibid., p. 101). She was very keen to practise her English and was comfortable speaking in private with Anglophones who knew and accepted her middle-class Peruvian identity, although she still mainly listened. But she found it difficult to talk in public with strangers who would classify her as an ‘immigrant’.

Through her detailed analysis of these women’s experience, Norton argues that confidence and anxiety are not individual attributes, but are socially constructed in encounters between the second language learners and the majority community. These encounters are often structured by relations of inequality. Similarly, class and ethnicity do not reside in the individual, but are constructed and realised through social relations.

Norton argues that through the acquisition of English, learners negotiate and construct an identity. As they learn English, their identities change, but Norton attributes some of the identity negotiation to living in a new country within a new social setting, with new social rules. All the women in her study were working to help their families, and to become successful in their new lives. In the same light, Francophone students at UWC negotiate and construct their identities, while equally getting adapted to new cultures as they aspire to be successful in their lives.

Dornyei (2009: p.1) argues that the world traversed by the L2 learner has changed remarkably and it is now characterised by linguistic and sociocultural diversity. Language learning involves the identities of learners (Coates 1998). Language is viewed as a form of self-representation which is deeply connected to one's identity (Miller, 2003). Language use, ethnicity and identity have also become 'complex topical issues'. For the Francophone students under study, it could be said that investment and motivation are part of their self-construction and negotiation plays out because they are living in a new and unfamiliar society.

Theorists such as Giddens (1984) and Boudieu (1977) also consider identity as an ongoing social process, which is dynamic, ever changing and multiple in nature. Constructing and negotiating identities in a multicultural context such as the UWC could be challenging, particularly for English second language learners. The Francophone students from Cameroon, Congo and Gabon had French as main language at school and in their social contexts back in their home countries, but at UWC and South Africa as a whole, they had to master English in order to function normally. In migration contexts, identity construction happens in a new culture and in a new language. Block (2007, p.5) argues that in the course of migration, one's identity and sense of self are put on the line, because there are many factors that are unfamiliar to the individual i.e. their history, culture and language tend to disappear and are replaced by new ones. In this situation, individuals must reconstruct and redefine themselves if they are to adapt to their new circumstances. Some of the reconstruction and redefinition that Block (2007) talks about takes place in second language learning contexts.

2.3 Language Learning and Identity construction

International studies on language and identity, have traditionally focused on how individuals or groups maintain, construct, project or negotiate their social identities in and through linguistic practices (e.g. Gumperz, 1982; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Tabouret-Keller, 1997; Cerulo, 1997; Kamwangamalu, 1998; Breitborde, 1998; Bailey, 2000; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). Some other studies investigated the academic socialization in language learning and the learners' identity construction (e.g. Morita, 2000, 2004; Duff, 2002; Raymond and Parks, 2002, 2004; Singh and Doherty, 2004; Her, 2005; Menard-Warwick, 2005; Hellermann, 2006). The present study takes on a more sociocultural dimension of identity construction which describes

the ways in which identity is constructed through and by language and how these processes occur within broader social discourses with their inscribed power relations. In doing so, this study draws mainly on the sociocultural theory and specifically, from Lave and Wenger (1991) and Firth and Wagner (2007) who demonstrate through their works that second language learning is situated in social practice and social interaction. It is, therefore, necessary to have a close look at the contribution made by these pieces of work to identity construction through second language learning. Lave and Wenger's (1991) work focuses on the Community of Practice (COP), agency, power and investment to explain the concept of identity construction through second language learning.

2.3.1 Community of Practice

Lave and Wenger's (1991) Community of practice (COP) framework helps to show a strong link between the act of learning a second language and the community in which the learning is actually taking place. The COP concept is a perspective that locates learning in the relationship between the person and the world. In the relationship of participation, the social and the individual constitute each other. Lave and Wenger's (1991) COP framework is included as part of the poststructural approach identified by Block (2007) and other scholars (Lantolf, 2000, Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000) to second language learning.

The idea of COP by Lave and Wenger (1991; 1998) is a prominent concept in the study of language learning as a social practice. Wenger (2006: p.1) defines Communities of Practice as groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Lave and Wenger (1991: p.29) argue that legitimate peripheral participation is the central characteristic of learning which is viewed as a situated activity. In this case, learning takes place when newcomers to a community have a legitimate reason or purpose for participation. They begin to see themselves as legitimate members or potential members of the community, and they have an intention to enter the community. Other community members see the newcomers as legitimate or potential members of the community.

The newcomers' participation in the practices of the community is peripheral in that they begin as outsiders and begin to move toward full participation (Lave and Wenger 1991: p.29). Lave and Wenger (1991) comment that for newcomers, the purpose is not to learn from talk as a

substitute for legitimate peripheral participation; it is rather to learn to talk as a key to legitimate peripheral participation (pp. 108-109). The concept of participation is used to describe the way in which a person becomes a member of a sociocultural community through engagement in social practices. The social practices are dynamic, and in turn, shape the person through the social relations enacted in them. Hence, learning is an integral part of all social practices (Wenger and Lave, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Learning as a social practice emphasizes the importance of the person as a social participant, and as a meaning-making entity for whom the social world is a resource for constituting an identity. Learning generally involves becoming a knower in a context where knowledge is negotiated with respect to the regime of competence of a given community. When a new student comes into a community, it is the competence that is pulling the experience along, until the learner's experience reflects the qualified competence of the community.

Firth and Wagner (2007), drawing on the works of Lave and Wenger (1991), view the process of learning as an “inseparable part of ongoing activities, embedded in social practice and interaction” (ibid, p.807). Framing language learning as a social process inherently implies that learning a second language will often involve a struggle for participation in a new social environment where the process accepts a good number of sociocultural and contextual factors that preclude discussion on subjectivity, agency, and multiple identities (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000). Weedon, (1987: p.97) explains “subjectivity” as an aspect of an individual's psyche by means of which the person identifies themselves and their place in the world. This notion of subjectivity entails the person “inserting” themselves into a particular “subject position” within a chosen “discourse” (ibid, p.112). Subjectivity is, therefore, liable to change in the event of a new discourse becoming available, or to changes in power relations between rival discourses, or by different subject positions becoming available within one and the same discourse (Weedon, 1987, p.32). Although a person may be positioned in a particular way within a given discourse, the person might resist the subject position or even set up a counter discourse which positions the person in a powerful rather than marginalized position. Ahearn (2001: p. 112) defines “agency” as a socio-culturally mediated capacity to act. This means that agency enables people to imagine, take up and perform new roles or identities and take concrete actions in pursuit of their goals.

Roberts (2001) points out that within the developing literature on language, social identity and its relation to second language, the learner is understood as a person with multiple identities, and some of them are contradictory. Kramsch (1994) views language as a way of seeing, understanding and communicating about the world. Each language user uses his/her language(s) differently. Learning English as second language is, therefore, seen as a social practice because communicating in any new language entails learning how to use words, rules and knowledge about that language in order to communicate effectively with its native speakers. It is through learning a second language that a learner participates in the activities of a multilingual community, by developing skills and knowledge necessary for full membership.

2.3.2 Agency, Power and Investment

In light of the above, Bourdieu (1977, 1991) draws attention to the importance of power in structuring discourse with interlocutors, who hardly share equal speaking rights. He argues that the value attributed to speech cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks. Conversely, a person who speaks cannot be understood from larger networks of social relationships, many of which may be unequally structured. Legitimate and illegitimate speakers are distinguished by their rights to speak and power to impose reception (1977: p. 648). Bourdieu considers the use of language as a social and political practice in which an utterance's value and meaning is determined, in part, by the value and meaning ascribed to the person who speaks. Bourdieu (1977, 1991) looks at identity as how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future (Ibid, p. 5).

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) concepts of cultural, social, symbolic and linguistic capital, Norton (1997: p.411) developed the concept of investment, which conceives learning as having a complex social history and multiple, sometimes conflicting desires. She argued that the social identities of language learners are multiple and subject to change.

As mentioned earlier, Norton's (2000) study examined the experiences of five immigrant women in Canada looking at the relationships between identity, agency, power, and access to English

language, inside and outside the workplace. To her 'agency' refers to an investment, which draws on economic metaphors, seeing language learners as having complex identities which change often and are constructed on the basis of the socially given and the individually struggled for. Her study showed how her participants were able to exert their agency in gaining the right to speak and to be heard. She found that the five immigrant women were not necessarily highly motivated to learn and speak a second language, but they had to invest in language learning. Norton argues that it is this relationship between the individual and the context that determines one's investment, or stake in the material and symbolic capital present in any interaction.

Another example by Norton (2000) shows how investments in speaking and learning English intersect with an individual's multiple identities. Katarina, a Polish wife and mother, for example, was driven to learn English to better her family's economic prospects, but she showed a low investment in doing so because of her status as an immigrant. Getting a job would most likely improve her English abilities, but she faced difficulties in finding work without papers and with limited English proficiency. She then remained ambivalent about integrating into the Canadian society and learning the necessary English for social mobility. Her predicament highlights two important findings in Norton's research: an individual's investment does not always correspond directly to her motivation to learn, and sometimes, an individual must already speak English to gain access to communities of native English speakers. Norton equally draws on Weedon's feminist post-structural theory, maintaining that it is through discourse that individuals can exercise their agency and can challenge their positioning by dominant discourses (Norton: 1995 p. 17). Norton's (2000) work investigated identity within a naturalistic setting.

Reflecting upon the problems that immigrant students face in mainstream classes, Harklau (1994: p.265) conducted a critical discourse analysis study, looking at the ways in which language exerts power on the immigrant language learners. He examined the role that language plays in the identity reconstruction of these learners, and how they socialized in the school. She found out that in most of their school experience, students faced an overwhelming monolingual environment, where expressions of their native language and culture were not encouraged.

Halbe (2005) also conducted a case study of an Indian student in a comprehensive high school in California. She described how the learner was painfully conscious of her limited English

proficiency. As a result, she never talked in the class so as to avoid any embarrassing episode and she was actually afraid of being made fun of by her classmates. Even though teachers were empathetic towards her, little could be done to resolve the situation (pp. 47-59).

Harklau's (1994) and Halbe's (2005) works cited above highlight the situated or socially and temporally constructed process by which newcomers (L2 learners) face challenges to become socialized into academic discourses at various levels of schooling. Some academic communities can have multiple, changing and sometimes competing discourses which can make newcomers' socialization less predictable and less linear. Considering this view, this study examines the socialization and experiences of Francophone students at UWC and focuses more on the classroom communities to which these students belonged. In this case, classrooms are considered as a particular kind of COP because the students are concerned mainly with their course work or tasks and everyday classroom experiences.

The classroom environment plays a crucial role in the development of a learner's L2 identity. Van Lier (2008) offers an analysis of identity work that holds agency as a central concept. The idea of agency as a central concept in identity construction focuses on the learner as an active participant in the language learning process, and in identity construction. Van Lier (2008) points out that agency requires the learner to invest physically, mentally and emotionally in the language being learned. He goes on to explain that through L2 acquisition, the learner develops agency (or the enactment of an L2 identity) (Van Lier 2008: p. 178).

Learner involvement in the acquisition process aligns with Norton's (1995) idea of 'investment', which captures the complexity of L2 learners' sociocultural histories. The notion of 'investment' shows how people can invest in the target language or not, in order to acquire a greater range of material and symbolic resources, which may enhance one's cultural capital and ultimately one's actual identity. Investment, as Norton (2000) states, signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their ambivalent desire to learn and practice it (p. 10). Identity construction occurs whenever learners are engaged cognitively, emotionally and physically. This view considers the degree to which learners accept the values of the classroom context, inclusive of possible interlocutors and mediational tools. L2 learners have a dynamic relationship with the target language and sometimes they have ambivalent desire to learn and to practice the target language.

The above cited literature on language and identity shows the various dimensions and definitions of second language learning and identity construction. Worth noting is the assertion that knowledge and understanding is socially constructed. The process of second language learning and identity construction cannot be effective without participation in social activities of a given community. Hence this study will explore how the Francophone students construct and negotiate their identity through English (L2) inside and outside the university lecture rooms.

2.4 The sociocultural theory and identity construction

Sociocultural theories of learning emphasize the significance of people as members of communities where social interaction and the use of tools are a foundation of learning. The sociocultural theory views identity construction as a product of the L2 learner's social context, interpersonal interactions and learner's attitude. Man uses tools to develop and change an object (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is at the centre of language learning and identity construction because it views language as the main tool for cognitive development and it considers all learning as part of an ongoing social process. According to Vygotsky (1978) language is a social construct. He argues that development is not a cognitive process that occurs inside a person's head and is separate from the external world in which people live. Vygotsky's theory expects students to actively participate in their own learning through the use of language and interactions with their fellow students and teachers or lecturers. It emphasizes the symbolic tool of language, proposing that students gain control over the mediational means made available by their culture, including language for interpersonal (social interaction) and intrapersonal thinking (Lantolf, 2000: p. 8). To be able to examine language learning as a social practice, students should be considered as active participants in constructing learning processes and investigating the interaction between different factors involved. It is necessary to look at the main concepts of sociocultural theory, as they contribute in identity construction through second language learning.

The sociocultural theories of learning maintain that learning takes place through social interactions and that at the heart of these interactions is how individuals negotiate and construct their identities. Considering Vygotsky's view on learning as a whole, Wells (2000, 1999, 1994)

states that learning takes place in the context of a purposeful and meaningful activity as learners and teachers or lecturers work together to construct knowledge that has its own intrinsic value. Therefore, second language learning is a social process; with the students bringing their own lived experiences as grounded in their own socio-cultural contexts. Wells confirms the fact that learning begins with personal experience in a social setting (1999: p. 91). At this point, Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) becomes relevant. Wells (1999) argues that the ZPD applies to any situation in which individuals, as they participate in an activity, are in the process of developing mastery of a practice or understanding a topic (p. 333).

In the context of this study, it is important to understand the social interactions between the Francophone students themselves, and also between the Francophone students and their lecturers. This is where Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory comes in. This theory brings out the various roles played by the research participants (Francophone students and their lecturers) in social interaction, inside and outside the classrooms. It is, therefore, important that we look at the sociocultural theory in-depth. Below I present the three main concepts of sociocultural theory involved in language learning, namely the ZPD, mediation and scaffolding.

2.4.1 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky (1978) defines the concept of ZPD as the distance between a child's actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 86). The ZPD is the distance between what students can achieve by themselves and what they can achieve when assisted by others. Wink and Putney (2001) relate that when students receive instructional support from a more capable peer in that particular context, they internalize the new information and are likely to perform independently in the next similar problem-solving situation (p.84). Vygotsky (1978) believes that with collaboration and direction, the student is always able to do more and solve more difficult tasks.

Vygotsky strongly holds that group members in a learning situation should have different levels of ability, so that more advanced peers can help less advanced members operate within their ZPD. In relation to this, Krashen (1981) makes a distinction between language acquisition and language learning and conceptualizes them in terms of two independent systems. For Krashen

(1981) language acquisition is a subconscious process gained through sustained exposure and interaction in the target language. Language learning on the other hand, involves the conscious process of studying a language. Krashen associates language acquisition to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages (1981, p. 1), and perceives language learning as the formal knowledge of language. Acquired knowledge is gained naturally in informal situations while learning occurs through formal instruction (Krashen, 1982, cited in Ellis, 1985: pp. 229-231).

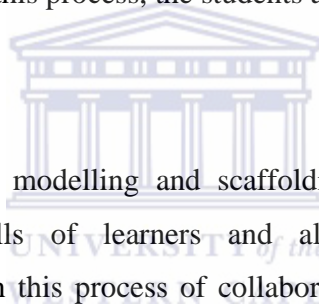
Krashen's monitor model is closely associated with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which focuses on language development from childhood through adulthood (Donato, 2000, p. 45). For the learner to reach a higher level of development (Zone of Proximal Development) the input must be at a higher level, meaning that the person mediating learning should be more knowledgeable than the learner so that the learner can be scaffolded more easily. The input must be comprehensible for learning to effectively take place. The learner could receive input from the environment (external), and the mental (internal) structures interact with the input to produce the output (L2 speech). A teacher or more experienced peer is able to provide the learner with "scaffolding" to support the student's evolving understanding of knowledge domains or development of complex skills. A brief description of "scaffolding" is given below.

2.4.2 Scaffolding

Scaffolding is closely related to the ZPD because it is only within the ZPD that scaffolding can occur. As mentioned above, working in the ZPD means that the learner is assisted by others to be able to achieve more than he or she would be able to achieve alone. Scaffolding refers to the detailed circumstances of such work in the ZPD. Scaffolding can be considered as a tutorial behaviour that is contingent, collaborative and interactive (Wood, 1988: 96). Behaviour is contingent when an action depends on (i.e. influences and is influenced by) other actions. It is collaborative when the end result, whether it is a conversation or the solution to a problem, is jointly achieved. And it is interactive when it includes the activity of two or more people who are mutually engaged. Scaffolding, therefore, is a collaborative process which enhances learning by providing assistance to another individual (Ohta, 2000: p. 52). It occurs routinely as students

work together on language learning tasks, and therefore, it becomes useful to consider the learners themselves as a source of knowledge in a social context (Donato, 1994, p.51-52).

Wells (1999) refers to scaffolding as a way of operationalizing Vygotsky's (1987) concept of working in the ZPD (p.127). He identifies three important features that give educational scaffolding its particular character: (i) the essentially dialogical nature of the discourse in which knowledge is co-constructed, (ii) the significance of the kind of activity in which knowing is embedded and (iii) the role of artefacts that mediate knowing (ibid). These features could be observed in a case where group presentation is given by a lecturer and students are paired in various groups. For learning to take place, there is need for each member of the group to contribute to the topic given. In order for the students to do a good presentation, the more knowledgeable peers would obviously put the various points contributed by each member and come up with a final draft. During this process, the students also need mediating tools which may be language, internet, books, etc.



Collaborative learning, discourse, modelling and scaffolding are strategies that support the intellectual knowledge and skills of learners and also facilitate intentional learning (planned/programmed learning). In this process of collaborative learning, the lecturer or more capable peer assists the new student until he/she attains independence in working without assistance. Collaborative or interactive learning in the form of group presentations and discussions could result in effective learning.

Second language learning and identity construction involve the concept of mediation which is concerned with the tools used in these processes. At the centre of mediation is language (input) which is used by learners in communicating and interacting, thereby constructing and negotiating identities.

2.4.3 Mediation

Learning is a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and is distributed across persons, tools and activities (Johnson, 2009, p. 9). This implies that learning is a socially mediated process as it involves social interaction and shared processes such as group discussions and/or presentations (Mitchell and Myles, 2004).

Mediation draws on the scaffolding of action and experience to further enhance learning by supporting the purpose, meaning, experience and engagement and by supporting insightful questioning of existing knowledge, action and experience (Wertsch, 1991). According to Vygotsky (1978) mediation refers to the part played by other significant people in the learners' lives to enhance learning by selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to them. He claims that the secret of effective learning lies in the nature of the social interaction between two or more people with different levels of skills and knowledge. This involves helping the learner to move into and through the next layer of knowledge or understanding.

Learners/students use tools to learn effectively and for Vygotsky (1978), mediation represents the use of tools, such as computers, learning activities, direct instructions, which are involved in the process of problem solving and learning. Among these tools, language is the most significant one. It is through language that one expresses information and ideas in different forms (e.g. discussions, narrations, and arguments). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is used to explain how language is used by teachers or lecturers and learners to mediate learning. The sociocultural theory brings out the roles of the different participants i.e. lecturers or teachers and learners in classroom interaction. Language is considered as a symbolic tool which allows individuals to collaborate with others and shape their world according to their goals. Lantoff (2000) considers mediation to be the centre concept of the sociocultural theory. Different tools are used to mediate a student's learning process. Interaction between learners/students also plays a very crucial part in mediation, as students become active in making meaning out of what they learn. Mediation may bring out the best in students who actively participate and willingly accept guidance from their lecturers or peers to construct knowledge.

Donato (2000) indicates that the sociocultural theory differs from cognitive approaches in that the cognitive approaches ascribe language learning to various internal processes, and the individual is seen as the sole channel through which knowledge is gained. The sociocultural theory, on the other hand, considers learning as a semiotic process where participation in socially-mediated activities is essential. It regards instruction as crucial to L2 development in the classroom. The instruction should be geared to the ZPD that is beyond the learner's actual development level. Mediation becomes the means for enhancing the individual's own mental functioning.

In L2 classes, the sociocultural theory asserts that learning is a collaborative achievement and not an isolated individual's effort where the learner works unassisted and unmediated. The theory emphasizes that during instruction, awareness of the structure and function of language is developed by using it socially. Donato (2000) claims that this theory adds value to interaction and the negotiation of meanings in the classroom. Teachers and learners are given opportunities to mediate and assist each other in the creation of ZPD in which each party learns and develops (Donato 2000). In this way, the sociocultural theory considers negotiation and creation of meanings as a collaborative act, through which the gap between the interpsychological/social and intrapsychological/individual is bridged. The theory believes that emphasis on collaboration during instruction helps learners to understand and see how interactions within a social instructional network are crucial for an individual's cognitive and linguistic development. According to Vygotsky, social instruction actually produces new, elaborate and advanced psychological processes that are unavailable to the individual working in isolation (Vygotsky 1989: p. 46).

The sociocultural theory also emphasizes the importance of metacognition and insists that education should be concerned with learning to learn, and developing learners' skills and strategies to continue to learn. It maintains that learning experiences should be meaningful and relevant to the learner's life and aim at the development and growth of the learner as a whole (Williams and Burden 1997). It offers theoretical perspectives with which to examine language learning as a social practice. It considers students as active participants in constructing learning processes, and investigates the interaction between different factors involved.

In relation to the above, Donato (1994) investigated how non-native speakers develop language learning experiences in the classroom setting, and how second language development occurs in the social context. His findings suggest that collective scaffolding may result in linguistic development in the individual learner. As mentioned earlier, the roles of different participants (teachers or lecturers and learners) in classroom interaction are brought to light by the sociocultural theory. Donato's findings support the importance of group work which provides students with the opportunity of scaffolding when exchanging linguistic artefacts. By recasting the role of learners during social interaction, the discussion among language learners provides

scaffolded help in the form of “inexpert-novice” relationships. The important message in Donato’s assertion is that learners can mutually assist and scaffold each other’s performance in the same way as experts scaffold it with novices. This suggests that peer interaction provides language learners with various learning tasks or environments, as such scaffolded help from peers as sources of interaction may improve performance.

Swain (2000) also supports the importance of a collaborative dialogue and a knowledge-building dialogue, as language use mediates language learning. Swain regards language as a mediating tool and explains how language helps knowledge-building, as shown in Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (1978). Swain (2000) clarifies the role of language in knowledge-building, by showing how language mediates learning in areas such as mathematics, science and history. In the case of second language learning, it is dialogue that constructs linguistic knowledge and allows performance outstrip competence. She explains that language learners construct linguistic knowledge and attempt to solve linguistic problems through joint effort and it is this collaborative performance that moves the learners beyond their current cognitive and linguistic states. This joint effort is referred to as language learning process (p.97). Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (e.g. ZPD, mediation and scaffolding) offers a comprehensive framework to analyse, interpret, and examine the interaction language learners may be involved in while constructing the language learning processes from multiple angles.

It is in this light that the present study examines how Francophone students at UWC education community become fuller participants in the community by negotiating and constructing their competence and identities through English (L2) learning. I attempt to examine whether or not English second language learning in the academic community takes place in the form of apprenticeship as suggested in Lave & Wenger’s (1999) theory. To gain more insight into the role of language in identity construction, I further refer to the poststructuralist theory.

2.5 Poststructuralist view of second language learning and identity construction

A post-structural world is one in which individuals are seen to choose and make cultures, rather than vice versa (Rapport 1999: p.7). The poststructuralist theory views language as a site of identity construction: a place where identity is positioned and contested. This theory brings out the active side of language in identity construction. It explains the dynamic nature of identity. Studies in this tradition emphasize that learners' subjectivities are evidenced in learners' struggle of self in a variety of sites, such as school, workplace, house, etc. (Duff, 2002; McKay and Wong, 1996; Miller, 2003; Norton, 1995, 2000; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004; Pavlenko, 2001). In a poststructuralist perspective, identity construction is a fluid process of ongoing struggle between different subject positions the person takes in a variety of social sites, which are structured by rules, values and power (Norton, 1995; 2000).

What is interesting about the poststructuralist theory is that it incorporates other theories. It is a modern form of the structuralist approach, sociocultural theory, and it gives room for flexibility unlike the traditional theories where identity is considered an in-born and fixed entity. The poststructural theory argues that identity changes with time, depending on the social context. For example, the use of social theory has contributed a lot in the interpretive validity of poststructuralist scholarship.

Bourdieu's (1991) work is a good example which allows poststructuralist researchers to examine and explain the functioning of various language ideologies and social processes that shape individual beliefs and behaviours. His view of language provides a powerful theoretical framework which poststructuralist researchers can use to theorise social context in ways that were lacking in the previous studies of motivation and attitudes. By this, the poststructuralist theory is broadening certain theories of the past, answering questions that were left unanswered by other enquiries. Instead of individuals using language to express their social identity, the poststructuralist research (Norton, 1995; 2000) demonstrates that language delineates and constitutes the identity of the speaker.

From a poststructuralist perspective, an individual's identity is not static, but socially constituted and expressed in interactions with others. Butler's (1990) view on identity as performance, among other poststructuralist ideas on language and identity seems particularly relevant and useful for the purpose of this study. According to Butler (1990), identity is created through social practices and performances. When applied in second language learning studies, this means that social categories, such as being a native/non-native speaker or being an expert/novice, are determined by people's performances within social interaction.

There are several poststructural views on language learning and identity construction, but this study will be informed by the views of Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1986), Bourdieu (1977) and Weedon (1987, 1997). These views bring out the role of language in identity construction and the characteristic of language learning as a social practice. For instance, Bakhtin (1981, 1984, and 1986) views second language learning as a process of struggling to use language in order to participate in specific speech communities. He considers language to be situated utterances in which speakers, in dialogue with others, struggle to create meanings. In this view, language has no independent existence outside of its use, which is social. He also sees speakers as being able to use language to express their own meanings and further points out how social positions outside language might affect an individual's speaking privilege. Bakhtin, (1981, 1984, and 1986) therefore, considers language (spoken and written) as dialogical and social, rather than monological. This means that the basic unit of language is conversational interaction, and not sentence structure or grammatical pattern.

Heller (2007) also appears to view language as a social practice, speakers as social actors and language boundaries as products of social action (p. 1). He claims that individuals can operate (in most cases) only within the boundaries and social conventions set by dominant discourses of a given context (p. 14).

Weedon (1987), like Bakhtin (1981, 1984, and 1986) and Bourdieu (1977), understands the importance of ascribed individual and group identity positions in structuring the extent to which language practices are valued. She integrates language, individual experience and social power in her theory of subjectivity. In this theory, the individual has greater human agency. She argues that it is in language that the individual constructs her subjectivity, her sense of self and her ways

of understanding her relation to the world (p. 28). Weedon (1987) considers social relationships as very crucial factors in how individuals are constructed and construct themselves.

The poststructuralist views discussed so far appear to support my belief that the identity of an individual/learner is diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social space. For example, in the case of this study, the identities of Francophone students at UWC could change at any time as they struggle to communicate with their classmates inside and outside their lecture rooms. Most of these students speak French at home and try to speak English to people they meet in the streets and at the markets/shopping malls. Each time they communicate, they are constructing, negotiating and reconstructing their identities.

2.6 The sociocultural and poststructuralist theories

Having used the sociocultural and poststructuralist theories to examine and understand second language learning as a social practice, the influence of home language on second language learning and language as a site of identity construction, I will clarify the relationship between the two theories. I will explain the link between Vygotsky's sociocultural concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the Lave and Wenger's Community of Practice (COP).

Like Vygotsky, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning is a function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs (i.e. it is situated), rather than something that occurs within the minds of individuals as cognitive psychologists have traditionally argued. Learners/students become involved in a community of practice, which is viewed as a broad characterization encompassing all social relations contained within a community of workers who share similar activities and identities, and who get things accomplished when they come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour (Wenger, 1998). The COP serves as a conceptual tool for understanding learning across different methods, historical periods, and in social and physical environments. Like Vygotsky's ZPD concept, it plays a major role in understanding how experienced lecturers or more capable peers go about their day-to-day activities and how newcomers observe and interact with them. In situated learning, the more capable peers' role is to scaffold the new students just outside their current ZPD and enable them to re-think their current views and practices. Lave and Wenger, (1991) explain that in each instance, COP

represents a negotiated set of relations among persons, activity, and the world, over time and in relation to other communities of practice (p. 98).

In a community of practice, identity construction is the production of social relations created around work and knowledge. It emerges in the process of activity as people work and learn collaboratively. The structures of communities implicitly and explicitly lay out the terms and conditions for the members' legitimate participation, and define and set boundaries around their learning. During the process of developing the knowledge base to become full members of a community, learning is a student's continuous negotiation with communities of practice, which ultimately gives direction to both the student and the practice. In a sense, therefore, the ZPD could be perceived as a boundary for members who are at various levels of competence or learning in a community of practice.

Using a situated learning approach to development and the concept of a community of practice, Lave and Wenger's (1991) research on apprenticeship offers one view on how the ZPD can help us construct or re-construct our view of development and the function of educators in the development process. With apprenticeship as their focus, Lave and Wenger set out to better understand the situated learning theory as a conceptual tool for education and instruction. They are interested in how competence is developed in communities of practice as more capable peers provide new students with leading activities situated in real time and in real settings.

In this study, the Francophone students under study construct their L2 identities and negotiate their competence in their English (L2) lecture rooms and local communities as they participate in oral and writing activities. In order to be more successful in L2 learning, they have to actively interact with their lecturers and more capable classmates inside and outside their lecture rooms.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has focused on the relationship between identity construction and second language learning, bringing to light the importance of the community or society to second language learning. The literature review reflected on various ways of looking at second language learner's identity, taking into consideration the sociocultural theory and the poststructuralist approaches which support the fact that the society/community is an inevitable factor to be considered in a second language learner's experience. This can support our view that second language learning is

a social practice, and that identity construction is an ongoing process, changing with time and space.

This leads to the next chapter which focuses on the research methodology used in this study. It brings to light the different methods used in data collection in order to respond to the literature discussed in this chapter.



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, literature relevant to the focus of this research was presented. This chapter focuses on the research methodology used in this study. It describes and discusses the qualitative research methods used in this thesis. Since the aim of this study is to investigate how Francophone students at the University of the Western Cape negotiate and construct their identities through English second language learning, a predominantly qualitative approach seemed to be the most appropriate one. This entailed examining their lived experiences in and out of the university, and how they used English (L2) for academic and social purposes. This chapter outlines the various stages involved in the design and implementation of the methodological plan devised for this study. It also deals with research ethics and issues of reflexivity.

3.2 Research approach and rationale

Qualitative research is defined as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: p. 3). It attempts to understand the unique interactions in a particular situation (Patton, 2002: p.10). In qualitative research, reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: pp. 4-5). Qualitative enquiry seeks to gain rich detailed information in terms of individual interpretations (Berg, 2004; Durrheim, 2006). It assumes that all knowledge is relative, that there is a subjective element to all knowledge and research. This implies that qualitative, holistic and ungeneralisable studies are justifiable.

In this study, qualitative methods were used in order to understand the Francophone students' experiences, and the socio-cultural contexts within which they lived. They were also used to understand how the students interacted with their lecturers and peers in English (L2) classrooms. The qualitative approach was considered to be the most appropriate means of realising the aims of this research, because it gave a degree of insights into the motivations and attitudes of the participants.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain that the notion of “lived experiences” has become an important one in social research because it involves collecting information about personal experiences, introspection, life story, interviews, observations, historical, interactions and visual text which are significant moments and meaningful in peoples' lives. This study made use of the qualitative research methodology which involved students and lecturers as participants. It made use of a variety of data collection techniques and imperial materials such as a case study, personal experiences, introspection, life story, interviews artefacts and observations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: p. 5).

In this study, I made use of a case study, personal experiences, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations to understand the experiences of Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students using English as a second language for academic and social purposes. This enabled me to explore how the Francophone students negotiated competence and identities in their English (L2) lecture rooms and in the local communities as they participated in oral and writing activities.

I further believed that the insights mentioned below could support my epistemological stance. Qualitative research is concerned with human beings in terms of interpersonal relationships, personal values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts and feelings. The qualitative researcher attempts to attain rich, real, deep and valid data from a rational standpoint. This approach is inductive (Leedy, 1993: p.143). It deals with collecting, analyzing and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. It refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things (Berg, 2001). It is much more subjective and uses different methods of collecting information, such as interviews, observations and document analysis.

According to Denzin (1989), triangulation or the use of multiple methods, is a plan of action that raises sociologists (and other social science researchers) above the personal biases that stem from single methodologies. By using multiple methods in the same study, observers or researchers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one method to another (Denzin, 1989: p.236). When one analyses data collected through different techniques, one is likely to come out with more valid and reliable findings than data collected using a single technique. A researcher may understand and describe a concept if he/she looks at it from two or more different perspectives. If

he/she comes out with the same results, the researcher could become more comfortable with his/her conclusion. Denzin (1978) sees triangulation as the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon.

My study aimed to explore, understand how the students under study coped with English second language learning, how they interacted with other students and how their experiences in the second language affected both their academic and social lives. The qualitative research methods enabled me to explore the relationship between language learning and identity construction, and to describe the unique interactions between English (L2) students with their first language (L1) peers and lecturers, inside and outside the classroom situations at the University of the Western Cape.

3.3 Research design and rationale

Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004: p.6) refer to a research design as a reflection of the methodological requirements of the research question that determines the type of data that will be collected, and how the data will be processed. In other words, a research design is a plan or structure that guides the researcher to obtain information or evidence to answer the research question(s).

A qualitative research design has been used in this study because it involves the use of open-ended questions and probing which gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses. Open-ended questions have the ability to evoke responses that are rich and explanatory in nature, and the use of probes encourage participants to elaborate on their answers. I chose the qualitative design for this study because it enabled me to get thick descriptions of the experiences of Francophone students at UWC as they negotiated and constructed their identities through English second language learning.

There are various types of designs that can be employed in qualitative research, namely the naturalistic inquiry, interpretative research, field study, participant observation, inductive research, case study and ethnography (Denzin and Lincoln: 2000 p. 3). I chose a case study as the research design for this study. Merriam (1988) and Willis (2007) define a case study as an

examination of a specific phenomenon such as a programme, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group which involves thick descriptive data. Willis (2007: p.239) suggests that case studies are about real people and real situations.

Similarly, Yin (1994) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Yin (1993) distinguishes between three types of case studies: exploratory, causal and descriptive case studies. In an exploratory case study, the collection of data occurs before theories or specific research questions are formulated. This kind of case study is followed up by analysis of data and leads to more systemic case studies. The first stage in this type of case study is to define the issues to be researched. The causal case study, on the other hand, looks for cause-and-effect relationships, and searches for explanatory theories of the phenomena. For Yin (ibid.), this situation offers the most suitable conditions for adopting the case study as the research strategy of choice. Lastly, the descriptive case study requires a theory to guide the collection of data, and this theory should be openly stated in advance and be the subject of review and debate, and later serve as the design for the descriptive case study. The more thoughtful the theory, the better the descriptive case study will be (Yin, 1993: p.22).

Stake (1993) also distinguishes three types of case studies, namely, intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies. An intrinsic case study is done when the case is unique and is, therefore, not representative of others. The purpose of conducting this type of case study is not mainly to build a theory, but it develops out of intrinsic interest. An instrumental case study is selected to provide insights or to develop an existing theory. In an instrumental case study, the case is often looked at in depth, its contexts are scrutinised, and its ordinary activities are detailed because it helps us pursue the external interest (Stake, 1993: p. 237). Finally, the collective case study is instrumental and extends to more than one instance.

Yin's (1994) descriptive case study is closely linked to Stake's (1993) intrinsic and instrumental case study types as they all depend on an existing theory to have a detailed look at a situation. They also involve a group of people, events or organisations. The three types of case studies are similar in that they give a thick description of real life situations and they give an in-depth look, as well as a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. I believe that the points raised so far can serve as my initial justification for the use of a case study approach.

As mentioned earlier, through the lens of the sociocultural theory, this study looked at a case of Francophone students at the UWC. The English second language learners were members of a minority group, who were experiencing challenges while learning the target language. Pierce (1995: p.13) reveals that the relationship between a second language and the learners is a complex, ongoing phenomenon, in which the role of language must be understood as constitutive of and constituted by a language learner's social identity. In light of this, it is quite possible that the Francophone students' language behaviour and language attitudes towards English second language were outcomes, and not causes of their proficiency.

Paré and Elam (1997) argue that a case study research strategy makes the capture and understanding of context possible, and can be used to achieve a variety of research aims using diverse data collection and analysis methods. In addition, the case study approach allows for thick descriptions of the phenomena under study (Yin, 1994) which give the researcher access to multiple interpretations. In studying events in their natural setting, the case study makes use of multiple methods of data collection such as interviews, documentary reviews, archival records, and direct and participant observations (Yin, 1994).

Following Willis' (2007) view, I used a case study design for this study because it gave ground for all the procedures required to investigate, examine and explore real lived experiences. It allowed various methods for data collection, such as interviews and observations. Through thick descriptions and exploration of the L2 students' experiences, it was envisaged that I would be able to answer my research questions accordingly.

3.4 Research site

History has shown that the South African education system favoured the white people, particularly at the higher level of education (UWC publications; 1973: 2001). The University of the Western Cape, which was then known as the University College of the Western Cape, was set aside by the ruling government at the time (National Party) to admit coloured group students (UWC publications, 2001: p. 4). During that time, whites held top positions in all formal domains and only low positions were given to the coloured people. In 1960, the first group of 166 students enrolled at the University College of the Western Cape, and in 1970, the school

gained its university status and became the University of the Western Cape (UWC) (UWC publications, 2001: p. 6).

A very prominent figure who has drawn my attention in the course of this study is the late Professor Jakes Gerwel, who was appointed Rector and Vice Chancellor at UWC from 1987 to the early 1990s. During his tenure (1987-1995), Professor Gerwel gave room for admission of students from various cultural backgrounds. He refused to limit admission only to particular races. The late Professor Gerwel said any student who met the statutory requirements could be admitted into the institution, regardless of his/her cultural background (UWC publications, 2001, p. 39).

Under his rule, the university adopted an open admission policy to make it more accessible to disadvantaged students. Professor Gerwel believed that the major thrust was towards a non-racial and majority democracy, reflecting itself not in the mere form of multi-racial political arrangements, but more fundamentally in the social re-organization of power and privilege (UWC publications, 2001: p. 21). He called for the university to become the "intellectual home of the left" where progressive thinkers could debate their ideas without compromising the principles of autonomy, diversity and freedom of expression (UWC publications, 2001: p. 30).

The UWC's stand on the academic and cultural boycott has given a lead to educational institutions, both locally and internationally. This institution encourages disadvantaged students, and foreigners who are non-racists, to get admission and feel free to express their opinions. Professor Gerwel equally saw the need for the English language to be implemented as the medium of instruction. He expressed his wish for UWC to use English language as the language of academic currency. The choice of English language as the language of academic currency makes communication or interaction between different racial and linguistic groups easier and, in addition, this language is considered as an international language.

With the above historical background on the UWC, it is important to note that this research site offers rich opportunities for the language learner to construct and negotiate his/her identities, without fear of being considered as the "other". Even today, the UWC remains one of the universities in South Africa which opens its doors to South Africans and international students of all races and cultural backgrounds. The Francophone students under study may find it easier

learning English second language and negotiating their membership into the UWC educational community because the general study body is mixed, with various ethnic groups whose first language is not English. At the UWC campus, there are students from various ethnic groups; African (e.g. Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, etc.), Indian, Coloured, White and international students. Most of the students are English second language learners and would not, therefore, find other second language learners strange. Today UWC is well -known and touted as a transformative anti-apartheid fighting institution. Therefore, issues of equality and integration are still at the top priority at this institution, and still dominate UWC official discourse. It was for the above stated reasons that UWC was chosen as an appropriate research site for this study.

3.5 Sampling and sampling techniques

Identifying a smaller group or subset of a given total population to gather data for a piece of research is always necessary to obtain quality results. The smaller group or subset used to collect data in a study is referred to as a sample. There are two main methods of sampling, namely, probability, also known as a random sampling and non-probability sampling, also known as a purposeful sampling (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007: p. 110).

The snowball sampling method which is a type of non-probability sample, was used to select the participants for this study. Snowballing, also known as chain referral sampling, is considered a type of purposive sampling. In this method, participants or informants with whom contact has already been made, use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study. Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit “hidden populations,” that is, groups that are not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies. In snowball sampling, a small number of individuals having the characteristics required for a specific study are identified. These individuals will equally help in identifying others and the circle may become larger (Cohen, et al., 2007: p. 116).

Snowball sampling, however, has its advantages and disadvantages. One popular advantage of this sampling method is that there are no lists or other obvious sources for locating members of the population of specific interest. The disadvantage of this sampling approach is that there is no way to know the total size of the overall population in advance. Snowball sampling also lacks definite knowledge as to whether or not the sample is an accurate representative of the target

population. By targeting only a few selected people, it is not always indicative of the actual trends within the result group. Identifying the appropriate person to conduct the sampling, as well as locating the correct targets is a time consuming process which renders the benefits only, slightly outweighing the costs.

I used the snowball sampling method for my study because not all the Francophone students at the University of Cape Town fell under the same category for the study. Some were in the first year and did not have enough to share; others only came to the university at the postgraduate level. Also, access to the Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking students studying at the University of the Western Cape was difficult. The selected students were all from a French background; three of them studying nursing, two studying pharmacy and three others studying Business Administration. The participants were three males and five females. Their average age ranged between 27 and 42 years old. Lastly, it was less expensive as I did not have to spend money moving from one institution to another or put up adverts for people to volunteer as participants. The sampling method was convenient and purposeful because I am a student at the UWC, and this gave me the opportunity to carry out my study without stressing about visiting other institutions.

Furthermore, I live in the same neighbourhood with two Francophone students at the University of the Western Cape; one from Cameroon and the other from Congo. They all had been struggling with English as a second language and when I explained my study to them, they were willing to participate in the study. They inspired me because they were anxious to learn English, though sometimes they had problems interacting or communicating in the target language. I tried getting a general statistics on Francophone students at the University of the Western Cape from the student administration, but I did not succeed. Finally, I decided to ask my two Francophone neighbours to help me get other students who were facing the same language problem like them. Through them, I got another Francophone student from Gabon who later referred me to one other Francophone student from Cameroon and two others from Congo. In fact, I ended up having eight Francophone students who agreed to participate in the study. But only four finally did the interviews and personal narratives and the other four withdrew from the study. I could not force them to complete the study because the consent form that was given to them stated clearly that their participation in this study was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any stage of research

(see Appendix 4). Therefore, the main participants of this study were four Francophone students at UWC who spoke French as a home language. The sample included males and females in order to provide greater insights into what the Francophone students (both males and females) thought about learning a new language in their new space. The selection of participants aimed at interviewing those who had at least spent two-three years in South Africa and at UWC campus in particular, because they had more experiences to share about using English second language for both academic and social purposes. I also interviewed three of Francophone students' lecturers. The profiles of Francophone students are tabulated below. A brief personal history of the four students is also provided. .

Table 1: Students' profiles

Criteria	Chantal	Joseph	Yvette	Rogers
Country of origin	Congo	Gabon	Cameroon	Cameroon
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Age	35	42	31	28
Programme	Bachelor degree in Nursing	Bachelor degree in Business Administration	Bachelor degree in Pharmacy	Bachelor degree in Pharmacy
First language	Lingala	Fang	Bassa	Duala
Language of instruction	English (L2)	English (L2)	English (L2)	English (L2)
Year of study	Second year	First year	Third year	Third year
Previous degree(s)	Baccalaureate	License (Bachelor degree) in Economics	License (Bachelor degree) in Physics	Baccalaureate

Chantal

Chantal was a Congolese woman in her mid thirties. She was born and raised in Congo Brazzaville, and had never studied or worked outside Congo until she moved to South Africa to join her husband in May 2009. She graduated from the top secondary schools in Congo with good grades in the Baccalaureate exams. She wished to find a full-time job in South Africa after obtaining the Bachelor degree in nursing.

Rogers

Rogers was a male Cameroonian third year Pharmacy student in his late twenties. He was born and raised in Cameroon, and graduated with very good grades at high school, with specialization in Physics and Applied mathematics. Before he moved to South Africa for the university studies in 2010, he attended English learning classes for six months.

Yvette

Yvette was a female Cameroonian in her early thirties. She was born and raised in Cameroon and had a Bachelor degree in Physics. She worked in a pharmacy owned by her family in Cameroon as a cashier for three years. She moved to South Africa in 2011, hoping to graduate as a trained pharmacist after four years. During the data collection period, she was doing her third year in pharmacy and hoped to graduate in 2015 and return home (Cameroon) to work as a qualified pharmacist, instead of a cashier in the pharmacy.

Joseph

Joseph was a Gabonese male in his early forties. He was born and raised in Gabon and graduated with a license (Bachelor degree) in Economics. He opened his own business and was running it as a Director for four years, and decided to move to South Africa to do an MBA at UWC. When he arrived in South Africa in 2012, he realized that he needed to have a good mastery of the English language to succeed in his studies. He then registered for English classes in Cape Town, and he decided to register as an undergraduate student for Business Administration at the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS), instead of pursuing an MBA degree. He finally

became a full-time student at the faculty of EMS last year, 2013. He hoped to go home (Gabon) with more knowledge, not only in business, but also in English language.

Here lecturers who taught the Francophone students were also involved in this study. They were two females and one male. Table 2 below outlines their profiles in terms of where they came from, their age and gender, and the languages they spoke (as first and second languages).

Table 2: Lecturers' profiles

Criteria	Madam Victoire	Mr. Johnson	Madam Precious
Country of origin	Rwanda	Nigeria	South Africa
Gender	Female	Male	Female
Age	40	Late forties	36
First language	Swahili	Ibo	Afrikaans
Second language	French	English	English

From the lecturers' profile above, the diversity of ethnic groups can be noted. The participants were from different countries (Rwanda, Nigeria and South Africa). The opinions of lecturers counted when it came to checking out students' participation and negotiation for competence. With different responses from the three lecturers, there was a clear indication of how the Francophone students negotiated competence in English second language and how they constructed their identities.

3.6 Research methods

The study made use of observations, document analysis and semi-structured interviews with four Francophone students (Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students) who moved to South Africa after completing their high school and university education and got admission at the University of the Western Cape. The collection of data using different/multiple methods brings about the idea of triangulation. Triangulation, expressed in plain language, is an approach to data analysis that synthesizes data from multiple sources. Creswell and Miller (2000: p. 126) define triangulation as a validity of procedure where researchers seek for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories. Triangulation seeks to quickly examine existing data to strengthen interpretations and improve policy and programmes based on the available evidence. Interviews, observations and Francophone students' personal narratives were used as methods of data collection, to ensure validity, as Chaudron (2003) has observed. Chaudron (2003: p. 804) states that triangulation is well recognized as a way of ensuring validity. Three lecturers of the Francophone students were also interviewed. The data were collected in the course of the 2014 academic year, over a period of two months.

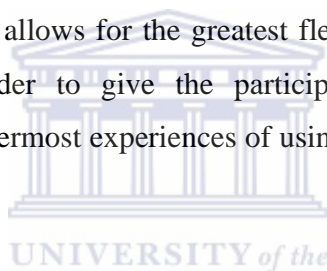
The aim was to investigate the Francophone students' practices and beliefs about learning in English second language. I also investigated the lecturers' experiences of teaching Francophone students who had different proficiency levels in English (L2) which is the main medium of instruction at the University of the Western Cape. The documents such as field notes during non-participant observations gave me more information about the perceptions of the selected students about L2 learning, and the difficulties they faced in (re)constructing their identities.

3.6.1 Interviews

There are different types of interviews, which include questionnaires, checklists and rating scales. Silverman (2000) identifies three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Open-ended interviews are another type, and they are usually like a shared conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is for this reason that Creswell (2003) describes interviews as involving unstructured and generally open-ended

questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell 2003: p.188).

Byrne (2004: p. 182) contends that qualitative interview generally refers to in-depth, loosely or semi-structured interviews, and these qualitative interviews are particularly useful for accessing individuals' attitudes and values. Silverman (2000) also identifies three types of interviews, namely the structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The structured interview is the one in which the researcher comes to the interview with a set of questions, does not deviate from those questions and asks the same questions to all participants. The semi-structured interview is carefully planned before the interview is carried out, but the researcher can change the order of questions, omit questions or vary the wording of the questions depending on what happens in the interview. Nunan (1992) claims that the semi-structured interviews involve in-depth questions which explore the participants' subjective experiences. Finally, the unstructured one is more conversation-like and allows for the greatest flexibility. In this study, I used the semi-structured interviews in order to give the participants enough freedom to express themselves, and bring out their innermost experiences of using English second language for both academic and social purposes.



Interviews can take different forms. For qualitative research purposes, the face-to-face interview is probably the best because the researcher has the benefit of reading his/hedr interviewee's or participant's facial expression, tone of voice and body language. In this way, the researcher can learn even more about the interview participant. Furthermore, with the aid of nonverbal cues and the context of a more natural conversation, the researcher will know better how to interpret the participant's responses. The researcher can also quickly find out if a question was misunderstood and rephrase it appropriately, or if a response is particularly rich, the interviewer can immediately ask follow-up questions. However, time and resources are always a challenge in research. Face-to-face interviews demand the most time of both the researcher and the participant. Also, if the interview participant lives far away, the researcher may not have the money or time to travel to a face-to-face interview.

An interview is a face to face interaction between an interviewer and interviewee, where the purpose is to understand the interviewee's life experiences or situations as expressed in his/her

own words. Through the interview we gain knowledge about people around us, getting to know them quite intimately, so that we can really understand how they think and feel. Interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell 2003: p. 188).

According to Codo (2003), interviewing is a fairly versatile technique for gathering and collecting data on multilingualism and useful in obtaining both linguistic productions from multilingual speakers and also content data. It is a very useful research tool as it gives the researcher a degree of flexibility and privileged access to other people's lives, for it gathers biographical and other relevant contextualizing information from users of language with their views, values and attitudes towards their own and others linguistic practices.

Codo (2003) categorises interviews as generators of two data sources: content and language use. Interviews primarily designed for speech samples are often used to obtain contextualizing biographical and language-related information from respondents. Interviews are useful tools for finding out how respondents feel about certain things. Good interview skills include the ability to listen well and ask questions in a non-threatening manner.

Seliger and Shohamy (1989), in line with the above, further explain that since the purpose of interviews is to collect data by actually talking to the participants, the interviews are, therefore, personalised and give the researcher a level of in-depth information, free response and flexibility that cannot be gathered by other techniques. Unstructured or semi-structured interviews can enable the interviewer to come in at certain levels of the interview with particular cues that allow for more information to emerge that was not foreseen at the beginning. He/she can also elicit additional data if initial answers are vague, incomplete, off-topic, or not specific enough. The interviewees, on their part, also have the opportunity to ask questions on what they have not understood.

Open-ended interviews are intended to find out how the participant views the world as opposed to the structured interviews, which target certain information. It is better to think in advance the exact purpose of your interview. The better you prepare, the better your interview will be.

Interviews can help the researcher gain the other person's experience of their reality i.e. how they view and interpret what happened or is happening.

In analysing the interviews then what is needed is structuring the large and complex material for analysis. This is done nowadays by transcription and by qualitative material which is then clarified and coded, making it amenable for analysis. Deleting ambiguous statements and repetitions is important here, and distinguishing between essential and nonessential, which depends largely on the purpose of the study.

In a case study, researchers can interview one person in depth. This could be a long-term study conducted over a few years or a short-term study of a few weeks, but in a case study, the researcher will usually interview the person several times, trying to get as much detailed information as possible from this person. In the following section, I focus on how the interviews were conducted with the selected participants.

I decided to interview lecturers who taught Francophone students at UWC. All the lecturers interviewed were multilingual speakers. The four Francophone students interviewed were from French-speaking backgrounds and had French as their medium of instruction till they came to South Africa. The Francophone students were then obliged to attend an English medium school since South Africa is an English dominated country. However, they spoke French at home with their relatives and struggled with English at the university since it had become their language of instruction. In the interviews conducted, I wanted to understand the different methods used by the lecturers in their lessons and also to know the activities used at the different levels of the lesson to enable students to talk, especially those who would be feeling uncomfortable with English (L2). The interviews with Francophone students' lecturers gave me information on the situation of the students concerning language issues, identity construction or (re)construction, and lecturers' teaching methods.

3.6.1.1 Students' interviews

In the semi-structured interviews, I prepared pre-determined core questions in advance from which I was able to explore in-depth information as the interview proceeded. At certain points, I

allowed for elaborations, both on the questions and the answers. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in English, though there were instances (e.g. Yvette's interview) that the participant preferred using French. In that case, the interview was later translated by the researcher. I was aware of the limitations of expression that would occur during the interviews due to participants' proficiency levels in English second language. Pavlenko, (2002) explains that the telling of life stories in L2 may be a means of empowerment that makes it possible to express new selves and desires previously considered untellable. We had moments where participants could not find the right words to express their thoughts. However, this allowed the participants to explain the particular event more in detail, in different words, and this provided me with more information for my analysis.

In this study, questions for the interviews were constructed to cover areas such as the educational background of each student, their experience of learning English (L2), their social interaction and identity. The Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students were given full freedom to use either French or English, or even to switch between the two languages so that the deepest and uninterrupted expression could be brought forward. The interviews were done individually with the selected students (from Cameroon, Gabon and Congo) and they lasted for approximately 30-45 minutes. The interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants. The interviews with the participants were semi-structured and conducted in person. The interviews were recorded and descriptive notes throughout the interview were also written. The interviews gave room for a common exchange of experience between the researcher and the respondents.

The interview questions were generally designed in an open-ended manner that covered the thematic areas and backgrounds such as lived experiences for using English second language for both academic and social purposes. The aim of the open-ended questions was to allow the participants to express themselves in their own words. In this way, I was able to understand the participants' feelings and day-to-day activities and experiences in a natural way, and this helped to make the data more trustworthy and specific.

Some of the interviews (e.g. Yvette's interview) were conducted in French and for the purpose of this thesis, they were translated into English by the researcher herself. This gave room for the

Francophone students to freely articulate what they thought because they were quite eager to express their ideas. Extensive notes were also taken during the fieldwork. I took note of some non-verbal expressions which indicated that there was more to what the interviewee was giving as answer.

Data from the four interviews were analyzed and transcribed in a narrative form. For ethics consideration, I have kept the identity of these participants anonymous by giving them pseudonyms (see appendix 5).

3.6.1.2 Lecturers' interviews

As mentioned above, I interviewed the lecturers of the selected students to find out what impressions they had about their Francophone students. I also wanted to find out about their expectations of the students, and how they planned to adjust their teaching and to support the students to be competent in English (L2). The lecturers were more difficult to find and so it was only best to go for the lecturers of already selected (for the study) Francophone students. They were three in number (two male and one female) from the Nursing, Pharmacy and Economic and Management Sciences. I decided it was best to ask the Francophone students about their lecturers and see if it could be possible to have an interview with them, considering the fact that they had an experience with teaching the selected students.

I had problems getting some personal information from the lecturers, such as their qualifications and ages because they claimed that by mentioning that information and the various disciplines, anybody could identify them. I did not find anything particularly wrong with their decision because ethically, they had the right to full confidentiality if they wanted it. This supports the notion that interview participants are human beings with their own set of rights, issues and potential problems which have to be respected. Although I could understand the identity of my participants while conducting the interview, I kept their identity confidential in writing up the research report by using pseudonyms.

The lecturers' interviews elicited information regarding their experiences of teaching Francophone students and their contribution towards the Francophone students' improvement in learning English second language. These interviews were conducted in English and lasted for 30-45 minutes for each lecturer (see appendix 5).

3.6.1.3 Limitations of interviews

Interviews can, however, have limitations as they are sometimes biased in answers and accuracy. This can happen when the interviewer and the interviewee are familiar with each other or when the issue under research is very sensitive. In such cases, the interviewee will fail to give the right information for fear of the unknown. In the case of the students used in this study, some were uncomfortable that their interviews could be used against them (even after they were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality in the consent form), and thus held back the truth and rather preferred to give the interviewer positive responses just to please her. I realized this while conducting interviews with the selected Francophone students, but this was not a big problem because I got more information from their personal narratives which they later wrote for me.

In some cases, the interviewer could be biased in analysing the responses given by the interviewee. The interviewer with a particular impression about an interviewee can carry this impression to the analysis of the data collected. The interviewee, on the other hand, can also give biased responses based on the researcher's attitude or the issue under research.

Also, inaccurate responses can sometimes occur when the interview questions are not written down and do not follow the same order. By this, I mean that the researcher asks the questions randomly and this may confuse the respondents. The questions should be chronological such that one question leads to the next. To prevent this confusion, my questions were written down and administered in the same order to all those interviewed. Changes occurred in cases where the responses of some of the respondents gave me the opportunity to get more information that was not envisaged at the beginning of the research. Thus further questions were posed immediately.

3.6.2 Observations of lectures

Observation is very important in qualitative research as the researcher takes note of the behaviour and activities of the researched. It refers to methods of data generation which involve the researcher immersing him/herself in a research setting, and observing the different dimensions of that setting (Creswell, 2003: p.186). According to Creswell (2003: p.188) the

researcher records, in an unstructured or semi-structured way, activities at the research site. The qualitative researcher may also engage in roles, varying from a non-participant to a complete participant.

Observation of lectures was used as one of the instruments for data collection relating to identity construction and English second language learning in this study. I observed how the lecturers of Francophone students interacted with the students in the classrooms. The classroom is the primary site where teaching and learning takes place and so it was very important for me to maintain it as my observation site, where I took note of the behaviour and activities of the researched. My observations focused on the teaching approaches that were used by the lecturers in their classrooms, i.e. how they facilitated or mediated English second language learning using English (L2) as a language of instruction. These observations included factors which influenced teaching and learning, the kinds of materials that were used in teaching Francophone students to facilitate teaching and learning in this study. Classroom observation was chosen to supplement the interviews and the interactional data.

As a qualitative researcher, I wrote exhaustive notes, recording everything I could observe at the scene. This involved observing Francophone students' lecture rooms and their interactions with people in and outside the classroom. I took the role of a passive observer in order not to miss out any details. I could easily take down notes since I was not participating in the classroom activities. I preferred being a passive observer as the closeness of the researcher with the participants may result in biases, which may later affect the researcher's analysis of data as a whole. While observing, I made as notes as much as possible, and at home I wrote narrative descriptions of the happenings in the classrooms that were guided by my notes and my memory.

Guided by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory within qualitative research, my observations of lectures focused on the interactions between the Francophone students and their lecturers, and with their fellow classmates. In other words, I observed the planned and unplanned activities that took place in the classrooms. The classroom observations made clear the various factors involved in teaching and learning English as a second language. I also took note of the classroom

atmosphere in order to understand how and why the lecturers and learners interacted in various ways.

I observed three classes of Francophone students under study. These classes were the third year pharmacy, second year nursing and first year business administration. I observed lectures for a period of six weeks, during the first and second terms in classes such as Fundamentals of Nursing (in the Nursing Department), Physics (in Pharmacy) and Academic Literacy for business (Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences).

During the observations, I took note of the classroom atmosphere which was going to help in analysing and interpreting lecturer-learner interaction. I noticed there was more relaxed atmosphere in the nursing and business administration lectures. I enjoyed the presentations and discussions in the nursing lectures as the Francophone students expressed themselves freely, although their competence in English was low. This was evident in the language errors that they made in their speech. I took note of questions asked by Francophone students and how their lecturer explained to them to understand. The lessons were interesting in the sense that I was familiar with some aspects of Human Biology and Fundamentals of nursing. The Human Biology lectures reminded me of my secondary school days when I did Human Biology too, though at a lower level. The atmosphere was so relaxed that I felt like participating.

At the faculty of EMS, I observed the lectures in Academic literacy for business and they were quite interesting. The lecture in Academic Literacy for business made me revisit certain aspects of academic writing. I even refreshed my mind about paraphrasing, paragraph writing and referencing, among other skills.

It is only at the pharmacy lectures that the atmosphere was a little serious with practical issues that only students and lecturers in the field could understand perfectly well. The general pharmacology lectures seemed more complicated than what I had anticipated. Physics, in pharmacy, concerned a lot of science terms which made me to focus more on the non-verbal expressions of the Francophone students under study. But when I attended the lectures dealing

with psychosocial aspects and ethics, things were a bit better because they touched on issues concerning human behaviour.

However, I also noted that all the lecturers I observed understood the Francophone students' presence in their various classrooms. There was one of them who actually told me she shared a similar experience with Francophone students as she was also from a French background.

As indicated earlier, observations of students and lecturers were conducted to gain more information on the interactions between the students and their lecturers. The observations permitted me to understand the English second language learning process of the students and how the lecturers were contributing to their learning. This technique facilitated the process of picking up details on how the lecturers managed students and got them to listen, and participate in oral and writing classroom activities. It enabled me to investigate the relationship between the students and their lecturers, how the classroom was organized and what type of methods lecturers used to facilitate learning.

Although observations have important advantages in understanding participants' behaviour, they also have limitations in that sometimes the results do not reflect the actual behaviour of the participants. In other words, sometimes the researcher's interpretation of facial expressions or body language of participants may not necessarily reflect what they seem to be. Hence the researcher should have an open mind, and try to understand the behavior of participants in relation to their context.

3.6.3 Students' narratives

According to Creswell (2003), documents for research may be public documents, (e.g. newspapers, minutes of meetings, official reports) or private documents (e.g. personal journals and dairies, letter, emails). Written narratives can also be collected as data in qualitative research. The Francophone students' written narratives were good for data collection in this study as they provided me with the language, words, feelings and lived experiences of the participants. This was more effective as the students wrote in my absence, and thus the information was unobtrusive and thoughtful.

Solé, (2007) explains that a personal narrative is a type of discourse practice which describes one's life events, though it is not just a story about narrators' personal experience and past events. This implies that by narrating their experiences, narrators implicate themselves, and try to identify themselves with others. narrators try to make sense of themselves in light of their various experiences, thereby, giving their lives more meanings. According to Mishler, (1999), a personal narrative is a form of case-centered research. Therefore, I believe that the students' narratives analyzed here are consistent with the case study design I have used in this study.

In order to analyze and understand how Francophone students position themselves discursively upon entering a new academic community at UWC), I conducted interviews with them and analyzed their written narratives using the narrative analysis approach. In this way, I also wanted to see how their positions shifted and how they constructed their identities.

The stories that the participants told me in the form of interview and written narratives were representations of their own experiences, particularly English second language learning. These experiences could have been shaped by their subjectivities, and thus might not be the direct interpretation of what actually happened in their lives. This justifies my choice of analyzing my participants' stories, using the narrative approach which allowed me to reach their inner thoughts such as motivations, investments, struggles and losses, and to actually view how their identities were practiced, tested out and constructed through such past experiences (Solé, 2004; Pavlenko, 2002).

The other unique nature of personal narratives is that the stories that are narrated are not only produced by the narrators, but also shaped by others (Pavlenko, 2002). As Pavlenko emphasized, the influence of social, cultural and historical conventions on narratives, as well as the relationship between the narrator and the interlocutor must be considered in the analysis. To acknowledge this co-constructed nature of narratives, I made notes regarding a possible influence that the language choice for my interview, as well as my academic background might have had on the narratives that the participants provided to me.

In a way, my academic background also played an important role in shaping their narratives. The four student participants and I shared a very similar background in that two were Cameroonians,

one Congolese and one Gabonese and all had Francophone background. In many ways, I was one of them. We were non-native English speakers who were enrolled in the same university. In addition to this, I informed the participants prior to the interviews that I was also a Cameroonian international Master student in South Africa. I made them understand that I was not going to judge them on what they were talking about as I had been there once too. This assurance helped the participants to feel more comfortable in sharing their problems and difficulties or challenges they had experienced in South Africa and at UWC, particularly with regard to English (L2) learning.

The Francophone students' written narratives were in response to the question: **“What are your experiences of using English for both academic and social purposes in South Africa and at UWC in particular?”** The narratives were used in this study because I realised that students could not actually reveal their true attitudes in the interviews and even in class, because they were uncomfortable and some could not speak English fluently, but could write it reasonably well. I wanted my participants to express themselves freely, and so I gave them the opportunity to write either in French or English. But they insisted on writing in English so that they could get corrections. These personal narratives were written in the form of essays and they spent two weeks on them. These narratives also helped in interpreting thoughts and feelings that might have been left out during interviews and observations. They enabled me to get more information on the students' perceptions on using English (L2) for academic and social purposes and how they negotiated competence and identities in their English (L2) lecture rooms and local communities.

3.7 Ethics

Beauchamp and Childress (1989) give a classic definition of ethics. They maintain that ethics pertains to doing good and avoiding harm. Doing research today without consent being sought from all participants may result in the questioning of the validity of the results and knowledge claims that might emanate from the research. Ethics is thus very important in research to avoid infringing on the rights and freedom of the informants.

Informed consent refers to the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in a research process or an investigation after being informed of facts that would likely influence their decisions (Diener and Crandall, 1978). It demands that the researcher includes only mature individuals who can make right decisions for themselves, choose freely to take part (or not) in the study, and understand the nature of the study (see Appendices 3 and 4 for students' and lecturers' consent forms). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999: p.65) the essential purpose of ethical research planning is to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants.

Before conducting this study, I sought informed consent from the Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students and their lecturers. I also sought permission from the Registrar and Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape (see Appendices 1 and 2) and lecturers concerned to observe their lectures. I explained that participation in the study was voluntary, and the participants could withdraw from the study at any time without coercion or any negative consequences. All information from the participants was kept confidential. The participants were also assured that the data of this study would only be used for research purposes and that their identities would be kept confidential.

In order to satisfy these ethical requirements, I met with the lecturers and students who were selected for this study in person, and explained to them the purpose of the study. I provided details about myself and a consent form which was signed by each interviewee. The participants were given the option of being tape-recorded or not, and that they had the right to withdraw from the interview at any time and to request for their recorded interview to be erased. By giving respondents control over their interview experiences, it was hoped that some of their concerns regarding privacy and anonymity would be ameliorated. The students who wrote the narratives did not write their names or anything that could identify them on the papers. Their social and personal positions were respected to the full.

3.8 Research Limitations

Data collection was limited to Francophone students (from Cameroon, Gabon and Congo) at UWC. Due to time constraints, lack of funds and therefore the need to do the extensive transcribing, I interviewed only four students. I also encountered some problems collecting data from the students who were ashamed of not using the right English words to express themselves. Some of them did not want to be audio-recorded, but in such situations I made notes while interviewing them.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process that challenges the researcher to explicitly examine how his or her research agenda and assumptions, subject location(s), personal beliefs, and emotions enter into their research. It is imperative for qualitative inquiry because it conceptualizes the researcher as an active participant in knowledge (re)production, rather than as a neutral bystander (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The main objective of doing reflexivity in qualitative research is to acknowledge and interrogate the constitutive role of the researcher in research design, data collection, analysis and knowledge production. Reflexivity, therefore, requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining outside of one's subject matter while conducting research. It enables the researcher to be part and parcel of his/her study.

The research journal I decided to keep since the beginning of my study helped me in getting around with this work without many mistakes. I used to write almost on a daily basis, ideas around my topic and how to go about gathering the necessary data. At one point, I almost changed my topic because the first few Francophone students I met at the UWC campus (both law students) somehow discouraged me that it was not going to be easy getting the research participants as many would not want to be laughed at. They told me most Francophone students still have problems using English second language and would feel uncomfortable talking about their experiences even if I had to let them know all information was kept confidential.

When I got home, I took out my research journal and just wrote in bold letters **“I THINK I WILL NEVER GET TO THE END OF THIS MASTER PROGRAM IF I KEEP THIS TOPIC...”** The next day I tried getting information about Francophone students from the student Administration office and I was told to go to various faculties. I did not give up. I started with the faculty of Arts and after about three days, I was beginning to think I should change the topic completely. But when I revisited my journal, something strongly told me to look for another way out, considering the fact that I am equally a Cameroonian who once faced challenges learning a second language. This fact gave me the courage to continue with the topic, especially as no work had been done on it at UWC. I then communicated with my journal, imagining and writing down questions that could lead to getting rich data for my study. This was the real beginning of my research journey.

3.9 Summary

This chapter focused on the methodology used in this thesis. It discussed the qualitative research design and methods used in the project. As stated in the first chapter, the purpose of this research was to explore Francophone students’ experiences of using English second language for academic and social purposes. I examined the extent to which the respondents’ written narratives were supported by their interviews, and whether there were any contradictions in the findings of the different instruments used in the data collection.

Classroom observations also formed part of the methodology, as they expanded my understanding of what was actually happening in the classes and whether the teaching materials and methodology were appropriate for the needs of the English (L2) students. The research population and how it was used in the study was also discussed. Triangulation was used in the method of data collection to ensure the reliability and validity of the information gathered.

The next chapter will deal with the presentation and analysis of data collected. This chapter will attempt to make meaning of all data collected using the various methods already presented.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research methodology with regard to design, sampling techniques and instruments used for data collection. In this chapter, raw data collected by means of interviews, observations and personal narratives is presented and analyzed. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part presents the data collected using various methods, while the second one deals with data analysis, using a narrative approach.

Knobel and Lankshear (2004) define data analysis as the process of organising all pieces of information, systematically identifying and interpreting their keys features or relationship with regard to themes, concepts and beliefs. In this case, preparing spoken data for analysis requires putting it down in words and turning it into a written script (i.e. transcript). The process of systematically identifying significant features in data is always informed by theory and it is directly related to one's research question (s). This involves making sense of the collected data.

Kvale (1999) argues that real analysis involves developing the meaning of the interviews, bringing the subject's own understanding into light as well as providing new perspectives from the researcher and the phenomenon. Data analysis involves organizing what has been seen, heard and read so that sense can be made of what is learned (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).

The data analysis in this study is informed by the qualitative research design which is discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Henning et al., (2004: p.102) argue that qualitative research data analysis involves breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships in order to make sense of it. Some of the data collected by different techniques (interviews, observations and personal narratives) are interwoven in order to give a coherent account of the data or research events. The following research questions which are stated in Chapter 1 were considered while analysing the data in this study:

1. What are the Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students' experiences of using English as a second language for academic and social purposes?
2. How do Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students negotiate competence and identities in their English (L2) lecture rooms and local communities as they participate in oral and writing activities?
3. What academic support is available to Francophone students in order to cope with English (L2)?

4.2 Presentation of data

Language is a means of communication, and it is by the virtue of being proficient in a language that successful communication between the individuals takes place. In order to examine how the students became full members of the education community at UWC, I focused on the way they negotiated identity for competence in English (L2), their participation in the lectures and how they behaved as members of a particular social group. As the Francophone students under study were self conscious of their low language proficiency in English (L2), they hesitated to communicate with others and they felt helpless in the process of English language learning. This observation will be explained in the observation, interview and narrative data presentation. Some of the interviews were done in French to allow better expression of ideas as explained in the previous chapter. These interviews were later translated and also transcribed.

Language has the power to make a learner confident and successful, while, at the same time, it could be a barrier to learning and success. The Francophone students at UWC seemed to face challenges becoming confident English speakers and to consider themselves as full members of the UWC academic community. A close analysis of the transcripts from the data collected for this study clearly brings forward the relationship between English second language learning and identity construction. This is evident in the interview and observation data presented below.

4.2.1 Interview data

The interviews with the Francophone students illuminated their experiences in a new learning environment and the strategies they used to survive the forces of alienation at UWC. The data shows that the Francophone students had similar experiences using English (L2) for academic and social purposes. The data also shows that all the four Francophone students interviewed for this study were at the beginning stage of English language learning because they had French as their medium of instruction throughout their schooling in their countries of origin. The interview transcripts show that none of the speakers said that the content taught in English was difficult for them. Rather, English was a barrier to acquiring content knowledge in the different university disciplines or subjects for which they were registered. They had to spend a considerable amount of time to understand the language of the lectures before they could actually start thinking about the actual theme of the lecture or the other technicalities explained in it. Two of the participants, Joseph and Chantal had to repeat a class each because of their limited proficiency in English. When asked for how long they have been studying at the UWC, Joseph replied:

This is my second year here at the UWC, but I am in the first year because I decided to go first for courses to improve my English so I can pass my class work and communicate also (Joseph, interview, 28/02/2014).

Responding to this same question, Chantal replied:

It is three years now, but I am in the second year because I repeat one year (Chantal, interview, 03/03/2014).

The above comments suggest that a student who does not completely understand the topic of discussion in the class is likely to find it difficult to participate in the discussion to express his/her knowledge. As noted earlier, the Francophone students in this study had as a language of instruction, French, and those who had fair competence in English did so out of their personal interest and efforts. The low proficiency levels of the non-English speakers seemed to hinder their participation in the classroom, and this tended to conceal their sense of commitment as knowledgeable and hardworking individuals. One of the students (Yvette) appeared to be passive, scared and less confident in the class, and seemed not to comprehend all what was going

on in the classroom. I observed that she would ask Joseph to explain certain things to her, but would say nothing to the lecturer or other students because she felt she could not express herself clearly in English (L2). When asked what she experienced in learning through the medium of a different language at university, she replied:

It is very difficult to learn in different language. I am used to French because back at home everyone around me communicates in that language. Even here in South Africa, I usually feel much better when I meet people with whom to communicate in French (Yvette, interview, 28/02/2014).

It appears that all the students had challenges at the beginning of their studies and decided to use various strategies to negotiate competence and identities in English (L2) lecture rooms and in local communities as they participated in oral and writing activities. Regarding class participation, Joseph in his interview had this to say:

They used to find my French accent a bit strange...I decide I must go for extra classes in English before I register at the University of the Western Cape. Now I can communicate with my peers and lecturers in English. I learn when I participate in class and group discussions because I get to express myself in English (Joseph, interview, 28/02/2014).

In the above excerpt, it is clear that Joseph had difficulties using English (L2) for academic and social purposes, and so he decided to take extra classes to improve his language. It was only after attending the English (L2) extra classes that he was able to communicate freely with his classmates and lecturers.

Likewise, Rogers also had his own challenges in English (L2) as he explained:

When I just came at the UWC, it took me some time to make friends...there were only two students with whom I communicated; one from Cameroon and a Congolese guy...I was advised to take six months English lesson classes before enrolling for my programme at UWC. I decided I was going to feel free, no matter what impression others could have about me. I decided to be part of the group, I participate fully in class and ask questions when necessary (Rogers, interview, 05/03/2014).

The excerpt shows that Rogers faced challenges as well at the beginning of his studies at UWC. He also went for six months English classes, after which he decided that he was going feel free despite all odds, and participate fully in class.

Chantal too faced challenges at the beginning:

When I first came, it was very difficult because in my country we use local languages and French for studies...I did not even know English. I used to attend English classes outside the UWC campus to improve my English. It is very difficult to learn in a different language, especially English. I feel good when the lecturer gives us presentations to make because they help me to improve my English, even group discussions, we all have turns and I speak in English (Chantal, interview, 03/03/2014).

Chantal, like the above two Francophone students faced English (L2) issues at the beginning of her studies even though she attended English classes outside the UWC campus. But she finally made herself part of her immediate communities by expressing herself freely in English.

Yvette expressed herself about learning in a new environment:

It is very difficult to learn in different language. I am used to French back at home...even here in South Africa, I usually feel much better when I meet people with whom to communicate in French. I really still find difficulties expressing myself in English. I always feel my accent is funny and so hardly speak up, except when very necessary (Yvette, interview, 28/02/2014).

Yvette also faced difficulties learning in English. But, unlike the other three participants, she did not attend English classes.

The students also gave me their different views on the language of instruction and their needs and expectations. In their responses, I could see their attitudes towards English. Yvette, Chantal and Rogers admitted to the fact that having English (L2) as the language of instruction, was rather an uncomfortable situation for them. But they still decided to start classes at UWC, while using various strategies to survive the situation. Joseph, on the other hand, said in his interview

that “the change frightened me”. He did not continue with his studies, but he preferred going first for extra English classes before coming to study at the university.

Some of the students also suggested what they thought could help them improve in the language of instruction or change their attitudes towards the language. When asked what they thought needed to happen to support their sense of belonging at UWC where English is the medium of instruction, Joseph had this to say:

I think I need to make myself feel free to study, not necessarily the institution’s job. I must accept others and make them also accept me and we can work together. The UWC has already helped by accepting me and other students from various countries and races, speaking different languages; even the South Africans are all from different ethnic groups and speak different languages, for example, Afrikaans, isiXhosa (Joseph, interview, 28/02/2014).

Yvette proposed that:

UWC could put up a compulsory programme for all learners who do not know English well in the first year, and make sure everyone passes it before going to the second year and maybe for my type who are not comfortable speaking English, to have individual presentations every week (Yvette, interview, 28/02/2014).

Chantal suggested that:

If UWC could permit students like me to have a short English course as part of their coursework, it can help (Chantal, interview, 03/03/2014).

In fact, the face-to-face interviews were very important as they helped me to probe participants for more information. This helped me to get more data as far as the Francophone students’ English second language experiences were concerned. Some of the Francophone students could not express themselves well in English and thus spoke in French.

4.2.2 Observation data

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I observed three classes of the Francophone students under study. Two of my participants were pharmacy students, one was a nursing student and the other one was a business administration student. During the nursing lectures, I took note of my participant's (Chantal) interactions with her lecturer and other students. Chantal was not the only Francophone student in her class, but she was willing to participate in my study. I observed not only Chantal's verbal participation, but also her non-verbal language (e.g. body language). For example, there was an instance during a group presentation, when she could not find the right words to use in English for HIV. But she managed to describe what she meant to say, almost talking to herself in French. In fact, she actually pronounced the word in French, and she used gestures to demonstrate the rest. Her lecturer was very encouraging, as she asked whether that was what Chantal wanted to say. I understood Chantal's situation, especially when she switched to French at one point, but I avoided playing the part of a translator as that could interfere with my study findings at the end. I only took my notes for further analysis.

The lecturer also understood Chantal because of her French background. What was interesting is that Chantal, although she struggled to negotiate and construct her identities due to her limited English proficiency, she made use of loan words (or borrowing) from French. In this case, French was used as a linguistic resource. Her classmates found this interesting and would laugh out even when they did not quite understand what she was saying. To communicate her intentions effectively, she would write the English words on the board and her peers would understand her better. I noticed that she showed better proficiency in written language than in oral activities.

During the lunch period, I observed that Chantal would talk with her Francophone peers, encouraging them to do like her. This was a sign of motivation or open spirit to construct new language identities and to learn new cultures, and a means of learning English better and faster. Chantal's eagerness to learn English drew the attention of her other classmates who became interested in learning French too. But I heard her telling them to teach her English first. This again showed her determination in becoming competent in English. This implies that although

Chantal was positioned in a particular way within a given discourse, she was able to set up a counter discourse which positioned her in a powerful, rather than marginalized position.

I also noticed that Chantal used to follow her lecturer after lectures to ask questions on things she did not understand in her lectures. She explained to me that her lecturer used to encourage her to feel free to book a consultation each time she had difficulties with her work. In this case, I can refer to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which states that, with collaboration and direction, the student is always able to do more and solve more difficult tasks. Chantal's lecturer was able to provide her with "scaffolding" to support her learning and understanding of English (L2). In this case, scaffolding, which often occurs within the ZPD, can be considered as a tutorial behaviour between Chantal and her lecturer.

In the case of Yvette, I noticed during my observation of pharmacy lectures, that she was comfortable only when she was seated next to Rogers who would explain certain things to her in French. During the pharmacy practice lectures (clinical skills), where issues like sugar level, blood pressure, were discussed, I noticed Yvette twisting her face, indicating that she did not understand something. I thought that she was going to ask questions to the lecturer, but she, instead, turned to Rogers and asked in French if he could explain to her better. I also noticed the aspect of scaffolding here, as Rogers helped Yvette. I heard him telling her in French to follow up the lectures, and meet him during the lunch time for further clarification. This again showed Yvette's resistance to being part of the new linguistic community. She would like to succeed in her studies and go home as a well trained pharmacist, without necessarily constructing any new linguistic identity.

Rogers, on the other hand, was a very active student in class. I observed that he made maximum use of opportunities to express himself in English, both in and outside the class. I noticed him asking questions and answering some that were asked by his classmates. He would speak English slowly, to ensure that he got the right words to express himself. I realised that slow speech was a way of giving himself time to think of the right English words to use, and this method seemed to work out well because his lecturer and other classmates understood him clearly. He seemed to be popular in his class because I noticed that his lecturer called his name from time to time to ask if there was something he wanted to say or ask. This happened more often because he interacted a lot with Yvette and other classmates during lectures.

Rogers' lecturer seemed to enjoy his Francophone student's active participation because I noticed his warm facial expression and smile each time Rogers explained something or asked a question. The lecturer's constant encouragement helped his Francophone student to feel accepted into the UWC education community. I remember this particular lecturer using expressions such as:

'Rogers, any problem?', 'Rogers, did you understand what I said, and can you explain it to Yves?', 'Yes Rogers, your hand was up...'

With this positive attitude from his lecturer, Rogers' negotiation of identity in his classroom and local community was made easier through his regular interaction with his lecturer and peers. This kind of interaction confirmed what Norton (1995) pointed out about Bourdieu's (1991) view of linguistic competence. Bourdieu (1991) viewed linguistic competence as 'the power to impose reception' which gave room for the expansion of the notion of L2 competence to include 'the right to speak', which is very important for successful learning.

I heard Rogers telling Yvette during lunch time that the best way to learn English (L2) was to make sure she expressed herself, even in broken English, and make sure she built some self confidence. He explained to her that he had personally decided to cross boundaries and assimilate to the new English-speaking South African communities, and that he had decided to construct new and mixed linguistic identities. Rogers' explanation brings in the idea that it is not only the social background and status of the L2 learner's culture, but the social value that individual develops in the new community of practice that is critical for L2 learning. This could be attributed to Rogers' decision to establish or accord himself a degree of status and self-worth that he succeeded to negotiate competence and identities in his English (L2) lecture room and in local communities as he participated in oral and writing activities. Rogers' behaviour, again, confirmed Norton' (2000) idea of investment, which clearly states that for a L2 learner to be invested in language learning is to be fuelled by desire for the language, whether or not this is positive or negative.

Joseph was not too active like Chantal and Rogers, but he also showed a lot of enthusiasm in learning English L2 and becoming competent in it. In the classroom he barely spoke, but he made useful contributions from time to time he spoke. I observed him closely and realised that

he made more notes than talking. He kept busy writing throughout the lectures, and he would ask a question once in a while. His lecturer gave room for him to ask questions, but he always replied with politeness, “I am okay, no questions”.

Outside the lecture room, however, I noticed him talking with two of his classmates and following up their conversation, I realised his English was not bad at all for a L2 learner. He made constructive contributions and spoke clearly, though with a bit of French accent which could only be noticed by a competent English speaker.

The above observations on Roger, Chantal and Joseph seem to confirm the poststructuralist perspective, which states that an individual's identity is not static, but socially constituted and expressed in interactions with others. L2 learners, according to the poststructuralist perspective are viewed as actors who perform certain acts. In other words, their identities are viewed as performance (Butler, 1990).

These classroom observations discussed above helped me to gain insights of things I could not get during the interviews because the participants did not tell me all about the strategies they used in negotiating and constructing their competence and identities through English second language learning. I will present narrative data below which complements the observation and interview data.

4.2.3 Narrative data

According to Creswell (2003: p.191) the descriptive narrative analysis describes phenomena based on data collected by a variety of means, but it does not address the causes of those phenomena. This method is used in studying individuals by asking them to provide stories about their lives. The narrative is then given a structure by the researcher so that the final research provides a blended narrative, combining the input of both the participant and the researcher. Description, therefore, involves a detailed rendering of information about people, places, or events in a particular setting. Creswell (2003: p.193) goes on to say that the descriptive analysis is useful in designing detailed descriptions of case studies, ethnographies and narrative research projects.

In this study, the descriptive analysis was used to describe and understand the case study of Francophone students' experiences of using English (L2) for academic and social purposes. I noticed that the students did not express themselves freely during observations and interviews, so it was good for them to write their personal narratives based on their experiences at UWC. I will present the narratives of Joseph and Rogers, who did not only get help from their lecturers and class mates, but were also helped by their neighbours and friends out of school.

Joseph, in addition to attending English classes out of campus, had a bilingual (French-English) room-mate with whom he spoke English. This helped him to put into practice what he learnt at the English classes. Rogers, on the other hand, decided to live in a coloured area where he could speak English more frequently. Most of his classmates were coloureds. He was excited to be considered as "one of them". Rogers' case reminded me of Lave and Wenger's (1991) Community of practice (COP), discussed earlier in Chapter two of this study, which shows a strong link between the act of learning a second language and the community in which the learning is actually taking place. The concept of the COP locates learning in the relationship between the person and the world. In this relationship of participation, the social and the individual constitute each other. This implies that learning does not take place in a vacuum. The community in which the learning is taking place is important as learning is a socio-cultural practice. Joseph, in his personal narrative, emphasized the fact that the social context in which learning takes place is very important and contributes in the learning process as well:

English to many in my country is strange because they cannot communicate in the language...I have only learn English here in South Africa. When I came in 2012 to study I realised it was not easy without first knowing English. My first months at the UWC before I decided to take English classes were very difficult and challenging. The students I met speaking English were just looking at me as I was from different planet. I thought I was not going to make it, that maybe I would have gone to France or Belgium instead to avoid language barrier...I decided to ask around and share with people from Cameroon or Congo who could understand me. I finally shared with a Cameroonian guy who was also a student, but in Stellenbosch. He played a great role in my English learning because he was so bilingual and insisted I practise English and he will correct my errors (Joseph, personal narrative, 14/04/2014).

The above extract from Joseph's personal narrative brought out the importance of community in which language learning is taking place. He improved in his English learning, not just because he attended extra classes, but also because of his room mate who could speak and write English well.

Yvette's language learning experience differed from that of Chantal, Rogers and Joseph. Throughout the data collection process, Yvette made clear that her pursuit of further education was to prepare herself for a better future. In her opinion, preparation for the future entailed university education to become a well trained pharmacist. She was the only one among the four participants who seemed to be resistant to change, i.e. to be assimilated in English (L2) culture. She was not ready to construct new linguistic identity as she said in her personal narrative:

“...I did not like this and I feel I should go to my country where I can feel free with speaking French” (Yvette, personal narrative, 05/03/2014).

In the interview I had with her, she told me that she had an inferiority complex which made her stay silent in class. She confirmed this in her personal narrative (See Appendix 7) when she said:

“I see students speaking English like they have everything, meanwhile I have nothing” (Yvette, personal narrative, 05/03/2014).

Yvette's personal narrative also shows that she would only go to shops where she could pay for items, without necessarily talking to someone in English (see Appendix.7).

Chantal's experience was quite different from Yvette's because she was willing to learn English and become a professional nurse, despite the fact that her husband and daughter laughed at her (Appendix 7). Unlike Yvette, Chantal would follow her neighbour who was better proficient in English than her, to the market and learn how to buy things. When she got her admission at UWC, she decided to learn English, no matter what challenges she faced. Chantal explained in her personal narrative that at first she only made friends with a Cameroonian and a fellow Congolese with whom she could speak French, but she decided at some point to “force English with everybody”. Even at home, she would speak in English:

“But I decide that I must force English with everybody and even in the house I will speak English, no matter they laugh at me or not” (Chantal, personal narrative, 12/03/2014).

Rogers also made maximum use of his time outside school to negotiate and construct his identity through English (L2). In his personal narrative, he talked of his neighbours and friends at home and university, who were mostly coloured South Africans with whom he communicated in English. He confidently concluded his narrative by saying,

“I feel I am part of other students in UWC, whether South African or other nationalities...I don't feel like a foreigner” (Rogers, personal narrative, 12/03/2014).

Joseph, on the other hand, had invested so much in learning English (L2), as he explained in his interview and narrative. His social identity changed from being a husband, father and businessman to that of a student. He came to South Africa to study and realised that he needed to acquire English proficiency in order to succeed. He decided to invest in English (L2) classes, though he did not plan to do so. His determination of being part of the UWC educational community without being looked at differently is clearly captured in the following excerpt from his personal narrative:

My experience using English, I will say it has been very challenging. I had to think maturely and invest in taking English classes to be able to use English. But it is a lifetime investment. I know my wife and children back home will be happy that I now can use English and they will also learn (Joseph, personal narrative, 14/04/2014).

Joseph even went further in his efforts to learn English (L2). He was not only motivated, but also invested in extra classes. He explained in his personal narrative that he did not do it just for himself, but for his whole family and that it was a lifetime investment. He used every opportunity at school and home to negotiate competence and identity in English (L2). He concluded his narrative by saying:

“I still continue my classes in English even now because I want to go home well equipped”.

Worth mentioning too is the way the participants gained their membership into the UWC educational community and their various social communities outside campus. As mentioned earlier, Chantal and Joseph, in their personal narratives, explained how their neighbours, university friends and room mates who were perfectly bilingual in English and French helped them to gain confidence as members of their respective communities. This was a great example of the form of apprenticeship offered by more experienced members in the community to newcomers. Vygotsky (1978) strongly holds that group members in a learning situation should have different levels of ability, so that more advanced peers can help less advanced members operate within their ZPD. Chantal and Joseph received instructional support from their more advanced neighbours, friends and roommates and internalized the new information about English (L2) to enhance their membership into the UWC and local communities. Chantal went as far as imposing her right to speak English (L2) and be heard because she said in her personal narrative that she would speak English even at home, regardless of whether she was being laughed at or not.

The interviews with the lecturers also showed the role they played for Francophone students to gain membership into their UWC academic/educational community. For example, Madam Victoire empathized with her Francophone students and gave them room to feel free to ask for help when and where necessary. She mentioned in the interview that she was also from a French background and she could understand her Francophone students better:

I am also from French background and studied in French before learning English later (Madam Victoire, interview, 25/03/2014).

Mr. Johnson too encouraged his Francophone students by giving room for outside classroom consultations and he even paid for extra English classes for one of his students:

I have noticed they like asking questions in class and always struggle to express themselves no matter how challenging it may be sometimes. I even had one who would say certain things in French when she could not find the right words in English; she would use French and try to demonstrate. This attitude drew my attention and I paid for her to have private English classes out of school hours (Mr. Johnson, interview, 14/03/2014).

4.3 Data analysis

As stated above, data analysis was guided by the research questions underpinning this study. I focused on the way Francophone students described how they negotiated for competence, participation and membership into the UWC educational community through English (L2). I analyzed comments made by the participants, as well as actions (strategies) that they took for the negotiation and construction of their identities in English (L2). I analysed the interviews alongside the written narratives in order to get an in-depth view of the participants' English second language experiences. I then placed the comments in narratives and responses to semi-structured interview questions to compare the participants' experiences. In this way, I was able to make direct comparisons and draw conclusions from the data.

Data analysis is guided by the three broad themes which correspond with the research questions stated in Chapter 1. These themes are:

- (i) Francophone students' experiences of learning English (L2)
- (ii) Negotiating identity through English (L2)
- (iii) Support available to Francophone students

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4.3.1 Francophone students' experiences of learning English (L2)

Concerning students' experiences of using English (L2), data shows that students had different experiences with regard to exposure to English (L2). The major challenge that all the four participants experienced was the negotiation for competence, participation and membership into the UWC educational community. Worth noting too is the fact that sometimes an individual must already speak English to gain access to communities of native English speakers. The South African community, being English-dominated (officially) made things difficult for the Francophone students to easily gain membership at the beginning of their studies because they all had French as their medium of instruction in their countries of origin. They all experienced difficult beginnings, both in and outside the classroom (i.e. in the neighbourhood and in other social contexts). Even in class, they had difficulty expressing themselves during oral activities such as whole-class discussions or small-group discussions and presentations.

Learning generally involves becoming a knower in a context where knowledge is negotiated with respect to the regime of competence of a given community. Because the Francophone students were new in the South African community as a whole, and at UWC in particular, it was their competence that determined their experience and their qualified competence in the community. Thus, the Francophone students were considered newcomers or illegitimate members of the community, until they could clearly express themselves in English (L2) and gain fuller membership in the community, thereby constructing new identities. Following Lave's and Wenger's (1991) view on identity construction, the Francophone students' participation in the practices of the community was peripheral in that they began as outsiders and moved toward full participation. They needed to learn to talk English properly in order to be considered full members of the UWC community and their respective local communities.

The data presented above shows that students' social identities were constantly changing due to movement between social groups, which means that the students continuously negotiated their identities, consciously or unconsciously (Marx, 2002). For instance, data shows that throughout the day, Chantal interacted with many different groups of people. At home, she identified herself as a mother and a wife. At the university, she interacted with English speaking students, lecturers and administrators, as well as with other Francophone students. She negotiated her identity in each interaction, switching constantly from French to English, and vice versa. She moved easily from one social interaction to the next, quickly reading a situation, negotiating and constructing her identity continuously. This goes to confirm the fact that social identity is not fixed (Norton, 1997, 2000) and is continually changing, depending on the social context or setting. The language learner adjusts or negotiates his or her identity depending on varying social situations. In this context, the term "negotiate" is used to describe how a language learner relates to various social groups and how this relationship changes over time.

Rogers' experience of English (L2) could be explained in terms of Norton's (2000) notion of "legitimacy" and "illegitimacy" of speakers in a new environment. As discussed in Chapter 2, Eva, one of Norton's (2000) participant, changed her position from an 'illegitimate' to a 'legitimate' speaker in the workplace, and her increasing confidence about her identity within the workplace began to affect her public life more generally. Eva's sense of who she was changed,

and she then began to challenge her subject position as an illegitimate speaker of English. Rogers, like Eva, developed an awareness of the right to speak in school and in his neighbourhood. He decided to challenge all those who looked at him to be different in any way because of his foreign nationality. This could be seen in his personal narrative extract below:

I live in Elsiesriver, where there are many coloured people. Their English is not really like the one I learn during my English classes, but it help me practise. I told myself I will learn from the coloured people even if they speak broken English, then I can at least be like one of them and feel free...In UWC I decided I will participate in class and feel free no matter what...In fact, I am an English speaker now and can't complain, I feel I am part of other students in UWC, whether South African or other nationalities. I don't feel like a foreigner (Rogers, personal narrative, 12/03/2014).

Rogers decided to impose himself into the education community at UWC and also into the local communities outside the UWC campus. He decided that he was going to use English for both academic and social purposes, at the same time he was in the process of negotiating and constructing his identities in a new context or environment. He demystified the idea of “English speakers” who are perceived as better than him, by simply declaring himself an “English speaker” with confidence.

The interview and narrative data show that Chantal, Rogers and Joseph were negotiating their identities on a daily basis. They “consciously or unconsciously” negotiated their identities continually (Marx 2000). For instance, Chantal was motivated to learn English. However, to change her identity of a non-English speaker and also to change from being just a housewife and mother to a qualified nurse, she strived for English knowledge and practice. She consistently referred to getting ahead in life and having a better future through English (L2). I believe that her desire to change her life situation was a motivating factor for learning English (L2), and that it was closely related to changing her identity of a foreigner. She needed to feel at ease with everyone in her new South African community in order to learn English (L2). She succeeded in negotiating her new linguistic identity because she was determined to become a competent English speaker. She did not want to be called “the other” by English (L1) speakers.

Learner involvement in the language acquisition process relates to Norton's (1995) idea of 'investment', as the latter can capture the complexity of L2 learners' sociocultural histories. The notion of 'investment' shows how people can invest in the target language or not, in order to acquire a greater range of material and symbolic resources, which may enhance one's cultural capital and ultimately one's actual identity. Investment, as Norton (2000: p.9) states, signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. This is evident in Joseph's case discussed above, who perceived the learning of English (L2) as an investment.

The negotiation and construction of identities in this study shows how students' social identities change while learning another language. Through identity negotiation and construction, it appears that the Francophone students will have greater economic futures, but also will be able to communicate more easily on a day-to-day basis in their new country South Africa). For all the four participants, being accepted into their new academic and social contexts was very important and remained a great life achievement.

4.3.2 Negotiating identity in English (L2)

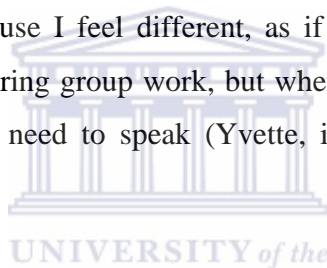
The strategies that the four participants took to negotiate competence, participation and membership varied widely, depending on the individual student's personal experience, values and resources that were available for them at that time. Nonetheless, all four participants faced challenges in the beginning of their English second language learning process. As mentioned before, Lave and Wenger (1991, 1998) view language learning as a socially situated process by which newcomers gradually move toward full participation in a given community's activities by interacting with more experienced community members. This implies that the Francophone students in this study, though they were considered newcomers, could eventually gain full membership into the UWC academic community and their respective local communities, depending on their individual growing involvement in the various activities taking place around them. Success in learning English (L2) dependent mainly on individual efforts.

Negotiating identity is situated because the same student can negotiate different identities and participate in different contexts. Negotiating identity in English (L2) considers first, the

classroom context of the Francophone students, though their local communities too are important. This is so because classroom participation goes more with the act of identity negotiation. It is during classroom participation that students may negotiate their identities better, either as competent or less competent individuals when compared to others. Sometimes the perception of their classmates may also contribute in their negotiation of identities. If they are considered as active participants by their classmates during group presentations and discussions, it becomes easier for them to negotiate their identities.

Almost all four participants successfully negotiated their competence and identities as they stated in personal narratives and in the interviews, except for Yvette who said in her interview, that she did not always feel as part of the group because she felt different:

...It is nobody's fault because I feel different, as if others will laugh at my accent or something. I hardly talk during group work, but when we are given a test or exam, I do my best because I do not need to speak (Yvette, interview, 28/02/2014; researcher's translation from French).



In answering the interview question on how their classmates behaved towards them, Rogers, Joseph and Chantal gave a positive response, showing collaboration between them (Francophone students) and their peers. They all showed a degree of interaction with their respective peers and one of them, Joseph, even said he exchanged some cultural ideas with his peers. To this question, Yvette had this to say:

They like pairing up with their chosen friends, but some try to be friendly, especially when they notice I perform well despite my silence (Yvette, interview, 28/02/2014; researcher's translation from French).

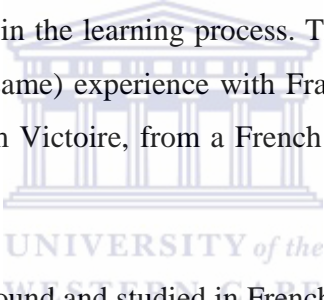
From the above excerpt, Yvette seemed positive that she could perform well despite her poor English proficiency and she felt important when she realised that some of her classmates could need her help in a way. When asked about group discussions, Yvette said:

Group discussions are really good and I learn from them, though I participate little because I have an inferiority complex" (Yvette, interview, 28/02/2014).

Thus, Yvette initially felt that she would not meet her communities' expectations regarding competence, especially linguistic competence. She assumed an identity as a less competent member, outsider and foreigner. From the above interview excerpts, it could be said that her silence did not necessarily mean that she was the worst student in the class in terms of English (L2) learning, but she lacked motivation and she had low self esteem to participate in group discussions.

4.3.3 Support available to Francophone students

As mentioned earlier, I also noted that the lecturers in all the lectures I observed were quite understanding and patient with the Francophone students who were present in their various classrooms. They all included group presentations in their course outlines so as to encourage each student to actively contribute in the learning process. There was one of them who actually told me she shared a similar (the same) experience with Francophone students as she was also from a French background. Madam Victoire, from a French background, had this to say in her interview:



...I am from French background and studied in French before learning English later. I am from a French-speaking country and had once been like my Francophone students here, learning English as a second language too. I would say I understand them better and help those who are willing to be helped. When they first enrolled at the UWC, things were not easy because of challenges in English. I advised them in the best way I could and told them to be serious with all their courses, not just the one I take with them...they are doing fine in their courses, despite some language errors sometimes. I encourage Francophone students in my class to study with students whose first language is English, and not to bother if people laugh at them once in a while. I rate their work the same way I do for all other students, no discriminations, so that they can learn from their mistakes. I think they will graduate from UWC with flying colours. I am not saying their English is perfect or will be, at least, they are much better than the way they came into UWC (Madam Victoire, interview, 25/03/2014).

All the lecturers of Francophone students were ready to assist when and where necessary as they offered extra consultation time for their Francophone students. One of the lecturers (Mr. Johnson) even went an extra mile to pay for English classes for his Francophone student:

I have been teaching Francophone students for three years now and I think they are putting more effort in learning English than other second language learners, maybe because they feel they are in a foreign country and need to work harder. They book for outside classroom consultations more than other students...I play my own part when they come to me to complain about their coursework. I even had one who would say certain things in French when she could not find the right words in English; she would use French and try to demonstrate. This attitude drew my attention and I paid for her to have private English classes out of school hours (Mr. Johnson, interview, 08/04/2014).

Madam Precious, on the other hand, said her Francophone student did not have a lot of English (L2) issues, but still she played her role as a lecturer to second language learners:

The Francophone student in my class does not seem to have second language issues. His English is not perfect, but he can express himself quite clearly...I make sure every student participates in class, I instruct that everyone contributes (Madam Precious, interview, 14/04/2014).

The triangulated data appears to confirm that Francophone students did not only get support from their lecturers, but also from other classmates, neighbours and friends. Chantal and Joseph received support from their neighbours who were willing to correct their errors in English. Yvette got support from Rogers who would explain lectures to her, making life easier. At home Rogers had coloured neighbours and friends with whom he communicated in English. The university (UWC) too offered academic support by providing a conducive learning environment with facilities like regular internet access, quiet reading rooms and a well equipped library. The availability of these resources was confirmed by the Francophone students in their interviews, when asked how they found studying at UWC as compared to their home universities and what they thought of the UWC as their learning environment.

4.4 Summary

This chapter focused on data presentation and analysis. Data collected by means of various methods, namely interviews, observations and personal narratives was presented. Data analysis was informed by the qualitative research design and the three research questions found in Chapter one of this study were considered during this analysis. This was to see if the questions have been addressed or contradicted. The next chapter will discuss and summarize the findings of the study. Subsequently, based on these findings, the current implications and future recommendations for English (L2) students at the University of the Western Cape will be put forth.



CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this study, I explored the language challenges faced by Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students studying at the University of the Western Cape, with regard to learning through the medium of English (L2). This chapter discusses and summarizes the findings of the study. In my discussion, I define and describe the relationship between language learning and identity construction within a multilingual educational context, in order to arrive at a conclusion, guided by the study findings discussed below.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The general findings of the study show that Francophone students' identity was negotiated and (re)constructed in different ways that dependent on the social contexts. Through learning in English (L2), the students developed certain qualities and attitudes towards English (L2) which tended to immerse them in the English (L2) environment, thus strengthening their identity construction in the new language. The findings discussed below have some relevance as to how English (L2) is perceived as an investment, the role of interaction in identity construction, voice and agency in identity construction, shared identities and language competence and the impact of the physical environment and resources on language learning and identity construction.

5.2.1 Investment in English (L2)

In order to negotiate competence and identities in English (L2), the Francophone students applied various methods to learn the language (English). As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the participants, Joseph, made an extra effort by deciding to register for English classes out of the UWC campus. In his personal narrative, Joseph clearly expressed his interest in learning English (L2). He decided to first attend English classes before starting with his course at the UWC. He called this "lifetime investment" in which even his family would benefit from. He continued the English (L2) classes even after returning to the UWC for his course.

Rogers and Chantal also attended English (L2) classes, though not for long as Joseph. They saw the need to learn English (L2) especially for academic purposes and for a better future. The participants expressed their need for a better future after obtaining their various degrees and to be able to perform well in their courses. Considering the fact that the UWC has English (L2) as medium of instruction, they had to do everything to learn the language. This explains why they were prepared to spend extra money on English (L2) lessons, and would even make further efforts to learn English (L2) where necessary.

The Francophone students viewed English as an investment due to its power as a global language. They realized that in order to succeed in their various courses and achieve their future dreams, English language was a necessity. This takes us to the poststructuralist view of language learning and identity construction which draws mainly from Bourdieu's (1977; 1991) works which lay emphasis on the relationship between identity construction and symbolic power. Norton and Van Lier, (2000; 2008), also agree with Bourdieu and go on to investigate how second language learners can invest in the target language in order to acquire a greater range of material and symbolic resources. In this case, the Francophone students invested in English (L2) because they realized it would make life easier for them, both at the UWC campus and in the future when they will be working.

Investment in English (L2) did not only take place through paying for extra English (L2) classes, but it also involved some personal efforts. This takes us back to Bourdieu (1977), who states that legitimate and illegitimate speakers are distinguished by their rights to speak and power to impose reception. Bourdieu (1977) considers the use of language as a social and political practice in which an utterance's value and meaning is determined in part by the value and meaning ascribed to the person who speaks. Norton (2000) also draws from the poststructural construction of identity to illuminate how a person's investment can change and how this change can empower the speaker to make herself/himself heard.

Looking at the poststructuralist views of investment in language learning, the Francophone students' investment in English (L2) clearly brings out the relationships between identity, agency, power and access to English language, inside and outside the lecture rooms, and in the entire local communities. It is because English language is considered important in their lives as a whole that the Francophone students find it necessary to make extra efforts towards learning

the language. They are ready to express themselves in English, even if it is not the standard version. They believe that through practising to speak English, even in the broken form can help in their learning the real language and becoming competent, thereby, constructing their identities as English (L2) speakers.

5.2.2 Identity construction through interaction in the target language

Vygotsky (1987) believes that with collaboration and direction, a student is always able to perform better, no matter how difficult the tasks at hand are. This implies that group members in a learning situation should have different levels of ability, so that more advanced peers can help the less advanced members to operate within their ZPD. Scaffolding occurs within the ZPD. This occurs as learners interact with more capable peers and/or adults.

This study shows that the Francophone students were assisted by more capable peers to learn or achieve what they were unable to do on their own. In L2 learning communities, peers help one another to build knowledge and skills. During group work, students can operate in the ZPD where they contribute to and benefit from the knowledge co-constructed during the interaction. In this study, the Francophone students constructed and negotiated their identity construction as they interacted in English (L2) with other students, lecturers and community members. Such interaction was necessary to reach the ZPD in learning English (L2).

Some of the participants gained gradually confidence in using English (L2) in and out of the classroom. This confirms Van Lier's (2008) suggestion that language learner identity develops as learners participate more fully in the target (L2) language culture. He explains that learning an L2 and becoming engaged in a new culture involves adjusting ones' sense of self and creating new identities. The analysed data showed that some of the participants exchanged cultural ideas with their peers from various cultural backgrounds. In that way, they were able to construct and negotiate their identity at UWC as English (L2) learners.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is at the centre of language learning and identity construction because it views language as the main tool for cognitive development, and it considers all learning as part of an ongoing social process.

According to Vygotsky (1978), language is a social construct. In the context of this study, the local communities in which the Francophone students lived could not be separated from the act of English (L2) learning because it was through their daily interaction with neighbours, friends or colleagues and relatives that they could construct and negotiate their identities. Identity construction and negotiation, therefore, occur in the process of second language learning in different contexts. Learning a second language gives learners a new sense of who they are and how to be in the world. In this study, the local communities became sites of identity construction. This implies that language learning and identity construction are closely related, and they can only occur in a given social context.

5.2.3 Shared identities and language competence

As stated above, language learning is a social practice. Through interaction, the Francophone students were moved to higher levels of competence by their lecturers. The analysed data shows that the lecturers' role in was multifaceted: they did not only create and design learning environments that maximized the Francophone students' opportunities to interact with each other, but they also acted as experts, models, guides and facilitators of social interactions. Since the Francophone students had less experience with English (L2), their lecturers sometimes considered that they needed more scaffolding than those students who had more experience with English language. This encouraged and motivated the Francophone students to try even harder to do better in English (L2). For instance, Madam Victoire acted as their intellectual and linguistic resource, demystifying the belief that English (L2) learning could be too complicated or could prohibit some Francophone students from studying in English-speaking countries or universities.

All the three lecturers gave support to their Francophone students by organizing class presentations and discussions which permitted their students to use the language orally and to express themselves freely. These class presentations and discussions encouraged interaction between the Francophone students and their peers as well. This was a way of immersing the Francophone students in the English culture, so that they could negotiate and construct their identity through the language (i.e. English) of the classroom.

5.2.4 The impact of the physical environment and resources on language learning and identity construction

The physical environment and resources in the classroom such as the internet, software and books can facilitate language learning. The analysed data shows that UWC was regarded as a conducive learning environment by the Francophone students. The Francophone students used adjectives such as, “spacious”, “conducive”, “regular internet facilities”, “well-equipped laboratories and libraries”, to describe UWC as a good learning environment. They compared the UWC to their home universities and said it had more physical resources to support or encourage learning. With well-equipped laboratories and libraries, they were able to carry out experiments and research without spending much money to get information and learning materials. In that way, they wanted to be associated with UWC, and such sentiments did not only motivate them to learn, but they also influenced the manner in which they re-constructed their identity in the new environment.

5.3 Summary of findings



This study has yielded insights into the understanding of how Francophone students at UWC experienced the process of English (L2) learning. The study indicates that for the Francophone students, L2 learning took place through their interaction with their surroundings, both at the university, at home and in various social contexts. The language input involved what the students received from their lecturers, friends and other more capable English second language speakers.

A sociocultural view of identity construction emphasizes the importance of social context, interpersonal interactions and learner attitudes. It informs us about sociocultural concepts, which should also be taken into consideration when investigating language learning. Language learner identity is considered to be socially constructed and so the characteristics of the learning context can affect the development and negotiation of L2 identity. Identity is co-constructed as learners operate in the ZPD with peer interaction and with more capable peers, thus co-constructing their identity. In this way, learners negotiate a balance between individual goals, academic goals and institutional goals, as well as maintain rapport with their peers. Van Lier (2008) suggests that

language learner identity develops as learners participate more fully in the target (L2) language culture. He explains that learning an L2 and becoming engaged in a new culture involves adjusting ones' sense of self and creating new identities to connect the known to the new (Van Lier, 2008: p.177). In this sense, the Francophone students had to adjust to the English (L2) environment and culture, while retaining French for communication with their families and friends.

Van Lier (2008) recommends several pedagogical approaches that may encourage learner-initiated, rather than teacher- or institution-initiated activity among language learners. These strategies include project-based, task-based, and content-based approaches which reinforce learners' use of the L2 as a tool rather than an end. The project-based, task-based and content-based approaches encourage L2 learners to be more active in the language learning process and identity construction because they are given the opportunity to use L2 as a tool among themselves and more expert peers. In the case of the Francophone students, I observed that their lecturers, apart from giving out group presentations also gave them self-study assignments and gave them instructions on how to present the written essays (assignments). During lectures questions were asked about previous content in order to show the link with the new lectures. Situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) also acknowledges how language affects learner identity and motivation.

The sociocultural approach to L2 identity erases the boundaries between the individual and the group, and between the agent and the context. This approach displays how each component of an interaction is dynamic, multiple and varied. Interlocutors take up multiple positions, contextual factors shift, and social environments change. Examining how language learners identify themselves and others sheds light on the content, quality and quantity of their language output. In this way, the poststructuralist framework can work alongside the sociocultural perspective for noting individual learner agency and demonstrating different spheres of social identity.

Various contexts provide models for learners to imitate. The encounters language learners have with other interlocutors, whether they are experts or novices, help them to monitor their own linguistic development, evaluate their communicative competence and (re)define their identity

within the context. The individual agency is thus, a situated and negotiated experience and identities emerge in the interaction between students' experiences and their social interpretations, over time (Murphy, 2008: p. 162).

English at UWC plays a somewhat paradoxical role in the forming and interacting of multilingual identities. Firstly, an identity of 'being English' or 'becoming English' is seen as an academic necessity by all students attending UWC, which is probably the case at any other English medium university. English is regarded a prestigious language which is believed to be the language to upward mobility and subsequent success. It is both a medium of instruction and a lingua franca at UWC. Therefore, in a sense, one could posit that English forms an identity factor to all students at UWC, in some way.

These linguistic options, on the other hand, are an entirely different and interesting phenomenon. English second language is used differently inside and outside the lecture halls. There is no uniform English identity, meaning that there are no specific rules or norms to using English at UWC as language use is completely context dependent. This explains why the Francophone students used the language differently outside the UWC campus, depending on their home environments and other social contexts out of school. In other words, social actors draw from different linguistic resources at their disposal to meet their daily needs. This means that language is more of a social practice than a fixed entity where English, French and other official languages in South Africa are skillfully used as multilingual resources, not only to communicate but also to better express some localised realities. Therefore, the issue of multiple identities is dependent on two contexts, namely the academic and social contexts.

From the findings, it could be deduced that despite challenges faced by Francophone students in learning and using English second language for both academic and social purposes, the learning of English (L2) had a positive outcome. Three of the four participants were proud to say that they could use English without having the feeling of being considered "foreigners". In the interviews and personal narratives discussed in Chapter 4, only Yvette's experience seemed a little different because she somehow resisted complete immersion in English (L2) culture and considered herself as the "other". She claimed that she had an inferiority complex because she felt different

from those who could use English second language fluently and freely. However, she ended up admitting, like the other three students that she could use English for academic and social purposes.

Chantal is an example of a participant who negotiated competence and identity in both English (L2) classroom and in the local community successfully. She told her story in her personal narrative on how she would struggle to use English second language in school and at home at the beginning. But with motivation and determination, she began to learn English through interaction with different people. In that way, her identity changed from a housewife, mother, English second language learner, nursing student at the UWC, to an English (L2) user. The negotiation of competence and identity was also observed in the case of the Gabonese participant, Joseph, who decided to invest heavily in learning English second language. He became a father, husband, businessman, English second language learner and a Business Administration student at UWC.

The different identities are supported by the poststructuralist view that there is nothing given or natural about being part of a social category or group, and that identity is not in-born or fixed, but it changes at all times. Learners move between various social groups and social contexts, and they constantly negotiate and construct their identities to either be or not be a member of a particular group. They must have multiple and changing identities to move from one context to another, which means that learners are negotiating and constructing their identities in every social context. Language learners are unique in this sense. In the analysed data, Joseph stated the importance of English second language in his future, not only for himself, but also for his entire family. He explained that English would increase his number of clients internationally, and that his family would benefit from the language as well. This goes to support Norton's (2000) agreement with Block (2007) that an individual's identity is the person's understanding of his/her relationship to the world, how this relationship is constructed in time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future (Norton, 2000: p. 5).

5.4 Conclusion

The role of language in learning cannot be over-emphasized. Language is the prime resource used for mediating learning. Identity is a broad topic that encompasses how people situate themselves in the world and is of interest in many academic fields, including second language learning. Second language learners' identities are socially and individually constructed. In this study, the lecturers and Francophone students worked with language simultaneously as an object of study and as a medium for learning. The sociocultural approach examines the importance of interpersonal interaction on the negotiation of L2 identity, and the poststructuralist approach examines the fluidity of second language learners' identities.

In the context of this study, Francophone students' identities are assumed to be constructed through interactions with peers, lecturers, neighbours and relatives. This illustrates that there is a close relationship between language learning and identity construction, and that identity is socially constructed. It also reaffirms the notion that language learning in practice is dependent upon social, cultural and even generational factors. In this study, the Francophone students strived to engage in linguistic and cultural negotiations at UWC and in local communities. Through these efforts, they could redefine their position in the South African society, and at UWC, in particular. In other words, while the four participants maintained their French backgrounds, they also opened up to constructing new identities through English (L2) learning. Thus, it can be concluded at this point that students in a multicultural classroom construct multiple identities based on the context of their engagement, especially in language classrooms. Therefore, identity construction is a fluid phenomenon which should be understood in relation to the social context which is embedded in language competence.

5.5 Implications and future recommendations

This study has implications for the field of second language and identity construction. It is required that lecturers pay special attention to the non-English speakers in their classes. While planning for the lectures, they should keep in the mind that there are students with limited proficiency in the language of instruction, who are trying to re-construct their "lost" identity. It is in this light that Harkla (1994) suggests that English Second Language (ESL) teaching should be improved so as to address the language requirements of immigrant students. He also suggests

that certain changes should be brought into the mainstream classroom setting, where the teacher needs to remember that an integral part of the class is the immigrant student who is sitting somewhere very silent and passive, fighting his/her language deficiency. Syllabus designers are also called to keep space for English second language learners in the curriculum.

South African higher institutions are equally called to make life easier for their non-English speaking students (both national and international) by creating a comfortable environment for learning other languages different from their mother tongues. This could be a means of embracing students of various ethnic groups and cultures.

This study was limited to a small number of participants. In future studies, I would recommend studying a larger group of Francophone students, and this may give rise to more variation and perhaps clear patterns of identity construction would emerge. I would recommend that the group consists of Francophone students from other countries like Rwanda, because it is possible that the results may be different because the nationals of this country had French as their language of instruction till 2008 when English language was introduced as a second official language.

Considering the fact that there are more international Francophone students getting admitted to UWC every year, it would be good for the institution to revisit its curriculum to include a compulsory English course for Francophone and other English (L2) students. This course should be different from English for Academic Purposes and Academic Literacy which are offered to all first year students to enable them to cope with academic work. It should encompass language structure and communication.

Future studies can also take an in-depth look at how languages are prioritized, how social environments are analyzed, which strategies help them to establish and maintain rapport, and how they identify themselves within the milieu of multiple languages. Another area for further study is how motivation is related to language learner identity. Instead of seeing integrative motivation as a desire to join a target (L2) language group, it has been reconceptualized as an internal identity negotiation process. As suggested by Block (2007), continued study of psychoanalytic approaches to identity negotiation may reveal a more salient connection between individual and social identities.

Also, further information on multilingual language learners is needed. Many studies focus on monolingual native speakers of English, but the perspectives and strategies of multilinguals can add to the body of knowledge, especially in higher education institutions.

Lastly, I would also suggest for future international Francophone students to take their time in attending some English (L2) classes before enrolling for any course in an English-speaking country or university in order to avoid unnecessary tension or uneasiness while studying in these environments.



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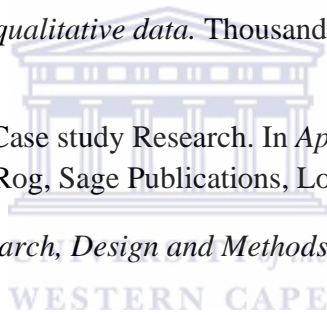
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher: Ms Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Contact number: 0786879754

Email: kemendequinta@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Quinta Kemende Wunseh. I am a Masters student in the Language Education Department, Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on Identity construction through English second language learning at the University of the Western Cape, where English is used as a medium of instruction.

Research Title: Identity construction through English second language (L2) learning: A case study of French speaking students at the University of the Western Cape.

Research objectives

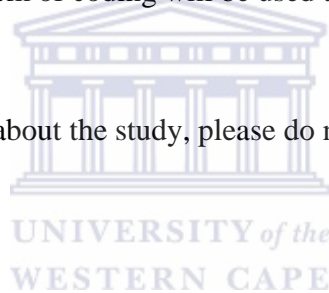
In this study, I hope to:

3. Explore and understand the language challenges faced by Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students studying at the University of the Western Cape.
4. Define and describe the relationship between language learning and identity construction within a multilingual educational context.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate how francophone students use English as a second language for academic and social purposes. The study aims to bring to light the students' identity in learning English as a second language and to learn through its medium. The target group will be students from Congo, Gabon and Cameroon who have registered for the first time for different qualifications at UWC. This study will draw on poststructuralist and social constructivist theories to explore and understand the lived experiences of the Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students at the University of the Western Cape. It will look at ways of defining and describing the relationship between second language learning and identity construction within a multilingual educational context, inside and outside their lecture rooms.

It is important to know that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The research participants (i.e. francophone students from Congo, Gabon and Cameroon) have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. All information collected from the students will be kept strictly anonymous and a system of coding will be used to protect the students' identity.

If at any stage you have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above provided details.



SIGNATURE OF THE RESEARCHER:

DATE:

APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION LETTER

The Annums
97A Alexandra Street
Parow
7500

The Registrar
University of the Western Cape
P/B X17
Bellville

Dear Prof. Cornelissen



Re: Permission to conduct research at UWC

My name is Quinta Kemende Wunseh. I am a Masters student in the Language Education Department, Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research on identity construction through English second language learning at the University of the Western Cape, where English is used as a medium of instruction. The title of my research is: Identity construction through English second language learning: A case study of French speaking students at the University of the Western Cape.

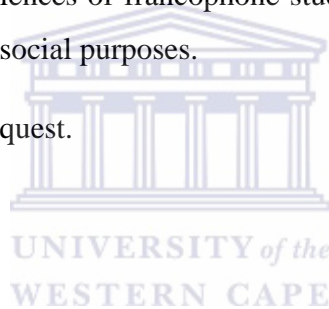
The main purpose of this study is to investigate how francophone students use English as a second language for academic and social purposes. The study aims to bring to light the students' identity in learning English as a second language and to learn through its medium. The target group will be students from Congo, Gabon and Cameroon who have registered for the first time

for different qualifications at UWC. This study will draw on poststructuralist and social constructivist theories to explore and understand the lived experiences of the Congolese, Gabonese and French-speaking Cameroonian students at the University of the Western Cape. It will look at ways of defining and describing the relationship between second language learning and identity construction within a multilingual educational context, inside and outside their lecture rooms.

I would like to request your permission to observe lecturers' and students' participation in the classrooms in order to achieve the goals of this study. The research will not interfere in any way with the functioning of the university or with learning in the classroom. In addition, all participants in the study will remain anonymous. Information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only. It will not be used in any public platform for any purposes other than to understand the experiences of francophone students at the UWC who use English second language for academic and social purposes.

I hope that you will consider my request.

Yours sincerely



Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Student Number: 3315473

Email: 3315473@myuwc.ac.za

APPENDIX 3: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE LECTURER

Researcher: Ms Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Contact number: 0786879754

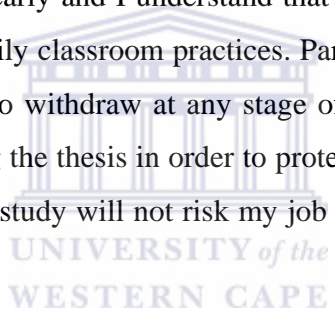
Email: kemendequinta@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: Identity construction through English second language learning: A case study of French speaking students at the University of the Western Cape.

I hereby give consent to the researcher to do observations in my classroom.

The study was explained to me clearly and I understand that the presence of the researcher will not disrupt or interfere with my daily classroom practices. Participation of my class in this study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any stage of research. All information will be treated confidentially when writing the thesis in order to protect my identity. I am promised that my classroom participation in this study will not risk my job and my personal image will not be damaged.



Lecturer's Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT LETTER FOR THE STUDENTS

Researcher: Ms Quinta Kemende Wunseh

Contact number: 0786879754

Email: kemendequinta@gmail.com

Institution: University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Education, Bellville, South Africa

Research Title: Identity construction through English second language learning: A case study of French speaking students at the University of the Western Cape.

The study was explained to me clearly and I understand that the presence of the researcher will not disrupt or interfere with my studies. Participation in this study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any stage of research. All information will be treated confidentially when writing the thesis in order to protect my identity. I am promised that my participation in this study will not risk my personal image as a student at UWC.

Student's Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEWS FOR STUDENTS

Transcription of four Francophone students' interviews

Interview 1-Chantal

R=researcher

I =interviewee

1. R; what is your country of origin?

I; Congo

2. R; what degree do you hold?

I; I have a Bac from my country and I am currently doing my second year in nursing.

3. R; what was (is) the medium of instruction in your former university of your country?

I; French

4. R; what made you travel to South Africa?

My husband first came to South Africa and I remained in Congo with our baby. When he finished his Master degree in Mathematics and started teaching, he made us to come also. So we joined him for family reason and we decided I must do nursing at UWC.

5. R; why did you choose to study at the University of the Western Cape?

I; My sister-in-law graduated nurse from the UWC and told us it is a good university and that many foreigners study there too. I made friend also with a Cameroon lady the day I register for nursing course.

6. R; How long have you been studying here?

I; It is three years now, but I am in the second year because I repeat one year.

7. R; what courses are you doing?

I; Human Biology, pharmacology, General nursing Sciences

8. R; Do you find studying at UWC different from studying at home university? Why?

I; yeah, there's lot of difference because back in Congo, we have not much internet studying opportunities; they are few and expensive.

9. R; As you know UWC is using English as a medium of instruction, how do you communicate effectively with your peers and lecturers?

I; when I first came, it was very difficult because in my country we use local languages and French for studies. French is different from English, you know and I did not even know English. But now I try, not that I know English very well, but I can communicate now with my peers and lecturers in English.

10. R; Does your course work require oral activities and practical classes?

I; yes, we do lot of presentation and discussions and sometimes we go to hospitals for practical.

11. R; what is it like, learning in a language different from your home language?

I; very difficult to learn in different language, especially English. I used to speak my local language a lot in my country and even here in South Africa with people from my country. French was just for school and to communicate with strangers. Now, learning English is very difficult even after all these years in South Africa.

12. R; Are there any programmes that UWC is offering to help students improve their English competence?

I; For me, I did not do any programme when I came the first year, but I do not know about other faculties or departments.

13. R; what do you think of the University of the Western Cape as your learning environment?

I; UWC, I think is better than other universities where whites are looked like they are high than blacks. Many people tell me that in other universities, if you are not white or South African, you are treated bad, but not like that with UWC. I feel free at the UWC campus and I know I will succeed to finish my nursing course.

14. R; what kinds of materials do your lecturers use that seem to promote effective learning?

I; You see, I like the tension-free atmosphere my lecturers give, they are like our friends because you can feel free to ask questions even after class. There is also internet available and books in the library. The practicals we do also outside the campus in hospitals is a good method to learn.

15. R; Do you always find yourself part of the group or not? Why?

I; yes, I feel free with classmates and like to share ideas with them. I do not mind even when they laugh at me because after I ask for correction and they give me.

16. R; what do you think needs to happen to support your sense of belonging at UWC?

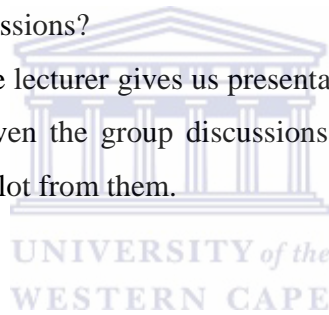
I; I used to attend English classes outside the UWC campus to improve my English. But if UWC could permit students like me to have a short English course as part of their coursework, it can help.

17. R; How do your classmates behave towards you?

I; Some are very friendly, they always correct me when I go wrong, but others do not like to make friends with foreigners. But I do not mind because the few that are friends with me make me feel like I am not a stranger or a foreigner.

18. R; How do you see yourself in class? Do you feel you are learning a lot from participating in group discussions?

I; Yes, I feel good when the lecturer gives us presentations to make because they help me to improve my English, even the group discussions, we all have turns and I speak in English, so I am learning a lot from them.



Interview 2- Rogers

R=researcher

I =interviewee

1. R; What is your country of origin?

I; Cameroon

2. R; What degree do you hold?

I; I have a Bac from my country, with specialization in Physics and Applied mathematics and I am currently doing my third year in Pharmacy.

3. R; What was (is) the medium of instruction in your former university of your country?

I; French

4. R; What made you travel to South Africa?

I; It has always been my dream to become either a medical doctor or a pharmacist in life. My elder brother travelled to South Africa in 2005 and graduated with an MBA two years later at the UWC. He encouraged me to travel to South Africa after I failed to get the visa for Italy.

5. R; Why did you choose to study at the University of the Western Cape?

I; As I said already, my elder brother graduated from the UWC in 2007 and is having a very good job now back at home in Cameroon. He encouraged me to come here because of the standard of education.

6. R; How long have you been studying here?

I; This is my third year at the UWC.

7. R; What courses are you doing?

I; General pharmacology, pharmacy practice, pharmaceuticals.

8. R; Do you find studying at UWC different from studying at home university? Why?

I; Of course, there's a lot of difference; the way the lecturers interact with students gives room for more productivity. For example, students feel free to email lecturers and even ask for private consultation time, something that is rare in my home country.

9. R; As you know UWC is using English as a medium of instruction, how do you communicate effectively with your peers and lecturers?

I; French is the medium of instruction in my country and is different from English. I was advised to take six months English lesson classes before enrolling for my program at the UWC and this helped me, together with what my brother had given me back at home. I cannot say my English is perfect, but I can communicate now with my peers and lecturers in English.

10. R; Does your course work require oral activities and practical classes?

I; Yes, we do have group presentations and discussions and I managed to get a part-time job at Clicks, which helps me to practise both my English language and also my lessons.

11. R; What is it like, learning in a language different from your home language?

I; The first time I went in for English classes, it was very difficult because I used to speak French with my family members and friends. But when my brother returned from South Africa, things were different as he decided to speak English to me most of the time. I do

not think I have a lot of difficulty in English anymore because I can read and write English.

12. R; Are there any programmes that UWC is offering to help students improve their English competence?

I; I do not think there are any particular programmes for Francophone students here at the UWC. It is assumed that everyone can understand English.

13. R; What do you think of the University of the Western Cape as your learning environment?

I; It is a conducive learning environment, especially if you as a student know why you are here and make use of all learning facilities, like the library, internet, workshops. I enjoy studying here.

14. R; What kinds of materials do your lecturers use that seem to promote effective learning?

I; The lecturers make learning seem less difficult as they pair students in groups and give take-away assignments. They also use daily life examples to illustrate what they teach, making learning very effective.

15. R; Do you always find yourself part of the group or not? Why?

I; When I just came at the UWC, it took me some time to make friends especially as most of my classmates were from different backgrounds. There were only two students with whom I communicated; one from Cameroon who was taking over a course she did not pass the previous year and a Congolese guy who only spent a semester and left. But at one point I decided I was going to feel free, no matter what impression others could have about me. I decided to be part of the group and since then, I am always part of the group, with confidence.

16. R; What do you think needs to happen to support your sense of belonging at UWC?

I; I can only suggest, but it is left for the UWC administrative body to decide whether to organise extra classes for students who do not understand English or not. You know, it is not only the Francophone students facing this difficulty in English; there are also South African students who do not understand English as well.

17. R; How do your classmates behave towards you?

I; My classmates are nice with me, though a few used to consider me like an outsider when we started the first year. You know they always think if you are an international student, you are somehow different. But now, I do not notice any funny behaviour because I even help some of them out when they have difficulties with courses like Physics and Mathematics.

18. R; How do you see yourself in class? Do you feel you are learning a lot from participating in group discussions?

I; I participate fully in class and ask questions when necessary. I need to make use of the fees I pay, so good performance is part of my everyday being.

Interview 3- Yvette

R=researcher

I =interviewee

1. R; What is your country of origin?

I; I am from Cameroon

2. R; What degree do you hold?

I; I had a License (Bachelor degree) in Physics in Cameroon before coming to South Africa.

3. R; What was (is) the medium of instruction in your former university of your country?

I; French

4. R; What made you travel to South Africa?

I; I have always wanted to be a trained pharmacist. I could not afford going to study in Europe and in the whole of Africa, I was advised to seek for admission into any university in South Africa because this country (South Africa) is known to have best medical facilities in Africa.

5. R; Why did you choose to study at the University of the Western Cape?

I; I sought admission into two South African universities (Stellenbosch University and the University of the Western Cape) and I got admitted at the UWC.



6. R; How long have you been studying here?

I; This is my third year at the UWC.

7. R; Does your experience here confirm what you were told about South Africa and the medical field?

I; Sure, I can not wait finishing my course and going home as a trained and confident pharmacist. Studying here has given me a solid background as a pharmacist.

8. R; Do you find studying at UWC different from studying at home university? Why?

I; Yes, very different because back at home in Cameroon our courses were not so professional; there was a lot of generalisation. This resulted to students graduating without really being trained for a particular job.

9. R; As you know UWC is using English as a medium of instruction, how do you communicate effectively with your peers and lecturers?

I; I write English more than I can speak. I really still find difficulties expressing myself in English. I always have a feeling my accent is funny and so hardly speak up, except when very necessary.

10. R; Does your course work require oral activities and practical classes?

I; yes, we do lot of presentation and discussions. We do have practical externship and other opportunities to practice outside the campus.

11. R; What is it like, learning in a language different from your home language?

I; It is very difficult to learn in different language. I am used to French because back at home everyone around me communicates in that language. Even here in South Africa, I usually feel much better when I meet people with whom to communicate in French.

12. R; Are there any programmes that UWC is offering to help students improve their English competence?

I; No, I did not take any program for English competence at the UWC.

13. R; What do you think of the University of the Western Cape as your learning environment?

I; It is first of all a spacious and conducive environment for studies. I like t because you have everything for studies; the laboratories and library are well equipped, there is regular internet connection.

14. R; What kinds of materials do your lecturers use that seem to promote effective learning?
I; The lecturers here encourage students to talk more in class and this leads to interaction with other students, even the quiet ones.
15. R; Do you always find yourself part of the group or not? Why?
I; Not always, but it is nobody's fault because I feel different, as if others will laugh at my accent or something. I hardly talk during our group work, but when we are given a test or exam, I do my best because I do not need to speak.
16. R; What do you think needs to happen to support your sense of belonging at UWC?
I; The UWC could put up a compulsory program for all learners who do not know English well in the first year and make sure everyone passes it before going to the second year and maybe for my type who are not comfortable speaking English, to have individual presentations every week.
17. R; How do your classmates behave towards you?
I; They like pairing up with their chosen friends, but some try to be friendly, especially when they notice I perform well despite my silence.
18. R; How do you see yourself in class? Do you feel you are learning a lot from participating in group discussions?
I; Group discussions are really good and I learn from them, though I participate little, because I have an inferiority complex.

Interview 4-Joseph

R=researcher

I =interviewee

1. R; what is your country of origin?
I; Gabon
2. R; what degree do you hold?
I; I hold a License (Bachelor degree) in Economics from my country and I am presently a student in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

3. R; what was (is) the medium of instruction in your former university of your country?

I; French

4. R; what made you travel to South Africa?

I own a business in my country and also want to go international. English, you know is global language and for businessman like me with competition everywhere, I need strong business English. In my country, English is not part of our daily life. I know South Africa too is open to many foreign businesses and English is the main language used officially. So I decide I must find admission here in South Africa

5. R; why did you choose to study at the University of the Western Cape?

I; I made research about the South African universities and courses offered and finally chose the UWC because it was the university which fought the apartheid regime and so give room for everybody, whether black or white or coloured to study. I did not want a situation where I will be marginalized.

6. R; How long have you been studying here?

I; This is my second year here at the UWC, but I am in the first year because I decide to go first for courses to improve my English so I can pass my class work and communicate also.

7. R; what courses are you doing?

I; Academic Literacy for Business, Management, Information systems.

8. R; Do you find studying at UWC different from studying at home university? Why?

I; Yes, there is difference. South Africa is more developed than my country; Gabon. The campus is equipped with many learning facilities like internet access, reading rooms and quiet areas in the open, where one can sit alone if not want population or disturbance.

9. R; As you know UWC is using English as a medium of instruction, how do you communicate effectively with your peers and lecturers?

I; In Gabon, we only use French as language of instruction, you can not find a school with English as medium of instruction. So this change frightened me at first and I decide I must go for extra classes in English before I register at the University of the Western Cape. Now I can communicate with my peers and lecturers in English.

10. R; Does your course work require oral activities and practical classes?

I; Yes, we have small groups in which we discuss and work on assignments.

11. R; what is it like, learning in a language different from your home language?

I; It is not easy, but is possible to learn a new language and even study without problem if you are determined. Many people in my country do not like travelling to English-speaking countries because of language issues, but I have realised it is interesting and very possible to cope learning in a new language.

12. R; Are there any programmes that UWC is offering to help students improve their English competence?

I; No, there are no specific programmes for students who do not know English well. But in our faculty; EMS, there is a compulsory course for all year one students which may help English learners. This course (Academic Literacy for Business) helps to develop the general English language proficiency for foundation students.

13. R; what do you think of the University of the Western Cape as your learning environment?

I; UWC has a good environment for studies. I spend most of my time on the campus, making use of the learning facilities because I have left my family home and must take my course seriously. I like the noise-free atmosphere in the main library and always go there to study.

14. R; what kinds of materials do your lecturers use that seem to promote effective learning?

I; We are always encouraged to read daily from journals, newspapers, books and appropriate websites in our field of study and during tutorials, specific readings are also issued.

15. R; Do you always find yourself part of the group or not? Why?

I; yes, I feel free with classmates and like to share ideas with them. My English is not perfect, but it is understandable and I am confident I will make it.

16. R; what do you think needs to happen to support your sense of belonging at UWC?

I; I think I need to make myself feel free to study, not necessarily the institution's job. I must accept others and make them also accept me and we can work together. The UWC has already helped by accepting me and other students from various countries and races,

speaking different languages; even the South Africans are all from different ethnic groups and speak different languages , for example, Afrikaans, Xhosa.

17. R; How do your classmates behave towards you?

I; They used to find my French accent a bit strange, but we get to understand each other. Some of them would even like to learn French. We exchange some cultural ideas and this is interesting.

18. R; How do you see yourself in class? Do you feel you are learning a lot from participating in group discussions?

I; Yes, I learn when I participate in class and group discussions because I get to express myself in English and when I find difficulty, people do not mock at me, they tell me how to speak properly.



APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEWS FOR LECTURERS

Transcription of three lecturers' interviews

Interview 1- Lecturer 1 (Madam Victoire)

R=researcher

I =interviewee

1. R; How many francophone students are there in your class?

I; I have five Francophone students in total, but three seem to be part-time. Why I say part-time, because they are not regular.

2. R; Have you taught French-speaking students before coming to the University of the Western Cape?

I; Yes, I am also from French background and studied in French before learning English later. I used to teach secondary school Francophone students in my country some years back.

3. R; What is the medium of instruction at the University of the Western Cape?

I; English

4. R; What is your impression of francophone students in your class?

I; As I said before, I am from a French-speaking country and had once been like my Francophone students here, learning English as a second language too. So talking about my impression about English learners, I would say I understand them better and help those who are willing to be helped.

5. R; How long have you been teaching them and what efforts are they making towards learning English as a second language?

I; I have been teaching my present Francophone students for two years now and I would say there are two out of the five who are very hardworking. When they first enrolled at the UWC, things were not easy because of challenges in English. Once they discovered I was also from French-speaking background, they felt blessed and expressed their worries.

I advised them in the best way I could and told them to be serious with all their courses, not just the one I take with them. I can assure you that the two students concerned have been different from the other three right from the beginning and they are doing fine in their courses, despite some language errors sometimes.

6. R; What kinds of programs does the university include for francophone students and how do you intend making a difference in their academic lives?

I; This question is for the institution to answer. But on a general note, I do not think there are programmes for Francophone students at the UWC. Everyone is expected to make personal efforts because there are many students having English as a second language, not just the Francophone students. I personally advise those who come to me with English learning complaints to be determined and always use my life as an example to tell them they can make it. I encourage the Francophone students in my class to study with students whose first language is English, and not to bother if people laugh at them once in a while. I always pair them up with hardworking English-speaking students for group presentations and discussions and I am very strict with all groups so they can learn from their errors.

7. R; What kinds of class activities do francophone students like and how do you evaluate their improvement in English?

I; My francophone students prefer group presentations, where they share ideas with other students. I rate their work the same way I do for all other students, no discriminations, so that they can learn from their mistakes. When they come to me out of class and ask what they can do to improve, I readily advise them on how to present their ideas in the best way, just as I do with all other students who come for personal consultations after class.

8. R; Do you think they are making a rapid improvement or they are struggling in English (L2)?

I; Yes, I think they will graduate from UWC with flying colours. I am not saying their English is perfect or will be, at least, they are much better than the way they came into UWC.

9. R; What would you propose for the university to include as academic activities to help francophone students easily participate actively and brilliantly?

I; I think the university could include English learning forums during the weekends for all second language learners and permit them freely express themselves. I mean, it must not be an examination or test, but bringing second language learners together and letting them have an opportunity to freely express themselves could help them learn English.

10. R; What kinds of oral activities do you give to these students? How do they react to these activities? Are they better in written or oral classroom activities?

I; They always have group presentations and discussions. Most of the time, they would choose someone who is good in English to represent them because they feel that their English may not be clear to everyone listening. But when they write, their English language is not bad, sometimes even better than some students who actually speak English.



Interview 2- Lecturer 2 (Mr. Johnson)

R=researcher

I =interviewee

1. R; How many francophone students are there in your class?

I; I have three Francophone students in my class.

2. R; Have you taught French-speaking students before coming to the University of the Western Cape?

I; No, this is my first time of teaching Francophone students. But I have a few French-speaking Cameroonian friends .

3. R; What is the medium of instruction at the University of the Western Cape?

I; English

4. R; What is your impression of francophone students in your class?

I; Francophone students are the same like other second language learners to me. For example, a student whose first language is Afrikaans would sometimes face challenges learning in English. So to me, all students are considered the same. I try to understand all my students and look into their individual issues as they present them to me.

5. R; How long have you been teaching them and what efforts are they making towards learning English as a second language?

I; I have been teaching Francophone students for three years now and I think they are putting more effort in learning English than other second language learners, maybe because they feel they are in any foreign country and need to work harder. They book for outside classroom consultations more than other students, so I think they have a positive spirit towards learning as a whole.

6. R; What kinds of programs does the university include for francophone students and how do you intend making a difference in their academic lives?

I; I do not think there are special programmes for Francophone students at the UWC. But as their lecturer, I play my own part when they come to me to complain about their coursework.

7. R; What kinds of class activities do francophone students like and how do you evaluate their improvement in English?

I; I have noticed that they like asking questions in class and always struggle to express themselves no matter how challenging it may be sometimes. I even had one who would say certain things in French when she could not find the right words in English; she would use French and try to demonstrate. This attitude drew my attention and I paid for her to have private English classes out of school hours.

8. R; Do you think they are making a rapid improvement or they are struggling in English (L2)?

I; Of course, for students to be promoted to the next level, it means their performance is good.

9. R; What would you propose for the university to include as academic activities to help francophone students easily participate actively and brilliantly?

I; I think the university could introduce a compulsory English learning programme in every faculty and make sure it is a condition for all first year students to be promoted to the next year/level (it should be made clear that if a student does not have a pass mark in that particular course, he/she would not be qualified for the second year even if the student performs well in the other courses). It is just a proposal, since I must say something, right?

10. R; What kinds of oral activities do you give to these students? How do they react to these activities? Are they better in written or oral classroom activities?

I; Our courses are more practical, students do not need to be so perfect in English language to perform well.

Interview 3- Lecturer 3 (Madam Precious)

R=researcher

I =interviewee

1. R; How many francophone students are there in your class?

I; I had three at the beginning, but right now I have only one Francophone student in my class.

2. R; Have you taught French-speaking students before coming to the University of the Western Cape?

I; Yes, but not in a full-time programme. I used to teach Francophone kids in my neighbourhood, just for an extra income.

3. R; What is the medium of instruction at the University of the Western Cape?

I; English

4. R; What is your impression of francophone students in your class?

I; I would say my Francophone student does not really have language problems. He is doing well so far.

5. R; How long have you been teaching them and what efforts are they making towards learning English as a second language?

I; I have been teaching my present Francophone student for about a year now and he only has a few language errors which could be made by even English-speaking students.

6. R; What kinds of programs does the university include for francophone students and how do you intend making a difference in their academic lives?

I; We do have an English language proficiency course in our faculty for all first year students. But I do not think this goes for all faculties. I can not give a general answer for the university.

7. R; What kinds of class activities do francophone students like and how do you evaluate their improvement in English?

I; We do have class presentations and discussions and during the tutorials students are paired up in smaller groups and encouraged to participate individually.

8. R; Do you think they are making a rapid improvement or they are struggling in English (L2)?

I; As I told you earlier, the Francophone student in my class does not seem to have much second language issues. His English is not perfect, but he can express himself quite clearly.

9. R; What would you propose for the university to include as academic activities to help francophone students easily participate actively and brilliantly?

I; I think the university could include English language proficiency at the first level in all faculties to help English second language students. You know, it is not only the Francophone students who have problems in English. There are many students who are learning in English for the first time.

10. R; What kinds of oral activities do you give to these students? How do they react to these activities? Are they better in written or oral classroom activities?

I; I make sure every student participates in class by directing questions to them after lecturing on a topic and sometimes during group discussions, I instruct that everyone contributes. English language is a foreign language to most of us in Africa, so sometimes; it is easier speaking than writing. But my Francophone student writes better than he speaks; he says this is because he has a poor accent influenced by his French background.

APPENDIX 7

STUDENTS' NARRATIVES



UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

JOSEPH

I am from Gabon and in my country, we use french School and for official matters. English to many in my country strange because they can not communicate in the language. My experience using english I will say it has been very challenging. I had to think maturely and insist in talking english classes - able to use English but it is a life time investment. I know my wife and children back home will be happy that I can use english and they will also learn.

I have only learn english here in South africa. When I come to study, I realised it were not easy with out first knowing. So I decide I must first take english classes, and I was right. It was unplanned investment, but it is helping now. I have a houseness ~~monring~~ home, and I could have clients, even international if I communicate in english.

My first months at UWC before I decide to take english classes were difficult and challenging. The students, I met speaking english were just looking I was from different planet. I thought I was not going to make it, that maybe I have come to france or Belgium instead to avoid language barrier.

I decided as a head of family, I must face challenges maturely, so I decided where to go for extra English classes. The problem was not only where but also where I lived, I could not express myself even at the tuck around, worst even when they were Somalians who are also having problems. The South africans did not understand a word in french. I decided to ask around and share with people from Cameroon or who could understand me in french. I finally shared with a Cameroonian who was also a student, but in Stellenbosch. The people a great role in my learning because he was so bilingual and insisted I practise english and he will correct my errors.

When I come back to school, many students who first knew me were I was so bold and communicated in english, not fearing being at or looked at like foreigner. Now felt I could even use english more than some of them. I was in discussions and presentations. I want to know how I can improve my english.

YVETTE

My Experience using English is Complicated. I only use French in everything because I school in this language, and even at home with family and friends.

I first did not want South Africa because they told me you must know English to school there. But I hear also of good pharmacy and so I said I need to try.

When I reached South Africa right from the airport, I hear English and some other language I think it was Xhosa. I said to myself we were going not to be easy in this country.

When I went to shopping centres, I like only shops like Pick n Pay or Shoprite, where I can pick without speaking English because I do not know how to speak or go to call the things.

In school at UWC, the first months were very difficult because I do not see many people to speak French. In class I will not speak English like I don't know what to say. I see students who

I did not like this and I feel I should go to my country where I can feel free with speaking French.

In physics, mathematics, chemistry, I understood things because I did some already in my country and science subjects not need to much English language. I pass even with my bad English.

I think I can write English better than before, though with some errors in tense (some times I don't know how to use past tense, conditional tense and so on)

But I know I can express myself in English.

CHANTAL.

I am Congolese woman with two children. I live in Porow with my v and go to school at UWC. My English is not good, but I try. When I just go South Africa, I know not English at all.

My experience using English here is funny. I can say 'even in the market was laughing and saying mama, what do you want? they never understand and I used to explain sometime in my language or French. I feel very to go to shop or market or even some where alone.

My Cameroon neighbor was understanding English and French I will hear when she go to the market and hear what she say. She was a registered student in UWC, but speak English and French very well.

My husband send me to learn English and my little daughter, will also laugh say mama don't know English. But my Cameroon neighbour told me put effort and I will speak and she correct me always. She helped me English even when I said to my husband, I want to do nursing in laugh, say I can not even understand lessons in English. But I force fine.

In my class, only one Cameroon girl and a boy from any country were because I feel free with them. But I decide that I must force English every one or every body and even in the house I will speak English, no me laugh at me or not. During class presentations, I will speak and ask questions in class also. Many people start saying I am improving in English and some wanted I teach them French also but I say I will know English very well first.

I now face only small problems in English because I can not write and speak perfect, but it is better and I understand understand me too.

ROGERS

Talking about my experience using English, it has stages. The stage is when I end to take a six months English classes before my course in UWC. I thought I was not going to cope. I even thought it was a way to brain wash me and change me and I did not change.

I told myself I will use French when if people don't understand me. At the time I understood it was for my own good to learn English.

After all, it was not really going to change who I am as a person. I realized English was not too complicated as I thought, especially people in my neighbourhood made it seem I live in Elsie river, where there are many coloured people.

Their English is not really like the one I learn during my English but it helps me practice. I told myself I will learn from them even if they speak broken English, then I can at least be like them and feel free.

In UWC, I decided I will participate in class and feel free no matter what. Some of my class mates were also coloured, making things better beyond out of my imagination a lot with them. My worst work did not require very good English that is how it is with science courses. So I did well in some that were with formula, practicals, like mathematics.

In fact, I am an English speaker now and can't complain. I have improved and I feel I am part of other students in UWC, South African or other nationalities. I don't feel like a foreigner.