# INVESTIGATING DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT AS A MEANS OF ADDRESSING THE ASSESSMENT DILEMMA OF ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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# SUMMARY

Using static forms of assessment with learners who have an additional language (AL) as the language of learning and assessment (LoLTA), especially those that have been identified and labelled low achievers, could do more harm than good. Many people neglect to take account of the complexity involved in learning a second language and often wonder why learners who have an AL as the LoLTA take so long to acquire it at the level of cognitive academic language proficiency. This study investigated the use of dynamic assessment (DA) as a method of assessing learners who have an AL as the LoLTA in mainstream education, focusing on Lagos, Nigeria, in the empirical research. The study looked at ways in which DA could contribute to a solution for the assessment of AL learners, specifically how DA influenced the assessment and performance of AL learners. The study, in addition, sought to establish how static assessment and DA affect the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their own performance. Finally, the study explored avenues through which DA could be used without it becoming an undue advantage for AL learners.

The research was a qualitative study within the interpretive paradigm that sought to understand the subjective experiences of AL learners with assessment. Within a multiple case study, it resembled action research. Eight participants from two schools in UBE 8 (Grade 8) took part in the study, which involved observation of the participants during continuous assessment (CA) cycles, with debriefing and language-related mediation of assessment skills thereafter, in the subjects Business Studies (BS) and Integrated Science (IS). The data collection covered four phases: three CA cycles and the examination of the first school term. Subsequent to Phase I, mediational assessment papers, a glossary and spelling list were used.

The findings suggest that DA had a positive influence on the AL participants' performance and affect during assessment, although to varying degrees. Individual learning potential and context appeared to play a crucial part. Once the participants' individual challenges were apparent, mediation could be directed at providing appropriate strategies to bridge the gaps. Due to the severity of the AL challenge, some participants seemed to require focused learning support in the AL, as well as mediated assessment sustained over a longer period. DA seemed to effectively provide guidance and feedback to the participants and improved their attitude towards assessment as well as the emotions experienced during assessment.

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# ACRONYMS

**Academic**

| | |
|---|---|
| AL | Additional Language |
| BICS | Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills |
| CA | Continuous Assessment |
| CALP | Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency |
| CDA | Curriculum-based Dynamic Assessment |
| CLD | Cultural and Linguistic Diversity |
| DA | Dynamic Assessment |
| DoE-SA | Department of Education – South Africa |
| EFL | English Foreign Language |
| ELL | English Language Learner |
| ESL | English Second Language |
| FGN | Federal Government of Nigeria |
| L1 | First language (mother tongue) |
| L2 | Second language (additional language) |
| LAC | Language across the curriculum |
| LEP | Limited English Proficiency |
| LiEP-SA | Language in Education Policy – South Africa |
| LoLT | Language of Learning and Teaching |
| LoLTA | Language of Learning, Teaching & Assessment |
| LPAD | Learning Potential Assessment Device |
| MLE | Mediated Learning Experience |
| NMoE | Nigerian Ministry of Education |
| NNPE | Nigerian National Policy on Education |
| SES | Socio-economic Status |
| TIMMS | Trends in International Mathematics & Science Studies |
| UBE | Universal Basic Education (Basic 1-9 = Grades 1-9) |
| ZPD | Zone of Proximal Development |

**Fieldwork**

| | |
|---|---|
| AF | Female Participant from Class A – LIB School |
| AM | Male Participant from Class A – LIB School |
| BF | Female Participant from Class B – LIB School |
| BM | Male Participant from Class B – LIB School |
| BS | Business Studies |
| CF | Female Participant from Class C – MIB School |
| CM | Male Participant from Class C – MIB School |
| DF | Female Participant from Class D – MIB School |
| DM | Male Participant from Class D – MIB School |
| IS | Integrated Science |
| LIB | Lower-Income Bracket School |
| LIB-BS | Business Studies Teacher – LIB School |
| LIB-IS | Integrated Science Teacher – LIB School |
| MIB | Medium-Income Bracket School |
| MIB-BS | Business Studies Teacher – MIB School |
| MIB-IS | Integrated Science Teacher – MIB School |

# REFERENCE CODING SYSTEM

The under listed are the various reference codes used and their meaning:

DMG:                Debriefing and Mediation Guideline


LIB/POA:            LIB School, Participant Observation Analysis

LIB/CA1-BS:         LIB School, CA1 Business Studies

LIB/CA1-IS:         LIB School, CA1 Integrated Science

LIB/CA2-BS:         LIB School, CA2 Business Studies

LIB/CA2-IS:         LIB School, CA2 Integrated Science

LIB/CA3-BS:         LIB School, CA3 Business Studies

LIB/CA3-IS:         LIB School, CA3 Business Studies

LIB/EX-BS:          LIB School, Examination Business Studies

LIB/EX-IS:          LIB School, Examination Integrated Science


MIB/POA:            MIB School, Participant Observation Analysis

MIB/CA1-BS:         MIB School, CA1 Business Studies

MIB/CA1-IS:         MIB School, CA1 Integrated Science

MIB/CA2-BS:         MIB School, CA2 Business Studies

MIB/CA2-IS:         MIB School, CA2 Integrated Science

MIB/CA3-BS:         MIB School, CA3 Business Studies

MIB/CA3-IS:         MIB School, CA3 Integrated Science

MIB/EX-BS:          MIB School, Examination Business Studies

MIB/EX-IS:          MIB School, Examination Integrated Science

**CHAPTER 1**

**THE ASSESSMENT DILEMMA OF ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

## 1.1     WHY I HAVE DONE THIS RESEARCH

At different points in my life I have worked with children, many of whom are additional language (AL) learners. No aspect of this work has been as challenging as their assessment. I have worked with AL learners whose struggle with language (English) has been mistaken for lack of cognitive ability. The expression of hopelessness on AL learners' faces when they look at examination papers and have difficulty understanding exactly what it is that is required of them or how to express their thoughts and ideas in English cannot be easily forgotten. Teachers have been known to mark down learners for grammatical and spelling mistakes in tests such as on History and Geography. I am aware of learners who, after failing Social Studies and Mathematics examinations, passed exceptionally well when the questions were translated into their home language and also sometimes did better when tests were repeated orally and they were allowed to respond in the same manner.

The problem of assessment of AL learners is increasingly becoming a global issue and I wish to seriously question whether the assessment of learners in a language in which they are not proficient is ever equitable practice. In mainstream education, summative and formative assessments have been conducted using both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced forms of assessment. Neither of these forms of assessment however, removes the bias that a lack of proficiency in the language of instruction and assessment introduces. The use of alternative forms of assessment such as portfolios, performance tasks, student exhibitions and oral interviews has been explored. These alternative forms of static assessment have so far seemed to yield only limited results (Campione & Brown, 1987; Lidz, 2002; Swanson & Lussier, 2001). This could be due to their failure to make effective allowances for the challenges faced by AL learners. Further research into alternative methods of assessment of AL learners is necessary and might be one possible way of addressing the growing concerns about using an AL for learning.

I have done this research to broaden the knowledge base of the assessment of AL learners and to explore the possibility and value of using dynamic assessment (DA) with AL learners in mainstream education. The context of the empirical research has been Lagos, Nigeria.

This chapter of my thesis deals with the background to the study and will attempt to show that the joint issues of additional language of learning and assessment are not peculiar to Nigeria, the site of my research, alone. I shall therefore refer to several countries with similar situations. The problem statement, purpose and significance of the study follow. The chapter is concluded with a definition of key terms and an outline of the methodology used in the study.

## 1.2    BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.2.1    The additional language factor in education

The world is now popularly called a global village with people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds moving around with relative ease, and many countries have citizens who speak two or more languages. The issues relating to language in education and assessment have become very important to education policy makers, educators in multilingual situations and educational psychologists worldwide (Estrin, 2000:233; Kozulin, 2002: 118; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:121).

The United States, being an immigrant country, has firsthand knowledge, like many African countries, of educating school populations bilingually/multilingually. Statistics show that over 30% of the students enrolled in public and private elementary and secondary schools in the United States come from those groups classified as ethnic minorities. This figure is expected to rise to 50% by the year 2050 (Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega & Yawkey, 1997:5). Of the learners in the United States, 14% currently speak a language other than English at home.

The United States is not alone. In the United Kingdom and other European countries, such as France and Germany, there is an influx of immigrant families in the form of refugees, asylum seekers and economic movers, especially following on the enlargement of the European Union. This also creates within these countries situations of cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD), *inter alia* affecting learners who may end up being labelled with learning difficulties

due to no direct fault of theirs and who, if care is not taken, might also develop emotional problems (Gonzalez *et al*., 1997: 58). In situations where learners have little knowledge of the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), these learners tend to become invisible and inaudible in the classroom (Cummins, 1996: 65), and silence and non-participation have under these conditions frequently been interpreted as lack of academic ability (Datta, 2000: 24-30).

In many countries experience has shown that many educators seem unaware of the complexities of trying to acquire a second language and certainly more so when learning and assessment have to take place in that language. Some educators appear to believe that language proficiency is a strong sign of intelligence, which means that learners who are still in the process of learning an AL could be viewed as less intelligent than monolingual learners who are native and fluent speakers of the LoLT. In Britain, the recognition of other languages by the Department of Education through the National Literacy Strategy has now made teachers more aware of the complexity of linguistic diversity and its implications for teaching and learning (Gravelle, 2000: 18; James, 2007).

Africa is a culturally and linguistically diverse continent. Many African countries have more than one official language and many children do not use their home language as the LoLT. In some cases the extent of the diversity is huge. An example is Nigeria, where there are about four hundred indigenous languages (Bamgbose, 1995: 24). English is officially the medium of learning, teaching and assessment from the fourth year of primary school (FGN, 2004: 14). It is commonly, yet often mistakenly, perceived in Nigeria that a fluent speaker of English is highly educated, even when he or she has had no formal education but has acquired the language by association. By contrast, fluency and education in many other languages are almost immediately equated with illiteracy. Ghana is another example. Countries such as Togo, Cameroon and Congo regard French as the language of the educated. In Mozambique, the official language is Portuguese, which is a foreign language for 98% of the population (Benson, 2000: 149-150).

 In South Africa, a country with eleven official languages, both English and Afrikaans are widely used as the languages of learning, teaching and assessment. The Language-in-Education Policy of South Africa (DoE-SA, 1997) recognises the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country and aims to promote multilingualism and respect for all the languages

used. The policy acknowledges the cognitive value and cost-effectiveness of using the home language initially as the medium of instruction (DoE-SA, 1997). In practice, English, however, still continues in many schools to dominate as the main LoLT.

An important issue for education world-wide is whether or not learners with an AL as their LoLT have acquired the level of proficiency that is required for them to demonstrate their knowledge and achieve the desired outcome on any given assessment tasks in that language (Barry, 2002: 106-108). If they have not, then the question is how appropriate is it to continue to assess them using instruments that were designed for fully fluent learners and that covertly measure proficiency in that language? Bearing in mind the linguistic diversity of countries such as Nigeria and South Africa, assessment should be appropriate for different learners and should be able to accommodate alternative approaches to alleviate the problems of those actually disadvantaged by traditional static forms of assessment, in this case, linguistically diverse learners (Morrow, in Barry, 2002: 110). For this reason, I am introducing a new term: *language of learning, teaching and assessment* (LoLTA), which I intend to use frequently instead of *LoLT* in this study. It is my contention that the language of assessment is not receiving due consideration in either assessment theory or language education policy, and that failure to explicitly recognise the language factor in LoLTA has serious implications for education on all fronts and at all levels.

### 1.2.2   The additional language factor in assessment

The problem of poor achievement in mainstream education is one which many departments of education have researched and sought solutions to for years. The label "under-achiever" is used to describe learners who perform below their potential and are unable to meet the minimum requirement for success on given assessments over a period of time, since they fail to make optimal use of their skills (Gonzalez *et al*., 1997: 5 & 6). Many departments of education, such as in the United States and the United Kingdom, expend huge resources, and much time and finances, on learning support, special education and intervention.

Research has shown that marked disadvantages with regard to learning and assessment occur for children where the home language differs from the LoLT (Baker, 2001: 122-132). Learners using an AL simply have more to cope with than the subject matter content. Teaching in the first language/mother tongue initially can remove some of the challenges, but

cannot answer for all since at some point the learners will continue to be assessed in another language. For instance, many children cannot necessarily read or write their home language though they can speak it. Then there is the question of how many languages can be used meaningfully in a single classroom, when talking about equal representation for all languages. We should also not lose sight of the economic and strategic value some languages have over others (Barry, 2002: 105 &110; Meyer, 1997: 236). Many of these issues are political and do not form part of the focus of this research.

In the USA, many speakers of other languages come to school and are diagnosed as having learning disabilities, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance as well as speech and language impairments and this leads to labelling (Gonzalez *et al*., 1997:61). Labelling frequently has negative consequences in the form of emotional and learning problems, alienation and stigmatisation. For learners using an AL, there is a high risk of mislabelling because lack of proficiency in the LoLTA can be confused with lack of adequate cognitive ability. Mislabelling has numerous harmful consequences (Gonzalez *et al*., 1997:61).

Statistics in the USA show that learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse are actually over-represented in special education classes and under-represented in gifted classes (Gonzalez *et al.*, 1997: 4-10). These statistics, they argue, are a reflection of subjectivity in the process of diagnosis. Teachers' attitudes are often based on low expectations, so the learners are not motivated to put in any effort. The over-representation of linguistically diverse learners in special education, some researchers perhaps more correctly believe, is somewhat connected to the fact that the language of communication and interaction in the family environment is not the language of learning and assessment (Datta, 2000: 22-23; Cummins, 2000). Studies have shown that many of the learning difficulties encountered by South African students and demonstrated in their performance results have their roots in a lack of proficiency in the LoLT (Howie & Hughes 1998: 5,6,75 & 77), in this case termed limited English proficiency (LEP).

Gonzalez and her colleagues (1997) believe that there are methodological flaws in the assessment and diagnostic processes used with culturally and linguistically diverse American learners, that result in the unreliability of assessment instruments, diagnosis and placements. Their contention (Gonzalez *et al*., 1997: 55) is that there are still many problems when trying to distinguish genuine disabilities from difficulties related to normal learning through the

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medium of a second language. American educators are found to be misinterpreting the lack of proficiency in English as a second language as a widespread intelligence deficit among culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Oller, 1991 in Gonzalez *et al.*, 1997: 61).

In the USA, UK and South Africa, a number of intelligence test batteries have been developed in or translated into some of the other languages used within the particular country (DoE-SA, 1996; Gonzalez *et al*., 1997; Gravelle, 1996). But the language of assessment in mainstream education still largely remains English in these countries, meaning that the recording of academic performance *per se* still remains at issue. This, again, impacts directly on the considerations of certification and selection and therefore runs the full circle to the issue of equity. More importantly, correctly identifying and addressing the language needs of AL learners in their assessment process could contribute significantly to better overall achievement and higher success rates.

At all levels learners whose home language is the LoLTA seem to have an advantage over those who still have to develop their proficiency to an academically functional level. The practice of assessing learners who are first language users of English with the same tests and criteria as those whose only contact with English is from the school environment cannot be considered as equitable. At the same time it is not desirable to give undue advantage to AL learners, as this would defeat the essence of assessment. Assessment should not only be balanced in terms of equity, but should also be valid. Learners should have equal opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge they have acquired without being advantaged or held back by the language used.

### 1.2.3   An assessment issue begging research

In recent years there has been a shift in the focus of assessment. The classical method of *assessment of learners* had a multitude of problems inherent in the difficulty of isolating the specific traits in the learners that should or should not form part of any assessment. Strong reservations are also held against the superior attitude implied in taking the freedom to make evaluative statements concerning the individual (Ellery & Sutherland, 2004:99; Estrin, 2000: 228; Hall, 1995: 75; James, 2008). During the past two to three decades the shift has increasingly been to *assessment of learning,* i.e. a movement from the product to the process of learning, which reflected especially the growing understanding of the constructive nature

of learning (James, 2008; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122). However, this emphasis is drawing some criticism on the grounds of validity issues, because of the different variables that can influence the results and the outcome of such assessment and the lack of predictive ability of assessment (James, 2008; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:121). More recently, recognition is growing that the focus should be on *assessment <u>for the purpose of learning</u>,* i.e. viewing assessment as part of the learning process itself and thus offering feedback into the actual classroom interaction to inform instruction (Bouwer, 2005: 47; Ellery & Sutherland, 2004:99-100; Estrin, 2000: 229; James, 2008). The shift described above at the same time reflects the progressive movement that has taken place from summative, norm-referenced assessment to formative, criterion-referenced assessment (Ellery & Sutherland, 2004:100; James, 2008; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:125).

Assessment certainly should not only provide information about what has been learned. What is required is for assessment actively to address the needs and problems of learners, to provide information about how they could be supported in the next step of their learning (Bouwer, 2005: 47; Heldsinger, 2008; James, 2008; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:124). If a barrier to learning exists, the assessment should also identify and address this, suggesting ways to overcome or reduce the barrier and predicting learning potential. It is essential that assessment provide formative information about the actual challenges and causes of low achievement with a view to mediating learning content and reducing such barriers and increasing the chances of improved learning. Those learners with an AL as the LoLTA should not be left to deal with their language deficiency on their own, without first of all trying alternative methods of assessment which might open up a way for them.

It is my contention that apart from the use of multilingual education and special education support services, the scope of the methods of assessment in mainstream education should be broadened as a means of addressing the factor of language in the education and assessment of every learner. Cummins (1996: 111-112) argues that the academic skills of bilinguals in an AL depend not only on the bilingual learner's exposure to an AL but also on the previous knowledge and concepts that they have inside their heads that assist them to make sense of the AL. Learners therefore, who do not have the requisite language skills to demonstrate the knowledge they possess might oftentimes be disadvantaged in terms of the assessment process and results.

Howie and Hughes (1998), in their report on the performance of South African students, in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), identified crucial language-in-assessment issues and call for further research in this area. They found among others that South African students performed very poorly on those items that required them to come up with their own responses/explanations to the items. Most of the South African participants wrote the test in either English or Afrikaans, whilst it was not their mother tongue. The language factor, according to the report (Howie & Hughes, 1998: 52, 59, 75 & 79), probably had a negative impact on achievement. The learners who took the test in their home language (English and Afrikaans) did significantly better than those with other home languages. There is, however, also the possibility that the standard of mathematics and science education was better in the schools attended by first language speakers. The report identifies areas that require further research, the first being the relationship between language and performance in mathematics and science, the second being the issue of taking a word problem test in a second or third language.

Ascertaining whether or not a learner has achieved cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins & Swain, 1986: 152-153; Cummins, 2001: 111-115), at the desired receptive and expressive levels is an uphill task. Meanwhile, accommodation of AL learners should be focused on in all assessment, and alternatives to the static assessment practices in mainstream education should therefore be more comprehensively researched. Such alternatives could include portfolio assessment, increasing less verbal forms of assessment and weighting those options more heavily, introducing multilingual assessment support assistants who are fluent in some of the languages represented in the classrooms, delaying formal assessment, increasing the duration of the assessment for AL learners and using dynamic assessment (DA). The use of DA is the focus of this research, to investigate whether and in which way(s) DA might provide a grounded and feasible solution to some of the challenges that AL learners face in mainstream education.

DA here refers to an interactive, non-static approach to conducting assessment. Over the years, assessment of learners contending with barriers to learning lost some of its rigidity due to the work of Barrera (2006), Budoff (1973, 1987), Campione & Brown (1987), Elliot, (2003), Feuerstein (1979, 2000), Lidz (2002), Tzuriel (2000) and others. These academics have persistently advocated the use of dynamic forms of assessment that meet the needs of the

learners rather than the continued use of static forms of assessment that do not inform instruction and under-evaluate the performance of learners facing barriers to learning.

Other than with static assessment, the focus of DA is on determining the true ability of the learner to respond to intervention and demonstrate what he or she really knows, and therefore on the potential for modification of the learner as opposed to categorization alone. The assessment is carried out in a test-teach-retest format (Lidz, 1987:3 & 4). DA has provided suitable alternatives to the assessment problems of a wide range of learners (Campione & Brown, 1987: 105; Lidz, 2002:69; Swanson & Lussier, 2001:342) and my assumption is that learners with an AL as the LoLTA who appear to demonstrate low achievement could benefit as well. DA will be discussed fully in Chapter 2.

## 1.3    WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Using static forms of assessment on learners who have an AL as the LoLTA, especially those that have been identified and labelled low achievers, could do more harm than good. Many people neglect to take account of the complexity involved in learning a second language and often wonder why learners who have an AL as the LoLT take so long to catch up with the rest of the class.

Barry (2002:106) expresses the opinion that the use of English as the language of learning and teaching by the majority of additional language learners in South Africa, will result in *"…entrenching unequal opportunities to teaching and learning…"*. The use of English admittedly has functional and economic value, but its use as the language of learning and teaching by the majority of second language learners in South African schools has been described as a major contributor to under-achievement, poor pass rates and high dropout rates and calls for further research into the impact of language on the achievement of learners (Barry, 2002: 106; Prinsloo, 2005:37). Morrow (in Barry, 2002:111) emphasizes the importance of the form, content and mode of assessment being appropriate for different learners.

This study investigates the use of DA as a method of assessing learners who have an AL as the LoLTA. Focusing on Nigeria in the empirical research, the study seeks to answer the

following main question: **In what ways can DA contribute to a solution for the assessment of AL learners?**

The main question has been unpacked to contain the following sub-questions:

(1)     How does DA influence the assessment and performance of AL learners?

(2a)    How does the use of static forms of assessment affect the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their own performance?

(2b)    How does the use of DA affect the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their own performance?

(3)     How should DA be conducted to prevent it becoming an undue advantage for AL learners?


## 1.4     PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The language-in-education issue is one that still requires a lot of research and development in addition to policy initiatives and implementation to resolve all the problems identified by teachers, educational psychologists, policy makers and other individuals. Before that happens I believe that the learners caught in the middle should not be left to continue being assessed in the traditional manner alone.

This study investigates the influence of DA as an alternative method of assessment for learners whose home language is different from the LoLTA. I shall use a form of DA called general Curriculum-based Dynamic Assessment (CDA), which has its roots in Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). My intention is to find out how AL learners respond to this method of assessment and determine the correspondent influence that the DA procedure has on learning and the performance of AL learners. It is therefore envisaged that the outcome of the research could add notably to the knowledge base concerning DA and perhaps also inform language education policy and implementation in Nigeria and other countries.

## 1.5     SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A great deal of research has been done on the use of DA with learners with learning disabilities and physical disabilities in special education programmes and also with gifted

learners, but not much attention has been paid to low-achieving learners in mainstream education. At a time when assessment theory and practices are being re-conceptualised from many angles world-wide (Campione & Brown, 1987; Gonzalez *et al*, 1997; Lidz, 2001 & 2002), it is my opinion that this study will contribute to further knowledge on dynamic assessment and could also make a significant contribution to an effective policy and practice of language in education in multilingual countries, as it will examine the use of DA with learners with an AL as the LoLTA.

The study focuses on moving away from traditional static forms of assessment. Research has linked the use of an AL as the language of learning to low performance (Barry, 2002:106-107; Howie & Hughes, 1998:75). Using curriculum-based dynamic assessment (CDA) might provide some measure of the learning support AL learners require while at the same time serving as assessment that will influence further classroom-based instruction.

My belief is that the study will contribute to the debate on the assessment of AL learners, the design of DA procedures and possibly the theory of DA in mainstream education.

## 1.6    OUTLINE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research will be qualitative, within the interpretivist paradigm. Although DA is essentially within the constructivist paradigm, this study focuses on aspects of the participants' profiles, attitude and situatedness and hence the paradigm shift. The study design will be an action research with multiple case study of the interaction with each of the participants.

The research project requires the participation of UBE 8 learners and their class teachers. It involves observation of the participants during the continuous assessment (CA) cycles of the first term and debriefing thereafter, in the subjects Business Studies (BS) and Integrated Science (IS). All activities will be conducted in a manner that will not interfere with regular classroom schedules.

The participants will consist of average and low achieving AL learners in Grade 8 (Universal Basic Education, UBE 8). The sampling will be purposive and consist of a selection of eight learners from two schools within Lagos. There will be a total of four participants per school

selected two each from two Grade 8 classes and an equal number of male and female participants. All the learners will be black Africans. The participating schools will be selected based on difference in their socio-economic status. To facilitate a comparative analysis, one will draw learners predominantly from the middle-income bracket while the other will draw learners predominantly from a lower income bracket. The selection of learners will be made in collaboration with the teachers who would have firsthand knowledge of the learners and hence be able to suggest AL learners who are emotionally stable in order to limit the occurrence of confounding variables that could affect the results of the study.

The data collection will be in four phases consisting of three continuous assessment (CA) cycles and an examination. During the phases there will classroom observation and debriefing and mediation of participants. Assessment papers subsequent to Phase I will be mediated. The data will be collected using a video recorder, field notes and the actual answer scripts of the participants.

The data will be analysed using comparative analysis of the data from the different CA cycles and the examination, chiefly as intra-comparison per case. The data generated from the debriefing and mediation will be analysed using an explanation-building technique for CDA.

## 1.7    ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Zeni (2001: xv) defines ethics as "the branch of philosophy dealing with decisions about right and wrong". Ethics has been associated with disciplines "within which principles and abstract rules have been debated and developed in relation to particular moral philosophical positions" (Birch, Miller, Mauthner & Jessop, 2002: 1). In our search for truth and knowledge through research, there is a need to make a moral commitment and an epistemic imperative (Birch *et al.*, 2002: 2; Mouton, 2001: 238-239). In research there is professional ethics or a code of conduct, which often is a critical reflection on the values, virtues, and norms of that profession (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 1996: 146 & 148; De Villiers, Wethmar, & Van der Bank, 2000: 68-69; Zeni, 2001: xvii).

In this research, I will adhere to the ethical guidelines and code of conduct of the Lagos State Ministry of Education and the Nigerian Union of Teachers as well as principles of research

ethics. Taking these guidelines and those stated by Mouton, (2001: 239-240) into consideration I will:

- respect the quality of educational research and adhere to the highest technical standards and practice
- highlight the restrictions of the results and the constraints of the methodology that will influence the validity of the final results
- accurately and justly represent my area and degree of expertise to the participatory schools and learners when there is a need to render professional or expert judgement
- ensure that there is no falsification or misrepresentation of evidence, data, findings or conclusions
- disclose details of the methodology and research design
- maintain appropriate ascription of authorship to publications; reject any form of plagiarism and simultaneous submission of manuscripts.

Since this research deals with human participants, and I acknowledge the fact that all human beings have basic rights that should be respected, including their right of privacy and of refusal to participate, I will strive to create a relationship that is characterised by trust and care. There will be no acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1990; Aubrey, David, Godfrey, & Thompson, 2000; Blaxter *et al*., 1996: 146-148; De Villiers, Wethmar & Van der Bank, 2000: 17 & 22; Mouton, 2001: 241-245). I will therefore:

- conduct this research with the utmost respect for the persons involved
- respect the dignity, belief and constitutional rights of the learners, including their right to privacy and confidentiality. I will ensure that the identity of the learners and the schools are protected at all times. All information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.
- respect their right to give, withhold or withdraw their consent to participate
- acknowledge the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner and encourage each to realise his / her potential
- avoid any form of humiliation and refrain from any form of child abuse, physical or psychological
- use appropriate language and behaviour in the interaction with the learners and act in a way that elicits respect from the learners
- disclose fully the nature and purpose of the research

- take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the learners
- obtain parental approval for the research
- protect the learners from any physical and mental discomfort

Individuals do not operate within a vacuum. They interact within a given society, which is governed by set rules and regulations. Although the scientific / research community operates as a distinct and relatively autonomous sector of society, researchers still have to uphold the rights of the rest of society and are therefore accountable to society. In addition to this most researchers rely on public funding either directly or indirectly, so researchers have a general obligation to conduct the research in a socially responsive and responsible manner (Aubrey *et al.*, 2000; De Villiers, Wethmar, & Van der Bank, 2000: 62; Blaxter *et al*., 1996: 147; Mouton, 2001: 241-242). In the light of this I will:

- ensure that there is no element of secrecy with the research
- disseminate research results freely and openly with the knowledge and permission of the participants
- be honest about my qualifications, capabilities and aims

## 1.8    DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Dynamic Assessment (DA)**

Dynamic assessment here refers to an interactive, non-static approach to conducting assessment. Other than the focus of static assessment on performance, the focus of DA is on determining the true potential of the learner to respond to intervention and demonstrate what he or she is really learning, and therefore the potential for modification of the learner as opposed to categorization alone. The assessment is carried out in a test-teach-retest format (Lidz, 1987: 3/4). The construct will be contemplated and developed in detail in Chapter 2.

**Additional Language (AL)**

Learners whose language of learning and teaching, in this research English, differs from their home language, are described as using an additional language.

**Language of learning, teaching and assessment (LoLTA)**

This refers to the language used in the classroom to teach learners but it also includes the language of the written texts used by the learners, the language of communication between the learners and the teachers, and the language in which all forms of assessment take place.

**Norm-referenced Assessment**

This refers to assessment scored and interpreted in accordance with how a learner's performance compares with that of a particular group or norm.

**Criterion-referenced Assessment**

This refers to assessment scored and interpreted in accordance with a particular standard or criterion of knowledge or skill that the curriculum, school or teacher has decided represents an acceptable level of mastery. It is concerned with the mastery of specific, defined skills and the performance of the learner indicates whether or not the learner has mastered those skills.

**Bilingualism**

In this study, bilingualism refers to the ability of an individual to communicate in two languages at the receptive and expressive level. Competence in both languages could be at the basic interpersonal communicative (BICS) level or higher, at the level of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).

**Multilingualism**

Multilingualism refers to the situation where people from the same geographical area or in one institution have different home languages.

## 1.9 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Chapter 1 constructed the background to the study with a statement of the problem and the research question. The chapter also included the purpose of the study and its significance as well as an outline of the research methodology, ethical considerations and the definition of key terms. Chapter 2 will examine literature relating to language and assessment with particular reference to the assessment of AL learners in schools. The chapter will further review the concept of DA and the theories/theorists from whom it is derived. It will finally critically examine relevant literature on research done in the field of DA and its uses. Chapter

3 will highlight the methodology used for the research process and the limitations of the study. Chapter 4 will contain the report of the research results and findings. Chapter 5 will contain an interpretation and discussion of the findings, a critical overview of the research with a discussion of the contingent theoretical and socio-educational issues, final conclusions, recommendations and thoughts on the value of the research.

# CHAPTER 2

## ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS: CONSIDERING A MOVEMENT FROM STATIC ASSESSMENT TOWARDS DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

"…language is the medium of much of human thought… the ability to think

and learn depends on their (learners') ability to use and understand language"

(Dean, 1996, cited in Nieman, 2006: 25)

Though putting it lightly, the above quotation sums up the central role language plays in the development of lower and higher order thinking skills and therefore learning. Language is a key factor in learning on three levels: knowledge construction, reconstruction and reproduction (and/or application). At each of these levels, the pivotal role language plays cannot be taken for granted.

In the classroom, for appropriate learning to take place, the learner has to be able to construct knowledge, and apply meaning to those concepts and units of learning he comes across. Post classroom encounter the learner must then reconstruct what he has come across, identifying main points, memorising and internalising them using various strategies to ensure adequate learning in preparation for assessment. The assessment then acts as the avenue for the reproduction and/or application of such knowledge. How can this be achieved if the level of language proficiency is inadequate for the complex cognitive activities that are required?

Language proficiency has been defined as the degree of control a learner exhibits over the use of the language in question (Goh, 2004: 125; Lopez, 1997: 504) and language proficiency has been qualified further in terms of basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), application of language on a social level and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), language skills needed for cognitively demanding classroom situations (Cummins & Swain, 1986: 152-153; Cummins, 2001: 111-115 & 145-146; Lopez, 1997: 504).

If we consider the intricacies of language-in-education, even for the L1 user, then we can begin to recognise the depth of the challenges faced by AL learners in the classroom. AL

learners have to deal with manifold concepts and terms, are expected to think about phenomena, reason through to a conclusion, read expository text, develop arguments, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information in a language they are often unable to process day-to-day thought in (Macdonald, 1990: 40).

What is the responsibility of the educator if an AL has been inadequately taught or acquired? How do we ensure that the LoLT is adequately taught when the majority of educators are themselves L2 or L3 users of the LoLT? Heugh (1999: 309), referring to South Africa, states that, "Teacher educators across the country agree that the current level of English language proficiency of teachers is entirely inadequate for effective teaching and learning to occur through English." When does language cease to be a conduit of meaningful communication between the educator and the learner? What, then, is the function of assessment? What accommodations in assessment are legitimate? How can we ensure that the AL becomes the "tool of thought" (Turner, 2000: 22) for learners? Before this is achieved, what scaffolds are required in the process of learning as well as assessment?

Chapter 2 is a literature review that attempts to establish a rationale for the use of DA with AL learners in mainstream education. The chapter begins by examining the issues surrounding AL and challenges of linguistic diversity with particular reference to Nigeria. The chapter continues with an overview of the broad fields of assessment, academic and static assessment, and the purposes of assessment. The chapter further looks at continuous assessment (CA) and other relevant issues in the area of assessment such as validity, reliability and equity in assessment. The next part of the chapter focuses on the issues of language-in-assessment and research in the field of language and assessment. The chapter goes on to define and discuss the concept of DA and its related theories and models, such as Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) and Campione & Brown's Graduated Prompting, then reviews relevant research carried out in the field of DA and finally considers the issue of validity of DA as an authentic form of assessment.

The various sections of the chapter are deliberated upon while relating the issues to AL and the challenges surrounding AL acquisition. Concerns for the learners affected are examined in relation especially to the Nigerian situation. The chapter concludes with findings from the

review and justification for the research, seeking from the theoretical perspective to answer the question: Can DA contribute to a solution for the assessment dilemma of AL learners?

## 2.2    THE ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ISSUES

Different terms, each with a slightly different emphasis,  are used to describe the  concept referred to in this study as *AL learners*, for instance,  "second language learners" (L2) (Barrera, 2006; Dornyei & Skehan, 2003; Kroll & Sunderman, 2003), "Limited English Proficiency" (LEP) learners (Guglielmi, 2008; Lopez, 1997; Vermeulen, 2000; Viljoen & Molefe, 2001), "language minority" learners, English Second Language (ESL) learners (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Macdonald, 1990; Theron & Nel, 2005; Turner, 2000), Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CLD) learners (Gonzalez *et al.*, 1997; Moore-Brown, Huerta,Uranga-Hernandez & Pena, 2006; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003;) and, more recently, the term "English Language Learner" (ELL) (Barrera, 2006; Goh, 2004, Zehr, 2007). For the purposes of this study, AL learners refer to those learners whose LoLTA differs from their home languages.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the issue of AL is a global phenomenon. There is a large-scale movement of immigrants from one place to another. According to Nieman (2006), there are now many more bilinguals and multilinguals in the world than there are monolinguals, so the issue of AL use could be described as the rule rather than the exception (Nieman, 2006: 22 & 23; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988: 11). That being the case, it could be concluded that in many schools there are more AL learners than learners whose LoLTA is their home language, and under such circumstances issues relating to AL use must be taken seriously.

The challenges of learning in an AL are complex. Learners sometimes come into the school environment from an early age with under-developed L1 proficiency and are confronted by a complex range of knowledge and learning all to be acquired in a language they are in the process of learning. According to Macdonald and Burroughs (1991: 15), learners beginning to use an AL (English) as the LoLT from Grade 1 – 4 do not have the requisite vocabulary to deal with the cognitive demands of studying multiple subjects such as History, Geography and Science. Using English as LoLT when learners are not adequately prepared to do so has been described as "a painful experience . . . and giving them (learners) the experience of failure" (Macdonald, 1990: 17). Others share this view and believe that learners struggle to

cope with the linguistic demands of academic study when the LoLT is an AL (Guglielmi, 2008: 323; Hugo, 2006: 48; Levin & Shohamy, 2008: 2). Unfortunately all learning areas are intrinsically related to language proficiency and a high level of language proficiency is seen as an essential aspect of the learning process in schools (Bamgbose, 1992 cited in Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004:73; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 143; Levin & Shohamy, 2008: 2).

Language has been linked to cognitive development and linguistic development is regularly seen as determinant of cognitive progression (Doughty & Long, 2003: 5; Gravelle, 2000:18; Heugh, 1999: 301). This then emphasises the impact of language on achievement (Cummins & Swain, 1986: 138; Gravelle, 2000: 159). Cummins distinction between social use of language (BICS) and language ability at an academic level (CALP) has made it pertinent for us to understand the importance of language proficiency at CALP level particularly for AL learners. For the AL learners to develop CALP several factors have to be in place. There should be adequate motivation and support for the learners, teachers should be good models, appropriate reading materials should be provided, class sizes should be smaller, individual attention should be a priority, adequate instructional materials should be available, and the home environment should be supportive to learning (Nieman, 2006: 34; Opara, 2004: 83-86). The list could go on, but the reality of the situation is that a vast majority of AL learners do not have access to the best environment for their language proficiency to attain the level of CALP.

Bamgbose (1992 cited in Brock-Utne *et al.*, 2004: 73) states that:
> "Language is without doubt the most important factor in the learning process, for the transfer of knowledge and skills is mediated through the spoken or written word. The paradox is that educational programmes and schemes are often designed to pay more attention to the structures and curricula than to language policy".

Bamgbose, while acknowledging the pivotal role of language in the learning process, seems to imply that more emphasis should be placed on language policy. With Nigeria as a point of reference, I believe that any language policy that is inadequately implemented is as bad as having no policy to begin with, could be confusing and thereby place a lot more burden on AL learners.

There are about four hundred languages in Nigeria and the vast majority of learners in the country are at least bilingual (Bamgbose, 1995: 24). English is the LoLTA for Nigerian

learners especially from the fourth year of primary school onwards. With English as the official language and the LoLTA, learners automatically become AL learners. The status of English as a dominant language in Nigeria has not been diminished by years of national independence or by the promulgation of the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NNPE) which includes the policy on language in education (Banjo, 1996: 72; Banjo, 1999: 179).

The NNPE tries to take cognisance of individual rights and emphasizes symbolically, the multilingual and multicultural nature of the Nigerian society and the importance of being able to communicate with the citizens of neighbouring countries (FGN, 2004: 7). The NNPE emphasizes the importance of language in education, and specifically of the indigenous languages. In this regard, it states that the Government shall:

> "Ensure that the medium of instruction is principally the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and to this end will
>
> (i)      develop the orthography of many more Nigerian languages
>
> (ii)     produce textbooks in Nigerian languages" (FGN, 2004: 7)

The languages in the curriculum for primary education include languages of the immediate environment, English and French. It is further stipulated,

> "The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period English shall be taught as a subject. From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of the immediate environment and French shall be taught as subjects" (FGN, 2004: 11).

Two foreign languages, English and French, play a key role in education in Nigeria and, contrary to the demands of the policy statement, implementation of the policy on the use of L1 in the first three years of education has not been fully effected. There are therefore many schools that use an AL (English) as the LoLT even from nursery/kindergarten classes. The implication of this is that assessment is conducted in English from as early as age three for learners whose home language is one of many. The government, from the policy statement, seems to want to promote multilingual education, but has also placed English in a position of prominence because it appears to be a unifying element (Opara, 2004:29) in a society where there is no agreement as to the exact number of languages that actually exist. The challenges for the AL learners continue to mount, because under the circumstances, AL learners appear

to be cut in between the policy makers and those entrusted with its implementation. Nigeria is, however, not alone.

The Language-in-Education policy of South Africa (DoE-SA, 1997) states that the government recognises cultural diversity as a national asset and thereby wants to promote multilingualism and the development of the official languages. It recognises the cognitive benefits of using the L1 as the LoLT but also states that the right to choose the LoLT is vested in the individual. Some of the main aims of the policy for language in education are

> "(a) To promote full participation in society and the economy through equitable and meaningful access to education
>
> (b) To pursue the language policy most supportive of general conceptual growth among learners and hence to establish additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education.
>
> (c) To counter disadvantages resulting from different mismatches between home languages and the languages of learning and teaching" (DoE-SA, 1997:2)

The above statements are excellent on paper, but their actual implications in the day-to-day lives of learners have not been researched enough. On the one hand, parents seem to want to ensure that their offspring are not marginalized by being denied access to the language of commerce and industry and to a very large extent the language of the government. They want assurance that education would make their children international learners who would be functional members of the society. They seem invariably to believe that the ability to communicate in the English language is a step in the right direction. Obviously parents want what is best for their children, but some might be ignorant of the consequences of having an AL as the LoLT. How many parents know the distinction between BICS and CALP or as some suggest, that the development of adequate cognitive functioning in the AL depends on the level of development of the LI (Gravelle, 2000: 54; Macdonald & Burroughs, 1991: 30-31)?

The relevance of mentioning the South African situation is to demonstrate the universal nature of the challenges faced by AL learners in relation to the LoLTA. These challenges are not peculiar to Nigeria alone but cut across many post-colonial African countries and also countries with a large immigrant population. Unfortunately, the implications of assessment in

an AL, of the probable subsequent misclassification, labelling and under-achievement, are lost in this line of reasoning because there is a focus on entry into the world of the "educated and learned". Parents do not seem to want their children attending school for several years without visible (audible?) changes in their proficiency in the target language, e.g. English, which is what appears to them to be happening when L1 is used. In Nigeria, parents find it completely unacceptable, especially in the urban centres, for the school to use the L1 or local languages and oftentimes come to demand that the learners be taught in English as the parents can develop the other languages at home and are not paying schools for that.

An examination of the situation in Nigeria reveals that there are no directed enlightenment programmes for parents, teachers or policy makers on the language challenges facing AL learners and the implications of using a second, third or foreign language as the LoLTA. The Nigerian language curriculum for the primary school includes the language of the immediate environment, English and French or, in Islamic schools, Arabic (FGN 2004: 10). The irony of this curriculum is frequently demonstrated when the language of the environment (one of the numerous local languages), English and French are all additional languages for possibly the larger percentage of the learners.

Most learners have to cope with second or third language learning concurrently with assimilation of the subject content being taught. This is a huge task for a vast number of learners, with English itself taught as a subject for a 40-minute period daily, and in most cases in context reduced scenarios, by teachers who themselves are L2 and L3 users of the language. This can hardly lead to academic proficiency in the language. Ohiri-Aniche (2006) opines that the language situation in Nigeria is deteriorating as learners are being propelled into the use of an AL from a very young age and end up lacking communicative competence even in their own indigenous languages. The local languages are often made to seem difficult and uninteresting. Many students can hardly wait to drop the subject in favour of another. In some cases, parents discourage their children from taking Yoruba, one of the main languages, even as a school subject (Ohiri-Aniche, 2004:3 & 14), the excuse being that they do not communicate in the language at home and it is all right if the children are not good at the language, they don't need it anyway! However, the development of the L1 is crucial because concepts and skills that have been acquired in the L1 can then be transferred to facilitate further learning (Levin & Shohamy, 2008: 10; Nieman, 2006: 28-29).

The state-owned (public) primary schools in Lagos, Nigeria hardly comply with the use of LI medium of instruction in the first three years either. Many of those who teach in public schools have children in private schools and the bottom line is always their children's acquisition of fluency in English. The problem has almost become generational because from one generation to the other, people seem to want, though sometimes unconsciously, to purge their children of the local languages (Ohiri-Aniche, 2004: 12-14). This shows that they are internalising the inferiority status implicit in coercive power relations. It is actually becoming the 'in thing' for parents to brag about how their children do not understand their local language. Even those who are policy makers and implementers send their children to expensive schools abroad or, at worst, the best international private schools in Nigeria, where the children are trained to be 'foreigners'.

Private schools in Nigeria do not use local languages as a medium of instruction in the classrooms. The parents actually require that English be the sole medium of instruction, thus opting for total linguistic immersion. They however do not have a clear understanding of the implications of their children being taught and assessed in a language in which they lack proficiency. Yoruba, one of the main regional languages, for instance is only taught as a school subject and even then, the teaching is sometimes not context embedded, meaning that it is not put into a familiar setting that is rich in routine objects or visuals and has extra-linguistic support in the form of referential and interactive feedback. Context reduced teaching is not desirable, as pupils seem to have no frame of reference or knowledge to work with (Cummins, 1986: 152-153).

This concept of context embedded and context reduced language use, as mentioned in Chapter 1, was used by Cummins to conceptualise language proficiency along two continua: the range of contextual support and the degree of cognitive involvement in communication. Cummins' theoretical framework distinguishes between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS can be acquired within 2 years, upon which the individual would be able to carry a basic conversation, identify and name objects, match similar things and transfer information from one medium to another. CALP is language usage at a higher conceptual level where the individual is able to engage in academic, conceptual discourse, generalise, classify and seek solutions to problems. It is believed that it takes between five to seven years to attain this high cognitive level of language proficiency (Cummins, 1986: 152-153, Cummins, 2001: 111-112). Other studies

have shown that the acquisition of CALP could and does in some cases take longer than that. Reed (2000: 114), reporting on the findings of a large-scale longitudinal study carried out by Thomas and Collier (1997), states that it takes AL learners starting with no English "at least seven to ten years to reach average level in English reading".

Krashen, cited in Nieman (2006: 27), states that a clear distinction has to be made between language acquisition and language learning. According to Krashen, language acquisition takes place through social interaction in specific contexts, it is an informal learning experience that happens largely unconsciously and, I would add, mostly centres on BICS. On the other hand, language learning takes place in a formal teaching situation where rules governing grammar, word formation and their application are taught and Krashen regards it as less effective than language acquisition. However, the development of full discourse skills and concepts required for CALP can be effectively supported by means of language teaching.

Hutchingson, Whiteley and Smith (2000: 45) argue that for AL learners to attain full academic achievement they have to be on the same proficiency level as monolinguals and that success in curriculum learning is dependent on learners' participation in building a "complex network of linguistic understanding". Pretorius and Ribbens (2005: 144), in a study carried out in a township school in South Africa, question Grade 8 learners' inability to read, especially since English had been their LoLT. They opine that the poor results have "serious implications for their academic performance" and wonder how learning could ever take place. The concern here is that even after so many years of exposure to English as the LoLT, AL learners are still not proficient in its use for academic purposes.

In order to curb the marginalisation and decline in the teaching and learning of African languages, the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) was set up in 2001 (Ohiri-Aniche, 2006: 20). Despite this, the use of AL as LoLTA still persists. We have to remember that competence in English is a popularly held criterion for economic success and social mobility in many Anglophone African countries. Many people have recognized, and rightly so, the power that the English language wields around the world and they see the acquisition of the English language as a tool for socioeconomic mobility (Banda, 2000: 57; Barry, 2002: 105; Nieman, 2006: 33; Opara, 2004: 31; Vermeulen, 2000: 265). This does not necessarily mean that they do not value their own language and culture, but they are hesitant to be left behind. The economic benefits of being competent in English appear to be overwhelming. Efforts to

encourage the use of other languages, despite all arguments concerning the benefits of multilingual education, developing CALP in the L1 and the relationship of language to ethnic identity, have not been successful. AL still continues to be the LoLTA and subtractive rather than additive bilingualism is being promoted. Subtractive bilingualism refers to a situation where the L1 is gradually replaced by the AL. As the learners' skills in the AL develop, the competence in the L1 decreases. This is contrasted with additive bilingualism, in which case the AL is added to the L1 without replacing it (Baker & Hornberger, 2001: 39, 71 & 224; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 33). "L1 of the learner (is) maintained throughout the educational career of the learner and ...other languages added ..." (Alexander, 2000 in Breidlid, 2003:94) Presently, there is a gradual growth in the population of Nigerians who are becoming L1 speakers of English (Braun, 1997:780; Ohiri-Aniche, 2004: 1). The implications of this trend for the local languages can only be imagined and the AL learners seem to continuously be at the receiving end of all the challenges implied. Indeed, the language policy does not appear to provide any practical solutions particularly in terms of the multiplicity of languages represented in classrooms and AL learners' capacity to learn within such classrooms.

## 2.3     CHALLENGES OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Of particular relevance to this study, is the issue of the challenges of linguistic diversity in mainstream education. Linguistic diversity in a classroom refers to the situation where two or more home languages and cultures are represented in a single classroom. Teachers and learners in multilingual and multicultural classrooms face the task of distinguishing between language-related achievement issues and other obstructive factors such as genuine learning disabilities (Camilleri & Law, 2007: 313; Frost, 2000: 133; Lidz & Macrine, 2001: 77; Pena & Gilman, 2000: 543 & 547). Linguistic diversity is also considered as an avenue for bad behaviour by learners whose teachers do not understand the majority languages represented in the classroom, leading to difficulty with classroom management. It could be tasking for teachers to establish whether or not the objectives of the lesson have been achieved if the AL learners are not proficient in the LoLT at the level of CALP. Linguistic diversity in the classroom could also make it easy for misclassification and labelling to occur, contributing to issues regarding the affective variable in learning.

However, many academics and researchers believe linguistic diversity should be viewed as an asset and not a problem (Banda, 2000: 62; Cummins, 1991: 378; Datta, 2000: 22-24;

Gonzalez *et al.*, 1997: 11; Nel, 2005: 156; Nieman, 2006: 23; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988: 33) According to Baker (in Datta, 2000: 9), international research carried out in multilingual classrooms suggests that "when two or more languages and cultures are present across a curriculum, there is value added in attainment and standards in classrooms rise". It is further argued that there are many advantages to children who become bilingual, and especially bi-literate. Scholars have maintained that the failure of development programmes in Africa can be linked to the "failure of education on the continent to embrace its multilingual reality" (Heugh, 1999:305). Yet Macdonald & Burroughs (1991: 30-31) suggest that in situations where both the teachers and the learners work in an AL, the limitations to the natural development of thinking skills are increased. This view is shared by Nieman (2006: 29), who argues that learners need to be mentally equipped in their first language, then the transfer of knowledge and skills can be easily facilitated. Garcia in Baker (1996: 7) opines that:

> "The greatest failure of contemporary education has been precisely its inability to help teachers understand the ethno-linguistic complexity of children, classrooms, speech communities and societies, in such a way as to make informed decisions about language and culture in the classroom".

Interestingly, teachers in Nigeria generally are aware of the ethno-linguistic complexity of their pupils and the classroom and in some cases the teacher is able to speak one or more of the indigenous languages represented in the class. But like most of the population, they recognise the power wielded by English and moreover they have to comply with the dictates of the NNPE. English being the official language and the LoLTA in all institutions of higher learning, secondary schools, most of the government primary schools and all the private ones, leaves teachers with little or no choice but to continue teaching and assessing their work in the stipulated manner (Banjo, 2002:179-181; Opara 2004: 32 & 80).

So, in a classroom where all the learners may have the same L1, the teacher tries to explain useful points from a History lesson in English, in many cases only to be confronted with blank faces awaiting further explanation and assistance. However, the representation of at least three languages in an average classroom is fairly common, especially in Lagos and other major cities. In cases such as these, the teacher does not have much choice but to use the AL as the LoLTA, although there are also many occasions where teachers resort to code switching and code mixing to ensure that the learners understand the lesson fully.

Code switching refers to a switch of language that occurs between sentences to carry the full statement and is otherwise known as inter-sentential switching. Code mixing is a switch in language that occurs within one sentence to utilise appropriate words or phrases and it is also known as intra-sentential switching (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004: 75; Nieman, 2006: 32). The use of code switching and code mixing oftentimes supports learning because the learners get a clearer picture of the subject matter and can also express their own understanding and questions more readily. After all, what is the point of teaching a "good" lesson if half of the class do not understand and are not carried along? Studies have shown that where the learners are conversant with the LoLT there is more interaction and willingness to participate and attempt to answer questions (Macdonald, 1990: 16).  Once communication breaks down in the classroom the teachers have failed in their role as mediators of knowledge and become drawbacks instead (Macdonald & Burroughs, 1991: 18-19).  Ellis (in Reed, 2000:115) reports studies which showed that some students feel anxious and fearful of having to learn or compete in an AL. He states further that some learners were "frightened of teachers' questions, feeling stupid and helpless in class". This inevitably impacts on language acquisition and achievement.

In many schools in both Nigeria and South African one needs to appreciate the extent of linguistic diversity, viewed against the background of the fundamental role of language in defining and experiencing one's reality. Then the question arises as to the percentage of the teacher population who are fully grounded in this fundamental role of language to our existence. How many are sufficiently literate in the African languages to teach in more than one or two of them? Swartz (cited in Nieman, 2006: 35) states that "academic study exposes students to de-contextualized knowledge and abstractions that require analytic competence and the higher order uses of language in order for students to cope." Surely, the language competence required to master a subject such as Home Economics or Business Studies differs from the requirements of subjects such as Integrated Science and Geography. Some of our local languages do not have the vocabulary to deal with the terminology involved. Linguistic diversity in the classroom, it could be argued, is making the proper development of the L1 a difficult challenge. It can therefore be deduced that the use of L1 in many instances is not practicable and lack of proficiency in the LoLTA will persist. Considering the investigation of assessment as a solution to the challenges of AL learners, I believe, could be deemed a worthwhile venture.

## 2.4    ASSESSMENT

### 2.4.1    Fields of assessment

Three decades ago, Salvia and Ysseldyke (1988) rather typically depicted assessment as "… the process of collecting data for the purpose of (1) specifying and verifying problems and (2) making decisions about students." This definition of assessment comes from the school of thought that focused on the classical method of assessment of learners. As discussed in Chapter 1, there is now a shift in this to a learning oriented purpose for assessment. Broadly, assessment can be classified in terms of the psychological and educational perspectives or frames of orientation. Assessment can also be described in terms of its purpose, as academic, diagnostic and selective. Academic assessment is used in schools and in the classroom to establish academic achievement of learners, to keep progress reports on the learners, and for instructional planning (Goh, 2004:2; Losardo and Notari-Syverson, 2001:17; Tawiah-Dadzie and Kankam, 2005: 101). Diagnostic assessment represents the medical model of intervention. It illuminates the nature of challenges encountered by an individual and establishes the adequate response to and treatment for such in terms of referral and/or further screening (Ingram 1980:4; Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1988: 4-9). The information derived from selective assessment can be used for classification for various kinds of services and placement, ranging from special education to gifted programmes to employment. The focus of this review is on academic assessment, although other forms of assessment will be taken into account when relevant.

### 2.4.2    Academic assessment

Academic assessment gives feedback to learners and teachers about the progress made in their schoolwork in terms of their achievement of the set goal and objectives of an educational programme (Nitko, 2004:10). Its results often determine progression to the next level. Educational assessment over the years has evolved as discussed in Chapter 1 from learner centred assessment of the underline learner, to assessment of underline learning and more recently assessment underline for the purpose of learning (Ellery & Sutherland, 2004:100; Estrin, 2000: 228-229; Grosser & Lombard, 2005: 44; James, 2008; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122-125). This is due to the realisation that assessment is pointless if it does not inform the decisions being made about teaching, learning and learner needs. This shift in the view of assessment over the years is of

importance to the study as it substantiates the necessity for a review of assessment practices along the line of the new orientation, which is about assessment for the purpose of learning. Van Aswegen and Dreyer (2005: 27) state that the fundamental role of assessment is to provide a "complementary methodology for monitoring, confirming and improving student learning". In line with the new shift in the focus on assessment, learners play a more active role and there is now an "integration of instruction and assessment" (Van Aswegen & Dreyer 2005: 28).

In arguing for the use of alternative forms of assessment, Grosser and Lombard (2005: 44) suggest that traditional forms of assessment emphasise reproduction of facts and that learning can be further improved by classroom assessment practices that involve learners in the assessment process and give precise explanatory feedback to the learners. Beets and Le Grange (2005: 1197-1198) call for assessment to be more authentic. They also opine that assessment should be an integral part of teaching and learning, and that there is a need for the change in theory to be institutionalised and translated into practice by implementing alternative forms of assessment. But when is change in theory really going to translate into practice? They (Beets & Le Grange, 2005: 1199) further argue that assessment practices are linked to and fully embedded in theories of teaching and learning and by necessary implication linked to shifts in teaching and learning. There should therefore be a shift from the behaviourist pedagogy that prioritises teaching objectives, focuses on teaching rather than learning and views assessment as a separate activity from the teaching and learning process. The emphasis, Beets and Le Grange (2005: 1199) believe, should be in line with the constructivist theories that emphasise shifts from teaching to learning and assessment, especially assessment tasks that inform learning. The question, however, still remains, does this shift in the approach to assessment incorporate the needs of AL learners, and how could it be accomplished?

Despite the growing emphasis on internal school-based assessment, and increasing use of formative continuous assessment, learners with an additional language as the LoLTA still are not provided for. In everyday practice assessments generally are, simply put, procedures designed to find out the overall gains achieved by the learners or the lack thereof, in terms of the domains of learning. The assessment practices generally do not take cognisance of the language challenges in assessment. This appears especially true in respect of summative external assessment.

To me, assessment should be the process of investigation of the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired by a learner as well as the revelation of the hindrances or barriers (if any) to the acquisition of such gains with a view to using such information to facilitate further learning and teaching.

This description of assessment has not been achieved where AL learners are concerned. It is imperative that teaching and assessment should be linguistically sensitive to the needs of AL learners and provide support for their language requirements. The nature and forms of assessment that are still widely practised remain static and generally do not provide the additional support needed to ensure that assessment is truly meaningful as an avenue for further learning. This necessitates the continuous call for close monitoring and re-conceptualisation of assessment practices.

### 2.4.3 Static assessment

Static assessment refers to the conventional methods of establishing the extent of learning that has taken place over a given period of time or of particular subject matter in a once-off, non-interventionist assessment context. It is the traditional form of assessment that does not permit the intervention of the examiner or interaction between any of the parties involved. Questions and tasks are presented once-off and the examinees have to solve the problems or do the tasks once-off. Static assessment usually takes the form of pencil and paper tests with a regulated procedure and a set time frame for completion. There are usually strict rules governing conduct during these tests (Haywood and Brown, 1990:412-413; Haywood & Tzuriel, 2002:40; Lidz, 1987; Tzuriel & Shamir, 2002:22). Assessment used in mainstream education, whether formative or summative, is usually static assessment in terms of form, design, process and use.

Static assessment, used in mainstream education, intelligence measures and psychological testing, has been criticized for a plethora of reasons including its limited ability to inform further learning and provide strategies for learning support. Bouwer (2005: 54) states that static formal assessments reveal little about learning processes and nothing about mediational strategies and as such the information contained in the results is an "inadequate basis for learning support". It is necessary to know what methods to use to "defeat the frequently

pessimistic predictions" of static standardized tests (Haywood & Tzuriel, 2002: 47). Swanson and Lussier (2001: 321) suggest that static measures do not provide much guidance before testing and therefore the performance of the examinees sometimes reflects the lack of understanding of instructions as opposed to their ability to carry out the task itself. For AL learners it is pertinent that the nature of their individual challenges be known and addressed as language proficiency impacts all other aspects of the learning (Davis & Reed, 2003: 112; Foko & Amory, 2005: 40; Frost, 2000: 132; Martin & Miller, 1996: 14-15; Weideman: 2003: 56)

Static assessment has been further criticised because it focuses on the reproduction of knowledge (Grosser & Lombard, 2005: 44). It has also been said to perpetuate stereotypical results and thereby create inequalities, cultural and linguistic bias and in other words, discrimination against learners who belong to minority groups (Grosser and Lombard, 2005: 44; Hessels, 1996: 133 & 139; Nettle and Bernstein, 1995:18; Yabusaki *et al*., 1995: 47).

If one of the purposes of academic assessment is to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge, then, as in the case of AL learners, all hindrances to the demonstration of such knowledge should be removed or at least provided for. It is partly due to the failure of static assessment to offer avenues for AL and CLD learners to demonstrate their knowledge, that various alternative forms of assessment are being developed (Campione & Brown, 1987; Estrin, 2000; Gonzalez *et al.*, 1997; Gopal & Stears, 2007; Lidz, 2001 & 2002). The fixed nature of the assessment in terms of the rules and principles governing its administration has also been partly responsible for the introduction of the continuous assessment system, to take the weight off the assessment *per se* and remove the anxiety associated with it by some learners in the hope that the end result would be a truer reflection of the knowledge acquired (Israel, 2006: 1420; Obe, 1980: 10-13; Okoli, 2000: 8).

Demonstration of knowledge is secondary to the realisation of the nature of the task itself. Even more fundamental than demonstrating knowledge is the necessity for AL learners to be able to decode, process, construct and internalise information, and essentially to understand what questions and/or instructions require of them. This cannot be achieved where the learners lack language proficiency. For cognitive access to instruction and content has to be achieved via language, scaffolding via language is required, meaning has to be mediated via language and static assessment does not in itself provide any avenues for this (Campione &

Brown, 1987; Lidz, 2002 & 2003; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001). Pretorius & Ribbens (2005:145) go further to say that both language proficiency and reading skills need to be addressed since they are not mutually exclusive.

### 2.4.4   Purposes of academic assessment

For many years, up to the present, assessment in education has often had only the general purpose of describing a learner's level of achievement or potential (Cotton, 1995:89; Ellery & Sutherland, 2004:99; Ingram, 1980:5; Louw, 2003:22; Rushton, 2005:509). Traditional methods of assessment measure how far an individual has progressed in assimilating existing knowledge (Cotton, 1995: 22; NCR, 2001:221; Okoli, 2000:5): essentially, assessment of the learner and, at best, assessment of learning.

Breen (2004: 2) states that assessment is essentially a form of evaluation. He reiterates that schools and teachers are also subjected to different forms of evaluation based on the results of the learners that are in their care. For Breen, the purpose of assessment is to satisfy the authorities that the requirements of education as set out by the national standards have been met.

Within the Nigerian education system, progression to the next class largely depends on the results of assessment carried out at different stages in the preceding year. How accurate can these results of assessment be?  Can it genuinely be declared that these results are a true reflection of the abilities and progress of AL learners? What then would be the nature of assistance given to AL learners based on inaccurate assessment? Inaccurate assessment results can only lead to inaccurate programme evaluation and policy formulation that end up compounding the predicament of the learners concerned. Davis and Reed (2003: 112) state that conscious and direct assistance needs to be earmarked for AL learners within educational systems since proficiency in an AL is required for academic success. They advocate the use of alternative methods of assessment that do not place emphasis on the use of the language still being acquired by the learner to the level of CALP.

The above is a reflection of an ideal that realistically has not been achieved within the Nigerian system. It is, however, more so with the fact that far too much emphasis is placed on certification and the results of assessment that are already fundamentally flawed, particularly

written tests (Olayinka, 1996: 18; Obe and Nigwo, 1996:27). For instance, prior to the introduction and implementation of UBE in some government schools in 2005, the First School Leaving Certificate, obtainable after six years of primary education, largely depended on examinations taken during the course of those years and progression to junior secondary schools depended on common entrance examinations for admission into both Federal and State secondary schools. Learners had to scramble for admission to schools (Fafunwa, 1991: 225). The competitiveness that assessment introduced into the lives of these learners, even at the primary school level, was enormous and the burden unimaginable. Compounding the matter further was the fact that a vast majority of the learners fell into the AL category.

Due to the falling standards of education in Nigerian government schools, poor implementation of government policies and general teacher dissatisfaction that sometimes leads to strike actions, parents that can afford it opt to send their children to private schools. Here again, the competition is strong and the pressure on the learners to pass examinations at acceptable levels to be admitted into the desired schools is severe.

For admission to higher institutions, there is an even keener sense of competition and over-assessment. A sense of urgency and desperation is usually perceived among students at this level. Lack of success in one examination could mean loss of a whole year or more for another opportunity to retake the examination. Employers often require written tests before individuals are short-listed for advertised jobs. The emphasis on assessment of the learner and/or learning and the subsequent results has such grave consequences that they must not be ignored. Therefore ensuring the accuracy of such assessment at all levels of the educational system remains by no means a negligible task.

 Assessment for learning, on the other hand, is used in the classroom for identification of learners with learning disabilities, classification of learners for special needs and programmes, prediction of future performance and achievement, and lately also for informing instruction. Good assessment should in fact be a consolidating tool within the learning process, it should encompass all the domains of learning (Cotton, 1995: 5 & 9; Okoli, 2000:4). This study is certainly calling to question all the basic purposes of assessment concerning a learner's level of achievement and potential, when the assessment is carried out in an AL. For these purposes to be met, the level of learners' proficiency in the LoLTA has to be taken into account. As discussed in Chapter 1, a learner has to attain CALP before assessment can be a true

reflection of acquisition of knowledge, level of achievement and potential (Cummins, 1986: 152-153; Cummins, 1996: 111-112) and this is equally true for the receptive and expressive levels of language proficiency, i.e. for processing and answering the assessment questions.

Formative assessment,  used to establish how much has been learned, i.e. to establish progress, to give feedback to learners/teachers about what may be required to modify teaching and learning activities and to identify individual strengths and weaknesses, should for all these purposes include attention to the AL factor. Summative assessment, which predicts performance or acts as a tool for selection, and is an evaluation of learning outcomes (Breen, 2004:2; Cotton, 1995:24; Nitko,1998: 9; Rushton, 2005:509), like-wise cannot claim valid or reliable results, unless the AL factor has been taken into account. In the Nigerian society, where an AL has been accepted as the LoLTA, we cannot afford to get assessment wrong, too much depends on it. It is vital to the individual to ensure as far as possible that assessment results are a true reflection of the knowledge acquired. Due to the obstacles of AL, it is firstly critical that assessment should serve as a pointer in the direction of the nature of support required by individual learners. How useful is static assessment in this regard? According to Tzuriel (2000: 386-389), the information contained in the results of static, formal assessments is an inadequate basis for learning support since it tells little about learning processes and nothing about mediational strategies that facilitate learning. In fact, the outcome of assessment frequently amounts to no more than a label around the learner's neck instead of providing the functional and operational description that is so essential to move the learning forward. Many learners, especially those coming from disadvantaged social backgrounds or having some form of learning difficulty or, I might add, using an AL as LoLTA, perform poorly on static measures, and the ways in which they may be supported remain hidden. Standard tests, by their static nature, also seldom provide information about emotional and contextual factors that may be impacting on the performance of the individual.

A whole range of challenges are influenced by the emphasis in Nigeria on assessment and the fact that so many facets of the daily life of Nigerians are influenced by the outcome of various assessment tasks. Examples of such challenges in the educational system include truancy, high dropout rates, loss of motivation, excessive focus on certification to the detriment of acquisition of skills that could lead to the much needed creation of employment (Bolarin, 1996: 139 & 143) and examination malpractices such as bringing unauthorised texts into examination halls, assisting others or asking others for assistance and copying from the scripts

of unsuspecting classmates (Obe, 1996: 26 & 27; Olayinka, 1996: 18). As part of the measures to address the challenges of school-based assessment and the emphasis on examinations, the system of continuous assessment was introduced into the Nigerian education system.

### 2.4.5   Continuous assessment (CA)

Continuous assessment was introduced in Nigeria by the 1977 National Policy on Education, to replace the system where only one assessment exercise, by way of an end of term/semester examination, determined the fate of learners. CA provides a series of continuously updated reports of the learners' attainments. Depending on the school involved, the CA can be based on weekly, fortnightly or other predetermined intervals on the school calendar (Okoli, 2000:8). Obe (1980: 12) describes CA as an "appraisal technique" that systematically covers all the learners' performances in class tests, home projects and other school activities during school periods. CA is used in a progressive and continuous manner and usually covers all the domains of learning (Nakabugo & Sieborger, 1999: 288). Israel (2006: 420-421) states that CA especially supports learners who are excessively anxious and do not cope well under pressure of examinations by de-emphasising performance in single once-off examinations.

CA is believed to encourage consistent study habits on the part of the learners. In line with the view of assessment for learning, the feedback from the series of assessment tasks is supposed to be used to improve teaching and remedy learning problems. The use of CA is further predicated on the assumption that several opportunities to demonstrate knowledge give a better aggregate and a more accurate description of the learning that has taken place (Denga, 1987: 151; Nakabugo & Sieborger, 1999: 288) Obe, 1980: 12; Okoli, 2000; 11).

As part of its characteristics, CA is known to be systematic, that is, CA is based on an operational plan with predetermined frequency and timing of the assessments. CA is also comprehensive when it is aimed at the total development of the learners across the three domains of learning, namely the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains as well as using various assessment techniques. Other characteristics of CA include being cumulative and guidance-oriented.  The cumulative quality refers to the practice of accumulating test and task scores, keeping updated records of such scores and making decisions about learners based on both past and present recorded performances. CA is guidance-oriented because

information obtained from the assessments is sometimes required to guide learners and inform their subject choice and perhaps courses of study (Obe, 1980: 13).

Some of the challenges and shortcomings identified that could influence the overall effectiveness of using the CA system include the increased workload for teachers, its time-consuming nature and the relative increase of the opportunity for subjectivity and teacher bias (Okoli, 2000:12). But no mention has been found in the literature reviewed of the implications of CA in the assessment of AL learners. Though the use of CA provides AL learners with more opportunities to demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired, it certainly does not *per se* remove or address the linguistic challenges faced by AL learners.

Whatever methods are used in CA, the assessments should always comply with the basic rules of individual assessment: it has to be authentic, current, comprehensive, valid and reliable (Cotton, 1995:43), but can we say that any of these requirements are met where the AL factor in assessment has not been properly addressed and accommodated? Can the basic rules be applied if the learners cannot understand the questions, let alone respond to them? Other characteristics of assessment include relevance and appropriateness of test format in terms of content, skill, time factor and the learners being assessed. To meet the requirements stated above would, for example, demand that we remember that with the AL learners the probability of needing more time is greater, the speed with which words can be decoded and comprehension achieved should not be compared to L1 users of the LoLTA. In case of portfolios, there has to be evidence to prove personal competence and this would include personal communication skills in speech and writing. The issue is then whether AL learners possess these skills at a sufficient level and whether allowances should be made. In providing accommodations in respect of any characteristic of assessment, however, we have to be wary as well that the concessions do not constitute undue advantage to the AL learners; otherwise, in terms of equity and fairness, the situation would only be reversed. There are guidelines that are directed at making assessment as fair and as unbiased as possible and these include validity and reliability.

### 2.4.6   Validity of assessment

A method of assessment is said to be valid if it measures only the intended aims, goals and objectives stipulated for the assessment (Cotton, 1995:93; Denga, 1987:110 111; Ingram,

1980: 22 &23). Static assessment is a purportedly valid form of assessment in that the assessment results reflect the level of achievement in a specific area of content or skill.

Test items that have been put through the rigours of test construction must have content, predictive and concurrent validity as well as face and construct validity (Killen, 2003:2; Obe, 1980:95-98; Okoli, 2000:145). Content validity refers to the extent to which assessment measures the subject matter content of a given course of study as well as its instructional objectives and the extent to which the assessment covers a large and representative sample of the course content (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:109; Killen, 2003: 2-4; Obe, 1980: 96; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003: 121). Content validity can be determined by careful analysis and comparison of the course outline with the assessment (Obe, 1980: 97; Okoli, 2000: 144). Predictive and concurrent validity are criterion related and have to do with the effectiveness with which performance on the assessment correlates with a specified criterion. Predictive validity is the assessment's ability to predict or estimate the future performance of the examinees on a given task. Concurrent validity is the assessment's correlation with measures of behaviour external to the test (Nitko, 2004:34-36 &42; Nzelibe and Ilogu, 1996: 41-44; Obe, 1980: 96). Assessment is said to have face validity if the examinees at a glance believe the assessment and their results to be reasonable and valid (Okoli, 2000: 144-145). With construct validity, the examinees' scores should vary as the theory underlying the construct which is the focus of the assessment, has predicted (Cohen, *et al.*, 2000: 110; Kunnan, 2000: 3; Nitko, 2004:34-36 &42; Nzelibe and Ilogu, 1996: 41-44; Obe, 1980: 96; Okoli, 2000: 144-146).

A closer examination of the issue of validity reveals that the above statements by and large are not applicable where AL learners are concerned and especially not when the test is compiled by a non-specialist assessor, such as a teacher. Assessment in subjects such as Geography, Mathematics, History and Science frequently also measure, albeit inadvertently, communicative competencies such as grammatical, socio-linguistic and discourse skills in their attempt to measure achievement in the particular subject content area. Subjects that are language-based and require lengthy written expression of the knowledge being assessed often end up covertly also assessing fluency, spelling, use of punctuation, vocabulary, grammar and clarity. Hence such tests lack validity since it is not only the subject matter content that is being assessed. For the AL learners who lack any or all of these communicative competencies

the tests are then invalidated for the obvious reasons that they now measure far more than they are purportedly supposed to be measuring.

The implications and consequences of the results obtained from such essentially invalid assessment cannot be overstated. Teachers may have a flawed view of the AL learners, they could base their preparation and choice of task on these results and engage in classroom processes that are inappropriate for the learners' needs. The actual linguistic needs of the learners, be it at the receptive or expressive level, will not be revealed and in some cases the learners could engage in memorisation of terminology for which they do not have the language proficiency to process and comprehend. Learners might end up not understanding the point of it all because they cannot make sense of their education or apply the requisite knowledge to their daily existence. Frustration, loss of motivation and outright resignation to the hopelessness of the situation are sure to result.

Is objectivity in assessment, e.g. by means of multiple choice questions, the answer to the validity dilemma in respect of AL learners? Objective testing, it could be argued, is based on verifiable facts or principles, hence should not pose a severe challenge to AL learners. This may be correct, however, only as far as expressive skills in respect of subject terminology are concerned. We must first ascertain that the AL learners' reading skills and level of comprehension are at a functionally adequate standard, since in some instances the challenges for AL learners could be at the receptive stage of quickly and accurately making sense of the question and not necessarily at the expressive stage of responding only. In fact, objective tests sometimes contain options that are confusing and require extensive reading of intentionally mixed-up ideas.  So, here again, we are back where we started. How can our assessment of AL learners be made more valid and trustworthy?

Societies like Nigeria cannot afford for invalid and inaccurate assessment to continue unabated since learners who could have progressed well in the education system could in this way be lost. The loss could also come in the form of high dropout rates due to lack of motivation and perceived insurmountable obstacles to academic achievement.

## 2.4.7   Reliability of assessment

Assessment results should also be reliable. Reliability refers to the consistence with which individuals having the same ability, knowledge or skill are able to achieve the same score whenever the test is administered (Ingram, 1980:21; Killen, 2003:2; Nitko, 2004:39; Nzelibe & Ilogu, 1996:40, 44 &45; Okoli, 2000:142; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003: 120). In terms of reliability, assessment of AL learners is most certainly not in the clear. Even with the use of a mark scheme, inter-marker reliability cannot at all times be guaranteed. For example, when two examiners mark the scripts of the same AL learner and the one is from the same cultural or linguistic background, it might be easier for that examiner to understand what the learner was trying to say as opposed to the examiner from a different background, hence the scoring of the same test could yield different results. Another example is that AL learners with challenges in written expression of language might perform significantly better on an assessment task if it is administered orally. Another crucial factor in the assessment of AL learners is the actual processing and decoding of the questions and assessment tasks itself. Learners who lack proficiency require more time to grapple with the questions, can easily misunderstand the requirements, might not be conversant with figurative speech or suggestions and innuendo that are sometimes left to the imagination in texts. In the situations above the failure or poor performance is at least partly due to the AL factor and such assessment cannot be deemed reliable.

There are also cases of AL learners not having had the requisite experiences to comprehend questions and they might want to look at the words that form the concepts from a purely BICS level as opposed to the more academic and holistic requirements. Different experiences and aspects of daily life have their own domains and only a proficient language user will be able to recognise nuances associated with some domains and act on the cues. AL learners should not be expected to deal with this challenge in addition to the assessment itself unless of course, that is what is being tested.

If the validity and reliability of assessment of AL learners cannot be guaranteed, this brings to the fore the issue of equity in assessment. Are these inequitable practices in assessment not in fact doing more harm than good, if we examine the long-term effect on AL learners in mainstream education? Some of these long-term effects, as they apply to Nigeria, might include the loss of motivation and faith in the education system, high dropout rates and

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truancy, in addition to countless individuals who have failed to obtain an education and contribute to the economy of the country as productive and articulate citizens. There are also those who have wasted years in formal schooling, obtaining an education that has little meaning because they have not benefited fully from it and have not used that period to learn trades that would have kept them gainfully employed. These learners defy classification, they have been to school but cannot actually be called literate, partly because of an assessment system that does not allow us to address the specific learning needs of AL that would in the long run ensure that those who leave secondary school can actually read and write adequately.

### 2.4.8   Equity in assessment

Despite continuous calls for assessment to be more equitable, accommodating the AL factor in assessment is not receiving the much needed attention widely in mainstream education. The importance placed on assessment has made it crucial that assessment processes and outcomes should be as accurate as possible. In respect of AL learners the issue then becomes how to facilitate their understanding of the question within the time frame of the assessment, while still maintaining the details and definition of the task and, if the need arises, support also the process of responding to the questions. Every learner should have an equal opportunity to demonstrate his/her knowledge. Rex (in Barry, 2002: 109), in respect of a study conducted in British inner city schools, maintains that, "…the issue of equality of opportunity is that of ensuring that children of different class, ethnic and racial (and, I would add, language) backgrounds have the same chances of success in selection and examination" (Barry, 2002: 109).

Vandeyar & Killen (2003: 121) argue that the basic question for any assessment task is whether or not the assessment gives every learner a "reasonable opportunity to demonstrate his/her understanding or skill". They believe it would be unfair to ask learners questions in a language they did not understand and that there should be an equal opportunity for success regardless of any differentiating factors among learners. Barry (2002: 109-110) suggests that broadening the approach to assessment for different learners, such as those who lack proficiency in the LoLT , could offer alternative opportunities to demonstrate the knowledge acquired, but questions the "fairness of a general across the board adjustment based on home language" (Barry, 2002: 109-110).

AL learners that have not reached the level of CALP do not have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge during assessment. Aside from accommodations, alternative forms of assessment should be investigated to provide for such inequalities. Estrin (2000: 228) believes that the use of alternative forms of assessment are of interest because of the hope that they may remove some of the inequalities by actually revealing what the learners know and may also remove *"…the fear that the same inequalities that are associated with traditional norm-referenced tests will recur."* No doubt this fear is a genuine one and ought to be addressed while striving to arrive at assessment practices that are suitable for AL learners. By no means should undue advantage be accorded to any group of learners for any reason.

Estrin (2000: 229) opines that assessment practices should ensure that "equitable opportunities to learn and achieve at the highest possible levels" are available to all learners especially due to the negative consequences of inequitable assessment practices such as gate keeping in respect of high-stakes assessments and tracking into special education and low ability classrooms. Some of the language demands of seemingly simple instructions require high level language proficiency that might be barriers to some learners. Estrin believes that alternative assessment is compatible with the social constructivism theory, where learning is portrayed as a social act in the classroom and learners are active participants in the construction of knowledge (Estrin, 2000: 232-239). She proposes that more equitable alternative assessment be integrated and these measures would include flexibility and mediation of assessments.

Gopal and Stears (2007: 15-17 & 21), in their quest for an alternative approach to assessing science competencies, report that their data showed that the learners had acquired and could discuss insightfully more about science ideas than what their test scores indicated. They opine that the presentation of learning is important. Suggesting that strategies that assess more than written responses of the learners' knowledge of science concepts are required, they call for the use of alternative methods of demonstrating knowledge.

Alternative forms of assessment that are currently in use include: authentic, portfolio and performance-based assessments as well as rubrics (Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001: 73-75 & 100; Rasool & Curtis, 2000: 220-221). Authentic assessment refers to the assessment of tasks being performed in real life contexts. Portfolio assessment refers to the collection of the learners' body of work that exhibit their efforts, progress and achievement over time (Grosser

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& Lombard, 2005: 45; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001: 100; Rasool & Curtis, 2000: 220). Performance-based assessment enables learners to demonstrate their learning with the production of something concrete that would have required critical thinking and active engagement on the part of the learners. Rubrics evaluate levels of proficiency using descriptive standards of performance and provide guidelines of what should be known (Rasool & Curtis, 2000: 221). These alternative assessment practices, when used in isolation, might not be able to reduce the challenges of inequitable assessment associated with the AL factor in education. There are limitations to their use as well. For instance, authentic, portfolio and performance-based assessment practices require a great deal of planning, coordination and expertise, they are time consuming, require a great deal of resources, cannot be applied in all contexts and, most importantly, in respect of the AL factor they cannot be used as forms of language replacement in subjects that have complex terminology.

Accommodations, as in alternative assessment, have been proposed as a means of reducing the inequalities in assessment. There are instances where accommodations are made for those believed to have a barrier to learning, from physical and learning disabilities to issues of language proficiency of AL learners. Goh (2004: 39), in an attempt to find a balance, states that the purpose of accommodations and alternatives in assessment is "… providing students with disabilities or ELLs (English language learners) an equal opportunity to perform on tests as their general population peers. Accommodations for learning and assessment, according to Goh (2004: 40), are in different categories ranging from the modification of setting, presentation format and response format to the modification of timing and scheduling. Modification of setting usually applies to learners with physical disabilities (e.g. using wheelchairs) and those classified as special students, such as those diagnosed with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. The modification of presentation format, response format and modification of timing and scheduling are more applicable to AL learners.

With the modification of presentation format, the instructions for tests can be simplified, read out or translated and bilingual interpreters can be used. The modification of the response format addresses the inability or difficulties of the learners to express themselves. One option is that the responses can be given orally, answers can be written in the native language or interpreters can be used to write out responses of the learners in question (Goh, 2004: 41-43). This is obviously not feasible in a typical, overcrowded classroom in the urban centre of Lagos, where all the learners are AL learners and there are multiple languages represented in

the one classroom (Obe & Nna, 2004: 23; Ogunleye, 1999: 139). How many interpreters would be required to write the learners' responses in a single test? In the case of modification of timing and schedule, who determines the length of time required by an AL learner to process and comprehend an assessment task? How do we know that a particular learner will ever, on his/her own, be able to construct meaning from the content of the assessment?

Goh (2004: 40) emphasises that accommodations should not be used "in an excessive manner to provide these students an unfair advantage over other students...". This is easier said than done, as what constitutes inequalities may mean different things to different individuals and groups. There are those who could see the use of accommodations and alternative forms of assessment as a means of giving undeserving individuals credits where it is not due. There are also those who would want to take advantage of the situation to claim rights that they do not merit. Those who seek a political undertone in every stratum of society could also make an issue of any form of accommodation, quickly turning it into a political matter. The issues surrounding equity will always be delicate and have to be dealt with cautiously, especially when advocating a change in an assessment system that is so deeply entrenched.

In Nigeria, the search for solutions to the multitude of challenges in the education system has relegated to the background any emphasis or focus on the language of assessment as a possible source of some of the challenges and therefore very limited research on the subject is available. The disinterested attitude towards researching closely the language of assessment seems to have its roots in the fact that English is the official and main language of the government and country. The multiplicity of languages in Nigeria, about 400 (Bamgbose, 1995; Opara, 2004), has resulted in unhealthy rivalry among linguistic groups and contributes to ethnic rather than national consciousness. The English language then serves as contact language that enhances unity, loyalty, allegiance and a sense of patriotism among the citizenry (Opara, 2004: 29). The foregoing makes it certain that English as the LoLTA is here to stay, further substantiating the call for increased research into the assessment challenges and alternative, more equitable, forms of learning and assessment for AL learners in the country.

## 2.5 LANGUAGE-IN-ASSESSMENT

### 2.5.1 Introduction

The implications of language-in-education in respect of assessment cannot be ignored. Sandoval & Duran (1998: 181) describe arriving at reliable and valid assessment for learners from a non-English background as a "complex challenge". Gee (2003: 44) argues that evaluative assessment carried out in any context is "invalid and unjust" if those being assessed have not had an "equal opportunity to learn". This view would certainly apply to AL learners. This section examines the impact of language on assessment with reference to Nigeria and further discusses the relevant research on language and assessment.

### 2.5.2 Language, assessment and Nigeria

The NNPE is completely silent on the assessment challenges concerning AL learners. This is a serious omission bearing in mind that by far the larger proportion of the Nigerian population of learners belong to the AL category. The implication of using English as the language of assessment is not even discussed. Ogunleye (1999: 131 &132) believes that the issue of the language of instruction that has plagued the Nigerian education system has been neglected over the years. He suggests that learners are finding it increasingly difficult to comprehend science especially at the primary school level and that the language policy has continued " … to retard and weaken our system of science education at the primary level" (Ogunleye, 1999:131). This strong statement is certainly applicable to the issue of language in assessment as well, since learners whose language proficiency has not yet attained the level of CALP and who cannot understand the LoLTA, have difficulty making full sense of what they are being asked, and the results of any assessment carried out under these circumstances are invalid and meaningless. Advanced language skills hold the key to achievement in assessment within the classroom (Nieman, 2006: 31).

In Nigeria, all examinations (except those for other languages) are conducted in English. As discussed earlier, many examinations end up not being valid because, no matter how well learners have prepared for a subject such as History, they will be hard put to pass the examination unless they are proficient in the use of English at the level of CALP. The various obstacles that present themselves at the receptive level include the learner's ability to decode

fluently, comprehend terms and full statement, and manage complex syntax in the assessment task. At the expressive level, it is a challenge to communicate their thoughts and ideas either orally or in writing, use terminology appropriately, develop arguments or explain their thoughts coherently. Is it any wonder, then, that many learners are disillusioned by the education system? Once the learners find the use of English an insurmountable hurdle they frequently lose motivation. Learners are ultimately confused as to the next line of action and some who drop out, end up with street gangs (Bolarin, 1996:143).

How can assessment in the L1 be used as an alternative form of assessment when the AL learners are themselves not always competent users of their languages? Moreover, in a multilingual society such as Nigeria, how many languages can be catered for in a single classroom without the situation turning into chaos? Especially in the urban centres in Nigeria L1 use is no longer feasible (Banjo, 1999: 183 & 184; Ohiri-Aniche, 2006:3 & 11; Opara, 2004: 29). More and more, the need for further research on assessment practice in the country is implicit, particularly since there are numerous non-standard local variations of the English language popularly called Pidgin English which are competing for the attention of AL learners on the social, non-formal interactive levels. The widespread use of Pidgin English makes the acquisition of the standard form of English increasingly difficult to achieve and can certainly be thought to interfere with learners' understanding of and response to assessment questions.

There is a need for the circumstances of the assessment of AL learners to be critically reviewed and researched with a view to arriving at more equitable assessment practices. English continues to wield a lot of power and assessment continues to be in English. This fact further substantiates the need for additional research in the area of assessment of AL learners and validates conducting this study. We need to start seriously considering the practicability of alternatives, and to devise ways in which the assessment of AL learners can become more valid and equitable.

The studies discussed in the following section highlight the challenges that language-in-assessment constitute and go further to demonstrate how static assessment sometimes discourages rather than encourages progress during formal study. Sandoval and Duran (1998:182-183) point out that, during assessment, it is important for learners to have an opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and competences being measured. Inability to

understand instructions and content are, according to them, barriers to the demonstration of knowledge acquired, whereupon they draw the logical conclusion that "… an assessment of individuals in a language they cannot comprehend will almost always be a poor measure of the construct" (Sandoval & Duran, 1998:184).

### 2.5.3    Research on effects of language-in-assessment

The research in this section resonate the impact of the AL factor on assessment and consequently achievement and shows that the issues surrounding AL in education are by no means just isolated incidents but have become a global phenomenon. There has been research conducted in various contexts with learners of different age groups depicting the relationship between language and assessment. The first study in this section was situated in Israel, the next were based in Nigeria followed by those from South Africa.

A large-scale evaluation study of the achievement of immigrant students (former USSR and Ethiopian students) in Israel, carried out by Levin and Shohamy (2008:4-12), focused on Grades 3, 9 and 11 in Mathematics and academic Hebrew, because these content areas were considered obstacles in school learning for this group of students. Using stratified sampling, 1000 students were selected from each grade level taking 500 immigrants and 500 Israeli born. Two specifically developed tests in Mathematics and academic Hebrew were used in the study. The results showed that the academic achievements of the immigrant students were significantly lower than their Israeli born peers in Hebrew, reading comprehension and Mathematics even after long periods of residence. The results indicated that immigrants require about 5 – 11 years to reach the achievement levels of those that are L1 users of the LoLT. The results suggest that, in addition to the factor of learning experience, the AL factor impacts achievement. Another relevant finding was that the development of the L1 is important and has a positive effect on AL learning.

With these findings the implications of teaching and learning have to be carefully considered. What happens to learners prior to the development of proficiency in the LoLT? How will they be taught in order to ensure comprehension of the subject? More importantly, what would be the implication of being assessed in the LoLTA? How would such assessment results be used? The findings further emphasise the need for research into the use of alternative forms of assessment for AL learners. Application of knowledge in subjects such as Mathematics

requires academic proficiency in the LoLTA, otherwise learning cannot be maximised. The issue here is that the language used in assessment impacts achievement.

Ohiri-Aniche (2006:6) conducted a study to determine whether the language use and language preferences in pre-primary and primary schools in Lagos conformed to provision of the NNPE (2004) to use L1 or the language of the immediate environment as the medium of instruction up till the third year of primary school. The study also sought to establish the challenges the schools experience in the course of compliance with the provision of the NNPE. The participating schools were from a cross-section of society ranging from high-income to low-income areas. The 36 schools selected were a mix of government owned public schools, private schools and faith-based schools belonging to religious organisations. The results revealed that 27 out of the 36 schools used English exclusively as the medium of instruction. The remaining 9 used English and Yoruba or English and Pidgin English. Of the teachers surveyed, 86% said there is a link between learning and the learners' proficiency in the LoLT (Ohiri-Aniche, 2006:15-19).

Ohiri-Anichi (2006) advocates compliance with the dictates of the NNPE regarding language. She is however quick to point out that 80% of the learners who participated in the study were not competent users of their L1. What then are the implications of these findings for assessment? The first obvious implication is that English seems to be the main language that will continue to be used also in assessment. Secondly, communicative competence in the local languages is on the decline, so even if assessment could be undertaken in the local languages the issue of proficiency would also arise.

An earlier study also conducted by Ohiri-Aniche (2004) produced similar results. The purpose of the study was to systematically investigate the language preferences of parents in Lagos. The study sought to establish which language(s) parents prefer their children to acquire and be able to communicate effectively in first.  The findings revealed that close to half of the under 5 year olds had not acquired their parents' language at all. Communicative competence in the indigenous languages is clearly on the decline (Ohiri-Aniche, 2004:4 & 12).

Otuka (in Ogunleye, 1999:184) attempted to analyse the relationship between eleven specifically selected variables and Physics concept attainment using 300 learners from 16 secondary schools in Nigeria. The results confirmed the importance of CALP in the LoLT,

finding that reading comprehension and reasoning ability were two of those variables helpful to concept learning in Physics. Similarly, research conducted by Aigbomian (in Ogunleye, 1999:184) studied the relationship between the understanding of Physics concepts and achievement in West African School Certificate Examinations. There were 501 learners involved in the study drawn from 54 secondary schools. The instrument used was the Test of Understanding of Physics Concepts. The findings revealed that learners did not have the required level of academic language to comprehend the Physics concepts to the extent where they would meaningfully apply such concepts. The same trends have emerged with various studies suggesting a decline in competence of Nigerian AL learners in the LoLTA (Maduekwe, 2001: 107-108). These findings may be associated with the quality of teaching of these learners, the environment to which they belong and the limited use for the LoLTA by the learners outside the classroom. Nigeria did make attempts to find lasting solutions. One of such was researching the use of L1 as the LoLT.

After independence in 1960, the government began to take an interest in the integration of the use of the local languages as medium of instruction in Nigerian schools (Awobuluyi, 2002:2). The "Ife Six-Years Yoruba Science Project" initiated in 1970 was part of an enlarged project carried out by the University of Ife (now known as Obafemi Awolowo University) under the chairmanship of Professor A. B. Fafunwa. With support from the Ford Foundation of America and the former Nigerian Western State Ministry of Education, the research project was initiated with the objective, among others, of exploring the use of the Yoruba language as the medium of instruction as opposed to a foreign/second language medium and to teach English effectively as a second language. Considerable work was put into curriculum and methodology development with a view to developing the appropriate materials for the project. A "Lexical Committee" was set up to select the right choice of words and concepts that would express in Yoruba those scientific concepts and expressions that were not easy to express accurately in Yoruba. Foreign words were borrowed to develop the lexicon of Yoruba. Science textbooks and workbooks were designed for the project. At the end of the six years period, the project revealed that Yoruba as the medium of instruction impacted positively on the performance of the learners and that proficiency in the LoLT was crucial to academic achievement (Fafunwa, 1975:214 & 225; Fafunwa, 1989). Even with success recorded by this study, however, continued use of Yoruba, as the language of science education in primary school was not sustainable because of its impracticability particularly in urban areas. There were too many languages represented in a single classroom to impose Yoruba as the LoLT.

What about the use of the other languages? In how many of them would the lexicon be developed and who would decide on those that qualified and those that did not? What would be the cost and what could be left undone to achieve this? The obvious easy way out was to let the *status quo* remain.

Language-in-education and related issues are not cause for concern in Nigeria alone. Research conducted in South Africa to determine the perception of ESL educators for mainstream Grade 4 in schools employing English as LoLT, found that 70% of the educators involved in the study believed that ESL learners "struggle to achieve academically because of language barriers rather than intellectual barriers" (Theron & Nel, 2005:224 & 226). Research conducted by Howie (2004) compared the performance of South African learners with the performance of learners from other developing countries that participated in TIMSS '99 and explored factors that had an effect on the performance of South African learners in Mathematics. The results revealed that the factors that had direct effect on South African learners included the learners' proficiency in English, the language the learners spoke at home and the language of learning in the classroom (Howie, 2004: 157). Here again the disparity between the L1 and the LoLTA has created challenges that so far seem to have defied solution. The situation is fast becoming a double-edged sword. The learners do not seem to acquire their L1 richly enough to develop academic proficiency. They come to school not yet as competent users of their L1 and are now faced with seemingly insurmountable language challenges in a L2, which is to become the LoLTA, that impact their achievement. We need to consider that alternative assessment might contribute to a possible solution.

In 2003, the South African Department of Education released the National Report on the Systemic Evaluation (NRSE) carried out in respect of Quality Assurance in the Foundation Phase. About 51300 Grade 3 learners in mainstream education as well as those with disabilities in special schools participated in the evaluation. Foundation Phase specialists developed the assessment tasks for the instruments used, and they covered three learning programmes namely: Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. The assessment tasks were translated into the 11 official languages of the country and administered in the dominant language of each class. The results of the survey revealed that 75% of the learners had been assessed in their home language. The results reflected not only the effect of assessment in AL on the remaining 25%, but more essentially the status of their learning through an AL.

According to the report, analysis of the effect of home language on learners' scores revealed that

> *"learners who took the instruments in their home language obtained significantly higher scores across all learning areas than their colleagues who had to respond to the assessment tasks in their second or third language"*.
> (DoE-SA, 2003a: 64)

The report further states that the differences in scores between home and AL learners is "extremely high and suggests a need for further investigation" (DoE-SA, 2003a: 66).

The National Report on Systemic Evaluation: Inclusive Education (Foundation Phase) (DoE-SA, 2003b: xviii & 63) also recorded that the instances where the home language of learners with disabilities was different from the LoLTA, achievement was affected and sometimes severely so. This report strongly declares that the problems demonstrated by the learners with disabilities who are also AL learners must be recognised as a pervasive barrier to learning in the Foundation Phase "… which also confronts non-disabled learners through the medium of an alternative language" (DoE-SA, 2003b: xviii & 63). The study indeed called for further research on assessment and learning support for all AL learners.

These South African results resonate the purpose of this present research, which is a further examination of the language-of-assessment issues in education. The fact that it is not always feasible to assess all learners in their home language because of the multiplicity of languages and also because the lexicon of many of the Nigerian languages has not been developed to meet the demands of higher education, makes it important to research possible adaptations of the assessment tasks in such a way that the AL does not act as a barrier to the establishment of achievement levels.

Breidlid (2003: 94) states that research has shown that the use of the L1 as the LoLT, especially in the early years, enables learners to acquire knowledge far more efficiently. According to Breidlid, most black people in South Africa, however, view mother tongue instruction as inferior and excluding blacks from mainstream society. This view is explained as largely due to the Bantu education system during the *apartheid* regime, hence the preference for the use of English. The economic situation in South Africa also enforces compromises where indigenous languages suffer. Breidlid (2003: 96) points out that problems are especially likely to arise where learners and teachers are from the same linguistic

background and speak the same language, but the medium of instruction is a foreign language to both parties.

Another study that dealt with the examination of the differential achievement of English L1 and L2 speakers was carried out by Barry (1999). This study revealed that English L1 learners *"… out-performed second language learners consistently across Grades 4,5,6 and 12 in all the assessments irrespective of the formats"* (Barry, 2002:113). The study further revealed that the English L2 speakers did not have the level of proficiency required for comprehension, to make inferences and critically evaluate texts used in the study. English L2 speakers furthermore found it difficult to complete sections where they were required to write their own responses to demonstrate comprehension (Barry, 2002: 114).

In a survey carried out by Meyer (1997), the purpose of the study was to look at the language of learning practised in formerly black schools, mainly in the then Northern Province of South Africa, to identify tensions between official policy and classroom practice and to assess the implications of these tensions for language policy. The survey revealed major discrepancies between the official policy on language of learning and actual practice. English was the official language of learning but code switching frequently took place. Teachers when interviewed favoured the sole use of English as the official LoLT despite the problems associated with it, but in practice they used other languages alongside English in the classroom (Meyer, 1997: 236).

If surveys of this nature reveal that teachers actually prefer to use English and are forced to code switch in their lessons because learners lack the requisite proficiency in English to comprehend what is being taught and English remains the LoLT, then the problem of the assessment of AL learners is clearly going to persist until issues relating to the language-in-education policy formation and implementation are resolved. Some teachers have found that code switching is one avenue of maintaining the balance in the classroom between lesson delivery and actual comprehension of the content of the lesson in question. This phenomenon is actually very common in African countries and is viewed as a coping strategy to enable learners to have access to the curriculum content (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004: & 75-78). Nel (2005: 156 &157) suggests that teachers should be supportive and have a positive attitude towards their learners' culture and language, they should accommodate learners and permit them to use code switching in discussions of group work, but the learners should then

report back in English. What then happens during assessment? Are AL learners going to be allowed to write using a blend of both English and their L1? This is not practicable for reasons already mentioned above. Code switching/mixing could probably bridge comprehension of content at the receptive level, but that certainly does not guarantee that the responses can be effectively conveyed in English during assessment. The same support (code switching for comprehension during lessons) is moreover not carried forward into assessment since the language of assessment for all subjects except the indigenous languages is English. This then means that even when the requisite knowledge has been acquired, the learner might have difficulty expressing such knowledge during assessment. As long as the LoLTA is an AL, solutions that focus on assessment practices should be given further consideration.

Research has shown that many schools in present day South Africa, as with Nigeria, have chosen English as their medium of instruction (Granville, Janks, Mphahlele, Reed *et al.,* 1998; Reagan, 2001: 62). This confirms earlier predictions of the dominance of English, such as by Mawasha in 1986 (in Chaka, 1997: 258), who opined that there is no foreseeable end to the use of English as the LoLT in many South African schools and that it is a practical medium of communication with the international community. This makes it increasingly important to research and accommodate alternative approaches to the assessment of AL learners who are disadvantaged by the use of the AL as the LoLTA.

There is a general agreement from the literature that lack of proficiency in the LoLT is one of the causes of under-achievement or low performance in assessment tasks (Banda, 2000: 51; Barry, 2002: 106; Prinsloo, 2005:37). Research has shown that in different fields and subject areas, from Science to Mathematics, academic proficiency in the LoLT is crucial (Howie, 2004: 157; Howie and Hughes 1998: 5,6,75 & 77). We are, however, still at a crossroad since there is no consensus as to what the probable solutions to the language problem are. Researchers have repeatedly called for the use of alternative forms of assessment, different groups advocating the one alternative they believe in as opposed to the other (Davis & Reed, 2003: 102 & 112; Grosser & Lombard, 2005: 43; Lidz, 2002: 68-69; Louw, 2003: 22-23; Rasool & Curtis, 2000: 219). No doubt there are considerable challenges ahead for the use of any alternative form of assessment in mainstream education. The sheer magnitude of the AL issue makes financing and training in respect of large-scale change in assessment practices a monumental task for any government. Research into alternative methods of assessing AL

learners therefore has to continue until some clear, reliable and significant solution can be arrived at.

As discussed in Chapter 1, other methods of assessment have been experimented with in psychological assessment and in curriculum-based mainstream assessment. The strong possibility that the use of DA in mainstream education to assess AL learners will yield positive results has been mentioned. As will be highlighted below, research has shown the success of a dynamic assessment procedure with a wide range of learners. However, many questions remain to be answered especially in respect of the language factor and learners in the higher grades who are in mainstream education.

## 2.6    THEORIES OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

### 2.6.1    The concept dynamic assessment

Dynamic Assessment (DA) is based on the notion of assessment as a direct teaching intervention where activity and modifiability are key components. This is in direct contrast to static forms of assessment (Campione and Brown, 1987: 82; Haywood and Brown, 1990: 411; Haywood & Tzuriel, 2002: 40-41; Lidz *et al*., 1987; Lidz, 1997: 281; Lidz, 2003:113). With DA, the shift in the focus of assessment from assessment of the learner right up to assessment for the purpose of learning is incorporated. The key terms here are _modifiability_ of _cognitive functioning_ through _activity_ and _interaction,_ essentially identifying that, contrary to the popular notion, assessment is not supposed to be judgemental but rather should serve as a means to an end, that end being enhanced performance of the learner who is being assessed, particularly in the classroom (De Beer, 2006: 9;Lidz, 1987 &1997; Lidz & Macrine 2001: 76; Lidz, 2003:112-113; Minick, 1987: 117; Tzuriel & Shamir, 2002: 22). DA was conceptualised by Vygotsky and operationalised by Feuerstein. One of the theoretical assumptions of DA is Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which states that individuals learn from engaging in social interaction during which adults and/or more knowledgeable others play a key role in guiding the learning process. Another theoretical assumption is the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is the area of learning potential between the learner's independent level of functioning and the level of achievement with adult assistance. Other assumptions are those of scaffolding where an adult guides and supports the learner to

improve on his/her work, and mediated learning experience (MLE). MLE proposes that an adult mediates between a learner and a given task to make sense of the task and make it more meaningful to the learner. Finally, there is the assumption of self-regulation which implies that individuals have the capacity to adjust themselves and adapt to their environment or a task if the need arises (Deutsch & Reynolds: 2000; Lidz, 1987 & 1991; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001; Pena, Iglesias & Lidz, 2001).

With DA's interactive approach to conducting assessment, the assessor and learner participate actively, where the learner has an active role in the construction of knowledge. The assessor intervenes with the intention of inducing cognitive changes in the learner and for the learner to achieve success, that is, for the enhancement of the individual's cognitive functioning. The intervention can be in the form of questions to stimulate, leads or suggestions to apply, and using other examples (Camilleri & Law, 2007: 317; Elliot, 2003: 16 & 17; Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987: 35 & 37; Kozulin *et al.*, 2002: 113). The focus is mainly on estimating the individual's readiness for change. The method of administration of DA is usually in the pre-test – intervention – post-test format. DA is most appropriate for those individuals where investigation is required into the reasons for their low performance and accessible ways to produce change in their cognitive functioning (Camilleri & Law, 2007: 312-313; Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987:37; Kozulin *et al.*, 2002; Lidz, 1987; Lidz, 2002).

DA provides basic information about the intervention strategies that promote change in the learner. Each learner is a unique individual and the strategies that ordinarily may yield positive results with one learner may not necessarily achieve results with another. So different intervention strategies have to be adopted and adapted. Dynamic measures provide a domain-specific "diagnosis" of children with learning difficulties of various natures. It allows the examiner to focus on the particular problem the learner has in a specific domain without assuming that the learner has a permanent mental handicap (Camilleri & Law, 2007: 313; Campbell, 1995: 92). In this study, the objective was to discover and investigate those linguistic factors that hindered the achievement of AL learners and see whether mediation at the linguistic level could contribute to raise the level of the learners' cognitive functioning. Critical to this study are Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD and Feuerstein' MLE as they might have specific relevance in respect of using an AL as the LoLTA.

## 2.6.2 Vygotsky's theories of social constructivism and the zone of proximal development

L. S. Vygotsky did much work in the area of human intelligence and in the process he developed various theories, among which are his theories of social construction and the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky believed that human beings are born with the propensity to interact socially; that action and social interaction combine to help children learn. For him, culture and consciousness constitute the actual subject of inquiry. The concepts of "situated action" and "situated learning" arise out of the view that the physical and social contexts within which learning takes place remain an integral part of what is learned (Haywood and Brown, 1990: 414; Kozulin & Garb, 2002: 113; Minick, 1987: 118; Wood, 1998: 40). His conception of human development places interaction between children and more mature members of their culture at the heart of psychological growth. He emphasises the importance of the social environment and the social construction of the mind as a means of intellectual development. Cultural tools such as language and speech facilitate these (Blanck, 1990: 50; Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000:312; Minick, 1987:121-126).

A significant feature of Vygotsky's social construction theory is its close relationship to his other theories regarding play and the role of adults in facilitating learning, language and writing. All these are closely interwoven. The controversial relationships between learning and development were highlighted in Vygotsky's work. He disagreed with Piaget's assertion that emphasised stages in biological maturity as an inevitable condition for learning. He stressed the role of language as a natural, biological and unique feature of human beings, and also the medium by which cultural inventions are transmitted (Deutch *et al*., 2000:312; Lidz, 1997: 282; Minick, 1987:130; Pena *et al.*, 2001:139). In Vygotsky's opinion, "the developmental process was towed by the learning process and any pedagogy that did not respect this was sterile" (Blanck, 1990: 50). This is where his extensive work on the ZPD comes in.

> "The ZPD of a child is the distance between his actual development, determined
> with the help of independently solved tasks, and the level of potential development
> of the child, determined with the tasks solved by the child under the guidance of
> adults and in cooperation with more intelligent partners" (Shayer, 2002: 16).

Vygotsky's assertion that social interaction is essential for learning is fundamental to the learning process also of AL learners. For them, it implies that learning should be interactive in an environment that adequately facilitates, but also supports, the construction of meaning and context-embedded communication. Vygotsky's emphasis on the importance of language as a cultural tool that facilitates intellectual development is pivotal to the learning of AL learners. What is the implication if the language proficiency of AL learners is not fully developed? Can learning take place adequately? What form and level of achievement can we expect? In the context of a linguistically diverse classroom, what is the role of the educator? How can the educator effectively support AL development in order effectively to serve as the mediator of learning? The notion of the ZPD could contain some of the answers, by interaction of the AL learners with a mediator creating a linguistically enabling environment, mediating learning and ultimately creating an appropriate linguistic context further to support the learning process within the assessment situation itself.

Vygotsky put language and communication at the core of intellectual and personal development (Lidz, 1997: 282; Wood, 1998: 11). The assessment process suggested by Vygotsky involves an initial assessment of the individual's competence, followed by instruction and then the measure of gain is believed to have greater predictive utility than unaided performance (Camilleri & Law, 2007: 313; Campione & Brown, 1987:83; Deutsch *et al.*, 2000:312). Operation within the ZPD requires the intervention of a "social mediator". Feuerstein *et al.* conceptualised the notion of MLE and delineated the aspects of social interaction that facilitate the creation of the ZPD. The environment should be predetermined in terms of selection, regulation and interpretation of experiences in question. There should also be proper planning in respect of the content of the mediation. According to Lidz (1997: 282), experiences that are mediated "enhance self regulation and representational thinking and result from specific types of interaction with experienced socialising agents".

### 2.6.3   Mediated Learning Experience

Feuerstein, regarded as the "father of mediation" (Fraser, 2006: 9), views individuals as malleable and capable of being modified or changed cognitively, no matter their age. MLE involves the practitioner (an experienced and intentioned person) choosing specific predetermined cognitive areas or content for the mediation and organising them as stimuli. These cognitive areas could include task modification, concept demands and language. The

stimuli are selected by the mediator who acts as a filter assisting the child in structuring and expanding experience to cognitive areas that would otherwise have been inaccessible. The focus of MLE is the mediation of broader processes that are meaningful to the learner. The learner is aided to solve a problem or master a task. MLE aims to produce in the learner the natural tendency to learn and to equip learners with the necessary tools. The mediator intentionally engages the learner in activities that are directed towards changing the learner's cognitive state, modifying the cognitive structures and committing the learner to meaningful learning (Fraser, 2006: 11-12; Jensen & Feuerstein, 1987: 380).

The theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability "…attempts to account for the differences in the capability of individuals to benefit from both formal and informal opportunities to learn" (Jensen & Feuerstein, 1987: 380). Direct exposure of an individual to stimuli is one of the modalities of learning. The second modality of learning is that the determinant of higher levels of cognitive functioning depends on the benefit derived from MLE. An individual's intellect may thus deviate from the expected course of development if there is exposure to learning through teaching (Fraser, 2006:9; Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987; Murphy, 2002). MLE comprises twelve components to optimise the cognitive development of children. The components were derived from the experiences of Feuerstein with children with various forms of learning difficulties (Lidz, 1997: 282). Of the twelve, Lidz (1997: 282) regards the most important ones to be the mediation of intentionality and reciprocity, meaning and transcendence. Mediation of *intentionality and reciprocity* refers to the process whereby the mediator, intentionally or consciously, makes an attempt to influence the performance of the learner, motivate the learner so that there is active participation where the learner shows the willingness to interact. Mediation of *meaning* refers to the mediator's provision of explanations for the importance and value of these activities in order to make them more meaningful. This can be achieved "through voice modulation and shows of affect" Lidz, 1991: 14). In the mediation of *transcendence*, the mediator goes beyond the immediate context to attempt to make a connection between that and other experiences (Lidz, 1991: 14; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001: 126-128).

The theory of social construction and MLE holds relevance for use with AL learners. Language is frequently said to be a major obstacle to academic success (Fraser, 2006: 14). The strategies of MLE and social construction can be used to support all learners with limited language proficiency and especially, AL learners. Mediation can lead to the development of

the AL learners' motivation and metacognitive functioning, which is an awareness and structuring of their learning and thought processes and could definitely support language development at receptive and expressive level. These come under the umbrella of DA.

The concept of DA is applicable to AL learners because it views assessment as a form of learning and learning support process, which is what is required by AL learners, and it is also not judgemental. The interactive and mediational approach ensures that language oriented scaffolding can be provided that stimulates the AL learner and provides for the lack of proficiency in the LoLTA. With particular reference to Vygotsky's ZPD, the assessor becomes the mediator, the more knowledgeable adult that systematically guides and supports the AL learner through the language barriers present in the assessment tasks. DA seems appropriate for use with AL learners because it creates an opportunity to bridge the language gaps in assessment and possibly address the issue of fairness by making the assessment tasks more equitable.

### 2.6.4 Models of dynamic assessment

*2.6.4.1 Orientation*

There are four basic models that most DA procedures can be classified under:

- The open-ended clinical approach developed by Reuven Feuerstein and his colleagues: This includes the Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD) and MLE as applied in the Instrumental Enrichment Programme. The focus is on the principles and strategies of problem solving and the ultimate aim of independent functioning (Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987: 44-45).

- The Learning Potential Assessment developed by Budoff and Guthke: This is an approach that focuses on classification of learners in an attempt to reduce the negative results of cultural bias. The intervention is standardized (Budoff, 1987: 55).

- The Graduated Prompting procedure developed by Campione and Brown: With this approach learners are offered systematically graded prompts/hints that would help in solving the set problem (Campione & Brown, 1987: 82-84; Deutsch *et al.*, 2000: 313).

- The Curriculum-Based approach developed by Lidz, based on Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience. This approach uses the actual content from the learner's educational programme and has no specific script for intervention (Lidz, 2002: 73).

These models are described separately below, followed by a discussion to consider their usefulness in the assessment of AL learners.

*2.6.4.2 Reuven Feuerstein's Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD)*

Feuerstein, like many others, was concerned about the psychometric theories and practice that led to quantitative results (Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987: 35-49). He pointed out the problems associated with the testing of those populations for whom the instruments had not originally been developed, and for whom no norms had been established or techniques applied. He highlighted the massive migration of culturally and linguistically diverse populations who needed to be assessed in order to receive support to adapt to their new dominant culture, as a reason for the development of appropriate assessment strategies. Another major concern of Feuerstein's was the way in which people on different levels of functioning had to be assessed using the same tests, reflecting the assumption that intelligence is a fixed entity. (Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987: 38).

There were different attempts to modify psychometric practice, one of these being the Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD) by Feuerstein *et al.* (1987). The LPAD turned out to be a milestone in terms of its influence in the field of Dynamic Assessment (Murphy, 2002: 26-27). Feuerstein conceptualised the construct of dynamic assessment as having as its core the concept of structural cognitive modifiability. This relates to the assumption that intelligence is not a fixed entity and the human intellect is an "open system accessible to structural change". It refers to the notion that by learning through teaching, an individual's intellect may deviate from the expected course of development and result in changes in the structural nature of the individual's cognitive processes. These changes could be in more than one area of mental activity. (Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987: 48; Fraser, 2006: 10-12; Murphy, 2002: 27-28).

The goal of the LPAD is to "modify the cognitive style characteristics of the individual or his or her preferential mode of functioning… challenging the inference of immutability…*"* (Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987:43). The LPAD assumes that new cognitive structures can be

produced in the individual and are not merely discovered or enhanced when they are within Vygotsky's ZPD. The various test instruments used in the LPAD battery have a structure that differs from other instruments in that they seek to investigate, detect and evaluate changes. The test-mediate-retest format is used and very small changes can be easily detected (Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987: 36-37; Murphy, 2002:26).

The LPAD bases its shift from the static forms of assessment to the dynamic approach on the changes in the assessment process that it adopts as opposed to the psychometric model. These changes include the nature and structure of the tasks. The tasks address higher mental processes, are relatively accessible to change and are constructed at optimal rather than minimal levels of complexity. Another difference is that the test situation is reshaped to produce a more flexible and interactive process, reflecting a significant shift to a process rather than product orientation. Finally there is change in the modalities for interpreting results and these focus on the peaks in the functioning of the individual (Lidz, 1991: 16-17) which are considered as indicators of the capacity of the individual.

The interpretation of the results is an attempt to locate the origins of the individual's success or failure and to attribute to them specific weights in the evaluation of the modifiability of the individual. The elaborate way of profiling the individual is the most central to the interpretation of the results of the LPAD (Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987: 46-47).

Some researchers have the opinion that Feuerstein's LPAD lacks empirical support. According to Murphy's review (2002: 27-28), Frisby and Braden's assessment of the work done by Feuerstein questions the use of concepts such as structural cognitive modifiability in a system where the meaning of "potential" has not been fully explicated, claiming that DA approaches contain contradictions and methodological errors. Frisby (1998: 262) states that the critics of DA argue that DA is undermined by the lack of resemblance of many DA tasks to school-like tasks and the unreliability of gain scores.

Feuerstein's LPAD has been described as "the most comprehensive and theoretically grounded expression of DA to date" (Lidz, 1991: 18). It is, however, highly time-consuming and could require between 5-8 hours to administer. But more importantly, the technique is basically for diagnostic purposes and its link to classroom and educational parameters has not

been fully developed. Since this study focuses on classroom-based assessment and curriculum content areas, the LPAD is not an appropriate measure to use.

*2.6.4.3 Milton Budoff's technique of learning potential assessment*

Milton Budoff and his colleagues developed the Learning Potential Assessment (LPA) technique as an alternative to assessment of cognitive functioning in response to the problems associated with the misclassification of many low-achieving learners as educable mentally retarded *(sic)*. They define intelligence as *"…the ability to profit from experience"* (Budoff, 1987:55). With this method of assessment, training is also embedded in a test-train-retest sequence, to arrive at an estimate of the general ability of the learner from the reasoning problem the learner has learnt to solve, which can then be compared with the low scholastic aptitude score.

The LPA method minimises the artificiality of the test situation by helping the learner develop problem-solving strategies even when the questions are unfamiliar. Training-based assessment, according to Budoff, allows the learners to demonstrate their potential and that they can perform suitably when they have a good understanding of what the task demands. It is their contention that training equalizes differences in experience. Many of the LPA procedures use standardized training procedures (Budoff, 1987: 77).

Budoff's LPA procedure basically serves as an alternative to an IQ test and is certainly not particularly suitable for the purposes of this research with AL learners in mainstream education. Though the research is focused on the mediation of learning and possible production of new cognitive structures or detection of changes in them, the measurement of intelligence is not contemplated.

*2.6.4.4 J.C. Campione and A.L. Brown's technique of graduated prompting*

Campione and Brown's approach to assessment and instruction has been influenced significantly by Vygotsky's work, putting into operation his concept of the ZPD (Campbell, 1995:82). Graduated prompting refers to assistance provided in the course of dynamic assessment in the form of standardised prompts derived from a detailed task analysis in a given domain (Campbell, 1995: 83). The approach involves assessment and evaluation of the particular processes underlying successful performance. The assessment procedure should

ideally be situated within a specific domain and not aimed at general intellectual functioning, and re-diagnosis must be an integral part of the assessment process (Campione & Brown, 1987:82-83). Campione and Brown focus on the role of the global learning and transfer process and aim to be more specific about the factors responsible for individual differences in learning and transfer.

The technique starts with an evaluation of the learner's initial competence. The learner is placed in a learning environment with an adult working together interactively until the learner is able to solve the problem independently. The collaborative effort with the adult involves a graduated series of suggestions, first general in nature and then moving on to a more specific and direct solution to the problem. This procedure allows for the estimation of the minimum time and mediation required by the learner to solve each problem. The metric of learning efficiency is the number of hints that the learner requires to reach the desired level of learning (Campione & Brown, 1987:83-84). A sample of the hint sequence for a rotation problem is as follows:

HINT1: "This problem is a called turning problem. Think about why it might be called that … Do you know how to solve the problem now or do you want another hint?

HINT 2: This is row 1. Put picture 1 in the practice box. Touch IN. Touch the picture. Now try to make the picture look like the second picture. (If successful) You did it. Now make it look like the last picture. (If the child cannot make picture 3, then give another hint 2A) (Campione & Brown, 1987: 110).

Below is a sample of the hint sequence for answering questions from previous learning:

HINT 1: Read the question again, slowly.

HINT 2: Read the question again, this time with emphasis on key words. Acknowledge any efforts made by the learners to answer. If the answer is not accurate continue with the hints.

HINT 3: What do you think the question requires? Do you think it might be...?

HINT 4: What other ideas do you have?

HINT 5: Good attempt, you are right but the question also requires you to... (the question is then explicitly analysed). Now read the question again. Is it now clearer?

HINT 6: Now that you know what the question requires, can you attempt to answer?

HINT 7: Not bad, but can you explain a little further focusing on ....

HINT 8: Why don't you try to ... Does that make it easier?

The hints continue from general to a more direct and explicit sequence of instructions and they are based on the level of assistance required by the learner involved (Campione & Brown, 1987: 105-106 & 112-114).

Campione and Brown's technique seems close to what this research requires. The mediation of linguistic components of assessment requires graduated prompts, but not necessarily scripted or standardised. Learners have individual differences and their needs might vary and therefore the need to be flexible might also arise. The prompts could be adapted and the problem set in the assessment task could be left unchanged. With the assessment left unchanged the issue of equity might then be partially addressed. Another similarity is that the approach also emphasises direct linkage with the curriculum or academic content. A major variation however is the focus of this technique, which aims to establish the level of assistance (derived from the number of prompts) required by the learners as opposed to the level of improvements made. It is therefore also not suitable for adaptation for this study.

*2.6.4.5 C.S. Lidz's technique of Curriculum-Based Dynamic Assessment*

Here also interaction is very important. There is an attempt to bridge assessment with intervention and for the results of assessment to inform instruction (Lidz, 2002:73). Learning is seen as contingent upon experience and the focus at any given time is on a specific task (Murphy, 2002:34). With this model, the content of the intervention is the actual curriculum or instructional situation of the learner. A sample of the curriculum content is used as the pre-test and post-test. The assessor determines what the learner is able to do based on observations and post-activity error analysis. After intervention the assessor administers work similar to the pre-test. This may be followed by a standardized assessment to explore the extent to which processing difficulties are present (Lidz, 2002:74; Murphy, 2002:34).

The processes included in the analysis consist of attention, perception, memory, conceptualisation and metacognition. There is a focus on determining the prerequisite knowledge base and facilitation of metacognition and the application of various strategies. The mediation results spontaneously in response to the need of the learner. There is no

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predetermined structure and so the curriculum-based dynamic assessment places high demands on the assessor as mediator. The approach has been successfully adapted for application to speech and language issues by Jitendra and Rohena-Diaz (1996) and Jitendra *et al.*, (1998) (Lidz, 2002:74). The details of these studies can be found in the next section. CDA is also considered an appropriate approach for use with Instructional Assistance or pre-referral teams (Lidz, 2002:74).

Lidz's CDA uses the curriculum content and thus this technique seems readily applicable to mainstream education and can be adapted to the needs of AL learners. The use of the actual curriculum content helps to establish the extent of processing difficulty a learner has and this can then be mediated. For the purposes of this study, linguistic difficulties should be an additional consideration. It is important to mention that Lidz's approach is mainly for diagnostic purposes which is not the objective of this study. This research focuses on providing linguistic scaffolding and mediation, but processes underlying successful performance and the effectiveness of mediation might also be revealed.

*2.6.4.6 Suitability of the models of DA for the assessment of AL learners*
DA offers a new mode of assessment for minorities and those disadvantaged by traditional assessment practices in one way or another. In relation to this study it is those disadvantaged by the use of AL as the LoLTA.

Sternberg and Grigorenko (2001:157) argue that despite all efforts put into the development of DA models, the approach has not fully lived up to expectations and has little or no "incremental validity". They further argue that it is not only during DA that learning occurs, that there is implicit learning in static assessment while DA has both implicit and explicit forms of learning. They posit that static and dynamic forms of assessment should be viewed "as representing regions along two continua rather than two distinct categories" (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001:160). The proponents of DA disagree strongly with the views of Sternberg and Grigorenko (Haywood, 2001: 201-202; Tzuriel, 2001:238) and distinguish fully between static assessment and DA.

We must not lose sight of the fact that all issues surrounding the use of DA have not been resolved. There are complexities associated with DA in mainstream education that cannot be ignored. For instance, the hands-on, highly interactive nature of the technique makes it

challenging for application with large numbers of learners at the same time. A variation of DA suitable for this purpose still needs to be developed and researched.

The opportunities provided by the use of DA neither eliminate the numerous prospective challenges with the use of DA in mainstream education nor do they provide immediate solutions to some of my pressing questions. For instance, does the application of DA in the classroom amount to labelling learners all over again? AL learners being singled out in the classroom for a different form of assessment could have negative connotations for the learners. Other questions are: What are the limits of DA strategies within the classroom? How does one guard against improper, inequitable application of DA? What is the extent of use of DA in mainstream education? Are there ways and methods of reducing the huge human and financial resources required to implement DA on a large scale? How could teachers be supported to acquire the necessary expertise for DA? How could the issue of equity and fairness be resolved in using DA with only some learners? These questions will be deliberated in Chapter 5.

## 2.7    APPLICATION OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

### 2.7.1   Research in respect of dynamic assessment

The research reviewed in this section is presented in chronological order and covers a wide range of the application of DA particularly with linguistically diverse learners. The research examined deals with participants in a variety of situations but whose common factor is the use of DA as an alternative form of assessment. This will be followed by an evaluative look at the status of the research, the implications of the findings generally and for this study and the work that remains to be done.

Pena & Quinn (1992: 271-277) carried out a study using DA to differentiate between children with language difference and those that had language disorders. Three Head Start classes of twenty children each who were from Puerto Rican (3-7 years) and African American (4-9 years) families were involved in the study. DA was employed to assess the performance of these linguistically diverse students, on labelling and description tasks. Pre-tests which included an expressive one-word picture vocabulary test were administered. The intervention conducted included 20-minute sessions of DA mediation with groups of learners, which

provided them with a general principle and a goal. The findings suggested effectiveness of DA in distinguishing between children with possible learning disabilities and language disorders from linguistically diverse children. The study also suggested implications for intervention.

In their review of bilingual and special education issues in relation to language assessment of linguistically diverse students, Jitendra and Rohena –Diaz (1996: 12-14) reported a case study where curriculum-based DA of language procedure was employed to assess the learning capabilities of the learner, Jose, and provide guidance for further instructional planning. Jose was an 8-year old Puerto Rican boy and was considered at-risk of academic failure. His teacher described his needs in language-specific tasks and such tasks were selected from the curriculum. Three parallel versions of the tasks were selected for use during the pre-test, mediation and post-test phases. Notes about Jose's responses and further requirements were taken during mediation when models were provided. The DA revealed Jose's need for continued instruction in English Language development with a focus on vocabulary. Multimodal presentation of materials within real contexts was seen to facilitate his attention and memory. The DA revealed that cognitive bridges between tasks had to be promoted to facilitate learning and that Jose's needs could be worked into collaborative learning activities in the classroom.

In another study, Jitendra and Rohena–Diaz (1998: 182-185) describe a case study of a curriculum-based language assessment process. The study involved a Spanish speaking 10-year old boy (Rafael) who had cerebral palsy and was classified as having mild low cognitive intelligence. His bilingual teacher reported that he was functioning in the moderate mental retardation range and his other teachers noted that he had challenges with expressive and receptive language in both Spanish and English. In order to identify Rafael's specific instructional needs in respect of academic language to determine suitable forms of instruction, a six-step curriculum-based DA procedure was used. The results indicated that Rafael should continue to receive instruction in both Spanish and English language development, particularly in vocabulary. Other necessary strategies were also identified and led to the development of an individualised educational programme for him. The DA provided much more instructionally useful information that was appropriate for linguistically diverse learners.

In the three studies cited above CDA was successfully used to distinguish linguistic diversity from possible language disorder. It was also useful in providing information for the specific teaching/learning requirements of individual learners so that individualised educational programmes could be employed where necessary. Though the ages of the learners differ, the procedure is particularly relevant to this study which deals with AL learners in mainstream education whose curriculum content will form the basis for the mediation.

The Seria-Think Instrument developed by Tzuriel (2000: 177) is a DA measure based on Vygotsky's ZPD and Feuerstein's MLE and is used for assessment and intervention with young children who have various kinds of difficulties with arithmetic. David Tzuriel (2000) carried out a study to validate this instrument as a DA measure aimed at measuring the process-oriented behaviours of children to reflect important cognitive functions necessary for solving problems in varied domains. The participants were 48 Grade 1 children in three classes in a central part of Israel. In the first session, all the children were administered the Seria-Think Instrument for the preliminary and pre-teaching phases. In the second session, the experimental children received the teaching, which included mediation of principles and strategies for solving the problems. The control group received no mediation. Both groups were administered the Seria-Think Maths Problems test in the last session. The findings of the study showed that children who were mediated on the Seria-Think Instrument were more efficient in their handling of the problems. They calculated and planned their steps as evidenced by the higher number of measurements used in the process and their trial and error responses were reduced. The post-teaching scores of DA measures represented children's cognitive capacities more accurately than did the pre-teaching scores. The post-teaching scores were deemed better predictors of the achievement outcome criterion than static measures as well as other pre-teaching tests of dynamic measures.

The results verify that the performance of children after a phase of learning and guidance is a more accurate predictor of their abilities than performance when there has been no mediation in terms of guidance on how to solve a given problem (Tzuriel, 2000: 189). With the success of this study there is a possibility also that mediation of a linguistic nature with AL learners directed at metacognitive question comprehension and analysis could reflect a more accurate description of their abilities.

In a study of a more therapeutic nature, carried out by Robinson-Zanartu and Aganza (2000: 463-467), one of the subjects of the study was Maria. A fifth grade special education evaluation revealed that Maria's reading skill was two years below her grade level while her mathematics ability was a year below the expected level. The DA procedure was initiated with a home visit, which later proved valuable as it created a form of familiarity with her background and home culture. The home visit offered an opportunity to maximize Maria's learning experiences. Maria was encouraged to read in her native Spanish language with the help of her parents. The DA procedure started with the use of LPAD, *Organisation of Dots*. The initial results revealed that Maria had "good non-verbal spatial orientation and adequate understanding of symbols and signs". Maria's language skills were still at the BICS level and this made it difficult for her to understand concepts and instructions at the required pace. Using DA and in conjunction with Maria's teachers, Maria's language skills were moved up to the CALP level. A similar study (Robinson-Zanartu and Aganza, 2000:460-1) involved a learner, Pablo who had been placed in the special education class in third grade and who was still in special education in the twelfth grade. Classroom observation revealed that he was a limited English speaker whereas the school qualified him as "English proficient". Further observation highlighted Pablo's lack of interest in schoolwork and borderline performance but his active engagement in discussions with his friends about the electrical and hydraulic systems used in customised cars and bikes. Pablo led a successful life outside of school. The researcher therefore designed a DA intervention with a focus on mediation of meaning and transcendence, using mediated exposure to reading and also focusing on personally and culturally meaningful contexts. This method proved a success in Pablo's case. His manifestations of anti-social behaviours disappeared as his identity and competence were enhanced. It was concluded that "dynamic assessment and mediated interventions support the development of cognitive functions" … and also offers psychologists and educators "powerful tools for addressing situations in which diverse children do not perform optimally in school" (Robinson-Zanartu and Aganzu, 2000:475).

The studies carried out with both Maria and Pablo are very encouraging examples of the successful application of DA in mainstream education and are directly related to this research. Maria's language skills moved up to CALP and Pablo showed enhanced competence, which had a direct impact on his behaviour, as he stopped all his anti-social behaviours.

Samuels (2000) used DA in the assessment and intervention of Chin, a post secondary student with learning difficulties who was born in Nigeria and believed to have inadequate language skills for college level study. The question was, "What is her level of achievement in English vocabulary, grammar and usage?" (Samuels, 2000:525). Chin was administered several tests, including the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Revised (Dunn & Dunn, 1981) and the Test of Adolescent and Adult Language, 3rd Edition (Hummail, Brown, Larsen & Wiederholt, 1994), which revealed that Chin had considerable language difficulties and her vocabulary was weak. But DA revealed that, with minimal intervention, Chin was able to understand the requirements of different tasks, she learned and applied strategies with minimal intervention, and her nonverbal cognitive abilities were strong. Chin described her experience as being positive and decided to leave the university into a programme in a technical college that was linguistically less demanding (Samuels, 2000:540).

The significance of the study with Chin lies in the extent of the information derived from the intervention, that enabled her to make the right choice in terms of her career. The study shows that the use of CDA in this research holds promise as it is linked with the identification of language difficulties and the use of intervention strategies. The present study will include learners with different profiles and per chance they could also obtain enough feedback to facilitate future choices that they might need to make.

A study by Chan, Ashman and Kraayernoord (2000) included participants in Grades 8 and 9 attending school in Australia, and 28 Grade 8 and Grade 9 students from schools in Hong Kong. The study sought to evaluate the learning and problem solving capabilities of the students in a subject such as science and specifically in biological classification. The objective of the project was to establish the extent to which students can benefit from further instruction and to provide insights into the interaction between the students' existing knowledge of nature and biological classification and their cognitive processing skills (Chan *et al.*, 2000:608). The study showed how CDA can be utilised by teachers to access information about their students' latent learning capabilities and problem solving strategies. CDA allowed the identification of the students' cognitive processes and an assessment of the extent to which the students could benefit from further instruction.

Chan *et al.*'s use of CDA with Grade 8 learners in science shows that this present research is not an isolated case. The study by Chan *et al.* adapted a DA approach usually used as a

content free procedure to one where the curriculum content of the subject played an important role. This is similar to the present study where the curriculum content of learners is used as a basis for the mediation. Chan *et al.*'s research also shows the extent to which DA procedures can be adapted to suit specific situations with a view to obtaining results that would reveal additional information about the learners and ultimately inform the direction of further instruction.

In a study conducted by Deutsch and Reynolds (2000), the aim was to investigate the experiences of educational psychologists who had had training in the use of DA, with regard to the effectiveness of the training, the extent of use of the procedures and the perceived advantages and problems inherent in the use of DA. As the theoretical basis for their DA work, the majority stated Feuerstein's theories and others, Vygotsky and Campione and Brown. Concerning materials used, Feuerstein, Tzuriel and Lidz were mentioned (Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000:319). Those educational psychologists who practised DA agreed on its effectiveness due to its flexibility and the body of information it provides, which includes precise comments and practical advice that lead to workable strategies (Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000:323-324). Among the problems mentioned, was that DA is too open to individual interpretation as well as the unfamiliarity of the language and the various concepts used in the DA materials (Deutsch & Reynolds, 2000:327).

Pena and Gillam (2000), in their work with children referred for speech and language evaluations, found that DA procedures help speech and language pathologists better describe the language learning potential of children who are referred for assessment. They found that important information for the planning of language intervention is provided by the use of DA procedures (Pena & Gillam, 2000:573). Pena, Iglesias & Lidz (2001) in their study to differentiate language difference from language disorder in culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners, investigated the nature of the response of preschool learners to MLE and differentiated between those that were developing and those that had low language proficiency. The study further investigated the efficacy of DA as opposed to static assessment procedures in the classification of the participants by language ability (Pena *et al.*, 2001:140). The results revealed that the use of DA was successful and promising in the "determination of language disorder versus language difference" (Pena *et al.*, 2001:151).

These studies, though carried out with younger children, also have direct relevance because in the present study it is important to be able to distinguish between an inadequate level of language proficiency impacting achievement, and other forms of challenges.

Lidz and Macrine (2001: 77-89) explored the use of an alternative assessment approach that incorporated DA as part of a multi-source battery in the identification of gifted culturally and linguistically diverse learners with age range from 6 to 11 years. The entire population of 473 students from a school in first to fifth grades were screened. The children within the top tenth percentile range on the measures administered, totalling 81, qualified for the individual assessment. The individual assessment included the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC) (Mental Processing Composite, MPC), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS, Reading and Maths) and the Naglieri Non-verbal Ability Test, modified for individual and dynamic administration (NNAT/DA). The study identified 25 students (5%) of the 473 children as gifted. Previous attempts had identified less than 1% of the students in the same school as gifted. The successful identification was attributed to the DA modification of the Naglieri Non-verbal Abilities Test (Lidz & Macrine, 2001:89). Lidz and Macrine (2001: 92), citing Samunda *et al.* (1991), reiterate that discrimination is inherent in using the outcomes of standardized tests for placement purposes, especially using the same tests for learners from diverse backgrounds. They believe that "... the continued use of conventional testing methods will only perpetuate this structural bias" (Lidz and Macrine 2001: 92).

The study supports the use of alternatives and the "unconventional application of existing standardized measures" (Lidz & Macrine, 2001:92). The research endorses the possibility of using the tests drawn up by teachers in this study in unconventional applications and in so doing avoiding the discrimination inherent in the use of the tests.

Lidz (2002: 74-75) reports the use of CDA with a 13-year old girl referred for poor academic performance, high anxiety within the teaching situation with particular reference to note taking and study skills and being on the verge of developing a school phobia. Initial screening revealed that during reading she was not able to visualise or conceptualise the meaning of the text and processing speed was also an issue. Mediation was carried out focusing on teaching her to visualise, pay attention to embedded cues and anticipation of what was ahead. Post-test showed that she was able to improve her performance by applying the skills learned during mediation. This case is another example of the successful application of

CDA. Though it involved a single learner, knowledge in respect of reading difficulty could be derived. It confirms also that addressing linguistic challenges by means of the CDA procedure has value for a learner's performance generally.

Kozulin and Garb (2002: 113-121) explored the feasibility of the development and implementation of a DA procedure for English as a foreign language (EFL). The participants consisted of young adults from pre-academic centres in Israel. A DA of EFL was designed and tested using the test-teach-test model. First, a pre-test that had been adapted from a standard test used for placement purposes in pre-academic centres at colleges and universities, was administered. Then, there was the mediation process that provided detailed guidelines to enable teachers to mediate each item in an interactive way and at the same time ensure consistency from teacher to teacher. The first part of the mediation involved grammatical, lexical and sentence structure while the second part involved comprehension. Finally the participants were re-tested using a second test where the items matched those of the pre-test in terms of information, strategies, length and level of difficulty. The results revealed that a number of students with identical pre-test scores performed differently on the post-test. The findings suggest that the EFL DA procedure had practical value in that it provided detailed information about the different learning needs of students who had the same standard performance scores in the first phase of testing. The students that benefited from mediation applied the strategies acquired during the process to the new test that they were given (Kozulin and Garb, 2002: 122). DA is therefore deemed useful in curricular domains such as EFL learning. The fact that the study dealt with EFL made it relatively straightforward in that only language was involved. The case would have been entirely different if in addition to the language, the participants had had to cope with another subject in an AL as in the present study. The success of the procedure is however promising in that DA was used for language related challenges.

## 2.7.2   An evaluation of dynamic assessment research

This section takes an evaluative look at the status of the research on DA, the implications of the findings generally as well as for this study, and the work that remains to be done.

The studies discussed in 2.7.1 have covered the use of DA in a wide range of situations and with learners from preschool to adolescents. The studies have also shown different forms and

degrees of success with the use of DA procedures. Interestingly, each of the studies adopted a different form of DA. For those who are new to DA or who are interested in adopting alternative forms of assessment, this could be a source of confusion, as I discovered. Careful evaluation is required in the choice or design of the appropriate method of DA to be applied in the different situations that present themselves. It is also apparent to me that even for a single learner one might need to apply more than one method of DA in order to achieve the desired objectives.

The literature reveals that the application of DA has been largely directed towards use with relatively small groups with only a handful in the range of five hundred individuals. This might be a source of concern for those advocating the use of DA in mainstream education. The question of practicability then arises and this issue is also pertinent to the present study. There are schools, in Nigeria for instance, where virtually every learner is an AL learner. How do we apply DA procedures to such huge numbers and under circumstances that are sometimes not altogether conducive to learning?

DA, as inferred from the literature, has recorded success with language-related challenges and further research should be directed towards modification and adaptation of DA for everyday application within the classroom setting. Emphasis has been on psychological assessment much more than on use within the classroom. Certainly more research is required to explore the practicability of the use of DA in mainstream education, particularly with AL learners. Of concern, however, is the fact that adapting the procedures to the needs of a wide range of AL learners might restrict the interactive encounters if accommodations have to be made in respect of the practitioners who would be required to mediate a vast number of AL learners.

It is encouraging that the literature reveals a broad range of age groups with whom the procedures have been used successfully. The challenge remains of linking DA to classroom practice, getting teachers involved enough in the processes to solicit their participation and ensure that they share the vision of assessment that is equitable and not biased against any group of learners, particularly AL learners. This is an area that requires extensive research.

It is worthy of note that, despite the use of qualitative research methods by some researchers, a significant amount of the research carried out in the field of DA has been done with emphasis on quantitative research methods, essentially testing hypotheses, examining correlations, comparing effect sizes, dealing with variance as well as error analysis. With this

study, I have decided to engage in qualitative research methodology for an in-depth understanding of the issues relating to AL learners and the use of an AL as the LoLTA. One major challenge this poses, however, is the subjectivity and credibility issue. DA already has to contend with criticism due to the purported lack of validity of some of the procedures.

## 2.8    VALIDITY OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

Killen (2003: 13) states that the concept of validity in assessment has evolved from the view in the 1990s of tests measuring what they are purportedly supposed to be measuring, to being part of an integrated evaluation. He refers to validity as an

> "…integral evaluative judgement of the degree to which empirical evidence
>  and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of the
> inferences and actions based on test scores or other modes of assessment"
> (Killen, 2003: 13).

Killen (2003: 4-6) believes that it is more "productive" to conceptualise validity as a unitary concept than as the separate forms that validity has been categorised in historically. According to the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and the National Council of Measurement in Education cited in Killen (2003: 5), validity refers to the "degree to which a certain inference from a test is appropriate and meaningful" and the degree to which the "evidence supports the inferences that are made" (Killen, 2003: 5).

The issue of validity has over the years been central to the debate surrounding DA. No doubt, interaction by way of mediation of learning and scaffolding during assessment can be a cause for concern about the validity of the results of such assessment. But if the purpose of the use of DA is to balance a system of assessment practices that are inequitable to AL learners, then the focus should be on ensuring that no undue advantage is bestowed upon the AL learners who use them.  The use of DA in the case of AL learners should be viewed as bridging a gap and creating avenues for learning support. Haywood and Tzuriel (2002: 58) concede that the problems of validity and reliability are "yet to be addressed seriously, much less solved". They believe that the objective of DA is to change those characteristics that were intended to be assessed in the first place. Embretson (1987: 141) opines that in psychometrics any procedure that results in a change in scores is regarded as coaching, that learning ability is not

a viable construct to psychometricians and that it is difficult to measure change. Embretson believes that DA has improved criterion-related validity but concedes that other issues of validity and reliability would have to be researched further. The proponents of DA continue to strive to ensure that validity in DA can be assured with the procedures.

An inductive reasoning task was used in a study by Ferara, Brown and Campione (1986) to examine the concurrent validity of dynamic measures with intelligence (Campbell, 1995: 83-84). Two traditional tasks from standardised IQ tests were used. The participants were 8 to 11 year old non-disabled children. The children were given an obviously difficult problem that would result in the majority of them needing help. They were assisted with a standard sequence of hints (from general hints to more concrete ones). With the next step they were presented with a similar problem, and help was provided if it was necessary. The children were subsequently given two difficult problems to solve and again were assisted with a sequence of gradually more explicit hints.

The analysis was based on the number of hints required by a child to reach the desired level of performance. The results revealed a significant relationship between the children's IQ scores and the dynamic measures obtained from their performance on the original problem. It further showed that graduated measures of learning and transfer efficiency have concurrent validity as related to intelligence and assessed by IQ tests (Campbell, 1995). The study above validates the use of DA, but the focus of the study was IQ testing whereas this present study entails the use of curriculum content in the classroom environment. The tests that will be used in the present study, virtually qualify as standardised measures, they will be drawn up by the teachers, and to ensure validity it is important to note that the underlying content of the assessments will not be altered.

## 2.9    CONCLUSION

Assessment, as we have seen, should guide instruction and improve learning. Instruction and assessment should be closely linked. Once information derived from assessment is off the mark, the result can be catastrophic in many ways. The teaching and learning process is then not only informed by inaccurate assumptions, but evaluation and placements are also affected, often with grievous consequences for the learner's self-concept, motivation and future career. In the case of AL learners inappropriate learning support is likely to occur once there are diagnostic errors in the first place.

Validity and reliability are key considerations in assessment and cannot be ignored. The AL factor in assessment is one that seriously calls to question the issues of validity and reliability of AL learners' performance profiles in mainstream education. Assessment of AL learners that lacks validity and reliability brings to the fore concerns about equity and bias.

The literature reviewed suggests that the AL issue in assessment is by no means a small problem, especially keeping in mind the extent of AL use as the LoLTA in mainstream education. The review further suggests that there is a link between AL use and poor academic performance and this cannot be ignored. The review also suggests that DA has been used successfully in research in educational psychology, neuropsychology, assessment in the face of CLD, and in education generally. Research into the use of DA with mainstream learners whose LoLT is an AL has however, been uncommon and that is a justification for this research to closely examine whether the achievements recorded in the field of DA and the previous successful application of DA could address some of the challenges caused by AL use in mainstream education.

This study will be carried out bearing in mind the strengths and limitations of DA and acknowledging that the study cannot grapple with all the questions or resolve all the issues surrounding the use of DA.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGICAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH PROCESS

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The DA approach has been criticized for containing contradictions and methodological errors (Frisby, 1998: 262), as being hands-on and highly interactive thereby making its use with a large number of participants in a single study somewhat challenging. These observations were taken into consideration in the methodological planning of this study.

Chapter 3 begins by highlighting the paradigm and the assumptions of the study. The chapter further discusses the research design, incorporating the participants, instrumentation, methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation as well as the role of the researcher. The research processes employed in the study are then described from Phase I to Phase IV, the final phase. The chapter concludes by stating the ethical considerations of the research.

## 3.2 PARADIGM AND ASSUMPTIONS

### 3.2.1 Background

There are various ways of viewing, researching and interpreting social reality. Whatever the perspective, it must be clearly defined in terms of ontology and epistemology. Ontology refers to the most fundamental categories of being and the relations among them. It comprises the theory of existence, of what there is, why, and how. In research, ontology concerns the very nature and essence of the particular research field (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 3-7; Snape & Spencer, 2003: 11; Scott & Usher, 1999: 11). Epistemology, on the other hand, is concerned with knowledge, the generation of knowledge, how knowledge can be acquired and communicated to others. Epistemology also concerns itself with how one distinguishes between what is legitimate knowledge as opposed to personal opinion and/or personal belief (Becker, 1993: 219; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 3-7; Mouton, 2001:138; Schwandt, 1993: 16; Scott & Usher, 1999: 11; Smith, 1993: 184).

I share the conviction that for one to truly have a good understanding of how the lives of individuals are affected by situations, in this case assessment, there has to be more than the figures and percentages of quantitative research. There has to be a shift from the positivistic, objectivist paradigm, from the abstraction of reality consistent with realist philosophy of science (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:9 Mouton, 2001: 156). There has to be an understanding of the issues from the perspective of those being investigated. The researcher has to share the participants' " frame of reference" and attempt to understand the participants' interpretation of the issues that affect and concern them. Reality is subjective, constructed and context- and situation-specific. Furthermore, interaction, exploration and active participation with others inform knowledge and decisions. Meaning is developed on the basis of experience, hence it is emergent (Belgrave & Smith, 2002: 248 & 254; Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 20, 35, 181 & 183; Mouton, 2001:141; Snape & Spencer, 2003: 7 & 38).

As discussed in the previous chapters, assessment affects every facet of our lives from learning, to progression within schools, to awards, to the nature of employment options available. Assessment is therefore an intrinsic part of our achievement or lack thereof. Assessment in one form or another is intertwined with our very existence and must be as valid and reliable as possible. The validity and reliability of assessment cannot be guaranteed in the case of AL learners. How can we through the assessment scores of AL learners assume their lack of knowledge of subject matter when we can neither be sure that the AL learner has the basic comprehension of the requirements of the task, nor that the AL learner has the requisite expressive skills to demonstrate knowledge?

For AL learners, assessment is a monumental challenge and it should be researched giving the AL learners an opportunity to contribute, albeit in any little way, to the further understanding of the nature of the problem they are faced with. DA having been researched in a host of different settings is a logical option to create scaffolding for AL learners. DA is collaborative learning through mediation and is an interactive approach of co-construction, it falls within the constructivist paradigm. However, the design of this research has necessitated a predominantly interpretivist approach, because it involves aspects of the uniqueness of each participant, their attitudes and personal sense of the experience, in line with the interpretive paradigm of multiple perspectives and multiple realities.

### 3.2.2 Paradigm

This research was carried out as a qualitative study that was concerned about and sought to understand the subjective experiences of AL learners with assessment, within the interpretive paradigm. A main characteristic of the interpretive paradigm is its concern for the individual and the subjectivity that enshrouds the particular experiences of each individual. A key characteristic of the interpretive paradigm is the attempt by the researcher to gain insight and understand a phenomenon from within the issues being researched. The interpretive paradigm focuses on actions and intentions as well as the personal involvement of both the participants and the researcher. In addition, it is interactive, interpretive and inter-dependent (Bassey, 1999: 43; Cohen *et al.*, 2000:22 &35; Creswell, 2003: 182; Mouton, 2001:149-151; Snape & Spencer, 2003: 6-7) "and legitimises the presence of self in inquiry" (Greene, 1993: 35).

Criticisms of this paradigm are rife, particularly due to the level of researcher interaction and involvement. The criticisms range from concern about the subjective involvement and potential bias of the researcher to the issues of validity and reliability and the consequent lack of generalisability. There are also objections concerning emotional involvement and possible manipulation of the research process by the researcher and participants as well as the possibility of the results being influenced by the Hawthorne effect (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:26 & 27: Mouton, 2001: 149-151).

While not denigrating the genuineness of these concerns, it is important to note that research must be conducted using the most appropriate design and methodology in order to enable the researcher to answer the questions posed. The use of DA in itself presupposes some form of mediation and interaction between researcher and participant. The fact that solutions to problems cannot be arrived at without consultation and collaboration with those affected by the problems, is important as well. The challenges in assessment faced by AL learners and their attitude toward different forms of assessment cannot be adequately investigated without interaction with the AL learners involved. Their subjective experiences and perceived solutions to their peculiar challenges (no matter how trivial they might seem) should be taken into serious consideration. The criticisms against the interpretivist paradigm were, however, noted and care was taken in the course of this study to reduce and/or control for negative effects on the results. The details are discussed in Chapter 4.

This study was a small-scale, in-depth research involving eight AL learners, engaging with them and attempting to understand their particular experiences, and their interpretation of participating in assessments in an AL. It further entailed mediation using DA based on interpretation of linguistic obstacles, discussing those with the learners, and giving them the opportunity to air their views and to suggest their perceived methods of alleviating the peculiar challenges they faced. This ultimately enabled me to interpret specific situations and challenges, giving rise to explicit description and thereby answering the following research question and sub-questions:

**In what ways can DA contribute to a solution for the assessment of AL learners?**

 (1)     How does DA influence the assessment and performance of AL learners?

(2a)    How does the use of static forms of assessment affect the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their own performance?

(2b)    How does the use of DA affect the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their own performance?

(3)     How should DA be conducted to prevent it becoming an undue advantage for AL learners?

The interpretive paradigm allowed the participants to be co-contributors to the adaptation of their assessment tasks with the use of DA. This paradigm was considered appropriate due to the fact that the answers to the research questions above represent perceived solutions based on the individual personal experiences of 'users', and not primarily an objective linguistic analysis and therefore not on the constructivist paradigm. The participants' responses during the DA process were in part expressions and perceptions of attitude towards a range of issues. The participants were debriefed and thus were in a position to describe and discuss from personal experiences what aspects of their assessment tasks were suitable and satisfactory as well as those aspects in which they needed to be supported.

### 3.2.3   Assumptions of the study

Language is an essential part of our existence, it influences our ability to understand and relate to all figures and facets of our everyday life. It is vital for learners to be fluent in the LoLTA. My assumption was that lack of proficiency in the LoLTA may be a strong contributing factor to the low achievement of some AL learners. Research has shown that

there is a correlation between the LoLTA and achievement (Baker, 2001; Barry, 2002; Datta, 2000; Gonzalez *et al.*, 1997; Howie & Hughes, 1998; Howie, 2004; Nieman, 2006; Prinsloo, 2005).

Assessment in an AL is a major challenge for AL learners. It was therefore my assumption that static forms of assessment yield neither valid nor reliable results for AL learners. Except for the multiple-choice format, assessment generally, even if sometimes only covertly, takes cognisance of errors in spelling, grammar, lexicon and punctuation. Learners are frequently marked down for these, rendering the assessment invalid and therefore also unreliable. Multiple-choice questions indirectly measure the ability to read, comprehend and respond to questions within the specified time, which also questions their validity (Sanderson, 2008).

Learning a second language is in itself a complex issue without having to learn in that language at the same time. The linguistic complexities of languages vary and acquiring a new language requires a conscious, systematic and methodical application of one's mind. Attempting to learn Mathematics, Science or any other subject in that language at the same time is a severe burden to place on any learner.

Finally, it was my assumption that using CDA to mediate and address the language component of AL learners' assessment, may provide some support essential to addressing the disadvantage where other alternative assessment methods have yielded only limited results.

## 3.3    RESEARCH PLANNING

### 3.3.1    Research design

*3.3.1.1 An overview*
The research design was selected in line with its suitability for the nature of the research questions and to meet the considerations of feasibility and economy. The research questions required an in-depth evaluation of the assessment taking skills of AL learners and identification of the language issues affecting them. It was necessary to engage in cycles of DA to investigate both the process and the results. It was through a qualitative examination of the issues, that questions concerning the attitude of the learners to static and dynamic assessment could be addressed meaningfully. Furthermore, a direct involvement of the

researcher would be required. In addition, finding the story of the learners' assessment results would be helpful to gain some understanding of their academic performance.

The study design decided upon was consequently an action research with a multiple case study of the interactions with each of the participants, and an individualised scrutiny of their assessment scripts and results.

*3.3.1.2 Action research*

Action research can be used in virtually any area where a problem has been identified involving a particular group, ranging from involvement of a group in changing teaching methods, learning strategies, improving methods of assessment, modification of participant attitudes and administration (Costello, 2003: 3-5). According to Kelly (1985: 132), Rapport (1970) suggests that

> "action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people
>
> in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science
>
> by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework".

Ebutt (1985: 156) believes that action research is the

> "systematic study of attempts to change and improve educational practice by
>
> groups of participants by means of their own practical actions and by means of
>
> their own reflections upon the effects of those actions."

Action research has been conceptualised in different ways, but for the purposes of this study, action research is defined as "a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention" (Cohen & Manion, 1994:186 in Cohen *et al.*, 2000:236 & 237). McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead (1996: 16) opine that action research involves, among others,

> "a commitment to educational improvement, … putting the "I" at the centre
>
> of the research," and " explanation of the action and validating claims made
>
> as a result of the research".

In the context of this study, action research focuses on the outcomes of an intervention and decision making interaction. The research method holistically examines the effectiveness of an intervention that was designed to empower its participants and promote collaborative

research through their active involvement (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:236-237; Kelly, 1985: 135). Action research also focuses on actual challenges encountered by the individuals concerned, aiming at "increased understanding of a given social situation"(Kelly, 1985:132), and it also aims to improve the situations and/or proffer solutions to them by reflection, adopting problem solving strategies and reviewing such strategies.

The action research in this study focused on the evaluation of assessment practices as it concerns AL learners. It sought to find a solution to the challenges of assessing AL learners in English, using DA. The essence of DA is interaction through mediation. In this case, the interaction was chiefly between the researcher and the AL learners. A lesser degree of collaboration also occurred with the teachers, in negotiating the mediational assessment instruments.

*3.3.1.3 Multiple case study*

It was hoped that a multiple case study would bring to the fore how different forms of assessment affect the attitude and performance of AL learners. Case studies allow for a "multi-perspectival analysis" and give the opportunity to describe the real-life context within which a phenomenon or interaction plays out (Tellis, 1997:1-16). In departing from abstract theories and other underlying principles, case studies provide the opportunity to view real situations and thus afford better understanding. The uniqueness of each case gives added meaning to the set of multiple cases under study. Case studies are deemed to make detailed data as well as contextual insights more accessible than questionnaires and surveys and can elicit empathy. It "copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interests..." (Yin, 2003: 13). Case studies have been used successfully in psychology, sociology, political science and DA studies before (Moore-Brown *et al.*, 2006: 213; Yin, 2003: 1-2).

It is important to mention that obstacles associated with observation and case studies have been noted concerning the inability to generalise the research findings, observer biases and subjectivity of the researcher. However, the nature of this study required investigating the subjective opinion of the participants. The context is an integral part of a case and case study research entails constantly factoring in contextual considerations (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004: 41). The divergent school contexts in the present study have made contextual considerations both a discipline and a strength. Therefore the aim was not so much to be able

to generalise than to identify and possibly isolate the peculiar challenges of the individual participants, thereby hopefully finding other pieces of understanding that might further facilitate arrival at a possible solution. As the researcher, I have tried to take accurate notes and I video-recorded the CA cycles and ensured that there would be no distortions or misrepresentations of the information gathered. The ethical guidelines played a strong role in all considerations.

### 3.3.2 Data collection

*3.3.2.1 Participants*

The participants consisted of average and low achieving AL learners in Grade 8 (UBE 8) referred to as Basic 8. The sampling was purposive and consisted of a selection of eight learners made from two schools within Lagos. There were a total of four participants per school, a boy and a girl each from two Basic 8 classes. The selections were made by the teachers based on their prior knowledge of the participants' language status and academic abilities. All the learners were black Africans. The participating schools were government owned schools and selection was based on a difference in the overall socio-economic status of the parents and feeder areas of the two schools. To facilitate a comparative analysis, one school was from the lower-income bracket (LIB School) while the other was from the middle-income bracket (MIB School).

*3.3.2.2 Instrumentation*

The qualitative nature of this study which involved debriefing and mediation, the importance of affect of the participants as well as understanding their perspectives on the issues that concern them, made it relevant and appropriate to use authentic instrumentation. Under the aforementioned circumstances the use of standardised instrumentation would have been counter-productive. The reason being that, the insightfulness gained from the study by way of perception of causal inferences, access to the actual contexts, behaviours and motives of the participants would have been lost in the rigidity of standardised instrumentation (Bassey, 1999: 81-83; Yin, 2003: 86-87).

The instrumentation for the DA was the assessment tasks of the three CA cycles and the examination of the first term of the Basic 8 learners in two subjects, Business Studies (BS) and Integrated Science (IS), as initially developed by the teachers. I further adapted the

assessment tasks for the CA cycles 2 and 3 and the examination into mediational assessment papers.

DA was used to identify and address the language-related obstacles during debriefing and mediational interaction with the learners concerning the assessments. The DA procedure took the form of a linguistically focused mediation of the test taking skills of the AL participants. The interactions essentially revealed the language-related problematic aspects of the assessments that the AL learners considered to be fundamental challenges to their success and that impacted their achievement negatively. For each subsequent cycle, the assessment tasks were adapted to incorporate the findings that the interactions with the learners revealed.

### 3.3.2.3 Methods of data collection

For an overview of the research plan, the methods of data collection are stipulated briefly below. A description of the process of each follows in 3.4.

(1)  *Assessment cycles and examination*

The data comprised all forms and aspects of response, including the scripts, on the actual assessment of the participants for CA1 "Welcome Test", the two adapted mediational assessments CA2 and CA3, and the adapted mediational examination.

(2)  *Observation*

The observation data comprised my notes on the test-taking behaviour of the participants during the CA cycles. The notes were based on direct observation and video-recordings of the proceedings.

(3)  *Debriefing of learners and mediation – Dynamic Assessment*

The data generated here were in the form of verbatim transcripts of the responses of the participants during the debriefing and mediational sessions.

(4)  *Adaptations of the CA and examination papers – Dynamic Assessment*

The schools' CAs and examinations as well as their adapted questions and formats formed part of the data that facilitated the explanation of the results and findings.

### 3.3.2.4 Data analysis

To complete the overview of the research plan, the methods of data analysis are stipulated briefly below. Explication follows in appropriate positions in the discussion of the findings in Chapter Four.

(1)    *Analysis of assessment cycles and examination data*

Each participant's scripts for the CA cycles were examined individually in respect of receptive and expressive language skills, to identify his/her particular linguistic challenges in terms of the format and linguistic complexity of the items the participants had been able to answer successfully, those where they had made errors, and those they had not attempted. Each participant's scores were also analysed comparatively across the CA cycles and with some reference to the means of the scores of the relevant classes for signs of possible progress. Owing to the small sample and the individual nature of the analyses, no statistical analysis was executed.

(2)    *Analysis of observation*

The observation notes were analysed per participant for behaviours that could be indicative of problematic thoughts and emotions regarding the assessment. This analysis served as a frame to give some direction to the discussions with each participant during debriefing and mediation. The observation notes were also analysed per school using a tabulation method to indicate the behaviours and mannerisms that were more prevalent during the assessment of each subject and could point to factors possibly responsible for some of the test-taking phenomena.

(3)    *Analysis of debriefing of learners and mediation – Dynamic Assessment*

The transcripts of the debriefings and mediations in the original mix of English and Yoruba were analysed per participant, using an explanation-building technique, but with some member checking, with reference to the linguistic challenges experienced. Collective analysis of the debriefing and mediational data per CA cycle was used to arrive at emergent themes for the adaptation of the assessment items in the subsequent CA cycle / examination.

(4)    *Analysis of adapted CA examination papers*

The adapted CA and examination papers were analysed per participant to determine the extent and nature of the receptive and expressive challenges of the participants.

*3.3.2.5 Interpretation*

The interpretation was based on the findings of the CA and examination data. The interpretation also took into account the findings from the analysis of the observations,

debriefing and mediation. An explanation-building technique was used based on the interpretivist paradigm.

### 3.3.3   Role of the researcher

Creswell (2007: 38) describes the qualitative researcher as "key instrument of data collection", generating data from documents, interviews and observation among others. According to Stringer (1993:154), socially responsive qualitative research implies a change in the role of the researcher from "disinterested observer to involved participant". Being an involved participant implies that one must recognise the possible limitations of personal influences and biases in the data collection, analysis and interpretation and guard against the overbearing presence of such perspectives. Examining the issues from a more "dispassionate perspective" is however not easily achievable or provable for that matter (Blaxter *et al.,*1996: 197-198).

The use of DA in the data collection of this study implies that I served as the mediator, attempting to obtain responses from the participants as to what would probably make their assessment less challenging and/or more meaningful. There was a high level of interaction and since the context was natural and the participants' responses and behaviour could not be predefined, it was important for me to be able to answer their questions appropriately with enough sense of understanding and empathy (Blaxter *et al*., 1996:61).  In a sense I was a facilitator of sort, engaging with the participants, teasing out relevant issues and at the same time consciously avoiding deep emotional attachment to the participants or their situation. Though I spoke about finding ways to reduce the assessment challenges created by the language barrier, and though some were eager to transfer dependence to me, there were no promises made to the participants, and no allegiances formed. It was however, a challenge not to let my frustration at the lack of basic infrastructure slip through during the process.

Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003: 159) suggest that a qualitative researcher must learn to empathise with different points of view without being too involved, but they also go further to emphasise that "complete objectivity and neutrality is almost impossible" (Legard *et al*., 2003:160). Snape and Spencer (2003: 17) agree that, more often than not, findings are inevitably influenced by the values and perspective of the researcher, but they suggest that transparency about assumptions on the part of the researcher could minimise this. Henning *et*

*al.* (2004: 6) describe the qualitative researcher as the "analytical instrument" who determines the outcome of research (data) by the knowledge and probable in-depth understanding and expertise demonstrated in the course of analysis and interpretation. The burden of making sense of the data rests with the researcher who has to ensure that the data are transformed into what Henning *et al.,* (2004: 6) call "thick description". This implies that the description has to be coherent, detailed, interpretative and based on underlying theories, thereby engaging fully with the data to bring the various aspects to life. The researcher becomes "a craftsperson who has access to many tools" (Henning *et al.,* 2004:11).

Coming from the background of being an AL learner as well, and knowing at firsthand the difficulty of communication in an AL and the hopelessness of not being able to fully translate an expression or emotion, I had to make a conscious effort as much as possible to put aside personal biases and was upfront about the underlying assumptions of the study. The hindrances to the smooth execution of the various phases of the data collection process also had to be endured and dealt with so as to minimise their impact on the study without affecting motivation. The discussions held with the teachers also gave me an insight into the AL issue as it affects them and their work in the classrooms.  I tried to ensure that the teachers realised that by observing their lessons and asking questions, I was not in any way being judgemental or demonstrating any form of superiority, but attempting to explore the challenges faced by AL learners and possibly contribute to a solution finding process.

## 3.4    THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

### 3.4.1   Introduction

The study was a qualitative action research of DA within a multiple case study over a period of fourteen weeks. This period covered the first term of the school year, which began in September and terminated mid December. The research process was divided into four phases and consisted of three CA cycles followed by a control measure, the end of term examination. Phase I was used to make contact with the schools, for general observation and orientation, to select the participants and observe lessons and the CA1 for BS and IS. The participants were debriefed on their test-taking experiences in the two subjects, with particular reference to the AL. During Phases II and III, the adapted mediational assessments CA2 and CA3 were

conducted and mediation and debriefing on the assessments took place. Phase IV comprised the examination during which the participants took the adapted assessment. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the data collection process.

**Table 3.1      Summary of the phases of data collection**

| PHASES | EVENT/ACTION |
|---|---|
| I: CA1 | "Welcome Test", taken by the whole class; general observation, orientation; contact, debriefing and mediation of participants; adaptation of assessment papers for CA2 |
| II: CA2 | Mediated assessment; observation, debriefing and mediation of participants; collation of participants' responses and observation notes; adaptation of assessment papers for CA3 |
| III: CA3 | Mediated assessment; observation, debriefing, mediation of participants; adaptation of papers for examination. |
| IV: Exam | Adapted end of term examination and comparative analysis of results. |

### 3.4.2   Phase I: Initial contact

*3.4.2.1 Selection of participants and contracting*

The participants were selected from two classes per school in collaboration with teachers who had firsthand knowledge of the learners and hence were able to apply the following exclusion criteria: instability on account of emotional, behavioural and environmental factors such as recent trauma, loss of a family member or illness; high levels of test anxiety; a serious lack of motivation; a tendency towards impulsive behaviour; behavioural challenges and truancy; and an extremely challenging socio-economic background.

The first contact with the selected participants in each school was to inform them of the scope and purposes of the project and contract them for the research. I introduced myself to them and explained in detail the nature of the research and the due processes that would be followed. I gave further explanation to them in the main language of the immediate environment, in both cases Yoruba, to ensure that everyone understood the essence of the project and there was clarity about the participants' role. The participants were informed that all personal details would be expunged from the final document and there would be strict

confidentiality and anonymity. The participants were informed that participation in the research was voluntary and that, though I would appreciate their participation, I could not force them to be part of it and anyone could withdraw at any time. The learners were all very eager to participate. I asked if there were any questions. Some of the questions were:

- Do we still have to attend normal classes when you are here (in their school)?
- How long will it take?
- Will our teachers be told what we say?
- Is it going to replace our examination?
- Who will mark the paper?
- How many tests do we have to write?
- Is the whole class going to be involved at some point?

The relevance of these questions asked by the participants became apparent during the actual data collection process. During the debriefing and mediation, some of the participants' reasons for wanting to use the opportunity to skip class and ensure that their comments about the teachers would not be disclosed were revealed. These will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The letter of informed consent was read to them and also translated into Yoruba for total comprehension. They were given letters for parental consent to take home for their parents/guardians to sign.

I was allowed to observe a couple of the lessons to get a feel of what the atmosphere in the classroom was and to note the relationship between the learners and their teachers.

### 3.4.2.2 CA1: the assessment

The learners were administered what was described as a "welcome test", which the teachers explained was used to get acquainted with the level at which the learners were functioning in their academics after the long vacation and to help them realise that the full academic schedule for the year had commenced. The scores did not form part of the CA for the term. The test questions were not many and as such gave little opportunity for extensive writing of responses. The assessment took less than 20 minutes for most of the class, but the time allowed was 30 minutes.

Observation of the assessment included noting the participants' behaviour and body language, indications of possible emotional reaction to their class work or attitude towards assessment tasks, impact of the experience of having a researcher in the class, teacher/learner relationship and measure of ease with which they communicated, and mood of the classroom generally. Detailed observation of language-related test-taking behaviour included following words with a finger while reading, pausing longer at certain words or phrases, underlining words, time spent on reading questions, tendency to re-read questions, practising responses or the spelling of words on rough paper, and writing smoothly and purposefully or with hesitation. Detailed observation indications of possible emotional behaviour included noting whether the participant seemed, for example, focused or seemingly absent-minded, calm and at ease or anxious and fidgety (see Appendix A for an example; the full audit trail is available on request). I also noted classroom practices, especially as these impacted language-related issues: the modes and linguistic quality of interaction within the classroom, and the level of participation of the learners.

During all the phases of data collection, the schools administered the assessment of a particular subject on the same day and at the same time, rendering it impossible to observe the participants individually. While I observed the two participants of one class, the other class was therefore video-recorded by an assistant and then we would change places in the next phase. The Business Studies (BS) and Integrated Science (IS) assessments during CA1 were in different time slots, on the same day.

Conducting the first observations and video-recordings proved challenging, as it was extremely difficult to observe the participants without obstructing the view of other learners on the blackboard. The general feature of the observation session was that the classrooms were already overcrowded. The questions were written on the blackboard and there was no room for the participants to sit and take the test separately.

### 3.4.2.3 Debriefing and mediation

Debriefing after completion of the assessment involved asking the participants questions about their observed behaviour, as stated in 3.4.2.2. I further enquired about the participant's experience of the assessment. Finally, the debriefing sought broadly to identify the language-related challenges of the CA task and engage the participant in a solution finding exercise with questions such as (Appendix B):

> Which of the questions made sense to you and which didn't?

> What made it take so long for you to read the question(s) and/or to respond?

> What could be done to help you process the questions faster and more clearly in the future?

> Would changing the language or rephrasing the question make it clearer for you to understand what you are expected to do? What should be changed and how?

Prior to the debriefing of the participants on CA1, the BS and IS teachers had both given me access to the participants' answer scripts and this information was put to use in the mediation, which obviously had a more specific focus than the debriefing. Carol Lidz (2002: 73) designed CDA out of the need to "…bridge assessment with intervention and for the results of the assessment to inform instruction." MLE played a key role in the process and the relevant components were intent, meaning, transcendence, joint regard, task regulation, praise and encouragement (Lidz, 2003: 51-53 & 117). The steps outlined by Lidz were modified as follows to ensure suitability for AL learners in mainstream education (Appendix B):

A. Clarify intentions

B. Engage with the participants about their willingness to be partners-in-progress

C. Establish the ease with which the participant can read and decode the questions

D. Explore the linguistic issues and challenges in terms of receptive and expressive levels of language use

E. Explore the cognitive level of the participants in relation to linguistic complexities of the assessment

F. Note adequacy of requisite previous knowledge of the subjects

G. Acknowledge and encourage correct responses

H. Create a solution-finding experience with mutual input

I. Generate suggestions for further reference

The mediational steps were then fleshed out as detailed below to support the participants in this study more adequately:

1) Participant reads the questions on the assessment task without assistance

2) Note points of correction without interruption

3) Read the questions to the participant (if necessary)

4) Ask the participant to model the reading of the questions (if necessary)

5) Establish the participant's level of comprehension of the questions in terms of language

6) Explore the meaning the participant ascribes to the task

7) Ask leading questions that might aid comprehension

8) Assist with lexical and/or grammatical cues

9) Explain the task requirements (if necessary)

10) Ask the participant to respond to selected questions orally

11) Randomly select words/phrases/sentences to be written by the participant

12) Note the level of adequacy of the participant's responses to questions

13) Establish how the participant's vocabulary use could be described

14) Note the participant's spelling proficiency

15) Note the nature of the sentence structure

16) Establish the extent to which the responses to the questions are arranged in a meaningful sequence and how appropriate they are

17) Establish whether or not the participant realises the apparent challenges

18) Ask what the difficulties/challenges are

19) Explore the suggestions the participant believes can facilitate his/her responses to questions

20) Establish if the participant is able to recall and transfer the previous corrections to the next assessment cycle

21) Establish the difficulties with mediational assessment (if any)

22) Clarify any issues/questions that arise from the adapted mediational assessment

23) Note the participant's attitude towards the whole process

24) Solicit suggestions for improvement

25) Establish, from the participant's point of view if any benefits have been derived from the interaction

*3.4.2.4 Collation and classification of CA1 results*

From the answer scripts, I noted spelling and grammatical errors as well as incorrect responses to the assessment questions. The notes obtained from the observation, debriefing and mediation of the participants were reviewed. This involved sorting and categorising the information in terms of receptive and expressive language barriers that could be addressed by mediation in the form of scaffolding. The task would then be to adapt the assessment questions for CA2 by incorporating the comments and suggestions of the participants in

developing appropriate scaffolding to mediate execution of the cognitive-linguistic acts of response at the receptive and expressive level of AL usage, as represented in Figures 3.1 and 3.2. The teachers and I exchanged telephone numbers and I was told that I would be contacted as soon as the date for the CA2 had been fixed and would be given the proposed questions to adapt as agreed.

Decoding the question

RECEPTIVE LEVEL ——————— Understanding the question

Processing the question to determine the response required
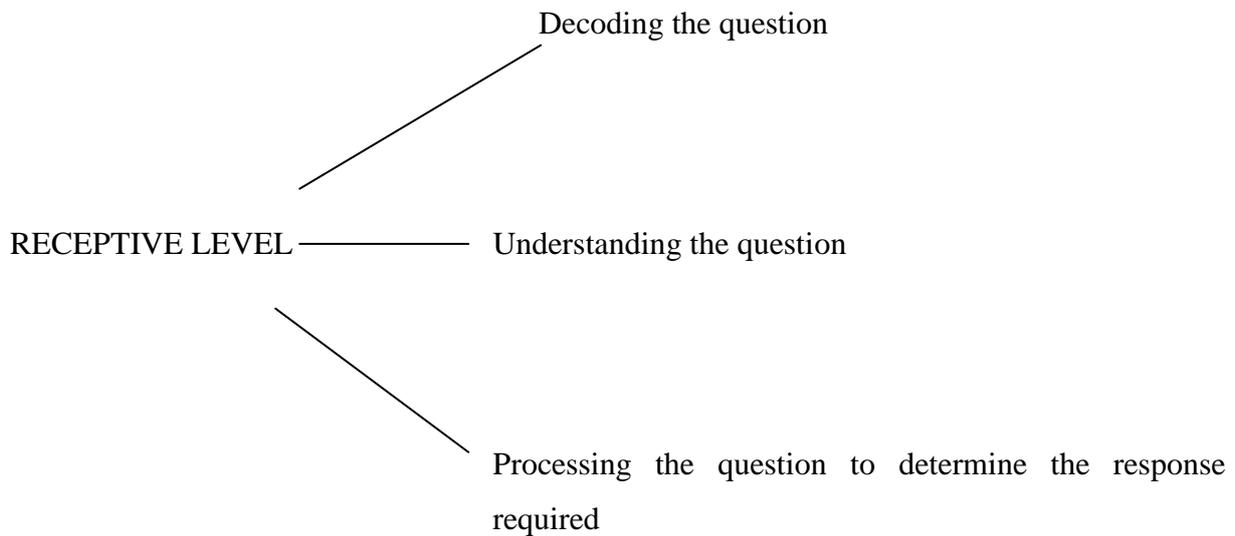
Figure 3.1: Receptive Level of AL Usage

Lexicon

Logical thought

EXPRESSIVE LEVEL ——————— Appropriateness of responses

Writing
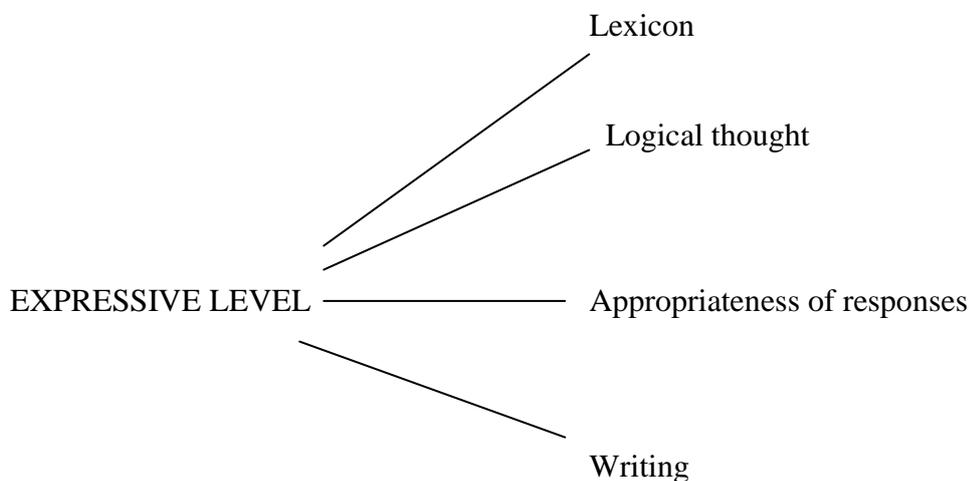
Figure 3.2: Expressive Level of AL Usage

### 3.4.3   Phase II: CA2

*3.4.3.1 Adaptation of CA2 question papers*

The adaptation of the assessment question papers for CA2 involved the development of scaffolding as indicated by the responses obtained during Phase I of the research, to bridge the

language gap and hopefully alleviate some of the challenges identified at both the receptive and expressive levels of the participants' test-taking experiences. The strategies suggested essentially aimed to enhance the assessment material and enable AL participants to self-direct their language-related activities to process the questions and construct their responses more effectively. Figure 3.3 provides a diagrammatic representation of the considerations involved in the adaptation of the assessments.
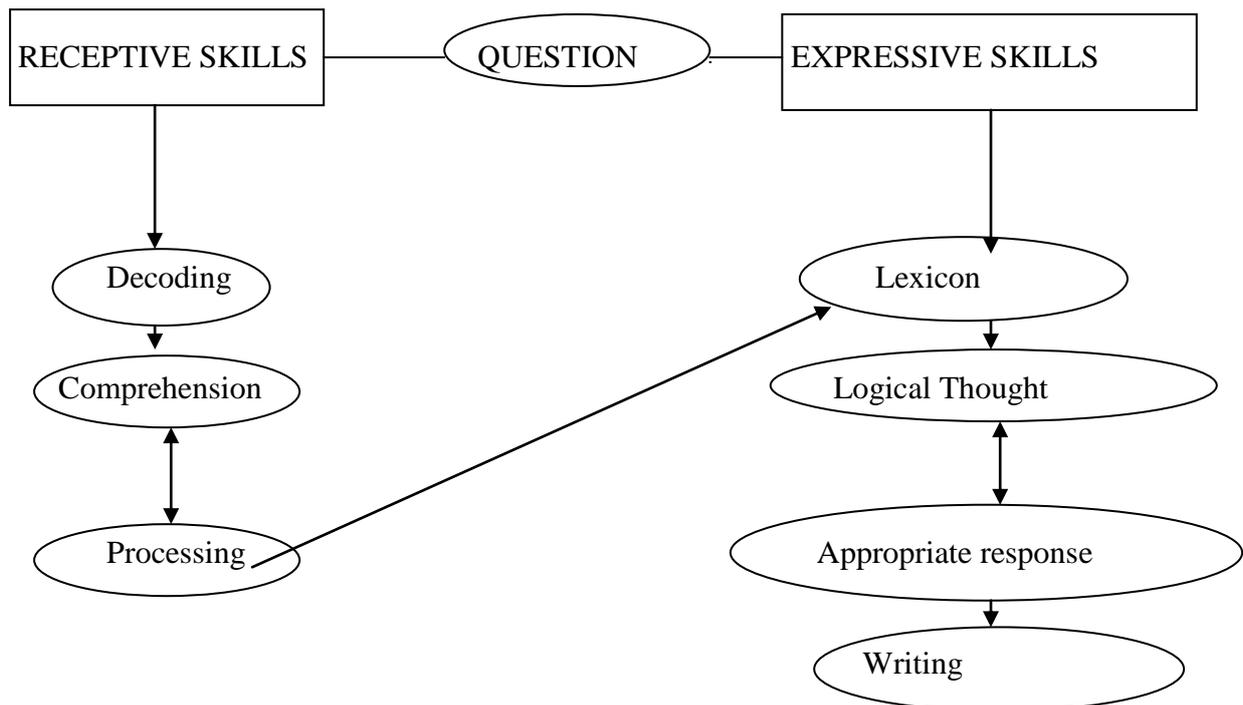


Figure 3.3: Test Adaptation Considerations

In the adaptation of the questions, two variables namely the receptive and expressive skills of the participants had to be taken into consideration as a major determinant of their ability to effectively respond to any given question. Figure 3.3 shows the relationship between the stages of the receptive skills, from the ability of the participant to decode the question, then comprehend the words not just individually but as part of the whole question to make sense. From the comprehension of the question stems the participants' ability to process the question and arrive, albeit mentally, at the knowledge that he/she is required to recall. That done, the initial success at the receptive level is then followed by the demonstration of that knowledge at the expressive level. The participant must possess the requisite lexicon and should be able to form a logical thought sequence which culminates in the writing of an appropriate response.

The focus was to address only the language-related barriers to assessment performance at the receptive level in the anticipation that clear comprehension of the question would facilitate the response process at the expressive level. In addition to the adaptation of the questions, a glossary of terms was provided that further clarified the words appearing in the CA tasks. Some of the terms were subject-specific while others belonged more generally to a lexicon of assessment terms. Examples of the more general terms taken from CA2 are: *differentiate, function* and *describe* (CA2-IS, 1-3). A spelling list was also provided to complement the glossary. The spelling list consisted of a small number of difficult-to-spell words from the topics addressed in the questions, that did not appear in the assessment paper or glossary. Care was taken not to provide a lead as to content required in the responses, i.e. not to provide an unfair advantage to the participants, but to mediate one aspect of the formal presentation of their responses. Table 3.2 contains examples of two questions for IS taken from CA2, with the adaptations in italics. The full mediational paper for CA2-IS is included in Appendix C. The other mediational papers are contained in the audit trail, which is available on request.

**Table 3.2 Sample of adapted CA questions**

| Teacher's Question | Adapted Question |
|---|---|
| 1. Name three (3) major types of soil. | 1. *Write down the three (3) most common* types of soil. |
| 2. Which of the soil types <br> (a) has the largest pore spaces | 2. Which of the *kinds* of soil <br> (a) has the *biggest* pore spaces (*the most spaces between pores*). |
| (b) has poor water holding capacity | (b) *cannot hold as much* water *as the others*. |
| (c) is sticky and mouldable in wet form | (c) is sticky and *can be made into different shapes when* wet. |
| (d) is the best soil for farming | (d) is *better than all the other kinds of soil* for farming |

\* Adaptations are italicised here for purpose of comparison – presented to participants in normal typeface.


*3.4.3.2 CA2: the assessment*

Phase II witnessed the administration of the first adapted mediational test. The practice in the schools was to write the assessment questions on the blackboard. This the teachers did during all the CA cycles and the examination. The participants were given paper copies of the adapted questions. The observation procedure took more or less the same format as the first

observation. The initial challenges experienced during the first phase of observation were not as prominent. Having a "third party" in the classroom no longer seemed to matter. Apart from an occasional glance in my direction the learners did the test with relative composure.

### 3.4.3.3 Debriefing and mediation

During the debriefing and mediation the participants were asked to comment on the adapted assessment, stating its value, if any, and suggesting what should be retained, enhanced or discarded. The participant gave their opinions on the adaptation and mentioned what was useful as well as obstructive to them. An example was the glossary of terms which deemed beneficial. Mediation ran the same course as for CA1.

### 3.4.3.4 Collation and classification of CA2 results

As with CA1, the observation, debriefing and mediational notes were collated. The errors on the scripts were also noted. The pattern of the participants' responses was taken into consideration and examined against their answer scripts. It also gave an indication of what the further focus of the mediation per participant should be.

## 3.4.4   Phase III: CA3

### 3.4.4.1 Adaptation of CA3 question papers

The review of the encounter with the participants informed the further adaptation of the assessment where the spelling list and glossary were adjusted in length and complexity in an attempt to incorporate the suggestions of the participants.

### 3.4.4.2 CA3: the assessment

As with CA2, the participants were administered the adapted mediational assessment in both BS and IS.

### 3.4.4.3 Debriefing and mediation

The debriefing and mediation ran the same course as with CA1 and CA2.

### 3.4.4.4 Collation and classification of CA3 results

The same process as with CA1 and CA2 was adopted.

### 3.4.5 Phase IV: Examination

*3.4.5.1 The examination*

The examination questions were written on the blackboard for the non-participating learners while those participating were given the printed adapted assessment papers. The teachers explained to the learners what they were supposed to do. There were no problems with that possibly due to the fact that I had been a regular feature in the schools.

*3.4.5.2 Post-experience informal discussion*

Instead of debriefing and mediation, the participants and I had a post-experience informal discussion that represented the last actual contact with the participants. The discussion was centred on the participants' experience of the project, their opinion in terms of the benefits or otherwise of the interactions and any other comments they had and had not had the opportunity to express. I expressed my gratitude to the participants for taking part in the project and for contributing to my further understanding of the use of DA in mainstream education.

In summary of the data collection process, Table 3.3 shows the programme of activities and specifies the participants in each. All the participants in the 4 participating classes were AL learners.

**Table 3.3    Programme of Activities**

| School – class | Participant | Data-collection phase | Integrated Science | Business Studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| LIB –A | All AL learners | I (CA 1) | | |
| | AF & AM | II (CA 2) | O | V |
| | AF & AM | III (CA 3) | V | O |
| | AF & AM | IV (exam.) | V | O |
| LIB –B | All AL learners | I (CA 1) | | |
| | BF & BM | II (CA 2) | V | O |
| | BF & BM | III (CA 3) | O | V |
| | BF & BM | IV (exam.) | O | V |
| MIB –C | All AL learners | I (CA 1) | | |
| | CF & CM | II (CA 2) | O | V |
| | CF & CM | III (CA 3) | V | O |
| | CF & CM | IV (exam.) | V | O |
| MIB –D | All AL learners | I (CA 1) | | |
| | DF & DM | II (CA 2) | V | O |
| | DF & DM | III (CA 3) | O | V |
| | DF & DM | IV (exam.) | O | V |

**Key**

O       = Participants observed directly during assessment

V       = Participants video recorded during assessment

**Key**

| Participant | School | Class | Participant code |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | LIB | A | AF |
| 2 | LIB | A | AM |
| 3 | LIB | B | BF |
| 4 | LIB | B | BM |
| 5 | MIB | C | CF |
| 6 | MIB | C | CM |
| 7 | MIB | D | DF |
| 8 | MIB | D | DM |

## 3.5 Analysis of data

The data were analysed per participant (per case) comparing the results of the CA and examination papers and using an explanation-building technique. The participants' scripts were analysed to divulge the language challenges visible on them and categorise them into receptive and expressive barriers. The scores on each CA were compared with the previous to establish any changes that might have occurred. Further analysis was carried out to establish the nature of the questions the learners found difficult. The scores of all the four participants were thereafter compared with each other to determine whether or not there was a pattern. No statistical analysis was conducted since it was not deemed meaningful to compare the results of the individual learners with those of the group, and no inferences could be drawn.

## 3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to the commencement of the data collection, approval for the research was sought and obtained from the Lagos State Ministry. A detailed letter disclosing the basis and nature of the research, the requirements of the researcher in terms of schools and participants as well as the anticipated duration of the study was sent to the ministry. The Ministry responded with a letter of approval to conduct research of a limited nature and letters were also sent to the schools informing them of the approval.

The approval from the Ministry and formal letters of introduction explaining in detail the whole process of data collection and interaction with the schools and AL learners were presented to the schools. Subsequently, there were informal discussions with the school principals and teachers of the relevant classes, during which all their questions and concerns were addressed.

Letters of informed consent and parental consent forms were prepared for the participants (Appendix D). The letters reiterated that the participants' basic rights would be respected including their right of refusal to participate, and their right to privacy and confidentiality.

Throughout the course of the fieldwork, the dignity of the participants was upheld. There was no humiliation of the participants neither was there any form of physical or psychological

abuse or mental discomfort. The participants were encouraged to realise their potential. Appropriate language and behaviour were used at all times.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

## 4.1    INTRODUCTION

The study explored ways in which DA could contribute to a solution to the assessment dilemma of AL learners, while investigating how CDA could influence the learning and performance of AL learners. The study further investigated the effect of both the usual static forms of assessment and DA on the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their performance. Finally, the study investigated ways of conducting DA that would prevent it from constituting an undue advantage for AL learners.

The objective of this chapter is to present the results and findings of the study. In order to minimise repetition, the presentation of the results commences with a description of the context within which the study took place. This incorporates the general description of all the participants, the two schools, classroom observations and the relationships within the schools. The chapter then presents the results and findings per school in respect of individual participants per school covering the debriefing (CA1-CA3) and mediation, the answer scripts and an overall discussion of the findings concerning the participant in terms of the AL factor, the impact of DA and affect. The presentation per school concludes with a comparative analysis of the participants' performance.

## 4.2    THE PARTICIPANTS

The participants were purposively selected from two schools that catered for learners from different socio-economic backgrounds, the lower income bracket (LIB) and the middle-income bracket (MIB). There was an equal number of males and females. The number of siblings the participants had and their position in their respective families were taken into consideration in the data analysis. This I deemed relevant because within the Nigerian context a range of issues could possibly be clarified with this information. Depending on the socio-economic composition of the immediate social environment, the extent of exposure to the LoLT could be inferred, as well as the probability of additional support for the learner. The support for the learner could, for example, be in the form of tutoring or checking by older

members of the family or there could be a lack of any form of assistance. In instances where the family size is small, parents might be able to render some level of support or pay for such support by employing private home tutors or by using organised after-school coaching.

Two classrooms per school and two participants per class (one male and one female) were involved in the study, totalling eight participants. In the LIB School the classes involved were coded A and B, and in the MIB School C and D. In the A-class of the LIB School the two participants were coded AF (the female participant) and AM (the male participant), and in the B-class BF (the female participant) and BM (the male participant). The same method of coding applied to the MIB School. In the C-class the participants were coded CF and CM, and in the D-class DF and DM. The subjects involved for all participants were Business Studies (BS) and Integrated Science (IS). Table 4.1 summarises the participants' profiles.

**Table 4.1       Participant Description**

| Participant | Age | Gender | No.     of siblings +participants | Position in family | School | Class | Participant code |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 15 | Female | 5 | 5th | LIB | A | AF |
| 2 | 15 | Male | 7 | 4th | LIB | A | AM |
| 3 | 13 | Female | 6 | 2nd | LIB | B | BF |
| 4 | 14 | Male | 5 | 3rd | LIB | B | BM |
| 5 | 13 | Female | 4 | 3rd | MIB | C | CF |
| 6 | 12 | Male | 4 | 3rd | MIB | C | CM |
| 7 | 11 | Female | 3 | 2nd | MIB | D | DF |
| 8 | 11 | Male | 4 | 2nd | MIB | D | DM |

Table 4.1 reveals that the LIB School had learners who were older, the youngest (No.3 – 13 years old) being the same age as the oldest participant (No.5) in the MIB School. The LIB School participants were also from bigger families (5-7 siblings). Though it was not by design, none of the participants was the first child in their families. The fact that they all had older siblings created the possibility of sibling support.

## 4.3     THE SCHOOLS

### 4.3.1   Introduction

It is important to the interpretation of the data to have a proper understanding of the contextual framework. This cannot be over-emphasised as the school environment in itself

could compromise the data. I have therefore described the context within which the data from each school were gathered to enable an informed understanding of some of the basic challenges for learning as well as research brought about by the nature of the environment.

### 4.3.2   School environment: LIB

The LIB School was located within a community that was comprised largely of lower income earners consisting mostly of petty traders, farmers and artisans, although there was now a gradual influx into the area of relatively higher income earners, including some professionals. The area was 45km from the city centre. The main language of the immediate environment was Yoruba. People of other tribes whose native languages differ were in the minority. Inhabitants used Yoruba, English or Pidgin to communicate with each other and mainly English and Pidgin for inter-tribe communication. The school catered for learners within the immediate environment that was within walking distance (though sometimes quite far) and indeed virtually all the learners walked to and from school.

The local community had an estimated population of about 150,000 and the types of dwellings ranged from houses with families of between 4 – 8 members occupying a single room or two per family, to a single family occupying a whole house. There was a community library that was not properly maintained. The open space that was earmarked for the community stadium was almost completely covered in weeds. There were no other parks or organised leisure areas for children. Children played in front of their homes. There was, however, a youth organisation whose objective it was to arrange events for the youths from different schools at different times during the school year. There was a health centre designed for ante and post natal care of women and infants. There were also two small private clinics, but serious illnesses had to be treated in hospitals elsewhere. There was some form of communal living in the sense that neighbours sometimes took care of each other's children while the parents were out. There was no visible culture of reading for leisure, the oral story-telling and playing was more predominant. Some learners helped their mothers sell items after school to help earn more income.

The LIB School itself was on a large expanse of land with only a small portion built up. The rest had green grass and playing fields for the learners. At the time of the study, the built-up portion comprised a Junior and Senior secondary school. The Junior Secondary (Basic 7 – 9),

which was the focus of this research, had three single-storey blocks of classrooms and an administrative block. Only the administrative block was painted. The classroom blocks each accommodated a year group consisting of four to five classes, with an average of 60 learners per class. The Basic 8 had five classrooms running from Basic 8A to 8E. The total number of learners in the Junior Secondary School was in the range of 1100.

The classroom spaces were virtually identical except for the direction the learners faced while seated. There were wooden desks and benches, designed for two learners but the learners sat three to a desk. I was informed that learners in this school sometimes had to provide their own desks. The desks were placed in four rows, with very little space between. The largest space in the classroom was about 1.5metres and this was between the first desk and the blackboard where the teacher stood. There were no teachers' tables provided in the classroom spaces.

The blackboard served as a partitioning wall between one classroom space and the other. So for those classes in the middle of the block, as for the observed classes, there were two openings, one in the front and one at the back. These openings created avenues for external distractions, especially for learners sitting at the back of the class and in the side rows. Distractions were sometimes due to noise from learners in adjoining classrooms because they were momentarily left unattended. The distractions could also be in the form of hearing the voice of the teacher in the other classroom.

The openings also facilitated a free flow of learners and teachers from one classroom space to the other. Except for those seated directly in front of the blackboard, the learners could actually see what was going on in the next class and hearing the other teacher was not difficult either.

The classroom block had neither windows nor a ceiling. Large open spaces between the walls and the roof provided ventilation. There were open doorways without doors leading into the classroom spaces and hence the learners could also see anybody moving around within the school premises. The walls ended just above the learners' heads when seated, and standing they could see what was going on outside the classroom. The available wall space, which was limited to begin with, was bare. There were no displays of posters, charts or the work of learners. No stacks of books or any form of instructional materials was visible.

The school infrastructure was inadequate and posed a major challenge for both the teachers and the learners. There was no sign of electricity in the classroom spaces. Only the administrative building, which included the staff rooms, had visible signs of electricity, although there was hardly ever any power due to incessant load shedding. Other basic amenities such as a library, laboratories and toilet facilities were inadequate. The environment was not conducive for meaningful teaching and learning to occur with ease.

The school day usually began at a quarter to eight in the morning and ended at two in the afternoon. There was morning assembly during which prayers were said before the school's daily programmes began. Latecomers to school and assembly were punished. There were eight periods of 40 minutes during each day. A teacher was in charge of keeping time and the school prefect rang the bell to signify the beginning and end of the lessons. The learners remained in their classroom spaces and the teachers came in to teach the various subjects. There were two break periods, short break (10 minutes) and long break (30 minutes).

Discipline was enforced by punishments such as kneeling down, washing toilets, picking up litter or receiving a beating. The classrooms were managed largely by the threat of punishment. The school focused a lot on maintaining order and not allowing the learners to be disruptive in the class. Respect from the learners towards the teachers generally was obvious as the learners stopped all unwanted activities in view of the teachers. Open confrontation with or outright disobedience to a teacher was unthinkable and had severe consequences.
The principal of the school was not very visible during my interaction with the school. The vice principal was the person that took charge of the daily activities. She frequently moved around the school and spoke with the teachers and learners.

The school had a Parent Teachers Association (PTA) that met at least once a term to discuss issues concerning the learners and the school. However, many parents did not honour the invitation to come to these meetings and hence did not actively participate in the decision-making exercises of the school. Discussions with the teachers left me with the impression that the teachers had resigned themselves to the inadequacy of the infrastructure, the poor teaching environment, the lack of provision of the basic requisite instructional materials and parents who could not be bothered about the progress of the school. The tone was that the teachers just put in what they perceived as their best possible effort under the circumstances.

### 4.3.3 School environment: MIB

The community within which the MIB School was located was mixed, comprising people from different backgrounds. Mainly offices and other businesses surrounded it. Residences were 3km away from the school. The main language of the immediate environment was Yoruba, although there were people from other ethnic groups resident within that community. The languages of communication were largely Yoruba, English and Pidgin. The school catered for learners from all over Lagos and some other states in the country. The learners from long distances away resided in the boarding house. A visible difference from the LIB School was observed in respect of provision, appearance and maintenance of the infrastructure.

The school was much bigger in terms of physical size and the number of learners (2364). The school provided boarding for as many as 60% of the learners, some due to long distances from their homes and others because of problems associated with commuting daily, or because the parents believed that their children would get more support from being in the boarding school.

Being a middle-income government school, the basic infrastructures were provided, for example there were electrical connections for lighting in the classrooms, but there was never power supply on any of the occasions I was in the school. The classroom blocks were properly built and had full concrete walls between them and wooden shutter windows. But the classrooms were sorely overcrowded, with numbers ranging between 100 and 136 per classroom of about 30 metres square in the Basic 8 block. The learners used wooden desks and benches. They sat six to a desk that ideally should seat three or at most four learners. The classrooms for the lessons observed contained 106 and 104 learners, not counting some who were absent.

The desks were arranged in rows of three, each row having eight desks. This made it difficult for the teacher to engage all the learners. There was no room to move around freely and it was difficult to know who was absent or present unless one specifically took attendance or required the attention of a learner for a specific reason. The spaces between the rows of desks formed the aisles that the teacher moved through while speaking to the learners. The blackboard took up almost the full length of the wall. The space between the blackboard and

the first set of desks was about one metre. It was difficult for the learners to move around freely or leave their seats without disturbing others and distracting their attention.

The wall spaces in the classrooms observed had no visuals in the form of charts, posters, learners' projects and other materials. The wall at the back in one of the classrooms had a duty roster for cleaning the classroom. There were no teachers' tables in the classrooms observed. The teachers placed their notebooks on a chair and proceeded to teach from there. But there was actually no space anyway where the teachers' tables could have fitted into properly. One of the reasons offered for the large numbers of the learners per class was that the school was over-subscribed annually. Since the school provided the entire basic infrastructure, had qualified teachers and was relatively affordable, many parents wanted their children/wards to attend there and pressurised the school for admission.

The crowded classroom environment seemed to make it extremely difficult for learners to maximise the teaching experience. This was not particularly due to any teacher errors and/or teaching style, but to the sheer number of learners in the class. Asked why more classrooms were not provided, given that the school had ample space for further development, the explanation was that the state education board had the responsibility of providing the infrastructure and the school itself could do nothing but put in their request and wait. The PTA had donated one of the existing blocks of classrooms.

The school day ran from quarter to eight to two o'clock, after which extra lessons were offered before the boarders returned to their hostels. There were eight periods of 40 minutes in a day. The school bell was rung by the school prefect in charge to signify the beginning and end of the periods. The Vice Principal Academics was responsible for the timetable and time keeping of the school. Latecomers were told to stand aside and the teacher on duty would then beat them with a stick.

There was consistent order and discipline in the school. Discipline was enforced by punishments such as picking up litter, being beaten, kneeling down, standing in front of the staff room or being suspended from school. All the learners remained in their classrooms whether or not a teacher was present. Some of the teachers carried canes to beat any learner that misbehaved and crossed their path.

The school had a standard library that appeared largely under-utilised and still had space for a lot more books. There was a large school hall, science laboratories and a dining hall. Here too the vice principal and the various heads of departments were more visible than the principal. The more senior members of staff were in a separate staff room while the other teachers used large overcrowded staff rooms. The school had an active PTA that met at least once a term to determine the issues affecting the teachers, the learners and the school. The PTA sometimes donated equipment and other things that the school required but could not afford.

## 4.4 CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

### 4.4.1 Introduction

The fact that no two classes can be exactly the same given that there are numerous factors that influence the process within any class, makes it pertinent to observe the classroom environment. For the purposes of analysis and interpretation of the data it is important to note similarities and differences including those that are minute.

During the observation of lessons in both schools, the language of interaction between the teacher and learners and between learners when communicating among themselves was noted and classified in terms of the quality of English spoken by the learners in the classroom. The quality of English ranged from above average (AAv.) and average (Av.) to below average (BAv.). *Average* here refers to the ability of the learner to communicate at the level of the basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and not necessarily cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). *Average* means the learner had competent social communicative ability i.e. could understand and be understood in the everyday use of English. Those classified as *above average* tended towards the achievement of CALP but did not necessarily command excellent academic use of English. Those classified as *below average* found even the everyday social use of English challenging and their utterances required constant correction.

The frequency of code switching and code mixing within the classroom during lessons was categorised as being high (H), medium (M) or low (L). *High frequency* of code switching here refers to situations where 25% or more of the lesson was conducted in a language other than

the LoLT. *Medium frequency* means less than 25% while *low frequency* refers to an occasional interjection of a phrase, expression or sentence in another language.

The atmosphere of the classroom as well as the general <u>teacher/learner relationship</u> was noted. The teacher/learner relationship described in Section 4.4.6 and 4.4.7 does not refer to the participants in particular, but to all the learners in the class, to get a feel of the context and dynamics of the classroom environment in relation to each teacher and the learners. The <u>occurrence of interaction</u> was also classified using *above average*, *average* and *below average* (AAv., Av., BAv.). Here, *above average* refers to active engagement and involvement of the learners in the lesson, the indications of eagerness with which the learners participated. *Below average* refers to a non-interactive environment where learners were onlookers. Since the nature of the subject and the topic and logistics of the lesson are contributory factors to the incidence of engagement and involvement between the teacher and learners, these have been taken into consideration in making statements and a classification.

The teachers have been given codes according to the schools and the subjects taught. The BS teacher from the LIB School has been coded LIB-BS and the others, LIB-IS, MIB-BS and MIB-IS.

## 4.4.2   The lessons: LIB School

*4.4.2.1 Business Studies (BS)*

The first lesson observation in the school was BS in Class A. During this lesson observation, -BS had to make a conscious effort to steer the learners' attention away from me and he only succeeded after a few minutes. He explained to them that I was in the school to do research and that the learners would see me regularly till the end of the term. The atmosphere was strictly that of civility and respect. There were no active and interactive discussions. The topic of study during the classroom observation was "Office Practices", and the lesson was conducted exclusively in English.

LIB-BS explained the topic in detail and referred to previous lessons. He did not use any form of instructional materials. The textbook used by the learners also did not have pictures or diagrams relating to the topic. LIB-BS used the blackboard extensively for writing notes and commanded the learners to take them down. Once LIB-BS started to write on the blackboard

the learners seemed more active and intent on writing the notes as quickly as possible. Up to half of the learners in the class could not keep up as they could be seen looking at each other's notes to complete sentences. About five of them started writing late because they were asking others for writing materials such as paper and biro.

LIB-BS wrote the notes from loose sheets he had brought with him. The notes took up about two pages in the learners' exercise books. The language used in the notes was not linguistically complex though visual examples would have facilitated learning. Some of the terminology used in the notes and explanations such as *In Box*, *Out Box*, *Filing Cabinets* could in my opinion have conveyed more meaning had pictures been provided to show the learners exactly what LIB-BS was talking about.

The majority of the learners did not have textbooks and more than ten of them did not have proper writing materials either, but had small exercise books that were inappropriate for that class, and about four of them wrote on loose sheets. This issue later became the focus of discussion between a couple of the teachers and me during our post debriefing discussions.

My assessment of the situation was that for those learners who did not really desire to pay attention there was ample opportunity to find other occupation apart from being attentive and participative in class. Once LIB-BS's back was turned, some learners spoke to each other, exchanged items and giggled. It was not always easy to distinguish the noise coming from the other classroom spaces from that coming from the class being observed. When the teacher turned around to face them, the learners behaved themselves.

*4.4.2.2 Integrated Science (IS)*

The observation of the IS lesson took place in Class B, and by this time the learners were already used to seeing me around the school. LIB-IS still introduced me to the learners and explained that I would be sitting in to observe the lesson as part of my project in the school. She also reminded them to be on their best behaviour. They greeted me in the usual manner and but for the occasional glance the learners did not pay much attention to me.

LIB-IS seemed more friendly and accommodating with the learners than LIB-BS. She spoke in a high-pitched voice that could be heard clearly at the back of the class. The topic being

dealt with during the lesson was "Types of soil". LIB-IS used English and Yoruba to explain the different types of soil to the learners and she went as far as using the Yoruba words for the different types of soil. Here again no visual instructional materials were used. The IS lesson had a higher degree of lexical and conceptual complexity. Terms such as *cultivation, crop rotation, irrigation* were difficult for the teacher to simplify and explain. It was even difficult to use Yoruba to explain as the Yoruba terminology for such concepts was equally complex. Much of the lesson period was taken up with LIB-IS' explanations, so the notes taken down by the learners during the lesson were much less. Two learners used Yoruba expressions and asked LIB-IS if it meant the same thing as she was trying to explain. Both times LIB-IS rephrased what the learner had said and asked if that sounded better. For instance, one learner said, "awon agbe ma ngbin agbado[1]" (LIB-IS/LOL, 13)[2] and LIB-IS said, "Well, not just maize but many other food and cash crops awon nkon tan ma nje ati awon imi ti won ma a ta as exports crops[3]" (LIB-IS/LOT, 25). LIB-IS also modelled responses to learners who attempted to speak English. " … the farmer go to do farm" (LIB-IS/LOL, 15) – "Farmers cultivate the soil and plant crops" (LIB-IS/LOT, 31).

None of the learners had the IS textbook with them during the lesson observation. They had not had time to borrow from learners in the other classroom spaces before LIB-IS got to their class. The learners were required to write less lesson notes even though they had no textbooks. Though the subject was deemed more difficult, the learners seemed to be more at ease during the IS lesson because LIB-IS was friendly and accommodating. But the level of participation and interaction could have been improved on if there had been instructional materials or specific activities planned for the lesson period.

LIB-IS used extensive code switching and code mixing and appeared to make strong efforts to get her learners to understand the lesson. She later informed me that for some of the lessons she brought actual items to the classroom for the learners to see and sometimes, where pictures were available, she passed them round the class to facilitate understanding.

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[1] The learner's expression means: *Farmers plant maize or corn.*

[2] *The reference coding system uses the* <u>teacher code</u> *(LIB-IS) to indicate which subject, the* <u>context</u> *i.e. lesson observation (LO) and the* <u>individual concerned,</u> *either the learner (L) or teacher (T). In this case LIB-IS/LOL refers to a* <u>learner</u> *during the observation of the* <u>IS lesson</u> *in the* <u>LIB School</u>*. See Appendix A for the full Reference Coding System.*

[3] *… not just the things we eat but also those we sell as exports crops.*

### 4.4.3   The lessons: MIB School

*4.4.3.1 Business Studies (BS)*

The BS lesson was observed in Class C. My introduction to the learners was very brief. MIB-BS just explained to the learners that there was a visitor in the classroom for the period and that they should behave themselves.

The topic of the lesson observed was "Types of Markets". MIB-BS provided a clear message of the objective of the lesson. She discussed the topic moving around the classroom while occasionally writing on the blackboard. MIB-BS tried to connect the lesson to the previous work the learners had done. She did not use any form of instructional materials but she was able to maintain the attention of the learners. MIB-BS referred the learners to their textbook on three occasions but about a third of the learners had no textbooks. I was told that some of the learners had not bought the textbook while others had lost theirs or had not brought the textbook to school on that day.  Those that had the required textbook shared with those that did not. The topic being taught had much technical and complex terminology, such as *commodity, retail, wholesale, promissory note*. Some of the learners seemed to follow while others looked on blankly.

The lesson was interactive because MIB-BS asked questions and pointed at those learners that did not volunteer to answer. On occasion when a learner did not respond she called on another to assist. She told the first learner that it was because he was not paying attention that she had called on him and asked that he repeat the answer and remain standing. He stood for about five minutes before MIB-BS told him to sit down.

The seating arrangement did not seem to be very comfortable and writing seemed difficult for some of the learners. More than ten learners did not have notebooks and wrote on loose sheets of paper, and I saw two learners who seemed to be looking for writing materials while the others were already busy writing. Although the notes written on the blackboard by MIB-BS were not voluminous, they would obviously not have completed the notes. The distractions were minimal as there was no real opportunity for the learners to focus on anything other than the lesson activities. The learners behaved well during the lesson.

*4.4.3.2 Integrated Science (IS)*

The observation of the IS lesson took place in Class D. MIB-IS briefly introduced me to the learners and proceeded with the lesson, which took place in the classroom and not the Science laboratory, since no experiment had been planned for the period. She informed the learners of the topic for discussion ("Digestion") and wrote this on the blackboard. The learners seemed interested in the IS lesson. From the beginning of the lesson MIB-IS engaged the attention of the learners and successfully maintained it in positive ways. The learners participated actively. She first of all started a discussion about the types of meals different learners had had in the days preceding and what they thought had happened to the food.

The learners seemed willing to participate and answer questions. MIB-IS tried to connect the lesson to the learners' previous learning and their daily experiences. The lesson was interactive. She was able to balance the different ability groups by asking learners to help each other answer questions such as "What is peristalsis?" "Who can demonstrate?" "Let's have someone volunteer to help Taiwo answer the question"(MIB-IS/LOT, 17). The learners also asked questions, e.g. one learner wanted to know whether the size of people's stomachs had to do with digestion of the food they ate. MIB-IS proceeded to ask other members of the classroom what they thought before she offered her own explanation.

MIB-IS referred the learners to their textbook. Not all the learners, however, had the prescribed textbook and therefore they shared with others. Although MIB-IS had not brought any instructional materials to the classroom, she drew a diagram on the blackboard and used it to explain the topic. She told the learners to draw the diagram in their notebooks and said that those who had textbooks could copy the diagram from there while the others should use the one on the blackboard. There were about six of the learners who wrote on sheets of paper. I was told they had either lost their notebooks or had left them at home.

### 4.4.4   Language of communication: LIB School

The learners communicated and interacted well with one another, they chatted at every opportunity. In and out of the classroom the learners had conversations among themselves, speaking mainly Yoruba. Occasionally I heard class prefects shouting simple instructions in English, such as "Sit down" or "Stop making noise", but Yoruba was the main language of communication among the learners, especially outside the classroom space.

The English the learners used was limited to their interaction with the teachers. The quality of English spoken by the learners was generally below average. There were many instances when learners mixed Yoruba and English. In an informal interview with one of the teachers, I was informed that about 70% of the learners could not express themselves properly in English and depended mainly on code switching and code mixing. While speaking with their teachers, learners would often start with a couple of words of English and finish off in Yoruba. The general, short phrases would be expressed in English while the main ideas would be expressed in Yoruba. At other times the learners would speak Pidgin. A learner once said to a teacher on the way out of the staffroom "Good morning, Ma, please, Ma, they said uhmmm … won ni ki nwa bere pe se ehin le nlo si 2C?"[4] (LIB/GOL, 7) Teachers' comments were sometimes made in Yoruba.

During the BS lesson, LIB-BS did not speak any Yoruba at all. He used English exclusively while teaching the subject content and also when addressing individuals directly. No code switching or code mixing by the teacher was recorded. During the course of the lesson LIB-BS asked some questions, but he got immediate responses to only those questions that required single word answers. When he asked learners to mention those items found in an office they called out "table, chair, visitor".  When he called on a learner to explain what goes on in an office, the learner stood without speaking and no other learner volunteered to answer. This occurred twice with different learners. LIB-BS then proceeded to go over that aspect of his lesson again. Thereafter, he asked another learner to answer the question. The learner attempted to answer but his subject/verb agreement and grammar had to be constantly corrected by LIB-BS.

During the course of the IS lesson, LIB-IS used code switching and code mixing when talking to individuals, calling them to attention or giving instructions. It seemed to be a somewhat automatic act, since, almost as soon as it had happened, the teacher returned to the lesson and spoke proper English again. *Proper English* in this case refers to the use of correct grammatical structure and not necessarily pronunciation. There were many instances where LIB-IS' Yoruba intonation and accent interfered with the English.

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[4] *Uhmmm… I was told to ask if you were the one going in to teach Class 2C.*

LIB-IS started off in English, then would direct a comment to a learner or group of learners in Yoruba, and automatically switch back to English to continue the lesson. Once the main idea had been expressed, LIB-IS repeated the section in Yoruba. For example, *soil cultivation* was first of all explained in English and then the explanation was repeated in Yoruba, using the Yoruba equivalents and explaining the science concepts and objects in Yoruba. Code switching was thus used extensively and there were a couple of instances when she also tried to explain aspects of the content in Yoruba briefly in response to questions that demonstrated lack of comprehension on the part of the learner. The following conversation is an example, when crop cultivation was mentioned.

| | |
|---|---|
| Learner 1: | Esskusse me, Ma, se bi awa na se ngbin tomato si ehin kule wa ni?"[5] |
| LIB-IS: | Yes Tola, but you know in this case it's on a much larger scale, more than what one family can use. I mean, ko ki nse nkon ti iwo ati awon parents e pelu awon aburo ati egbon e, gbogbo ehin ti e jo ngbele o le je e tan[6]. So, what's going to happen? Ki ni o ma sele ? Ki ni won ma a se?[7] |
| Learner 2: | They will sell! |
| Learner 1: | Won ma a ta a![8] |
| Learner 3: | Won a fun yan![9] |
| Learner 4: | Won a toju e![10] |
| LIB-IS: | Yes, won ma a need lati ta a.[11] The farmers would have to sell and that's why the crops are grown… for sale. So, which type of soil would you, Tola, say was in your garden where you plant tomatoes? Iru ile wo lo wa lehin kule yin. Iru wo gan gan larin awon ti a nso?[12] Which one? |
| Learner 5: | Gbogbo e ni Ma![13] |
| LIB-IS: | Don't shout raise your hand! Anybody else? |
| Learners: | Me, Ma! |
| | Me, Ma! |
| | Excuse, Ma! |
| LIB-IS: | Tunde, yes? |
| Learner 6: | All of it are there! |
| LIB-IS: | All of them ARE there. Tunde says all the types of soil are in his backyard, onigbogbo orisirisi soil ta nsoro e lo wa lehin kule won.[14] Is that possible? (LIB-IS/LOL, 1-6) |

LIB-IS engaged in code switching out of frustration that the learners were unable to fully comprehend the content of the lesson. The learners indeed confirmed this during the debriefing and so did LIB-IS during our conversations. Yoruba was the only other language

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[5] *Excuse me, Ma, are you referring to the way we plant tomatoes in the garden at the back of our house?*

[6] *… it's not what you, your parents and siblings, one family can consume*

[7] *…so, what's going to happen, what will they do?*

[8] *They will sell!*

[9] *They'll give them out!*

[10] *They'll preserve them!*

[11] *… they'll have to sell*

[12] *…which type of soil would you say was in your backyard, exactly, which of the ones that we've been discussing?*

[13] *All of them are there, Ma!*

LIB-IS used. The situation seemed to be facilitated by the fact that all the learners understood the Yoruba language. It was my impression that the limited participation of the learners during both the BS and IS lessons was largely due to the learners' inability to communicate effectively in the LoLT (English). Rather than attempt to speak English, most of the learners seemed to prefer not to participate at all (confirmed during debriefing). Those learners that participated did so using Yoruba or Pidgin during the IS lesson where they were encouraged and allowed to do so. The high level of code switching by LIB-IS seemed to encourage the learners to express themselves more freely.

My interaction with the LIB participants later confirmed that encouragement to code switch facilitated discussion. During the initial contact with them I explained the project to them in English and Yoruba. I encouraged them to use either of the languages and once they felt at ease with me they responded mostly in Yoruba although sometimes three of the four also attempted to respond in simple English. Table 4.2a[15] below portrays the language interaction within the classes observed. Code switching and code mixing have been combined in the table. Both are considered as using an alternative to the LoLT and will not be distinguished at this stage.

**Table 4.2a     Language Usage: LIB School**

| Class | QE-L | CS-T | CS-L |
|-------|------|------|------|
| A (BS) | **BAv.** | **L** | **H** |
| B (IS) | **BAv.** | **H** | **H** |

| **Key** | | |
|---|---|---|
| QE-L = Quality of English spoken by the learners | AAv. | = Above Average |
| CS-T = Code switching/mixing by teacher | Av. | = Average |
| CS-L = Code switching/mixing by learners | BAv. | = Below Average |
| | H | = High |
| | M | = Medium |
| | L | = Low |

Table 4.2a shows that the quality of English spoken by the learners was below average for both classes, which means that the learners' utterances had to be constantly corrected and they

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[14] *… he says all the different types of soil can be found in the backyard…*

found even non-academic use of the language challenging. Although the teachers' rate of code switching/mixing differed, LIB-BS almost never using this and LIB-IS' being high, the learners used a high frequency of code switching/mixing for both academic and non-academic communication.

### 4.4.5   Language of communication: MIB School

The language use in the MIB School was mixed. There were about 30% of the learners who spoke English to each other and the rest communicated mainly in Yoruba and changed to English only when their teachers were close by. Despite the fact that the school policy actively encourages the use of English, virtually to the level of total language immersion, the learner profile determined by the location of the school makes it difficult to communicate solely in English. According to MIB-IS, close to 90% of the learner population would be able to speak Yoruba even if it is at a social level and would prefer to use a language that would not result in any kind of judgements being made about them due to the inaccuracy of their grammatical constructions and vocabulary. Most teachers would probably turn a blind eye to the informal use of Yoruba by the learners and only discourage its use in the classrooms for academic purposes.

The learners overall seemed comfortable communicating with their teachers in English. During the initial contact with the participants, while attempting to familiarise them with the project, I explained the procedure to them in both Yoruba and English and quickly discovered that each time I asked the participants questions using Yoruba, every one of them responded in English.   The participants were not always completely fluent but they could express themselves adequately.

In the BS lesson, MIB-BS did not use code switching to any significant extent, only uttering an occasional Yoruba word here and there. The use of these words seemed to be habitual and was directed at the learners to sometimes establish confirmation. An example of this was when MIB-BS said "You have all been to the market before, abi?[16] And you know what goes

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[15] A cumulative table has been constructed to facilitate ready comparison of the information added therein. The versions will be numbered using a & b.

[16]  *Haven't you*? *Isn't it? Don't you?*

on there, hen?[17]" *Abi* and *hen* in the above utterances make them questions and the use of these expressions is no longer exclusive to any language in Nigeria, but it is understood by everybody residing in and around major cities to mean in the above context "Haven't you?" or "Isn't it?" and "Don't you?"

There was a group of about ten learners in the class of 106 who had a good understanding of what MIB-BS was teaching and clearly assisted to move the lesson forward by asking questions and volunteering to answer questions. These learners had a good command of English as far as could be demonstrated during the lesson. MIB-BS, however, put in a lot of effort to randomly call on learners whether or not they raised their hands. She carried the whole class along by using the element of surprise, calling on unsuspecting learners at random.

MIB-IS spoke English during the course of the IS lesson. As soon as any murmuring occurred in the class, however, she shouted, *"Ta lo nsoro?[18]; Ta lo npariwo?[19]"* This happened four times during the course of the lesson. The code switching was essentially to get the attention of the learners and was virtually automatic as, even without a pause, the lesson continued in English. Some of the learners, however, spoke to each other in Yoruba or engaged in code switching with each other during the course of the lesson. These conversations as far I could gather seemed to be in connection with the seating arrangement and asking for writing materials from each other. There was a mix of learners in class D. Three learners initiated discussion and asked questions and they had a good command of English. But there were also two learners sitting close-by who spoke to each other during the course of the lesson using poor grammar. Table 4.3a shows the language usage for learners in both classrooms and lessons observed in the MIB School.

**Table 4.3a      Language Usage: MIB School**

| Class | QE-L | CS-T | CS-L |
|-------|------|------|------|
| **C (BS)** | Av. | L | H |
| **D (IS)** | Av. | L | H |

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[17] *Haven't you? Isn't it? Don't you*?
[18] *Who is speaking?*
[19] *Who is making a noise?*

**Key**

| | |
|---|---|
| QE-L | = Quality of English spoken by the learners |
| CS-T | = Code switching/mixing by teacher |
| CS-L | = Code switching/mixing by learners |

| | |
|---|---|
| AAv. | = Above Average |
| Av. | = Average |
| BAv. | = Below Average |
| H | = High |
| M | = Medium |
| L | = Low |

Table 4.3a shows that the quality of English spoken by the learners was by and large average, although in some cases it was fluent. There was minimal code switching/mixing on the part of the teachers as this did not form part of their teaching strategy. There was however a fair degree of code switching/mixing among the learners in and out of the classroom when speaking to one another and elements of poor grammar were noted when they addressed their teachers in English.

### 4.4.6 Teacher-learner relationship: LIB School

The relationship between LIB-BS and his learners seemed fairly cordial, though not overly friendly. He was rather formal and authoritarian, but not hostile. The lesson was conducted at a brisk pace and the learners were relatively attentive and well behaved. Some of the learners whispered to one another and were reminded to behave and show respect to the class visitor. The learners' whispering and interactions during the BS lesson did not seem to have anything to do with the lesson being taught. For example, two learners were asking for writing materials, and another was looking for his notebook.

The learners were respectful towards LIB-BS. As soon as he turned towards the class, each one of them immediately looked up and seemingly paid attention. The learners were also quick to say "Sir" at every opportunity. There was, however, not much interaction between the teacher and learners. LIB-BS on several occasions called on specific learners to answer questions, but got responses only twice. The rest just stood up and stared at the blackboard or the floor. LIB-BS would then explain all over again.

The IS lesson contained more activity and interaction between LIB-IS and the learners. A learner was, for example, at one time specifically asked the meaning of terms for different

types of soil. Other learners called out local terms that expressed ideas required by the teacher and also spoke to each other. For instance:

LIB-IS:     Rasaq, what type of soil is clayey soil?
Learners:   Amo! Amo![20]
Rasaq:      We use for pot.
LIB-IS:     We can use it to make pots. OK, amo is what we call clay, abi?[21]
Learners:   Yes!
LIB-IS:     But clayey soil means the type of soil that is mouldable, that can be made into different shapes. A le fi se pot bi Rasaq se so a tun le fi se orisirisi nkon mi[22]. (LIB-IS/LOL, 7-9)

The atmosphere was less formal and more supportive than in BS, in terms of the extensive explanations given in both Yoruba and English. When LIB-IS felt the learners did not understand or follow her explanations she went over it again and engaged in code switching/mixing to ensure that they understood. LIB-IS responded to the learners' questions in English and then repeated her utterances in Yoruba. The learners seemed more willing to participate and sometimes did so in Yoruba, acknowledging recognition of the local terminology and explaining to each other, referring to shared experiences and previous knowledge.

The use of Yoruba and particularly code switching on the part of LIB-IS appeared to initiate and promote interaction. The impression I got was that she used code switching/mixing as an inclusive strategy to get the learners engaged in set activities. Each time she followed up her statements with a Yoruba translation the learners responded well and contributed to the discussion. This strategy was effective in the sense that the learners at least responded in the classroom. Table 4.2b below shows the teacher-learner relationship in addition to the language usage pattern in the LIB School.

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[20] *Clay! Clay!*

[21] *…its what we call "clay" isn't it?*

[22] *… we can use it to make pots as Rasaq has said and we can also use it to make a host of other things as well.*

**Table 4.2b      Language usage and teacher-learner relationship: LIB School**

| Class | QE-L | CS-T | CS-L | Int.-L/L | Int.-T/L |
|-------|------|------|------|----------|----------|
| **A (BS)** | BAv. | L | H | AAv. | BAv. |
| **B (IS)** | BAv. | H | H | AAv. | Av. |

**Key**

QE-L   = Quality of English spoken by the learners

CS-T    = Code switching/mixing by teacher

CS-L   = Code switching/mixing by learners

Int.-T/L = Teacher/Learner interaction

Int.-L/L = Learner/Learner interaction

AAv.   = Above Average

Av.     = Average

BAv.   = Below Average

H       = High

M       = Below Average

L       = Low

Table 4.2b shows that the quality of English used by the learners in the LIB School as well as their interactions with LIB-BS were essentially at the BICS level and very limited, but the learners' incidence of interaction among themselves was lively and highly functional. They spoke excitedly with each other and did not seem to have any inhibitions, although it must be noted that their language of communication was mainly Yoruba. The language of communication with the teacher was supposed to be English, but there was a considerable frequency of code switching/mixing with LIB-IS. The interaction between LIB-IS and the learners was decidedly more than with LIB-BS. In the case of LIB-BS, interaction was almost non-existent.

### 4.4.7   Teacher-learner relationship: MIB School

The learners in the BS class seemed accustomed to the authoritarian nature of MIB-BS. They had positive interaction with her. They were free to ask questions and were given explanatory responses accordingly. They knew the rules of her mode of teaching and by and large stayed within the boundaries. MIB-BS made it clear that every learner was expected to pay attention as anyone could be called upon to answer a question. The learners appeared to enjoy the class and there were no hints of boredom. The spirit was active and lively. Respect played a significant part in the relationship. Inappropriate behaviour such as disrupting the lesson and attracting the teacher's attention in a negative way would be dealt with severely. The learners

seemed to be used to the punishments for misbehaving, which ranged from verbal warning to a beating with the cane and kneeling down outside. No one, however, was actually punished during the lesson observed although one learner was asked to remain standing after failing to respond to a question. In the Nigerian context that would, however, not be regarded as punishment.

There was no hostility between the learners and MIB-IS, even though this lesson was also a formal and authoritarian environment. The learners behaved relatively well for the class size of 104. MIB-IS held a long cane that she used to get the learners' attention and to keep them quiet. She would rap on one of the front desks or the blackboard and make a loud noise that attracted attention. The learners appeared to be accustomed to seeing the cane. They were free to ask questions and this they did. The lesson was, however, strictly business. No side jokes or funny examples were used to explain the topic being discussed. Table 4.3b below shows the quality of the learners' English, the frequency of code switching of the teachers as well as learners and the amount of interaction between the learners and teachers.

**Table 4.3b        Language usage and teacher-learner relationship: MIB School**

| Class | QE-L | CS-T | CS-L | Int.-L/L | Int.-T/L |
|-------|------|------|------|----------|----------|
| **C (BS)** | Av. | L | H | AAv. | AAv. |
| **D (IS)** | Av. | L | H | AAv. | Av. |

**Key**
QE-L   = Quality of English spoken by the learners

CS-T    = Code switching/mixing by teacher

CS-L   = Code switching/mixing by learners

Int.-T/L = Teacher/Learner interaction

Int.-L/L = Learner/Learner interaction

AAv.   = Above Average

Av.      = Average

BAv.   = Below Average

H         = High

M         = Medium

L         = Low

Table 4.3b shows that the quality of English used by the learners in the MIB School was average. The frequency of code switching/mixing by the teachers was negligible. The teachers in the MIB School appeared to take the use of English as the LoLT quite seriously. This was however, not reflected by the learners, whose code switching/mixing was of high frequency because the majority appeared to prefer to speak Yoruba to each other although the quality of

their spoken English at the BICS level was passable. The learner/learner rate of interaction was high in both classes, and the interaction between teacher and learners was higher for MIB-BS than for MIB-IS (AAv:Av).

A comparative summary of the classroom observation is displayed in Table 4.4. It is, however, important to note that only one lesson was observed per subject per school. These observations obviously cannot be generalised. They can only serve as a guide for understanding and interpreting the participant data.

**Table 4.4      Comparative Classroom Observation Summary**

| School | QE-L | CS-T | CS-L | Int.-L/L | Int.-T/L |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LIB (BS)** | BAv. | L | H | AAv. | BAv. |
| **LIB (IS)** | BAv. | H | H | AAv. | Av. |
| **MIB (BS)** | Av. | L | H | AAv. | AAv. |
| **MIB (IS)** | Av. | L | H | AAv. | Av. |

| Key | |
|---|---|
| QE-L   = Quality of English spoken by the learners | AAv.   = Above Average |
| CS-T    = Code switching/mixing by teacher | Av.      = Average |
| CS-L   = Code switching/mixing by learners | BAv.   = Below Average |
| Int.-T/L = Teacher/Learner interaction | H        = High |
| Int.-L/L = Learner/Learner interaction | M        = Medium |
| | L        = Low |

Table 4.4 shows that the learners in the LIB School could only speak English at the BICS level, if even that. The quality of English spoken by the learners in the MIB School appeared better although they had not yet achieved an adequate level of CALP either. The table shows that only LIB-IS consistently used code switching. As for the other teachers, code switching/mixing was insignificant and even absent, as in the case of LIB-BS. The learners in both schools engaged in considerable code switching/mixing when interacting with their teachers. The frequency of interaction between the learners and MIB-BS was substantial as she constantly called on learners to participate. MIB-IS also had an interactive lesson but interaction was lower in comparison with MIB-BS. LIB-IS made a conscious effort to engage the learners and interact with them, but the rate of interaction still fell short of active engagement with a majority of the learners. There was virtually no interaction between LIS-

BS and the learners. There was extensive interaction among the learners in both schools, speaking Yoruba especially.

### 4.4.8   Researcher / participant relationship

One of the greatest challenges for me in respect of interacting with the participants had to do with power relations. Attempting to put the participants at ease, assuring them that the confidentiality clause was real and that their identities would not be revealed, required several reiterations. Gaining the participants' confidence and trust took some effort. The language factor was not a barrier since I was fluent in Yoruba and I translated most of my utterances to Yoruba, particularly in the LIB School.

The participants in the LIB School responded in Yoruba most of the time. The freedom to use either of the two languages ensured that the learners in that school were eventually at ease to participate. AF, BF and BM were initially reluctant to contribute actively. They had to be assured and reassured, but they eventually came round. AF gave single-word responses when spoken to and even sometimes just gestured in response to questions, and rarely took the initiative to comment on any issue. She was encouraged to speak in Yoruba and when she did, she was more involved, she demonstrated more willingness to participate and her responses became richer. She seemed to trust me more as time passed. She said things about matters that affected her personally and even spoke about her teachers and demonstrated some level of trust at the later stages of our interaction. From the onset AM was never timid or reluctant to interact or comment on issues. He was friendly, assertive and articulate, though his grammar was not always correct. He wanted us to find solutions to the problems of his school and his education in particular. He co-operated fully and was willing to lend a hand. He seemed to enjoy being listened to.  BF really seemed to enjoy working with me. She was lively and highly critical. She was also trusting as she said things that she knew could ordinarily get her into trouble. BM also lost all inhibitions and spoke more freely after the second session together. Although he realised in time that I was not in the school to solve all the problems, he was still content to tell me about the obstacles he faced.

The participants in the MIB School were more enthusiastic about the project than those in the LIB School and also more articulate. The participants were ready to contribute and discuss the issues they felt affected them in the school. A lot of the information gathered was valuable,

but not all was relevant to the study. Some of them spoke about the transportation challenges they faced, commuting long distances to and from school daily, also about the lack of a regular electricity supply and issues relating to the boarding house, all of which impacted on their ability to put the optimum effort into their schoolwork. Participant CF was the only one who had to be encouraged to participate fully in the discussions. She hardly ever volunteered any information. She had to be encouraged explicitly before she spoke. CM and DM volunteered information even about their teachers. They had suggestions about everything. They were free and at ease and they asked many questions about the project. DF seemed uneasy at first, but she too responded well by the time we met the third time.

## 4.5 CA RESULTS AND FINDINGS: LIB SCHOOL

### 4.5.1 Introduction

This section records data from the debriefing, mediation and the actual CA cycles per participant in accordance with the dictates for the analysis of CDA, which include attention, perception, memory, conceptualisation and metacognition (Lidz, 2002:74). With CDA, there is no predetermined structure and the mediator has a prominent role responding to the needs of the learner (Lidz, 2002:74). Hence, the format used was adopted to ensure that the results are reported systematically and follow the process of the actual encounter with the learners. The report views each participant holistically as part of a multiple case study before a comparative analysis is carried out. The sections on the debriefing and mediation narrate the remarks and behaviour of the participants in respect of the AL challenges experienced, their attitude towards assessment practices and items as well as their response to DA. In looking at the answer scripts, the findings as to the nature of the AL challenges at the receptive and expressive levels of language use are noted and also some effects of DA, and an overview of performance with reference to the mean performance scores of the relevant classes. The discussion of the findings per participant highlights the AL factor, the impact of DA and the affective behaviour of the participants, and preliminarily links some relevant phenomena with issues under consideration in the literature.

### 4.5.2    Results in respect of Participant AF

*4.5.2.1 Debriefing*

      (1)     CA1

AF was rather reserved during the first debriefing. She said the BS was not difficult and she felt she would get a pass mark. AF had nothing to say about her observed behaviours such as fidgeting, pausing, hesitating, frowning and scribbling on her script. The IS according to AF was also "fine" and everything was "OK". When I asked why she had not answered all the questions in BS and IS, AF did not respond immediately. When prodded she said she had done all the ones she could. "Mi o mo nkan ti mo ma ko mo. Mi o le se awon toku[23]" (DMS-AF/CA1-IS, 16). She seemed to think I was at the school to liberate her from her assessment tasks as a whole and showed some displeasure when she learned that this was not the case. I realised that AF at that point was not forthcoming and was unwilling to volunteer any more information.

      (2)     CA2

During the debriefing after CA2, AF was more forthcoming and co-operative. The responses and willingness of AM, who shared the first two sessions, to participate, seemed to contribute to this and possibly she also began to see me less as an extension of the school authorities. By now I had an idea of the extent of AF's challenges as demonstrated in the results of the CA1 and was thus also able to ask her more pertinent questions, such as "Ninu gbogbo nkan tan bere, se gbogbo nkan to fe ko pata pata lo ko ni?[24] Kilo wa lokan e ni awon igba to fi owo ara e sere, to n wo ra ra ra?[25] Ki ni o ba a je ki o se e se fun e, ki lo ma a je ko ye e na?[26] Mo fe ki a jo wa ogbon ta a ma a da si to ma fi le ye e da a da?[27] (DMS-AF/CA2-BS, 21-25: Researcher).

I gradually asked more questions and continued to reassure her that nothing she said would be used against her. I spoke mainly Yoruba and sometimes used code switching. For the BS, AF said the CA2 was "fine and OK". She had thought she would do better in the CA1-BS, but admitted she was often disappointed about her scores.

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[23]  *I didn't know what else to write. I couldn't do the others.*
[24] *For all the questions, were you able to write down everything you wanted to say?*
[25] *What was going on in your mind at those times you were fidgeting and looking about?*
[26] *What would have made it easier for you to understand?*
[27] *I want us to work out how to make it better for you to understand.*

Researcher:    So, how was it? Bawo ni?[28]
AF:            O fine, Ma, o wa OK.[29]
Researcher:    (*Smiling*) So now. Bawo gan gan ni? Bawo lo se se? So oto.[30]
AF:            (*Smiling and looking down*) Mi o mo nkan ti mo tun ma a gba, mo ro pe o ye
               kin se da a da but mi o mo nkan ti mo tun ma a gba.[31] (DMS-AF/CA2-BS, 24-
               25)

According to AF, she did not know how to improve her performance. She said she had an idea what the questions were about, but did not know how to write the answers. The adapted assessment made it easier, but there was now more to read. Initially, she wanted to answer the mediational questions separately before she remembered that they were just explanations. She was hopeful that this time she would do well.

Researcher:    But ki ni ki awa se si gbogbo wahala yi? Nitori se o mo, ki e le se daa da na ni
               ki ni a le se ti o ma a jeki o le se da da, ko le pass?[32]
AF:            (*Hesitating*) Mi o mo, Ma. Ko ti e ye emi na.[33] (DMS-AF/CA2-IS, 46)

The IS was, however, a different story. AF asserted that she was sure that, no matter what she wrote, it was unlikely she would pass any IS assessment and so she only did what she could and found other means of whiling away the time set for the assessment. She therefore scribbled on paper, fidgeted with writing materials and otherwise kept herself occupied without disturbing others in the class. This comment interested me because during the assessments she never submitted her script until the others were handing in theirs. AF disclosed that she was afraid of the opinion the teacher would express about her work if she handed it in while others were still writing, since the teacher could then take more time to study her script and might confront her about her responses.


(3)    CA3

AF's observed mannerisms had remained the same for both BS and IS. She had muttered, frowned visibly, covered her paper and looked confused and irritated. In debriefing, she again responded that she had done well. BS was good, but for IS she was less sure but still thought it was "OK". Of course, by now, AF's "OK" to me still meant she was going to fail, although I was on the lookout for some measure of improvement. She said she had found the glossary particularly useful and had looked at that even before reading the questions. The spelling list

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[28] *How was it?* (*Referring to the assessment*)
[29] *It was fine, Ma. It was OK.*
[30] *Tell me now, how was it really? Tell me the truth.*
[31] *I don't know what I'll score again I think I should do well but I really don't know what my scores will be.*
32 *But how can we reduce all the challenges, because the bottom line is for you to do well. What more
  do you think could be done for you to pass?*

was too long to her liking and she ignored it because she had not known more than half of the words on the list from CA2 and so did not bother with the list at all this time.

When asked to explain some of her observed behaviours, such as resting her head on her palm, covering her script with her arm and muttering, AF said that she had muttered because she wished the others would complete their work quickly. She had not known what else to write, had done all she could and wanted to get the ordeal over with. AF had been frustrated because the others were taking too long. Since she was not sure of the correctness of her work, she had covered her scripts to avoid being beaten for not doing her work well and generally being embarrassed in front of the class by the teachers. But she still believed that the BS was "good".

| Researcher: | But ki lo de to ma se oju se imu ati enu to ban si se lowo so fun mi na?[34] |
| AF: | (*Smiling*) Mo ti se tan, awon iyoku o de dahun.[35] |
| Researcher: | Really? O ti se tan?[36] |
| AF: | (*Smiling*) Mi o mo nkan ti mo ma a ko mo.[37] (DMS-AF/CA3-IS, 73-74) |

My impression of AF's attitude was that she seemed to be beyond caring whether or not she made anything of her education. She was in school because she had to be and seemed apathetic about the whole academic process.

### 4.5.2.2 Mediation

With AF, a significant portion of the mediation sessions was conducted in Yoruba to ensure mutual understanding of the discussion. AF's reading ability proved to be exceedingly poor. She could pronounce hardly any of the words without assistance, failing totally with words such as *receptionist, function, qualities, documents, handled* (LIB/CA1-BS & LIB/CA2-BS). AF found it extremely difficult to read the questions (i.e. in terms of word recognition, fluency) and it was therefore not surprising that she could neither understand nor answer many of the questions. We went over the pronunciation of the words that made up the questions, read them together and AF attempted to read them on her own. Even then, she found it difficult to read questions such as the following, stumbling over all the words that have been underlined:

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[33] *I don't know, Ma. I don't have a clue.*
[34] *But why do you still continue to make faces? Tell me why.*
[35] *I had finished and the others were wasting time.*
[36] *Really? You actually finished?*
[37] *I didn't know what else to write.*

(a) Who is a <u>receptionist</u>? (LIB/CA1-BS, Q1)

(b) <u>Mention</u> four <u>job qualities</u> of a <u>receptionist</u>. (LIB/CA2-BS, Q2)

AF was able to read only words that did not exceed four letters and were high frequency, low complexity words of a functional nature (BICS). She was unable to comprehend words of a more academic nature (reflecting CALP) and required further explanation.

The sessions revealed AF's tendency to follow the words of each sentence with the finger and vocalise while reading. Questioned on this, AF said she found it easier to read that way. After the initial reading of the CA1-BS questions as they had been written by the teacher, I translated them to Yoruba, using descriptive words where I could not find a direct translation in Yoruba. On three of the four BS assessment tasks, AF clearly had no idea what was expected of her without the translation of the questions in Yoruba. Even after translation, she could only give explanations, in Yoruba, that broadly suggested the content associated with the answers. Assessment of AF's expressive skills revealed inadequacies in the oral responses to the BS tasks even when speaking Yoruba. AF only succeeded in demonstrating a basic comprehension of the terminology and not the academic acquisition of content knowledge required to answer the questions. In English, she was unable to answer the questions even orally. Below is an example taken from CA2-BS, where she was unable to process the question despite its close resemblance to the earlier Q2: (Q5: List four personal qualities of a receptionist):

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | Se wa a tun ka question yi fun mi jo?[38] |
| AF: | Yes, Ma. |
| AF: | (*Smiles uneasily looking at me*) Lees … four (*long pause*) pee … (*stops reading*) |
| Researcher: | List four personal qualities of a receptionist (*Reading slowly, indicating each word with a pencil*).   Repeat it after me, ma a ka tele mi[39]. List four personal qualities of a receptionist. |
| AF: | Lees four pee … (*looks up*) Lees ... four (pauses) Lees four peso na kwaliti of resetionis, ("List four personal qualities of a receptionist") |
| Researcher: | Ki ni nwon bere? Ki ni won ni ko so?[40] |
| AF: | Resetionis[41] (*frowning*) |
| Researcher: | Ok. Let's go back to another question. Je ki a pada sehin na. Question ta a dahun ni ekan[42]. Who is a receptionist? |
| AF: | Awon to ma njoko si ibi ise, si office.[43] |

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[38] *Can you please read this question to me?*
[39] *Repeat it after me.*
[40] *What does the question mean? What does it require you to do?*
[41] *Receptionist.*
[42] *Let's go back to a question we answered earlier.*
[43] *Those who sit in a workplace, in an office.*

| Researcher: | Won kan kin njoko nikan now. Awon ni a ma koko kan ta a ba wonu office awon la ma bere oro nipa office yen lowo won[44]. |
|---|---|
| AF: | Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | Now, what are the personal qualities of a receptionist? Iru eyan wo lo ye ki receptionist je? Iru iwa wo loye ko ni?[45] |
| AF: | Won lati ma a toju office kin nkan kan ma a ba sele[46] (DMS-AF/CA2-BS, 29-40). |

The IS assessments proved even more challenging for AF, apparently because the terminology was difficult to break down into everyday language in Yoruba and many words still had to be borrowed from the English version in order to state the question, hence leading to extensive code mixing. Even with translation and explanation AF was still unable to answer the questions correctly orally. AF displayed a lack of understanding of the questions and the nature of the responses required of her, leading me to infer that severe language difficulty or even cognitive challenge was obstructing her understanding of the subject matter *per se*. Example from CA3-IS (Q5: Mention three respiratory diseases), once AF's complete inability to read the questions had been established:

| Researcher: | Se ki a bere pelu iyi ti ko gun ju[47]. Se wa ka a tele mi read it after me ok?[48] |
|---|---|
| AF: | (*Nods, looks at text*) |
| Researcher: | Mention, Mention. What's the next word? |
| AF: | Three. |
| Researcher: | Good. Now the next word we will call in five parts before we call it together. Se o ye e? A pe e ni ototo ki o le baa mo pe, then a wa pe e papo[49]. |
| Researcher: | Res – pi – ra – to – ry; Respiratory |
| AF: | Res – pi – ra – to – ry; Respiratoory |
| Researcher: | The next word is "diseases". Ta a ba ka po[50] it'll be … Mention three respiratory diseases. Won ni ko so arun meta to ni se pelu bi a se nmi.[51] |
| AF: | (*Stares at the floor*) (DMS-AF/CA3-IS, 75-79). |

In the discussions on the challenges she experienced, AF disclosed that she had difficulty reading and understanding the 'difficult' words and sometimes did not know what to do. She suggested that if the questions were also written in Yoruba she would understand what was required of her. But the sessions, held mainly in Yoruba, yielded limited improvement. AF believed assistance with her use of language could bring about a significant improvement in her performance. But she understated the level of assistance she required for average

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[44] *Not just anyone who sits in an office. They are the ones you first of all come across in an office and they give you information about the office.*
[45] *What are the personal qualities of a receptionist? What kind of behaviour or attributes should they possess?*
[46] *They have to take care of the office so that nothing goes wrong.*
[47] *Let's start over, this time with the shortest question.*
[48] *Will you read it after me?*
[49] *Do you understand? We'll first of all call the word in parts then we'll call it together.*
[50] *Reading together as a whole sentence it will be…*

performance to be achieved. In my judgement, extensive intervention in respect of reading and comprehension in both Yoruba and English was essential prior to any attempt to focus on identifying the appropriate subject content to answer the specific question, particularly in IS. Unfortunately, understanding the content to be learned overall for the assessment was in turn prerequisite to understanding the assessment questions.

*4.5.2.3 Answer scripts*

> (1)      Receptive level

As indicated in the earlier sections on her debriefing and mediation, AF could not read the questions. Her CA1-BS script revealed that she had spent a lot of the time copying the questions onto the answer script, omitting to answer all but one and even that attempt was inadequate: "What is an office?"(LIB/CA1-BS, Q2). AF's response was "Office wher person must do work". She copied the CA1-IS questions in the same manner, and put her responses under the questions, of which only one was partially correct.

Asked how she could attempt to answer the IS questions at all since she could not read them, she explained that her teacher had discussed the topics over and over again and that she was able to determine what was required without necessarily being able to read more than the keywords in the questions. However, AF's inability to read at the required level certainly calls to question her ability to process the questions and construct appropriate responses, let alone the full text from which she was to learn for the assessment. Her scores on the CA cycles presented in Table 4.5 clearly reflect this.

> (2)      Expressive level

AF's scripts contained numerous errors. Every line had two or more misspellings. Words of more than three letters correctly spelled were derived from the questions on the blackboard. AF's response to the Question: "List five documents handled by a receptionist" (LIB/CA2-BS, Q2), was as follows:

> 1. receptment
> 2. solution
> 3. infromation
> 4. documents

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[51] *You've been asked to say three diseases that have to do with our breathing.*

5. qualities

AF demonstrated knowledge of *list* and *five*, i.e. the question format, but the fact that not even one item is correct seems to suggest that she was not familiar with the words denoting the conceptual content of the question *(documents, handled, receptionist)*. Four of the response items above (2-5) appeared in questions on the blackboard, and might have been copied, and the remaining one (*receptment*) might be a derivation from the question itself (*receptionist*).

AF's challenges appeared to be mainly language-based, although she did not seem to quite grasp the extent or nature of her difficulties. Despite the debriefing and mediation sessions, the scripts written from the adapted assessment papers in CA2 and CA3 contained almost identical errors to those found in CA1, such as the sentence, "This is a resptionist is the person who take in charg of an office" (LIB/CA2: Q1) and numerous spelling errors. Many of the spelling errors (e.g. *nacesseary, ancoraged, anjoy, prysing;* CA3-BS: Q2-3) might have occurred due to interference of the L1, since they were written phonetically as sometimes pronounced locally by individuals who have had limited formal education. Others would appear to be writing errors, or could have stemmed from initially miscopying notes from the blackboard, e.g. *deseribing, infromation, discaunt, seling.* However, even some of the words that appeared in the questions and the glossary were also spelled incorrectly e.g. *polit, resptionist* (LIB/CA2-BS: Q1 &3).

AF's responses to some of the questions were not comprehensible and did not earn her marks, although she was evidently trying to explain something relevant e.g. "List five advantages of credit sale"(LIB/CA3-BS: Q1): One of AF's responses was "sales buyers ar ancoraged". Another example was, in response to the EX-IS item, *"State the importance of oxygen to living things,"*(LIB/EX-IS, Q3): AF's response was, "the importance of oxygen to living thing is they can walk they can eat they can play the have life and they play." Table 4.5 and Figure 4.1 contain AF's CA and examination scores in percentages.

**Table 4.5      AF scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS $\bar{x}=37.5$ | CA2-BS $\bar{x}=35$ | CA3-BS $\bar{x}=41.5$ | EX-BS $\bar{x}=47$ | CA1-IS $\bar{x}=18$ | CA2-IS $\bar{x}=23$ | CA3-IS $\bar{x}=10$ | EX-IS $\bar{x}=22.5$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AF | 20 | 25 | 25 | 30 | 10 | 14 | 5 | 20 |
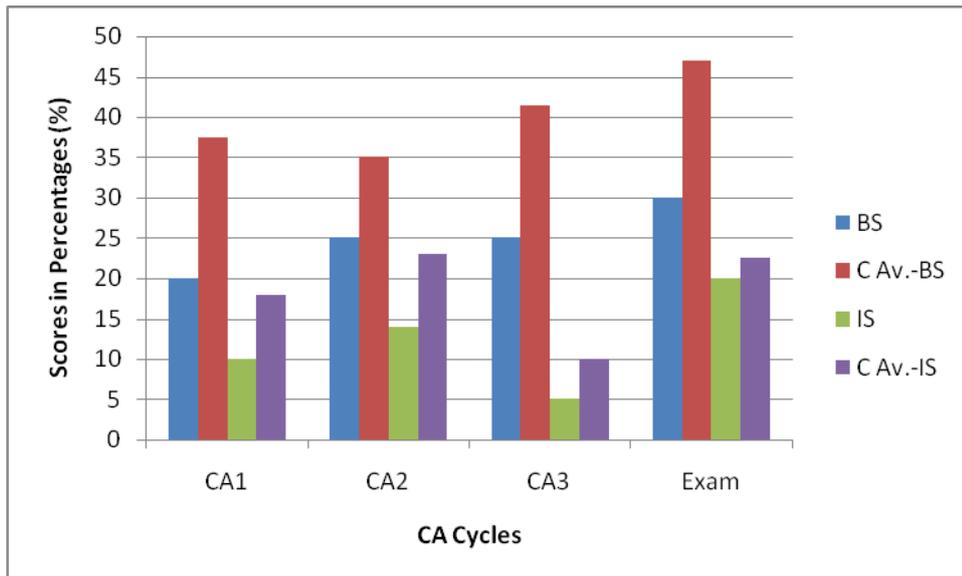
**Figure 4.1 AF – Comparison of CA and examination scores**

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.1 indicate that AF failed in all assessments in both BS and IS (pass mark 50%) and that her scores in both were well below the mean performance of Class A and B (also failing marks) in all but EX-IS (difference only 2.5%). In CA2 she showed an improvement in both subjects relative to her performance in CA1 (BS 20%:25%, IS 10%:14%), and again in the examination, relative to her performance in CA3 (BS 25%:30%, IS 5%:30%). It would seem that CA3 was in some way problematic for her, in that her score for BS remained stable (25%) whereas the mean performance of Class A and B improved by 6.5%, and her IS-score dropped dramatically (14%-5%). However, the fact that the mean performance of Class A and B in CA3-IS was also very low (10%) in comparison with the other means for IS (18%, 23%, 22.5%), suggests that we should look elsewhere to explain AF's low score, e.g. in flaws in CA3-IS itself, or the complexity of the content.

*4.5.2.4 Discussion – AF*

   (1)  Additional language factor

AF had exceedingly poor reading capability in English, especially regarding terms and words denoting concepts. She had poor content knowledge and severe language difficulty in English as well as Yoruba. She viewed IS as an especially insurmountable challenge, because of the level and number of CALP terms involved. Ironically, AF improved relatively more in IS than in BS. The scaffolding provided by the teacher's code-switching in IS might have contributed to the scale of her improvement in IS over the term, since the severity of AF's difficulties

with English would have made the consistent use of English in the BS-lessons by and large inaccessible.

The fact that the LoLTA was an AL clearly compounded AF's problems. She was unable to adequately construct knowledge in a language still in the very early stages of acquisition. By necessary implication it was virtually impossible for her to reconstruct the body of information she had been exposed to, and to reproduce in any way her knowledge during assessment. She found the challenge so severe that, despite my persistent probing, she couldn't even begin to suggest helpful measures for her improvement.

What sort of intervention did AF require? Being unable to access the questions was an obstacle that the translations to Yoruba provided for, but only in a limited way, since she could not write Yoruba either. She required intervention not just with the comprehension of assessment tasks and responding to them, but also with learning the LoLTA even at BICS level. Her lack of AL proficiency was so severe that it would not be possible, using any curricular content even at an elementary level, to reliably determine whether or not her barrier to learning was of an intellectual or linguistic nature, or both.

(2)    Impact of dynamic assessment

The mediation and AF's scripts revealed that she had multiple and severe language-related challenges, chief being that her L1 had not been fully developed, thus also affecting the development of the AL. A formidable challenge was learning in a language she was virtually unable to communicate in. She required extensive and intensive intervention in respect of reading and comprehension. On occasion, mediation actually broke down because the highest level of graduated prompting (Campione & Brown, 1987) was still insufficient support for her to arrive at coherent responses to the questions. Also, most mediation had to be done in Yoruba, and questions in the mediational assessment papers, such as CA3-IS Q5, had to be further mediated in Yoruba.  Table 4.1 revealed that AF was the youngest of five children in her nuclear family and she was already 15 years old (the highest age among the participants), at the time of the data collection. From the Nigerian perspective, this immediately suggests that her parents probably had no formal education and were from a low socio-economic background. Another deduction that could be made is that her older siblings either had no formal education or that schooling had very little impact on their lives hence they could not be of much assistance to her. With this in mind, that the DA had any impact on AF, was

amazing. AF did not pass any of the CAs nor the examination. She consistently performed below the mean performance of Class A and B, but she did show some steady, if limited, improvement. This trend might have been less significant had it been any other individual, but with the severity of her AL problems it was an encouraging phenomenon, suggesting that she had derived some benefit from DA. One tantalising possibility involves the fact that she read the glossary during CA3 even before looking at the questions, suggesting that she recognised the value of its explanatory information for her to use literally as a crutch for comprehension. By contrast, she ignored the spelling list, stating that half the words had been unknown to her during the CA2 and thus shying away from the task at the expressive level.

(3)     Affect

AF seriously lacked motivation and was frustrated by her inability to succeed in her schoolwork. She had no idea how to reduce the challenges of schooling and appeared apathetic. Could low self-esteem have been contributory to her lack of achievement, or had she developed an emotional block against academic learning? I was not able to arrive at any conclusions in this regard due to time constraints and the consideration that such questioning would amount to a digression from the focus of the study. AF experienced severe stress about her teachers' possible comments and actions about her work and feared embarrassment before her peers. She was reticent at first, but her attitude later changed and she made visible efforts to answer questions during mediation. It was not clear whether she was stressed as a result of her assessment scores or due to her inability to comprehend what she had been taught.

### 4.5.3   Results in respect of Participant AM

*4.5.3.1 Debriefing*

(1)     CA1

AM appeared to be quite confident and enthusiastic. During this debriefing and mediation, he used a fair amount of English in between our code switching. His attitude conveyed the impression of someone who acted more competent than was actually the case. During the assessments, AM seemed completely focused and concentrated on the task. He, however, read the questions vocalising each word. When asked about this, AM said that he always read that way and that he could read more easily and faster in this manner and that he was better able to focus.

| Researcher: | So, don't you think invigilators might think you're trying to speak to someone else if you continue to read that way abi ki ni o feel? Se won ni ma a ro pe o fe bere oro lowo elomi?[52] |
| --- | --- |
| AM: | (*Shaking his head*) Ha! No, Ma. Won mo mi, won mo pe mi o ni ji yan wo. Ah, no Ma.[53] |
| Researcher: | OK. But se wa promise pe wa try lati bere si kawe si nu without moving your lips. Se wa a try.[54] |
| AM: | Yes, Ma, (*nodding*) mo ma try.[55] |
| Researcher: | But ki ni ka se si awon nkan ti won bere lowo yin. Ki ni mo le se to ma je ki o ye yin, ki e de le se won daa da?[56] |
| AM: | (Thinking seriously) Bo ya ti won ba se alaye nkan tan fe ka se awon tan le ka a a le mo nkan ti teacher fe …[57] |
| Researcher: | Bo ya kan de ko awon questions yen ni Yoruba?[58] |
| AM: | (*Looking bewildered*) No o, Ma! Mi o mo Yoruba ka, a po ti a le ka Yoruba, Ma.[59] |
| Researcher: | (*Smiling*) Wait now … wait. It would still be in English and then the Yoruba could be included for those who would prefer to read Yoruba. Won mi yo English kuro. Won ma a kan fi Yoruba kun ni fun awon ti yen ma a ye ni.[60] |
| AM: | (*Short laugh and continuously shakes his head*). OK. (DMS-AM/CA1-IS, 18-22) |

According to AM, the occasions when he had been observed stalling and pausing during the assessment had been due to his inability to remember the exact words to use.


(2)    CA2

AM found IS very difficult and was waiting for the right time to drop the subject. He believed that he had a good idea of some of the topics, yet he still failed the subject.

| AM: | Excuse, Ma, mi o mon nkan to de ti mo ma n fail science yen. (Pauses) Igba mi (pauses again) Igba mi o de man ye mi sugbon mi o kin pass e da a da.[61] |
| --- | --- |
| Researcher | Ki ni iwo ro pe o nsele? Ki ni o un happen?[62] |
| AM: | Bo ya bi mo se ma nko nkon. Ti a ba ti se mistake kekere kankan wan ma a mark gbogbo e wrong ni. Business Studies ye mi da a da[63]. (DMS-AM/CA2-BS, 29-30) |

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[52] *What do you think? Won't they feel you're attempting to ask someone else for the answers?*

[53] *They know me and know I would never cheat.*

[54] *But could you promise to make an effort to start reading silently? Will you try?*

[55] *Yes, Ma, I'll try.*

[56] *What can I do about the question papers to help  you and the others understand and write the tests better?*

[57] *Maybe if they (teachers) explain what they want, those who can't read would know what to do.*

[58] *Perhaps if the questions were written in Yoruba . . .*

[59] *No, Ma! I can't read Yoruba, there are many of us who can't read Yoruba.*

[60] *The English won't be removed, but maybe Yoruba should be added for those who prefer to read the Yoruba version of the question.*

[61] *I don't know why I fail science. (Pauses)Sometimes (Pauses again) sometimes I understand what the teacher says but still I never pass well.*

[62] *What do you think is happening? What's happening?*

[63] *Maybe it's the way I write, but if one makes any little mistake the teacher marks everything wrong. I*

AM believed writing down his ideas to be his major challenge in school and suggested that spelling and vocabulary introduced as separate subjects could be helpful. He believed that, meanwhile, more assistance in that regard would also be far-reaching. During this session, considerably more Yoruba was used than after CA1.

AM:   Ka ni won le ma a ko wa ni spelling ni oto boya ki teacher mi wa fun iyen nikan…(*suddenly seemed inspired*) No, ki teacher mi wa fun vocab na, a je ki se tan ma ma a gbe fun wa po a le ma a se ni ile, a de le ye wa da a da. Yes, o ma a je ki o ye wa a, ma mo o.[64] (DMS-AM/CA2-BS, 39)

I commented that the teachers' notes on the various topics most likely contained the correct spellings and that more systematic study of the subjects using class notes coupled with the use of the recommended textbooks could go a long way in assisting him to improve. AM's demeanour changed to dejection as he explained that for many of the subjects he and many of his classmates did not have the recommended textbooks, because their parents had never bought them. What about the teachers' notes then? AM's answer was that he sometimes had to copy from classmates because the teachers wrote on the blackboard and if for any reason one could not keep up, one would have to copy the notes and sometimes imported errors from those.

    (3)     CA3

This time, AM again seemed confident about his abilities and performance and sure of himself. AM believed he was an able student and indeed he was, at least relative to the performance of some others in his class. The BS, he said, was not really difficult because he had been able to answer the questions and he was sure he would do well. Asked about his observed behaviours during CA3-IS, such as tapping the table, frowning, writing on his palm, his response was:

AM:   Ha, mi o mo bi mo se ma a ko awon nkan imi, mo wa n try lati ranti.[65] (DMS-AM/CA3-IS, 73)

AM felt he should also pass the IS even though it was more difficult. He, however, only conceded that IS had been difficult for him when confronted with some of his test-taking

_understand Business Studies better_.

[64] *Maybe if they can teach us spelling separately maybe with a separate teacher for that alone . . . (suddenly seemed inspired) No, there should be another teacher for vocabulary as well. Then the work we'd be given would be more and we'd be able to do it at home and it will be clearer. Yes, It'll help us understand better, I'll understand*.

[65] *I didn't know how to write what I wanted to say and was just trying to remember.*

behaviours during the assessment process. AM had seemed anxious and fidgety. He had re-read the questions and had waited a long while before writing anything.

AM:     Awon nkan tan nbere lowo wa le die, mi o mo pe won ma bere awon iyen. But mo se da a da sha.[66] (DMS-AM/CA3-IS, 78)

### 4.5.3.2 Mediation

AM's knowledge of the LoLTA was still at the BICS level though his grammar and expressive skills were better than those of AF. He responded voluminously in Yoruba when addressed in that language and was not embarrassed to explain himself in Yoruba during our sessions together.

He could read the questions fairly fluently, although the pronunciation of a number of words such as *qualities, identify, methods* (LIB/CA2-BS) did prove a challenge to him. With BS, he appeared able to decode and understand the questions and could respond appropriately in Yoruba and in English when asked to do so orally. AM's challenges were more apparent with IS, where he was not able to respond to questions in English and lacked adequate knowledge of the concepts and terminology.

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | Ki ni o nsele pelu Integrated Science yi?[67] What's going on? |
| AM: | (Looking around as if to check if anyone could hear him) Mi o like e rara, Ma. O ti le ju.[68] |
| Researcher: | What is making it so difficult for you? Ki ni o je ko le be yen na? Kilo feel?[69] |
| AM: | Ko kan ye mi ni Ma. Mi o fe se. Mi o like e.[70] |
| Researcher: | But mo ri teacher yin ti o se alaye gan ni the other class. Won nko yin da a da now?[71] |
| AM: | (Pauses, looks at the floor and then says) Awon oro yen ti le ju. Mi o fe se mo, o de si di SS1 ki nto le drop e.[72] |
| Researcher: | But don't you want to make an attempt to improve before then? I mean you could end enjoying the subject. |
| AM: | (Laughs) I want to do better. Mo ma a try, Ma.[73] |
| Researcher: | OK. Then, let us attempt to answer another question. (DMS-AM/CA3, 85-88) |

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[66] *The questions were a bit difficult and unexpected, but I should do well anyway.*
[67] *What is going on with the IS, what is the problem?*
[68] *I don't like it at all, Ma. It's too difficult.*
[69] *What do you think is making it difficult for you?*
[70] *I just don't understand it. I don't want to take the subject anymore. I don't like it.*
[71] *But I saw your teacher in the other class and she was putting in a lot of effort. You're being taught well now?*
[72] *The words are just too difficult. I don't want to do it anymore but I can't drop it till I reach the senior secondary.*
[73] *I will try, Ma.*

AM attempted to read the next question and, as with all the others in both BS and IS, his pronunciation was laden with Yoruba intonation and accent, but that never deterred him from trying. Even while saying the words wrongly, he did so with confidence and took correction in his stride. For example, he was not able to pronounce *define, ingestion and egestion* (LIB/CA2-IS, Q4) and was corrected. AM was able to give a vague definition of *digestion* but failed completely with *ingestion* and *egestion*. The mediation for AM, therefore, included mediating access to the pronunciation and meaning of specific terminology and this also led to the mediation of grammar.

AM disclosed that he found the adapted assessment questions helpful, but that his greatest academic challenge in terms of language was how to express himself properly and he wanted assistance with the development of writing strategies. In respect of his expressive abilities, AM's grammar still showed much room for improvement although he spoke without hesitation and accepted correction without ado, carrying on with the response he believed was appropriate. AM's writing was legible though containing many deletions in his attempt to correct spelling errors. His vocabulary was limited, so he had difficulty writing down all the ideas he was able to articulate orally.

*4.5.3.3 Answer Scripts*

    (1)    Receptive level

There seemed to be no need to translate questions to AM, although I sometimes did so all the same because I was not convinced that he fully understood. He could comprehend social communications effectively, as well as read the questions in BS and mostly establish correctly what the assessment task required of him. IS, however, proved rather more challenging. He could read the questions, although sometimes with faulty pronunciation, but comprehending the terminology was difficult for him. It was not, however, clear if this was due to lack of content knowledge or due to the challenges of the LoLTA.

    (2)    Expressive level

AM could express himself fairly clearly and effectively in English when speaking at the level of BICS. Closer examination, however, revealed that AM seemed to have challenges with writing down his responses during assessment. AM spelled some of the words phonetically.

The pronunciation often reflected interference of AM's L1 (Yoruba), e.g. *lomin soil* (loamy), *sanding soil* (sandy), *amentn weather* (harmattan).

Samples of AM's responses from the IS assessments (CA2-IS and CA3-IS) further appeared to demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the conceptual requirements of the question, which might (or might not) be associated with lack of content knowledge. For example, asked to list enzymes that help in the digestion of food (LIB/CA2-IS, Q5), AM wrote "energy, carbohydrates and digestive", reflecting an association with *digestion* but not with the question. Again, when asked to define the process of digestion, AM's response was, "digestion is the breaking down of food so that it can easily to (be) observed." The word *be* was written and then crossed out. *Observed* was confused by AM for *absorbed*, a confusion of terms which illustrates AM's difficulties with terminology: unable to sustain meaningful communication in his responses, he memorised terms in rote learning fashion.

The first question of CA3-IS was: "Differentiate between (a) sexual and asexual reproduction (b) self and cross pollination." AM left the (a)-part of the question unanswered and responded thus to the (b)-part:

"the different between self and cross pollination : self is a person

cross pollination: is a cross that hold the human pollination".

Here AM was attempting to use individual or discrete meanings of the words in answering the question, failing to recognise and grasp the academic concepts (*self pollination* and *cross pollination*) in the context of the particular subject theme. The elliptical formulation, "*self and cross pollination*", of course contributed to his error. Table 4.6 and Figure 4.2 contain AM's CA and examination scores in percentages.

**Table 4.6    AM scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS $\bar{x}=37.5$ | CA2-BS $\bar{x}=35$ | CA3-BS $\bar{x}=41.5$ | EX-BS $\bar{x}=47$ | CA1-IS $\bar{x}=18$ | CA2-IS $\bar{x}=23$ | CA3-IS $\bar{x}=10$ | EX-IS $\bar{x}=22.5$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AM** | 15 | 27 | 55 | 55 | 25 | 44 | 10 | 33 |
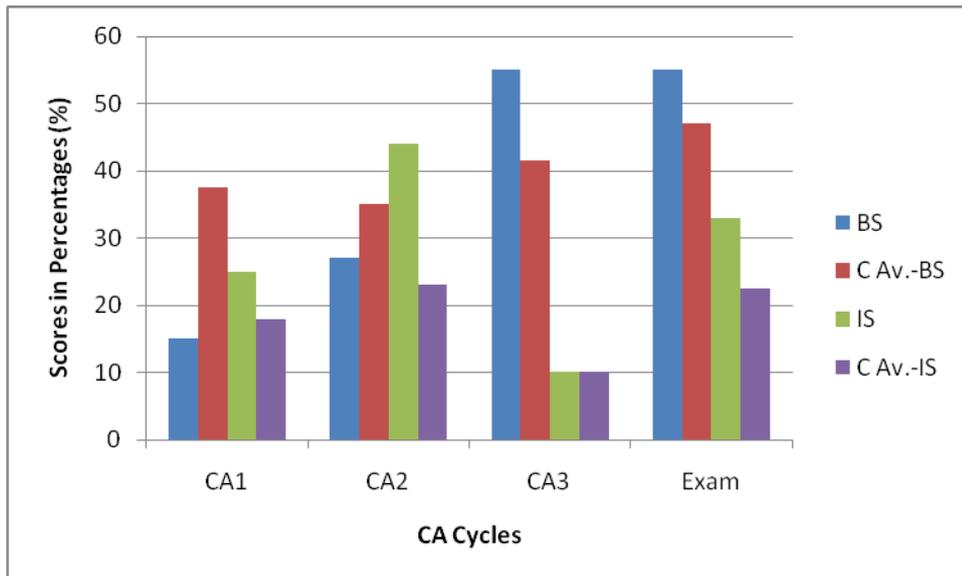
**Figure 4.2    AM – Comparison of CA and Examination Scores**

Table 4.6 and Figure 4.2 show that AM failed the CA1-BS and CA2-BS and all assessments in IS, but he recorded some interesting improvements all the same. Counter to the slight drop for CA2-BS in the mean performance of Class A and B (37.5% - 35%), AM improved by 12% (15% - 27%), then broke through dramatically in CA3-BS not only far to surpass the mean performance score of 41.5%, but to actually achieve a pass mark (55%), which he retained in the examination. In IS his improvement in the CA2 was also considerable (25% - 44%), but he did not succeed in maintaining the gain. Notably, however, AM's scores were consistently higher than the means in IS, excepting for the apparently flawed CA3-IS.

*4.5.3.4 Discussion – AM*

(1)    Additional language factor

AM was linguistically challenged, although the extent was not as acute as with AF in either Yoruba or English. He spoke Yoruba well and used code mixing with ease. In spite of his proficiency in Yoruba, he strongly doubted whether it could have any sense to provide the English assessment questions in parallel in Yoruba as well, stating that few could read Yoruba. This draws attention to the phenomenon of subtractive bilingualism (Ada, 1991: 448; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 18 & 33), where mastery in the L2 is achieved at the expense of proficiency in the L1 and no attempt is made to maintain the L1.

This learner really had much potential that he was unable to access on account of the AL barrier. He could read English but he had faulty pronunciation and demonstrated a lack of

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comprehension of the conceptual requirements of some questions. He actually suggested that it would be helpful if teachers explained what they wanted, thus demonstrating how crucial it is for AL learners to have full access to the meaning of the questions in assessment. AM said he found IS exceedingly difficult and his inability to cope with the IS concepts and terminology was a strong factor in this perception. The fact that his IS-assessment scores were higher than the mean performance score of Class A and B for all but the generally problematic CA3-IS, did not seem to alleviate his sense of the linguistic pressure of the subject at all. AM found writing his ideas challenging at least partly because he had difficulty remembering the terms to use, although inadequate understanding and/or preparation for assessment could have contributed to this, especially initially.

His complaint about teachers' tendency to mark everything wrong upon "any tiny mistake" merits serious consideration, although this would entail looking at the issues of accommodation of AL in assessment more than at DA. AM's suggestion concerning focused learning support in spelling and vocabulary is also relevant with regard to this complaint in that it highlights the need for language education across the curriculum (LAC) (Nieman, 2006: 34) as the obverse of strict assessment.

Finally, the lack of textbooks and faultless notes on which to model AL usage while learning seems to have had a crippling effect on the academic progress of this boy with such good potential.

(2)     Impact of dynamic assessment

AM's excellent latent potential was clearly demonstrated by the considerable gains that he made in the course of the intervention, which obversely also demonstrated the value that the DA had for him. The DA appeared to tap into his potential in various ways. The corrections and mediation offered in respect of pronunciation, meaning and grammar were readily accepted and incorporated.  His scores in the CA-BS and examination reveal that he was able to improve greatly, to the level of rising above the mean performance scores of Class A and B, and also passing the subject in CA3 and again in the examination. This may partly be because the linguistic complexity of BS was not too great for him to benefit directly from DA although, given his need for approval, a Hawthorne effect (Ary *et al*., 1990: 306; Mouton, 2001: 106; Cohen *et al*., 2000: 127) is also possible. AM's performance in IS fluctuated more.

In perceiving IS to be fraught with unfamiliar, difficult terms, he associated his problems strongly with the AL factor.

Mediation over the brief period of a single term indeed proved to have somewhat limited value and AM persisted in floundering along by means of rote memory learning, at least partly because of the severe constraints of AL experienced in trying to write his responses to the assessment questions. He found the adapted assessments useful, but he wished also for permanent language-based intervention such as separate teachers who would specifically deal with the development of spelling and vocabulary.

(3)    Affect

AM presented a confident and enthusiastic front about his studies, striving to conceal and deny his difficulties. He expressed the desire to excel and demonstrated willingness to work harder at home if only he were provided with the tools of spelling and vocabulary. AM's profile as detailed in Table 4.1 provides a probable insight into his attitudes and also gives some indication of his socio-economic background. Being a middle child in a large family, and at an age (15years) considered to be too old for Basic 8 (by Nigerian standards), it could be suggested that his other siblings might have contributed to his level of motivation. For instance, having older siblings who were high performers in school could mean AM desired to emulate them. Conversely, older siblings that were bad role models in terms of academic achievement could also be motivating factors for him. In this case the desire not to be like them and to dissociate himself from their lack of achievement might also be a motivating factor for AM.  In the same vein he had younger ones that probably looked up to him as well.

AM showed visible signs of effort and also tension during assessments, reflecting conflicting emotions in trying for the best possible product and avoiding the threats of error. The level of difficulty of IS caused him (in other respects a learner with positive disposition) to dislike the subject to the extent of wanting to drop it. Denial and avoidance behaviour seemed to be his (ineffectual) coping strategies. The immediate effect of the intervention, shown in AM's dramatic improvement in both subjects during CA2, is a sure indication of the strong emotional effect exercised on AM by the linguistic barriers to his learning as well as by his experience of my 'support'. This also strengthens the possibility of a Hawthorne effect on his performance profile.

### 4.5.4 Results in respect of Participant BF

*4.5.4.1 Debriefing*

(1)     CA1

BF was a lively girl, very vocal, friendly and active. She was fluent in Yoruba, but not even at the BICS level of application of the LoLTA, although her sorely limited communicative skills in English did not deter her from expressing herself or at least trying to. BF was eager to be in the project and believed she had a lot contribute. In helpless frustration BF blamed her failing marks on the complexity of the assessment questions, i.e. on her inability to understand what she was expected to do.

| BF: | (*Before I had said anything*) Ki ni a ma se ni eni, Ma?[74] Can I be doing reading of paper for you, that one? (*Pointing to my loose sheets*) Ma a ka a da da![75] |
| --- | --- |
| Researcher: | (*Smiling*) Can you read the paper to me? Of course, but let's talk about the test first. How was it? |
| BF: | Mo se, Ma.[76] |
| Researcher: | I know you did. But how was it? Se o mo gbogbo nkan tan bere lowo ninu Business Studies yen?[77] |
| BF: | O da. Mo se. (*Pausing*) Mi o pari sa. Won ti je ki o le ju.[78] |
| Researcher: | E wo ni o le nibe? Ki ni o je ko le ju awon toku lo?[79] |
| BF: | (*Reflecting*) Mi o mo nkan ti won fe ki a ko. Won mo o mo nje ki o le ni. Mi kin fe se awon test yen tori mi ni pass.[80] |
| Researcher: | Ko si eni ti o fe ko fail now. Nobody, nkan ti mo se nbere pe ki  ni oro pe o nfa to ki fi nse da a da?[81] |
| BF: | Ti nkan ti won bere ba a ye mi, ma a pass.[82] (DMS-BF/CA1-BS, 1-5). |

BF had seemed restless during the CA1 assessments. She had sometimes tapped the table and her paper, murmured intermittently and made faces. When asked about this, she had no explanation except that sometimes she was unable to cope with the questions and that it was involuntary expressions of her emotions. The discussion quoted revealed that BF perceived the teachers as being deliberately challenging and that she had negative expectations of the results of her assessment.

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[74] *What are we going to do today, Ma?*
[75] *… I'll read it properly.*
[76] *I did it, Ma.*
[77] *Could you answer all the questions in the BS?*
[78] *It was good. I did it … but I didn't finish … they (teachers) made it too difficult.*
[79] *Which one was difficult? What made it difficult?*
[80] *I didn't know what the teacher was asking. They (teachers) intentionally made it difficult. I don't like doing the test because I know I'm going to fail.*
[81] *Nobody wants you to fail. That's why I'm asking you what you think is the reason you don't do well.*
[82] *If I understand what I'm asked to do, I'll pass.*

(2)     CA2

This debriefing revealed that BF failed to understand that she must accept some of the responsibility for her academic performance. BF readily blamed other individuals and situations for her inability to succeed beyond a certain point. It was either the textbooks that were too complex or the teacher who did not explain properly and did not use enough code switching and code mixing, or her classmates who usually made a noise and did not allow proper studies to take place. BF said she had found the glossary useful but had initially felt reading it might be a waste of time. When she tried it she found it was actually helpful in clarifying the question. She asked if it was possible to use it with all the other subjects.

BF had a strong belief that teachers intentionally made the topics and subjects difficult for them to understand. She continually emphasised the importance of understanding the questions and suggested that the questions should be read aloud.

Researcher:    But OK, awon ti o nko yin nlati bere questions ki won le fi mo boya o ye yin or maybe won ma a need lati tun gbogbo e ko, abi ki won lo method mi [83]…

BF:            (*Interjecting*) Won fe ka fail ni Ma…[84]

Researcher:    Nkan ti a ma se nipe a ma a pada wa so gbogbo yen… bawo ni Integrated Science lo te yi?[85]

BF:            O da a ju ti akoko yen lo. Better.[86]

Researcher:    What else do you think would make a difference? Ki ni awon nkan imi ti a le se ki awon questions yen le ye e?[87]

BF:            Bo ya ki won ma a ka a sita. Ki won ri pe o ye gbogbo wa. Ki a to bere si ko sile.[88](DMS-BF/CA2-IS, 49-51)

(3)     CA3

During the CA3-BS, BF's mannerisms had still occurred although somewhat reduced. She had seemed completely lost during the IS. She said the BS was good, but she did not have any idea how the IS would turn out. She believed, however, that if she had had the IS textbook she probably would have done better. In her view, the textbook, written in the AL, formed an important resource to succeed in assessments.

Researcher:    Teacher yin de ma nfi Yoruba ko yin …[89]

BF:            (*Interjects*) But ko ki nse ojojumo, not all the time.[90]

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[83] *But those teaching have to assess you to know what gains you've made and try other methods of teaching if you don't understand*

[84] *They (teachers) want us to fail, Ma.*

[85] *What we'll do is come back and discuss all the issues you're raising. Now, how was the IS this time?*

[86] *It was better than the first one.*

[87] *What else could be done to help you process the questions better?*

[88] *Maybe the questions should be read out to everyone and they (teachers) should be sure everyone understands before allowing them to write.*

[89] *Your teacher uses Yoruba to teach…*

Researcher:    Se ko ki nye e ni awon igba ti won ba fi ko yin ni?[91] Do you then understand?
BF:            (*Makes a face*) Ah, o ma nye mi ti won ba nfi Yoruba ko wa, but nkan ti won ma nbere ninu exam ko ni yen sha.[92] (DMS-BF/CA3-IS, 79-80)


*4.5.4.2 Mediation*

During each of the mediation sessions, BF read the questions, then there was collaborative reading when the pronunciations were corrected and practiced. Thereafter, the functional assessment terms were explained using code switching and code mixing. The questions were translated to Yoruba to clarify conceptual difficulties and then BF attempted to answer them. BF understood simple instructions in English dealing with her school and other social interactions; but all instructions and utterances of a more academic nature had to be translated to mediate clarity and comprehension. BF was a poor reader of both Yoruba and English, but she was eager to learn and she asked many, mostly relevant, questions. Mediation of her reading therefore chiefly entailed processing of the questions. Questions were read collaboratively and each was explained. A considerable portion of the mediation was done in Yoruba. BF sometimes gave completely irrelevant responses to questions and sometimes the questions had to be revisited and explained further. For example, when asked to "List three agents of weathering" (LIB/CA2-IS, Q3), her response was "dry weather, cold weather", showing a complete lack of understanding of the terms *agents* and *weathering*. To the question "List five advantages of cash sales"(LIB/CA3-BS, Q2), she responded: "The issue of bad doubt will not asist". She seemed to benefit from the mediation, however, and enjoyed the process.


BF's grammar and expressive ability of English was very poor, but she could speak Yoruba fairly well. Sometimes, little sense could be made of the English she wrote or spoke. On a number of occasions she had to stop speaking and start again, this time using Yoruba. She lacked self-confidence when speaking English and was visibly surer of herself with the use of Yoruba. When she attempted to speak English, she had to be constantly reassured and told that any mistakes she made would be corrected.


She used code mixing extensively and used her hands to demonstrate and make her points clearer. BF required assistance with the sequence of her thoughts to form a meaningful,

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[90] *But it's not everyday, not all the time.*
[91] *Don't you understand at those times that she uses Yoruba to teach?*
[92] *Yes, I do understand when she uses Yoruba to teach but that's not what is asked in the examinations.*

logical response. By the time she reached the CA3 mediation, however, she could read the words denoting assessment functions such as *state*, *define*, *describe* and *define* without assistance. BF believed that she could improve if she had consistent assistance from a tutor after school and also if the questions were clarified and she could understand what was required of her. BF also wished that teachers would teach strategies to boost her writing abilities.

*4.5.4.3 Answer scripts*

     (1)     Receptive level

As indicated above, BF could not read her assessment questions properly and struggled with key words. She had to be assisted and some questions had to be explained in Yoruba.

     (2)     Expressive level

BF's answer scripts revealed many grammatical errors despite the fact that the assessment tasks did not require complex sentence formation. Her responses sometimes did convey sufficient sense, but at other times it was fairly difficult to understand what she was trying to say. Answering the question: "Why is oxygen important to us as living things?" (LIB/CA3-IS, Q9) BF responded as follows, demonstrating understanding of the question as well as some knowledge of the relevant content:

"oxygen is inportant to that we can smeel and breath because without oxygen human being can't be alive".

On the other hand, it was fairly difficult to make sense of what BF wrote in response to the next question, although that was perhaps because she had not read the question carefully enough or because the syntactical complexity of the question caused her to concentrate on the end part:

"What can you do to make sure you get enough oxygen in the room where you sleep?"(LIB/CA3-IS, Q10)

BF's answer:

"to make sure that I have enough oxygen in my is when I breath oxygen the one I breath will keep me death and also when we have fan can also keep us from heat so that we sleep very well to protect our self from heat."

In response to the question, "In what ways does the amount of water you drink affect what you excrete?"(LIB/EX-IS, Q5), BF answered:

"in by taken al ot of water it excrete and affect The body organs or The stomack."

At the linguistic level, this response demonstrates a complete breakdown of syntax and meaning, even to the extreme of causing non-words *(al ot),* and at the conceptual level only a vague association occurs between *water − excrete − affect* (provided by the question) and *body organs − stomack.* Her inadequate writing skills actually seemed to compound the challenges she faced, but her responses had grown considerably in length when compared with CA1. Table 4.7 and Figure 4.3 contain BF's CA and examination scores in percentages.

**Table 4.7        BF scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS $\bar{x}=37.5$ | CA2-BS $\bar{x}=35$ | CA3-BS $\bar{x}=41.5$ | EX-BS $\bar{x}=47$ | CA1-IS $\bar{x}=18$ | CA2-IS $\bar{x}=23$ | CA3-IS $\bar{x}=10$ | EX-IS $\bar{x}=22.5$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BF** | 25 | 25 | 45 | 50 | 0 | 14 | 10 | 30 |
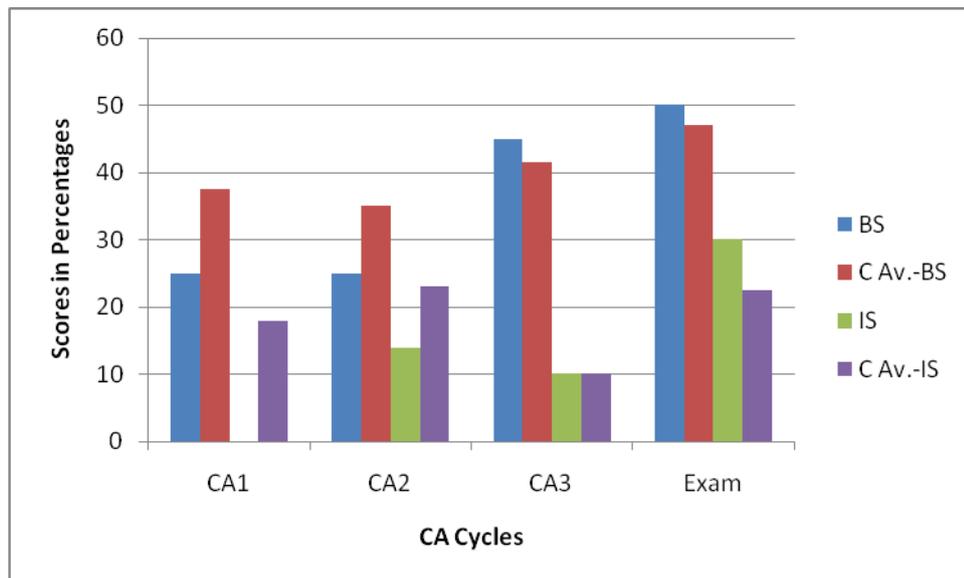


**Figure 4.3        BF – Comparison of CA and Examination Scores**

Table 4.7 and Figure 4.3 show that BF improved in both subjects from below the mean performance scores of Class A and B, to above. She ultimately got a pass mark (50%) in BS in the examination. BF never passed an IS-assessment, but she did show consistent improvement relative to the mean performance scores of Class A and B, breaking even in the flawed CA3-IS and then outstripping the mean in the examination.

*4.5.4.4 Discussion – BF*

    (1)        Additional language factor

BF demonstrated a severe lack of communicative skills in English but was articulate in Yoruba, and Yoruba frequently had to be used during our sessions together. She had poor proficiency in English even at the BICS level and this severely compromised the development of CALP. BF put her finger squarely on the assessment dilemma of AL learners when she stated that her inability to understand the questions was at the root of her failing marks. BF was a poor reader and as with AF and AM she saw the value of having the teacher read the questions and ensure that the learners understand what is expected of them. BF frequently asked questions, which indicates her striving to achieve understanding. She also had challenges expressing her ideas, especially in writing. In gesturing with her hands to supplement her spoken statements, she succeeded in clarifying or even adding information that did not yet exist in her expressive lexicon of the AL. This fact leaves no doubt at all that her assessment results could not possibly be a reliable indication of her learning and supports previous findings in respect of the impact of AL proficiency on achievement (Barry, 2002: 106; Prinsloo, 2005:37). BF understood the benefit that focused language learning support might hold for her, which endorses the fact that effective language instruction for AL use in learning should contain elements that are less pertinent in teaching a L2 for communicative purposes generally. She also seemingly understood the value of having a textbook which could be viewed as a dependable source for rote learning, terminology and spelling.

    (2)        Impact of dynamic assessment

BF appeared to have benefited from the mediation, knowing that her mistakes would be addressed instead of merely being marked down, and she would be assisted. BF enjoyed the mediation and was eager to learn and ready to accept any form of assistance offered. She asked many questions and thereby gave further direction to the mediation. It also indicated her need for interaction (which DA supplied), which is not even considered in static assessment. Graduated prompting was required, with revisiting of the questions. She especially required mediation in making sense of the questions and forming the logical sequence of responses. BF reiterated the importance of understanding the assessment questions (a need which is served very well by the principle of graduated prompting) and the value of focused learning support (which is so essentially what DA is about). She consistently put in a lot of effort and wanted to develop her cognitive skills as well as be fluent in English. This was certainly a welcome development since DA is not intended to turn the learner into a

passive receptacle and a mere beneficiary, but is explicitly concerned with enlisting the learner's concerted effort to realise his/her full potential. The theoretical assumptions include the key role of interaction and guidance in DA (Deutsch & Reynolds: 2000; Lidz, 1987 & 1991; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001; Pena, Iglesias & Lidz, 2001). It could actually be argued that the possible Hawthorne effect contained in BF's strong improvement is a logical and indeed legitimate element of DA.

BF's responses grew in length in CA3 and the examination scripts, possibly on account of the mediation which had made her try harder to express her thoughts. She found the glossary useful and asked if other subjects could incorporate its use as well. This suggests that the DA was already finding transfer into some other aspects of her learning. However, she recognised the implication of the time factor when using the glossary since more time was required to read through the glossary and no additional time was awarded for its inclusion on the assessment papers. She scored a pass mark (50%) in only the BS examination, but relative to the mean performance scores of Class A and B, she showed consistent improvement in all the other assessments.

    (3)    Affect

BF was very interesting to work with, but seriously lacked self-confidence when speaking English. She appeared to be enjoying our interactions and was always willing to participate and contribute to the discussion. Transferring the AL dilemma to the field of relationships, she seemed to harbour resentment against her teachers, believing that they intentionally made the learners' work difficult. BF displayed an external locus of control in blaming her lack of achievement on teachers, the complexity of textbooks and the noise of peers but she might not have been all that wrong in her perceptions.. She was almost always certain she would fail and this translated directly into a dislike of being tested and she showed visible signs of tension during tests. Situations such as these, ultimately lead learners to lose motivation and end up in a state of confusion often resulting in truancy and dropping out of school (Bolarin, 1996:143).

### 4.5.5 Results in respect of Participant BM

*4.5.5.1 Debriefing*

(1) CA1

BM said he viewed the challenges of school as overwhelming. He loved the idea of the project because he welcomed any form of distraction from his schoolwork and thought it would be an opportunity to do something different. After the initial meeting during which he realised that there would not be much disruption to the school timetable, he was disappointed, although he was still willing to participate. BM was fluent in Yoruba and believed that English made assessment challenging most of the time. He disclosed that he had fidgeted during the assessments because he disliked tests and believed he would make mistakes in writing the answers even when he knew the answer. He agreed with BF that teachers purposely made assessments difficult because they wanted the subject they taught to be viewed as complex and tough. Probing this comment further, I asked whether any of the topics covered in the CA cycles had not been taught in class. He conceded that they had all been taught, but said that he had limited understanding of the content, especially in IS.

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | I was watching you during the test. How did you feel about that? Bawo ni o se feel nipa e?[93] |
| BM: | Yes Ma. O wa ok. Mi o mind.[94] |
| Researcher: | O gbe ori le table, o tun frown gan, o tun wo ka a kiri. Kilode?[95] |
| BM: | (*Laughing*) Mi o kin like kin ma se test.[96] |
| Researcher: | Kilode?[97] |
| BM: | (*Focuses on his hands*) Mo ma nsi awon nkan ti mo ba fe so ko nigba mi, ode ma nwa dun mi ti mo ba a si because I know it.[98](DMS-BM/CA1-IS, 7-9) |

(2) CA2

BM believed that the mediational changes made to the assessment questions had been helpful in both subjects since they seemed to aid his understanding. He viewed BS as an easier subject to cope with because some of the terms were familiar. In respect of the IS assessment, he believed that he might actually have a better score this time because he felt he had been better able to answer the questions. He was, however, quick to add that he first had to wait for

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[93] *How did you feel about being observed?*
[94] *It was OK, I didn't mind.*
[95] *You put your head on the table, you were frowning and looking about. Why?*
[96] *I don't like taking tests.*
[97] *Why?*
[98] *I sometimes make mistakes while writing those things I want to say, and it hurts my feelings when I now get it wrong because I know the answer.*

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the test scores to come. He found the difficulty level of the IS terminology so overwhelming that he could not even specify which terms were unfamiliar and the entire subject had lost its meaning for him:

Researcher: It's not that bad with the right support, I mean ti o ba ri eni to le help e ni ile tabi ni school Integrated Science o de wa le ju na se o mo.[99]

 BM: Rara, Ma. Awon nkon mi ti won ma nso ti le ju. Mi o mo nkan to de ti won fi nko wa ni awon imi nibe?[100]

Researcher: Bi awon wo? Which ones?[101]

BM: (*Wide eyed/mouth open*) Won ti poju. Bi enipe gbogbo e ni. Emi o mo nkan ti o ye ki a fi won se.[102] (DMS-BM/CA2-IS, 43-44)

BM thought that many aspects of IS were too difficult for him to actually find relevance for it in his daily life or to relate it to issues that affected him directly and hence he did not like the subject. BM did not believe that his language ability in Yoruba was good enough for him to attempt to read and answer questions in Yoruba. He believed that clarifying the questions in either English or Yoruba could rather make a difference to his performance. BM also thought teachers were too strict about spelling and grammar.

BM: Excuse, Ma. Gbogbo nkan ni won ma n mark wrong. Nkan kekere ti eyan ba ti si ko abi ti o spell da da won ma wrong e ni. Ko da at all.[103] (DMS-BM/CA3-IS, 75)

When queried about what would happen if teachers were more accommodating with language errors, BM acknowledged that the issues were complex and had to be thought through.

(3) CA3

I quickly brought it to BM's attention that his behaviour during the assessment this time had had me worried. He had seemed more anxious and fidgety than before. He agreed that he had felt confused and anxious and said it was because the IS test was not what he had expected and he did not wish to fail. His feelings about the test spilled over into resentment against school generally:

BM: Mi o mo awon imi ninu e rara at all.[104]

Researcher: Se o o ka iwe e fun test iyi ni?[105]

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[99] *You know with the right support in school and help from home, you'll find that IS is not really that difficult.*

[100] *No, Ma I don't agree. Some of the terms are just too difficult. I just don't understand why we are taught some of those things.*

[101] *Like which ones?*

[102] *They are too many. It's as if it's everything. I don't know what we are supposed to do with them.*

[103] *They (teachers) mark everything wrong. Every little error or small spelling mistake they'll mark wrong. It isn't nice at all.*

[104] *I didn't know some of them at all.*

[105] *Didn't you study for this test at all?*

BM:            Mo ka a, Ma. Nitori nkan ti mi o se like school niyen.[106]
Researcher:    Ah … ko de ri be o. O de mo nkan to ma a gba now. O le ma bad to bi o se
               nro. Nkan ti o ma se nisinyin nipe o ma ti bere si ka iwe fun exam e. Iyi ti o ba
               ti ye e wa tete ma bere lowo teacher ki o to di igba yen.[107]
BM:            Yes, Ma. Ma se be. E se, Ma.[108](DMS-BM/CA3-BS, 6-8)

BM said he wished his parents could afford a private tutor for him. He believed that individual support would be the best for him and said he felt there was no opportunity to get the teacher's attention long enough to fully grasp the concepts and ideas. He strongly believed that his needs to achieve in-depth understanding of the subjects were more than could be provided for within the class. He felt the challenges he faced in school were due to the extent of difficulty of some of the school subjects such as IS and he did not believe that all the subjects were either necessary or useful. BM actually felt that some of the subjects only served to make education much more difficult.

*4.5.5.2 Mediation*

BM was very cooperative during the mediation process. His use of the LoLTA was at the BICS level although his reading proficiency in English was better than that of the other participants from the LIB School. With BS, BM was able to understand the questions and answer them with ease in Yoruba, but he had some difficulty when using English. IS proved more challenging for him even in Yoruba, in terms of his ability to express himself fully and find the right words to use. He appeared to be putting in a lot of effort and wished to improve.

The questions were read and there was collaborative effort to establish that BM understood the question. Once comprehension was established in Yoruba, the focus of the mediation for BM was on the appropriate expression of his ideas in Yoruba and translation to English. He was able by and large to express his ideas in Yoruba. But his English lexicon was limited and it prevented him from adequately expressing his thoughts, therefore when answering orally he was descriptive rather than precise. For instance, when asked to "state the functions of the skeleton" (LIB/CA3-IS, Q2), BM responded by saying "we can walk and stand", instead of using the term *movement* as contained in the IS textbook. This appears to be a direct translation of the idea from Yoruba. It was clear that BM required assistance with the use of appropriate terminology that had to be learnt in the AL, since the translations would not

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[106] *I studied, Ma. That's why I don't like school.*
[107] *Don't look at it that way. You don't know what your score will be. The result might actually be better than you think. But start studying for your exams early so that you can discuss any problems with your teacher.*

suffice. The two-way translation (English – Yoruba; Yoruba – English) that BM required appeared to be helpful with accessing the questions, understanding the requirements and possibly working out the responses in Yoruba, but the challenge then remained translating this response back into English using the appropriate terminology. Adding further to the challenges was the fact that he did not have the IS textbook, the only ones he had were those for English and Mathematics.

*4.5.5.3 Answer Scripts*

　　(1)　　Receptive level

BM's communication in English was at BICS level with occasional bad grammar, while he lacked adequate proficiency at CALP level. He sometimes demonstrated some level of comprehension of the content requirements of the assessment questions and at other times he appeared to be confused about the content. He did not seem to be able to distinguish between instructions requiring him to *List, State, Define* and *Explain* and simply listed items in all cases, although this tendency might have been linked to his difficulties at the expressive level.

　　(2)　　Expressive level

BM had some challenges with spelling, but less so relative to the other participants, who mostly had very poor spelling skills. BM misspelled words such as "receptionist" (respitionist) despite the fact that it was available to copy as part of a question. Other spelling mistakes included phonetic spelling such as *hart* (heart), *breth* (breathe), phonetic spelling influenced by improper pronunciation resulting from the interference of the L1 such as *dores* (dress), *hendled* (handled), *deaseas* (diseases), and distortion of unfamiliar words, such as *refeest* (reference), *stomed* (stomach), *beteew* (between).

In some of BM's responses comprehension was implicated, should the teacher fail or refuse to infer correctly through the fuzz caused by error, but it is clear that he actually had a good idea of the relevant content:  For instance, BM's response to the item: "List five advantages of cash sales"(LIB/CA3-BS, Q2) was:

"a　　cash is always available with the selles　　　*sellers / sales?*

b　　money is not <u>tired</u> down with the buyer　　　*tied*

c　　The issue of bad debt will not arise

---

[108] *Yes, Ma, I'll do that. Thank you, Ma.*

d       circulation of money is stimvlated

e       buyer may enjoy obverdass cash discount     *?*

        of large quantities where brought"              *if ... were bought*

BM proved able to spell even complex words correctly, although the product does not make full sense semantically. Strictly speaking, only one answer (c) is faultless, but it is worth considering how his AL needs should be accommodated in all of the others.


BM seemed mostly unable to demonstrate understanding of IS. He copied the questions and left them unanswered in a number of instances. In some others, the answers were completely meaningless. Looking at these responses, it is possible that question complexity contributed significantly to his difficulties. For example, an item stated: "Describe briefly the processes of inspiration (inhalation) and exhalation in man." (LIB/CA3-IS, Q3).

BM's response was:    "(a) Reproduction      (b) reproductive        (c) Fertilization"

It is unclear what BM was thinking. He spelled the words flawlessly, possibly because he copied them from the spelling list of the adapted mediational assessment.

Another example: "What is the composition of blood? Describe each component." (LIB/CA3-IS, Q6).

BM's response: "a blood is things that make our body ware and make us healthe"

In the next example also, a combination of difficulties concerning question comprehension and content knowledge appear to have contributed to his poor performance: "Why are the kidneys very important organs?"  (LIB/CA3-IS, Q11).

BM's response: "Intestine: It is a small part of the body. Organs: The organs make our body be fest and heathe. Tissue: The Tissue make the hart breth in oxygens".

Instead of responding to the question about *kidneys*, he went on to write about other parts of the body, probably the ones he believed he knew. Table 4.8 and Figure 4.4 contain BM's CA and examination scores in percentages.


**Table 4.8       BM scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS $\bar{x}=37.5$ | CA2-BS $\bar{x}=35$ | CA3-BS $\bar{x}=41.5$ | EX-BS $\bar{x}=47$ | CA1-IS $\bar{x}=18$ | CA2-IS $\bar{x}=23$ | CA3-IS $\bar{x}=10$ | EX-IS $\bar{x}=22.5$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BM | 40 | 42 | 45 | 50 | 30 | 40 | 5 | 28 |
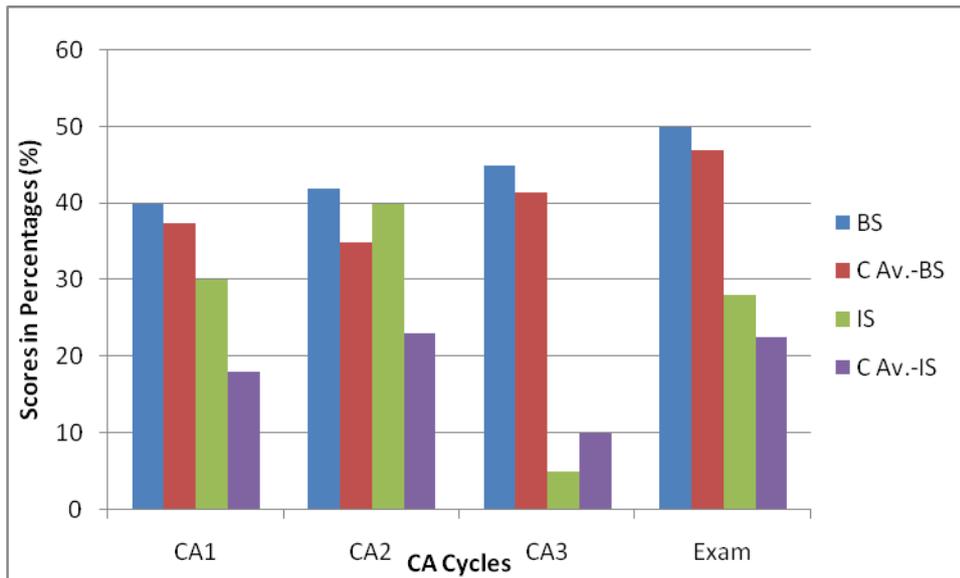
**Figure 4.4     BM – Comparison of CA and Examination Scores**

Table 4.8 and Figure 4.4 show that BM's BS scores recorded slight increases throughout the period of the research (40% - 42% - 45% - 50%), though these did not consistently indicate an improvement relative to the mean performance of Class A and B. He did, however, succeed in performing slightly above the mean performance of Class A and B in BS all the time and reached a pass mark in the examination. In respect of IS, BM was not able to maintain either the steady improvement or his superior position of a 12% and 17% advantage over the mean performance of Class A and B in CA1-IS and CA2-IS. Plummeting (at 5%) to below the mean performance (10%) of Class A and B in the flawed CA3-IS, he failed to recover to his CA2 – level of performance in the examination (40%:28%) whereas the mean performance of Class A and B (23%:22.5%) suggests that the majority of other learners did so.

*4.5.5.4 Discussion – BM*

(1)     Additional language factor

In respect of language, BM's communication skills in English were still firmly at BICS level, with some instances of poor grammar. He had limited vocabulary and his pronunciation was sometimes faulty, and these facts had a strong impact on his spelling and his performance generally at the receptive as well as the expressive level, especially since his teachers marked even slight errors. His reading proficiency was better than that of the other participants from his school, but he had difficulty expressing his thoughts and ideas. The numerous obstacles of a route of translation in learning in an AL showed up clearly with BM and corroborate the argument of  Hutchingson, Whiteley and Smith (2000: 45), that for AL learners success in

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curriculum learning is dependent on building a "complex network of linguistic understanding", and this cannot be achieved by individual word translation.

The AL factor made IS incomprehensible and unmanageable for BM because of its terminological complexity as frequently confirmed by his responses to assessment questions, so his performance in CA1-IS and CA2-IS relative to the mean performance of Class A and B suggests that he was a hard worker. In verbalising that BS was the easier subject because some of the terms were easier, BM demonstrated the perception of a linkage between subject and linguistic complexity in the perception of the AL learner. His belief that teachers should be more accommodating about language-related errors in assessment would seem to demonstrate the same point. His pain when he knew the answer yet the AL factor made him get it wrong (footnote 98), should seriously be noted in this regard.

(2)    Impact of dynamic assessment

Being by his own statement a learner with a need for deep, time-consuming support, BM said that he had found the adapted assessments for both subjects useful. He was of the opinion that the number of subjects that they had to study in school should be reduced to give more focus and allow for better understanding. A possible implication of BM's suggestion is that language should be taught across the curriculum in fewer subject areas to facilitate in-depth learning of the requisite terms and terminology (Macdonald & Burroughs, 1991: 18). His desire for a tutor was an indication that he realised the benefits of individualised support and much of the mediation was focused at the micro-level of translation. Judging by the questions that he only copied but left unanswered, the small range of his assessment scores and the limited improvement generally, BM's wariness about making mistakes had apparently not yet been resolved by means of the DA. Another possibility is that BM was actualising virtually peak potential through hard work and desperately needed focused AL support for further improvement.

(3)    Affect

BM took his work very seriously, so the barriers to good performance cast up by the AL-situation upset him profoundly and he showed severe signs of stress when he found an assessment to be difficult, as it happened so clearly with CA3-IS, the apparently flawed assessment (mean performance score 10%). Not only was the apparent shock of CA3-IS

visible at the time of the assessment, but it would seem to have affected him in the longer term in the examination as well.

BM had a negative attitude towards assessment, which seemed to spill over into viewing the challenges of schooling in general and assessment in particular as overwhelming and oppressive. He appeared to feel hunted by the fact that teachers marked even slight errors and in this respect a lack of self-confidence and negative expectations appeared to be mutually reinforcing, but there was also a sense of pain stemming from the conviction that he knew the answer, yet would be marked down for mistakes made in the process of writing it. His desire to escape into non-school activities could be taken as a reflection of his need for relief. He resented being subjected to assessment because the result became the evidence of his limited ability. The impact of AL in assessment is clearly shown here.

### 4.5.6   Comparative analysis of participants' results – LIB School

The analysis of the data on each of the four participants of the LIB School has shown possible discrete effects of the use of an AL as the LoLTA on the participants and their attitude to school and assessment, and it has also shown some effects possibly ascribable to the use of DA on their performance and attitude towards assessment. A comparative examination of the data may yield some additional information. It is not an attempt to generalise. Such conclusions certainly cannot be drawn from the findings with one school and four participants, on the same grounds as that the individualised data could not be compared statistically even with those of Class A and B. Table 4.9 combines Tables 4.5 – 4.8 on the LIB School participants' scores. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 give a graphic representation of the BS-scores from the perspectives of the CA-cycles and the participants' performance.

**Table 4.9**    **Combined table of LIB-scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS X̄=37.5 | | CA2-BS X̄=35 | | CA3-BS X̄=41.5 | | EX-BS X̄=47 | | CA1-IS X̄=18 | | CA2-IS X̄=23 | | CA3-IS X̄=10 | | EX-IS X̄=22.5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Score | Deviation from mean | Score | Deviation from mean | Score | Deviation from mean | Score | Deviation from mean | Score | Deviation from mean | Score | Deviation from mean | Score | Deviation from mean | Score | Deviation from mean |
| AF | 20 | -17.5 | 25 | -10 | 25 | -16.5 | 30 | -17 | 10 | -8 | 14 | -9 | 5 | -5 | 20 | -2.5 |
| AM | 15 | -22.5 | 27 | -8 | 55 | +13.5 | 55 | +8 | 25 | +7 | 44 | +21 | 10 | 0 | 33 | +10.5 |
| BF | 25 | -12.5 | 25 | -10 | 45 | +3.5 | 50 | +3 | 0 | -18 | 14 | -9 | 10 | 0 | 30 | +7.5 |
| BM | 40 | +2.5 | 42 | +7 | 45 | +3.5 | 50 | +3 | 30 | +12 | 40 | +17 | 5 | -5 | 28 | +5.5 |



Line Plot of multiple variables
Figure 4.5
CA & EX_BS Scores LIB School
Assessment Cycles

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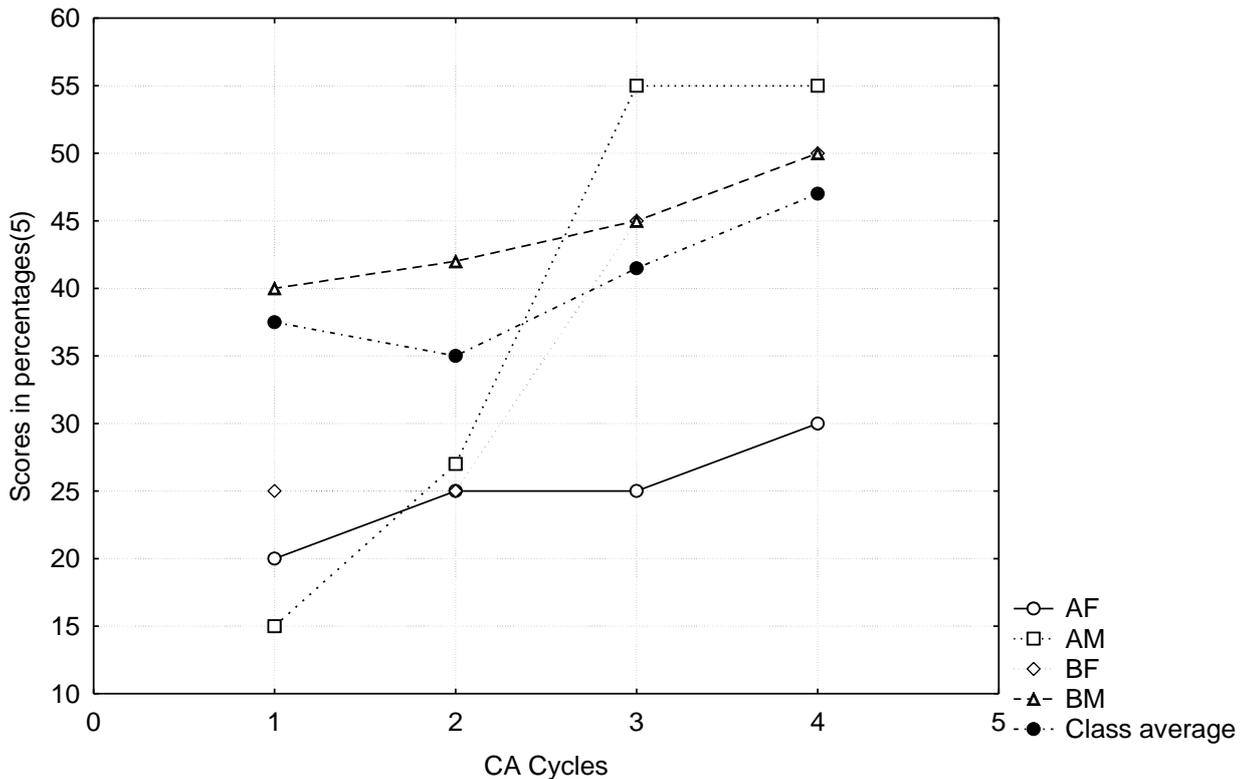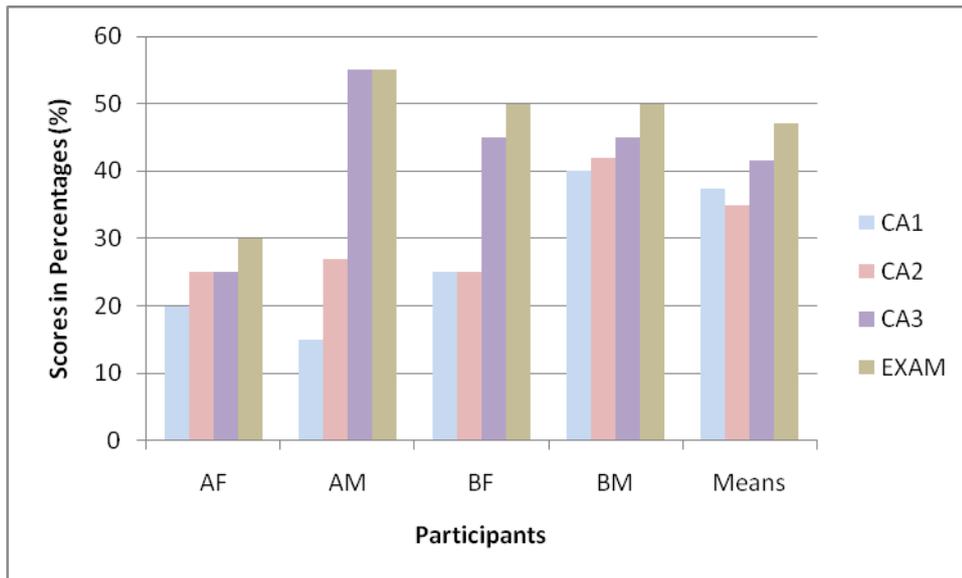
**Figure 4.6** **CA & EX-BS Scores LIB School: Participants**

Figure 4.5 shows not only the improvement generally in terms of the range of the scores per cycle, but also some decrease in variance among the participants, with the scores of AM, BF and BM drawing closer together and all three meeting the pass requirement (50%) in the examination. Some similar trends among the scores are thus observable for AM, BF and BM, with AF unable to maintain similar gains. In CA3 and the examination, all but AF also performed above the mean scores of Class A and B, in contrast with the below-mean performance of all but BM in CA1 and CA2.

Figure 4.6 shows the pattern of consistent improvement through the four assessments for all the participants, therein differing from the mean scores of Class A and B which reflect a dip in the CA2. AF and BM made only a 10% gain during the term, i.e. from CA1 to the examination (20-30%, 40-50%). AF was the weakest participant overall, the only one failing to achieve a pass mark by the end of the DA intervention and consistently scoring below the mean performance of Class A and B. This raises the possibility of limited intellectual potential, further complicated by the AL factor. BM again, was initially the strongest participant, with a baseline performance of 40% and scores consistently above the mean performance of Class A and B, which raises the possibility of stronger intellectual potential, already well actualised. The pattern of improvement of AM and BF differs from that of AF and BM, in terms of overall range (40% and 25% respectively) and each also showing a fairly dramatic increment in CA3. These two profiles lead one to surmise that the mediation was more effective with AM and BF and served to trigger a considerable measure of latent

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learning potential, suggesting as with the LPAD that mediation can lead to structural change in the human intellect (Feuerstein *et al.*, 1987:48 ). AM showed the most progress. He started with the lowest baseline performance (15%) and was able to attain a pass mark (55%) in both CA3-BS and EX-BS. In respect of BF, the DA mediation was not immediately effective, but she also recorded considerable progress during CA3-BS and she was able to maintain the improvement up till the examination where she obtained a pass mark (50%). Judging by her low baseline performance (25%), she also demonstrated good learning potential. To summarise, the DA mediation appears to have had some positive effects in BS on all the participants from the LIB School as they performed better in the examination than the CAs and they also made progressive improvements in their scores from CA1-BS to CA3- BS. But the effect of the DA on performance in BS appears also to have been influenced by the learning potential of the individual. The fact that the mediation was of a linguistic nature, would further imply that the AL factor would almost certainly have played a role. However, this can only be contemplated once the results of the IS assessments have been scrutinised. Figures 4.7 and 4.8 give a graphic representation of the IS-scores from the perspective on the CA-cycles and on the participants' performance.



Figure 4.7
CA & EX-IS Scores LIB School
Assessment cycles
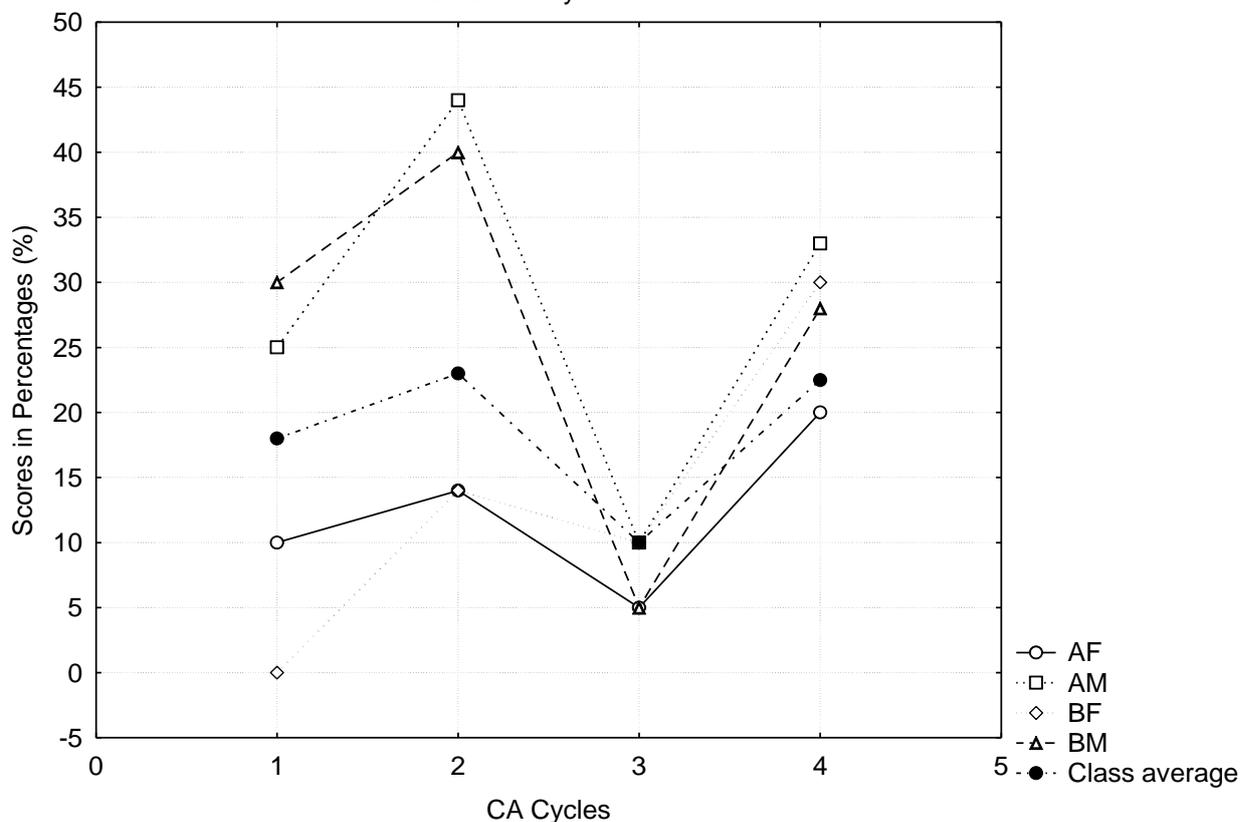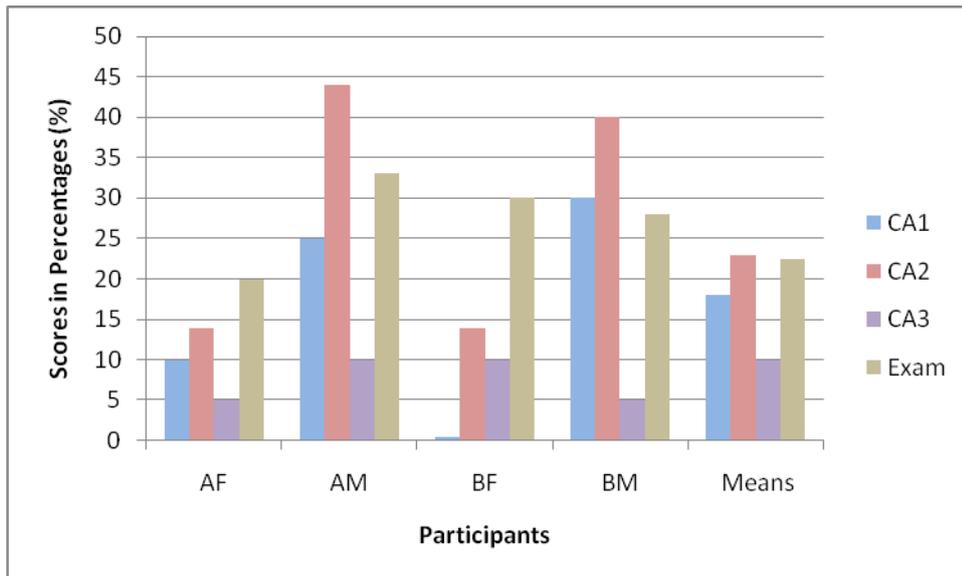
**Figure 4.8      CA & EX-IS Scores LIB School: Participants**

Figures 4.7 and Figure 4.8 show different patterns of performance relative to the mean performance scores of Class A and B, to those depicted in Figures 4.5 and 4.6 in respect of BS. In Figure 4.7, the cycle pattern is consistent for all four participants, i.e. a fairly radical improvement from CA1 to CA2 (10+% for AM, BF and BM), a severe dip in CA3 mostly to below the level of CA1, and recovery by 15+% in the examination. The pattern is also reflected in the mean performance scores of Class A and B, although across a tighter range. The examination did not, however, culminate in their highest marks for all participants as in BS and did not yield any pass marks, 33% (AM) being the highest. In addition to holding forth a subject-specific influence on assessment results (with the CALP-level proficiency of the AL required by this subject further impacting on their learning), Figure 4.7 would seem also to suggest an assessment-specific influence on the scores, with the added possibility that the examination scores were depressed on account of the emotional effect of the poor CA3-results. This would point to a more powerful counter-effect of assessment factors than that which could result from the Hawthorne-effect of the research.

Figure 4.8 shows that the participants' performance profiles in respect of IS differ from those in BS. Disregarding the apparently flawed CA3-results, the profiles still do not show the consistent improvement noted for BS in Figure 4.6, with two participants (AM and BM) dropping back from CA2 in the examination by 11% and 12% respectively, in contrast with the virtually stable mean scores (23% and 22.5%) of Class A and B. AF's performance profile in IS appears the same as in BS, although considerably lower, but so do the mean scores of

Class A and B. Recalling BM's steady performance and improvement in BS, the effect of AL at the CALP level on his IS-performance can hardly be doubted. He seems to have benefited considerably from the mediational assessment in CA2, but his examination score was actually lower than his CA1-IS score. AM was this time, by fairly small margins, the best performer overall and again demonstrated one dramatic spurt of improvement, but BF recorded the strongest improvement overall (0% - 30%). However, the results suggest the participants might not have had the language proficiency to cope with the complexity of the terminology and concepts related to IS. Indeed, each of them during the debriefing expressed concerns about the challenges of understanding the IS questions.

## 4.6     CA RESULTS AND FINDINGS: MIB SCHOOL

### 4.6.1   Introduction

In analysing the data from the LIB School, we obviously found individual differences among the participants and even between those in one class sharing teachers and doing the same assessments. There were differences in respect of the impact of the interaction and mediation on the participants, the range of change recorded and attitude. However, the impact of the context itself should not be underestimated as it can reduce but seldom eradicate the effects of within-group diversity, and it adds to inter-group variance. With the LIB and MIB Schools, the differences in the availability of facilities such as laboratories, libraries and basic infrastructure and in teaching style would certainly lead one to expect such variance. In the MIB School, there appeared to be higher standards and higher expectations of the students, then sometimes leading to more able learners in the MIB School scoring less than or the same as a less able one in the LIB. The implication of this consideration is that the performance of the participants from the MIB School should first be looked at discretely, in relation only to one another, and should not yet be compared with the performance of the participants from the LIB School.

**4.6.2    Results in respect of Participant CF**

*4.6.2.1 Debriefing*

(1)    CA1

CF was quiet and reserved, but even so displayed a positive disposition. My first impression was that this was due to a lack of proficiency in the LoLT even at BICS level. CF's quiet and reserved nature could also easily be mistaken for a lack of academic ability. Closer interaction revealed that she was able to communicate with ease on a social level, although some errors (retained in the transcripts) did occur. However, during the CA1 debriefing, she attempted to make academic responses and demonstrate subject area knowledge. She had to be consistently encouraged before she contributed meaningfully to discussion of the issues regarding AL learners and the adaptation of the questions for better comprehension by AL learners. Thereafter, she spoke of the difficulties encountered due to overcrowded classrooms and the challenges of keeping up with the teachers in such an environment. She suggested that other teachers should be put in charge of those learners that do not understand given subjects to provide them with further assistance.

During parts of the CA1-assessments CF had seemed at ease, although her scores and an analysis of her marked scripts did not reflect any reason for this. CF scored low marks on both CA1-BS and CA1-IS. When asked about some of her observed expressions and mannerisms, such as fidgeting and hissing during the assessments, she contended that she sometimes did not know what was required by the question and at other times did not know how to write correctly what she wanted to say, so she then took time to think before continuing her work. CF seemed confused by my questions at first, but in time said that both understanding assessment questions and recollection of information were sometimes a challenge. She further suggested that the inability to understand the assessment questions was possibly responsible for some of her classmates attempting to copy from the work of other learners during tests, convinced that it was the only way they could pass.

| Researcher: | Tell me, is that how you usually behave each time you're writing a test or exam? Se bi o se ma nse niyen all the time?[109] |
|---|---|
| CF: | (*Sitting gracefully, upright and alert*) Yes, Ma. No. I don't know, Ma. |
| Researcher: | But o wa OK, mo kan fe mo nkan to de to fi n se be yen ni.[110] |
| CF: | (*Reflecting*) Is when I'm trying to remember, then I do like that. |
| Researcher: | Is it because of the difficult items? Awon kan le nibe abi?[111] |

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[109] *Is that how you behave all the time?*
[110] *It's OK. I would just like to know why you did that.*
[111] *Were some difficult?*

| | |
|---|---|
| CF: | (*Hesitating*) Yes, Ma. I'm trying to remember what to write. |
| Researcher: | You were trying to remember? O o ranti awon kan…awon wo?[112] |
| CF: | The hard ones. |
| Researcher: | Which ones? How many of them? |
| CF: | (*Silent, looks down then away and down again*) |
| Researcher: | Or was everything difficult? Se gbogbo e ni o le ni?[113] |
| CF: | (*Nods slightly*) |
| Researcher: | Kilo je ki won le? Ki de ni a le se ki o ba le ye e?[114] |
| CF: | (*Frowning, then answering only the second part of the question*) Ah, uhmm… We'll explain to them before writing [115]. |
| Researcher: | How? |
| CF: | Our teacher must explain questions before everybody write. |
| Researcher: | Do you think that would help? |
| CF: | Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | How? |
| CF: | Everybody will understand. I will know it. Then people will not be giraffing[116] during the test. |
| Researcher: | Why do they do that? |
| CF: | (*Smiling hesitantly*) When they don't know they will giraffe because they don't want to repeat. |
| Researcher: | Do you sometimes giraffe? |
| CF: | (*Silent, looks worried*) |
| Researcher: | Ma a worry, ko kin se pe nma so fun teacher yin. Mi o ni so.[117] |
| CF: | No, Ma. If they (teachers) catch you, they will beat you very well. (DMS-CF/CA1-BS, 13-21) |

    (2)    CA2

CF's difficulties in respect of CALP became more apparent as our meetings progressed but she seemed to be enjoying the sessions more. She believed that her performance in both BS and IS of CA2 was "good" and thought the adapted assessment questions had aided her understanding of the concepts in the questions. CF said she had attempted not to make any faces so that I would not have anything to ask her about. But I still did, because, as I explained to her, it took concentration not to show any reaction and not showing any reaction also required explanation as to whether or not the assessment was too easy. She said she liked IS, but sometimes understanding the questions was a challenge, particularly those that required her to *describe*, *differentiate* and *explain* (MB/CA2-IS, Q1 & Q3). CF on this

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[112] *Which ones didn't you remember?*

[113] *Was it everything that was difficult?*

[114] *What made them difficult? What can we do to help you understand?*

[115] *Direct translation from Yoruba meaning – We should explain (referring to assessment questions) to them (learners) before they write their answers/respond.*

[116] *Attempting to peek at the scripts of others*

[117] *Don't worry, it is not as if I'm going to tell your teacher. I won't tell.*

occasion seemed happier with the BS assessment, and she had specifically utilised the glossary items.

CF:             Sometimes I write it well and then I get it wrong. My teacher then say it's not what she want.
Researcher:     How do you feel about that? Kilo se ma nfeel tan ba so be?[118]
CF:             O ma ndun yan, Ma.[119] But it is OK.
Researcher:     Don't you do corrections? Abi e ki nse ni?[120]
CF:             We do it, Ma.
Researcher:     Do you then understand?
CF:             (*Silent then smiles slightly*)
Researcher:     O le so fun mi now. Mi o ni lo so.[121]
CF:             We do the correction in class. We stand up and answer the questions.
Researcher:     Se o ma wa nye e nigba yen?[122]
CF:             (*Pauses, hesitates and then speaks*) Uhmmmm the people (learners) that know it they just say the right answer. But I don't know why is the right answer. Then we have to write another notes and teacher say we should ask those that know the answer later.
Researcher:     How was your test?
CF:             Business Studies was good, Ma.
Researcher:     Bawo ni awon questions yen se ri ni ote yi?[123] How were they?
CF:             (*Smiling*) I check for words on the paper.
Researcher:     Which ones. Awon wo?[124]
CF:             Uhmmm …I don't know again. (*suddenly*) Yes, *function, qualities*
Researcher:     So, se bi mo se se paper yen da, se o useful?[125]
CF:             Yes, Ma. I check the words. It make it better. I can answer.
                (DMS-CF/CA2-IS, 43-51)

    (3)    CA3

CF seemed highly focused and composed during the CA cycles, but that did not translate into high achievement or better performances than the other participants in the MIB School. CF believed she would do well in her CA3 assessments and was still excited about the glossary. Her desire to improve was apparent and she visibly put some effort into writing the assessment as she seemed more careful about ensuring she was doing the correct thing by utilising the glossary and taking time to think about her oral responses. CF asserted, however, that she found it easier to excel in subjects that did not require excessive writing and explanations, such as Mathematics. Asked what her performance in that subject was like, she explained that she actually enjoyed Mathematics and usually passed it well. I probed further,

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[118] *How do you feel when your teacher says that?*
[119] *It usually hurts my feelings, Ma.*
[120] *Or don't you do it?*
[121] *You can tell me now. I won't go and tell.*
[122] *Do you then understand?*
[123] *How were the questions this time?*
[124] *Which ones?*
[125] *Was the way I modified questions any good, was it useful?*

asking CF how she coped with word problems in Mathematics. CF contended that she had no difficulty with word problems because, though the problems could be lengthy in nature, they hardly ever required her to write out explanations but only entailed numerical solutions.

CF:             I want to pass Inter Science (i.e. Integrated Science) like Maths. (Hesitating) But sometime is hard (DMS-CF/CA3-IS, 66).

I expected that she would prefer and probably enjoy BS, but that was not the case. Contrary to the difficulty generally associated with IS in the LIB School in terms of terminology and technicalities, CF still preferred IS to BS. She said the BS teacher sometimes told them to borrow the notes of the learners in another class and copy these into their notebooks during the lesson. For lessons conducted in this manner, she maintained that no actual teaching took place and the learners were more likely to misunderstand the topics, particularly if they imported errors from badly written notes from which they copied.

*4.6.2.2 Mediation*

The debriefing and mediation process took place in both Yoruba and English. The mediational process took the form of assistance with reading the questions and essentially understanding the key words, thereby facilitating comprehension of the questions. CF had challenges both at the receptive and expressive levels of language usage, although she persisted in speaking English. I used code switching to mediate comprehension each time I was not convinced that she fully understood the questions and/or issues being discussed. During the mediation she was guided to read the questions more fluently, without repetitions, since she tended to repeat words and phrases within sentences. The mediation also included practising proper pronunciation. However, from CA1 to CA3, the same pronunciation challenges were observed. At the point of correction CF used the right pronunciation, but she soon slipped back into her original way with some words once she attempted to speak quickly.

Orally, during the mediation, she could explain her responses to the questions using sentences where ordinarily, for a more competent language user, short phrases would have sufficed. Her oral responses were given only after there had been further explanation and elaboration on the questions. Below is an example of CF's inability to clearly express herself. To the question "State five (5) advantages of credit sales" (MIB/CA3-BS, Q3), CF's response was:

(a) help

(b) you must pay fast

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(c) you must talk to the person polity

When asked for further elaboration during the mediation, CF was able to explain further what she had meant by her first response, "help". On the surface it was a wrong response to the question and did not seem to make any sense. But according to CF, she wrote "help" because she was trying to convey that credit sales could serve as a form of assistance to those who needed to make purchases but had no cash in hand.

The mediation aided CF's comprehension of the questions, her reading and some of her pronunciation, although she sometimes had to re-read the questions and had to be given examples before she could comprehend.

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | Tun question yen ka na.[126] Read it again. |
| CF: | (*Reads the question with Yoruba accent*) |
| Researcher: | (*Re-reading the question*) Ki ni won ni ko se?[127] |
| CF: | (*Stares*) |
| Researcher: | Ki ni won mean by *differentiate*? Ki ni won ni ko se?[128] |
| CF: | (*Continues staring, this time shaking her head*) |
| Researcher: | Kilo ya to larin won, kilo wa ni ibi kan ti o si ni bomi?[129] |
| CF: | Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | Wo awon iwe mejeji yi hen, differentiate between them. So nkan ti o yato larin won[130]. What are the differences? |
| CF: | OK, Ma. |
| Researcher: | No, I want you to answer the question. What are the differences between the two notebooks? Kilo yato larin won?[131] |
| CF: | This is big than that one and is red. |
| Researcher: | Very good. Now let's try the question again. |
| CF: | One there is sexual and the other one there is no sexual. |
| Researcher: | OK. At least that's a beginning, but to pass o ma need lati so ju yen lo. Ki ni o tun ranti?[132] (DMS-CF/CA2-IS, 73-79) |

*4.6.2.3 Answer scripts*

(1)     Receptive level

CF could recognise some of the words that formed the questions though she had bad pronunciations. She also had problems with the pronunciation of words such as *office*, *visitor* and *receptionist* (MIB/CA2-BS, Q1) and *differentiate*, *sexual*, *asexual* and *function* (MIB/CA2-IS, Q1), which she called with Yoruba accent. She replaced the /f/ sound with the

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[126] *Read the question again.*
[127] *What were you asked to do?*
[128] *What does "differentiate" mean? What were you asked to do?*
[129] *What are the differences between them, what can you find in one that is not in the other?*
[130] *Take a look at these two books... What does one have that the other doesn't have?*
[131] *How do you know one from the other?*
[132] *You'll need to say more than that. What else do you remember?*

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/v/ sound and /s/ with /z/. There did not seem to be a link between these distortions and her poor comprehension, but it could make it difficult for her to be understood especially by someone from a different ethnic group who does not understand Yoruba. The distortions in pronunciation also increased the probability of incorrect writing. Despite appearing confident, CF was the only participant from the MIB School who was not a fluent reader. She repeated words and phrases, thus affecting the fluency of her reading. CF's understanding of the requirements of the assessment tasks was limited to questions formulated at the level of BICS and so was her ability to give appropriate responses. Some of her responses demonstrated comprehension while others displayed outright confusion, which seemed to be due to her failure to understand what she was required to do. CF lacked comprehension of some assessment-specific terms (e.g. *explain, differentiate* and *advantage*) and then did not seem to know what was required. When instructed to *explain*, *differentiate* or *describe*, for instance, she made lists and gave responses that were inappropriate to not only the assessment questions but also the content of the subject, particularly BS. For example, her response to the question, "List three markets under commodity market" (MIB/CA2-BS, Q3), which is discussed in the next section, shows some confusion of the subject content.

(2)     Expressive level

CF's handwriting was neat and legible. Expressing her thoughts was more challenging. CF could not express herself well, she lacked clarity of expression especially in her writing. In CA2-BS an item was, "Explain five functions of an office" (MIB/CA2-BS, Q1), and part of CF's response was *"we attend with visitors"* and "we do our official work". She did not seem to be able to explain herself due to her limited vocabulary, but her use of associated key words such as *attend, visitors* and *official* suggests that she did make the effort to learn the information by rote, but was then unable to use the terms in coherent statement. She was able to list two other functions and these were correct. In the same BS paper another item was, "List three (3) markets under commodity market" (MIB/CA2-BS, Q3), and CF wrote in response:

*"* by action
by talking polite
be friendly to the person
attending very well"

CF was able to make a list, although containing four points instead of three, but the contents of the list do not demonstrate any comprehension of the requirements of the item nor do they have any relationship with the question.

CF's sentence structure in English sometimes reflected direct translation of phrases from Yoruba. For instance, the following sentences by CF, "The people that know it, *they* just say the right answer. But I don't know *why is* the right answer", demonstrate characteristics of Yoruba. CF in effect was saying, "The learners who knew it just said the right answer and I didn't know why it was the right answer." Here CF used an additional subject pronoun *(they)* and omitted the impersonal pronoun referring to "the right answer" – *it,* and also failed to use the appropriate tenses.

The CA3-BS proved extremely challenging for CF. The items required her to explain concepts and to make inferences and CF found it difficult to express herself. In response to the question, "Explain what is described as a credit sale" (MIB/CA3-BS, Q2), CF wrote: "A credit sale is what you buy and later you pay your money." This response demonstrates that she had an idea of the answer, a perception of what *credit sale* was, but lacked CALP to express herself appropriately. Some of the responses given in the examination, in addition to the challenge of getting her ideas across, also suggest a lack of understanding of some words in the question, contributing to the incorrect answers. When asked to state the advantages of credit sale (MIB/EX-BS, Q1), CF wrote:

> "when you have money you must pay fast
>
>   you must not delay the money
>
>   you must not disappoint the person
>
>   you will be the customer"

The total mismatch between question and response suggests that CF did not have a clear notion of *advantage* or she had an incorrect notion of the subject content to begin with.

There was an indication that CF made good use of the glossary and spelling list, as all the words that appeared in the glossary and spelling list were spelled correctly in her responses. The words spelled incorrectly, such as *breath* (breathe) and *polity* (politely*),* were not on the assessment paper. CF's responses were sometimes very basic and elementary even when responding orally. In the case of IS, CF left unanswered all the questions that required responses in sentence format, such as those asking her to describe or differentiate between

concepts. When asked to "State two functions of the skeleton" (MIB/CA2-IS, Q2), part of her response was, " it help us to go to where we are going to" Table 4.10 below shows the scores of CF on the CAs and examination in percentages and Figure 4.9 is a graphical representation of the same.

**Table 4.10      CF scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS $\bar{x}=39.5$ | CA2-BS $\bar{x}=50$ | CA3-BS $\bar{x}=45$ | EX-BS $\bar{x}=55$ | CA1-IS $\bar{x}=38$ | CA2-IS $\bar{x}=52$ | CA3-IS $\bar{x}=45$ | EX-IS $\bar{x}=50$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CF | 30 | 50 | 22 | 35 | 20 | 25 | 45 | 50 |
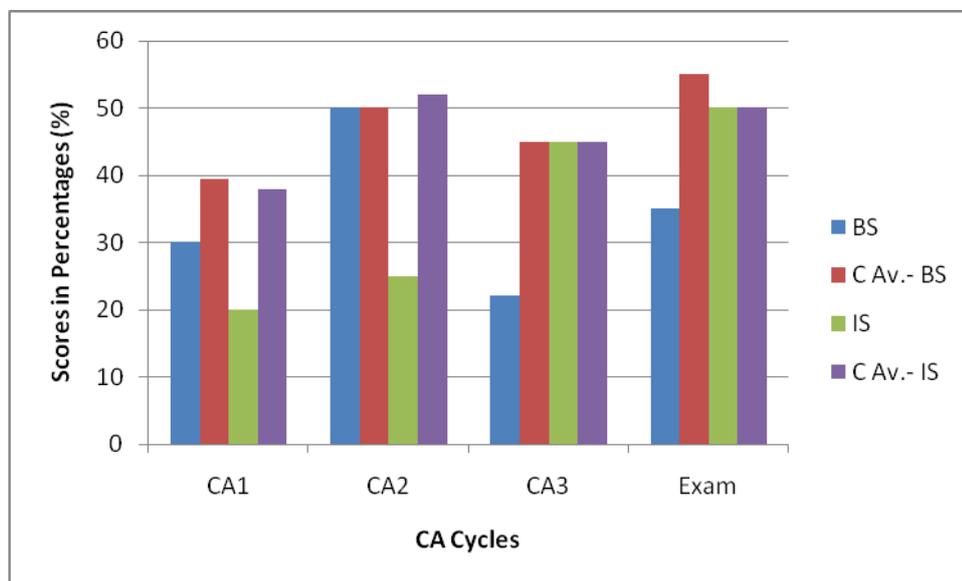


**Figure 4.9      CF – Comparison of CA and Examination Scores**

Table 4.10 and Figure 4.9 show that CF failed both CA1-BS and CA1-IS (BS:30%, IS:20%). She scored well below the mean performance of Class C and D, which were also failing marks (BS:39%, IS: 38%). For BS, she improved dramatically, to match the improved mean performance of Class C and D (50%) during CA2-BS, but then dropped back even more dramatically in CA3-BS (22%) relative to the mean score (45%) and was unable to close the gap in the examination. CF recorded a steady increase in IS, catching up with the mean performance score of Class C and D in CA3-IS (45%) and keeping up the pace to attain a pass mark (50%) in the examination.

*4.6.2.4 Discussion – CF*

      (1)      Additional language factor

CF's communicative skills in English were still at BICS level, with instances of grammatical error and poor pronunciation in her spoken language. She was not a fluent reader, and she also lacked clarity of expression. These challenges in her LoLTA obviously impacted her performance and contributed to limited achievement. The assistance she required with reading, in word recognition and comprehension of key words in the subject terminology, could be related to the low level of her communicative skills and consequent difficulty in understanding assessment questions and constructing appropriate responses. Her ability to answer questions orally using descriptive language portrayed some understanding of the subject content, but she was not at all articulate at the level of CALP. This strongly suggests a need for special support and an alternative form of assessment if her grades are to improve. Not convinced that she could fully comprehend all we had to discuss without further elaboration in Yoruba, I sometimes used code switching. Code switching did not remove the assessment challenges but only ensured that the communication between us did not break down (Macdonald & Burroughs, 1991: 18-19). Her continued use of English despite my code switching suggests that the effects of subtractive bilingualism cannot be ruled out as it seemed as if she was reluctant to identify with or use her own language (Ada, 1991: 448; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 18 & 33). CF's awareness of her limitations due to the AL factor led her to believe that dropping subjects that required higher language input in terms of reading and terminology was the answer. This seemed to imply that she felt overwhelmed by the language demands of some of her subjects and did not feel there was anything she could do about it. Rote learning of terms seems a possible strategy adopted by CF in IS in respect of some of the terminology she could not elaborate further on. The futility of such methods of learning for an AL learner is apparent in her inability to apply such knowledge and make inferences where necessary, resulting in continuously scoring low grades in the subject. Her avoidance behaviour in omitting responses to questions requiring full statements was of course counter-productive in every respect and illustrates that the damaging effect of poor proficiency of an AL impacts on more than the learner's scores. Her perception that some of her classmates resorted to copying from others during assessments confirms that behavioural problems such as engaging in examination malpractices could result from the challenges cast up by AL (Olayinka, 1996: 18).

(2)    Impact of dynamic assessment

CF required assistance with comprehension of instructional terms (e.g. *differentiate*), pronunciation and vocabulary at the receptive level of language use and was consequently also unable to adequately convey all her ideas at the expressive level of language use. She found the adapted assessment useful and was excited about using the glossary. The glossary seemed to have been useful, particularly with IS, to clarify some questions and to spell correctly. This further emphasises the need for the investigation of vocabulary building as a strategy to bridge the gaps for AL learners (Macdonald, 1990: 17). She gained from the mediational experience as she recorded some improvement during the process particularly in her IS scores and she also expressed her intention of putting in more effort to improve her communicative skills. This further emphasises the importance of collaboration in learning and corroborates Vygotsky's theory of the impact of social interaction and mediation on learning (Lidz, 1997:282; Minick, 1987:130). CF is another example of a learner with potential whose achievement was limited by the AL factor (Banda, 2000: 51; Barry, 2002: 106; Prinsloo, 2005:37). The fluctuations in CF's results in BS seemed to reflect her lack of engagement with the subject, but it might also be connected to lack of reliance on the learning materials due to the teacher's practice of letting the class copy notes from other classes. Probably the initial response to the mediation resulted in the gains made in CA2-BS and her CA3-BS score could have been affected by inappropriate teaching practices and even having incorrect notes to start with. The overall quality of CF's performance in BS was better than some of the LIB participants (AF, AM) in terms of clarity and the number of errors in spelling and grammar, but it appears that CF's teacher (MIB-BS) was less accommodating of AL factors during her scoring of the learners' scripts.

(3)    Affect

CF was a quiet and reserved individual who was highly composed and focused, suggesting that she took her studies seriously. At 13 years of age, in the MIB School, CF was probably one of the oldest in her class (Table 4.1) and this may have contributed to the level of composure and maturity that she displayed. She disclosed that she had made a conscious effort not to display any test taking behaviours that I would later need to ask about. Trying to mask her behaviour could be seen as a sign of self-consciousness or at least self-awareness concerning the level of difficulty experienced during the assessments and a lack of expectation that others could do anything about it. Our interaction enabled CF to open up about her feelings concerning the subjects she did in school. She said she did not mind

coming to school and undergoing some forms of assessment, in her opinion numerical subjects reduced the volume of writing she had to do and were more straightforward. CF's reiteration of this view suggests the measure of stress she could be under with reading and comprehension and the hopelessness of not knowing what to do about some of the assessment questions. However, she disclosed that she now realised that even with mathematics-based subjects it was still necessary to have fully developed language skills in the LoLTA.

### 4.6.3   Results in respect of Participant CM

*4.6.3.1 Debriefing*

      (1)     CA1

CM was a lively boy, who appeared very interested in the project and eager to participate. He wanted to discuss a whole range of issues that sometimes had no direct relationship with the study. He seemed to require an avenue to relate his thoughts and ideas regarding school-life. He could speak English fluently at BICS level and was articulate in his oral responses. He demonstrated a high level of understanding for the requirements of the project, which seemed to imply that he was metacognitively sensitive to the difficulties related to AL that he and others were facing in assessment. He distinguished appropriately between the challenges of understanding the assessment questions and recall of relevant information for his responses, and he thought that specific assistance was needed to clarify questions for the learners.

During the CA1, CM had seemed to be conscious that he was being observed. He had stared across the class quite a lot and it had sometimes been difficult to place the expressions on his face. There had been times when he had just stared at the blackboard. CM disclosed that he usually stared when trying to recall a required response. He further explained that he consciously made an effort to avoid looking at anything or anyone in particular during assessments, for fear of being accused of attempting to cheat by peeking at another person's work. There were times when he found his CAs difficult, but for CA1 he believed he would do well. CM wanted us to also engage many of the other learners in his class who were not fluent in English in the project, drawing attention to a serious degree of avoidance behaviour among them.

CM:        But Ma, are you going to call everybody? I think you should talk to everybody. Some of the day students don't come everyday. They run from school. If you talk to them. And … and even some boarders, they say they are sick and don't do tests.

| Researcher: | Well, I was hoping that by talking to the four of you, I'd have an idea of what can be done to clarify the test question for everyone. |
|---|---|
| CM: | (*Pausing*) Yes, Ma. I will think what you can do. |
| Researcher: | Iwo nko? Do you get a 100% in all your tests? Se o ma ngba gbogbo e tan?[133] |
| CM: | (*Smiling*) Rara[134]. No, Ma. |
| Researcher: | So, why not? What stops you? |
| CM: | (*Smiling and looking down*) Sometimes I forget things, sometimes I don't understand but I try to write. |
| Researcher: | For those that you usually forget, you'll have to learn ways that will help you remember, abi? But sori awon ti ko ye e,[135] those you don't understand I want to see how we can help you understand better. |
| CM: | The teacher teaching us should explain the questions. Not the invigilator. Oh, you know, sometimes they tell you to shut up if you ask a question. |
| Researcher: | Why don't you tell your teacher about that? |
| CM: | (*Looking amazed*) But they will just ask whether you are the only one in the class and call you olofo[136] (DMS-CM/CA1-BS, 10-14) |

(2)     CA2

CM stated that during the CA2-BS he had waited long periods before writing anything because he was trying to recall what he had learned. Confronted with the fact that he had sometimes looked confused, CM stated that on different occasions he had not been sure of exactly what was expected in a question. He admitted that he had had difficulty with CA2-BS. He however associated this with his inability generally to comprehend the teacher more than with the assessment itself. CM seemed to have a sense of the extent of the challenges of learning in an AL and the impact of its pervasiveness on learning. Although he was clear about the nature of the difficulties encountered by AL learners in assessment, suggestions of probable solutions were harder to come by. CM was sorely aware of the additional challenge of writing in the AL. He thought that some learners should be allowed to do their CA tasks twice, the first time in writing and the second orally, so that the teachers would be sure of the learners' ability.

| Researcher: | What then do you think would help to make the tests easier for you and the others? |
|---|---|
| CM: | (*Sighing*) It's hard, Ma. |
| Researcher: | What is hard? |
| CM: | Because, I don't know what we can do. |
| Researcher: | If you think about what goes on in your mind when you're doing your tests (*Pausing*). For instance, when writing your tests what do you believe if present would have helped you? |

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[133] *What about you? Do you get everything right?*

[134] *No.*

[135] *But those you don't understand…*

[136] *Dense/brainless/dim-witted*

CM:             Sometimes is not clear (*hesitating*) sometimes, like I don't understand and sometime is hard. (*Pausing*)…Sometimes I know it, Ma. Maybe the teacher should allow us to say the answer and explain ourselves and then write it.

Researcher:     How ...

CM:             (*Interrupts*) No. No, Ma. We should write first, then explain ourselves. That will be good. (*Smiling with satisfaction*) (MIB/CA2-IS, 78-81)

Confronted with all the mistakes on his CA2 scripts and the fact that some of the terms had been in the glossary and spelling list, CM said he had been afraid he might not complete his assessment in time, so he had not attended to the spelling list, especially since the meanings of those words were not included. He suggested that the spelling list be combined with the glossary, to include the meanings of all words.

CM:             Ma, all the words should have meaning there.

Researcher:     All of them?

CM:             Yes, Ma.

Researcher:     The glossary and the spelling list?

CM:             Yes, Ma. It would be good.

Researcher:     How do you think that would help?

CM:             Because we can check the meaning of all the words on the list (*referring to the glossary*)

Researcher:     You know the spelling list wasn't meant to replace your notes or the dictionary or textbooks ...

CM:             But we don't have books. Some of us don't have all the books.

Researcher:     I know but...

CM:             This one can help everybody, Ma. Maybe we can pass better. (MIB/CA2-BS, 85-90)

         (3)     CA3

The debriefing for CA3 revealed that CM had fabricated responses instead of resorting to what he had been taught, raising the possibility that he had not prepared thoroughly for the assessments. By this meeting it was clear that CM found BS uninteresting and confusing. He did not enjoy the lessons and he was probably not putting in as much effort as he should. The fact that CM performed better in IS than BS all the way through further strengthened this assumption. With BS, another possibility was that he had difficulty understanding key concepts. An item in the assessment said, "State five (5) advantages of credit sales" (MIB/CA3-BS, Q3). CM's response in part was "People see the shop owner as a kind person and it is an advantage for people." Obviously this was not one of the options required and it was marked wrong. The response showed some understanding of *advantage* (which appeared in the glossary) but he was not able to relate it to *credit sales* and the rest of his response did not address the question correctly either. CM made it clear that he was not the least bit

interested in BS. This, coupled with the issues he had with the teaching methods, seemed to affect his attitude and by implication the level of effort he applied to studying for the BS-assessments. CM seemed to enjoy IS despite the presumed higher level of complexity in comparison to BS. He was able to orally answer three out of four of the CA3-IS questions, with various degrees of accuracy. His inability to respond to the question, "Describe briefly sexual reproduction in plants" (MIB/CA3-IS, Q3), reflected a lack of adequate preparation rather than any sort of confusion with the terminology.

| Researcher: | You seem to understand Science more than Business Studies, what is going on? |
| CM: | (*Smiling and looking proud of himself*) |
| Researcher: | I don't understand. Ko ye mi[137]. Maybe you should explain that to me. |
| CM: | (*His demeanour suddenly changing*) I want to pass Business Studies, Ma. But I don't pass. |
| Researcher: | Yes... |
| CM: | I don't know some. The one I know I get wrong again. |
| Researcher: | Are you sure you study well enough for your tests? |
| CM: | Uhmmm ... (*Looks away and then down*) |
| Researcher: | What did you want to say? |
| CM: | I have Science book. |
| Researcher: | Textbook? |
| CM: | Yes, Ma. And I have Maths. No Business Studies. |
| Researcher: | But many of the others in your class don't have textbooks as well... |
| CM: | They fail ... we always fail. I don't want to do Business Studies, the teacher ... (*Pauses then looks directly at me*) I don't want to do Business Studies, Ma. |
| Researcher: | But, why? |
| CM: | Many people in my class don't like Business Studies. Our teacher doesn't like our class. |
| Researcher: | Tell me why you think that? |
| CM: | Because, Ma she doesn't always come ... Science is better. She also gives our test to other people to mark. I don't like Business Studies. (MIB/CA3-IS, 105-113) |

My initial impression of CM as a lively boy, who appeared very interested in the project and eager to participate, did not change despite his suspected lack of adequate preparation for the BS assessments. I was beginning to have empathy for his perceived helplessness in respect of the challenges he faced with the teaching and learning in the BS classroom. He lacked motivation and his solution appeared to be to just coast through the lessons until he was no longer compelled to study it.

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[137] *I don't understand.*

*4.6.3.2 Mediation*

CM believed that the adaptation of the assessments made it easier, but he felt that he was actually familiar with the meaning of many of the functional assessment terms and could rather benefit from explanations of subject-specific terms. He believed, however, that the glossary could help many others in his class. The mediational process with CM also began with reading and analysing the questions. CM had trouble with some of the pronunciations (e.g. *skeleton*). This was mediated and he was able to sustain the proper pronunciation during our interaction. There was, however, still some room for improvement in respect of fluency as he tripped on words and phrases in his attempt to read fast. The mediational procedure with CM was chiefly in the form of assistance in understanding the questions. He could answer the IS questions orally once they had been explained and simplified further by paraphrasing and repeating the questions. However, with the questions that he required assistance, it was not clear whether his difficulties were due to inadequate language skills or lack of content knowledge. There were instances, particularly with CA3-BS, where he did not seem to know what was required in terms of specific subject content. He however did seem to benefit from the mediation with BS as he was able to answer a question in the examination (MIB/EX-BS, Q1) which he had previously answered incorrectly (MIB/CA3-BS, Q3). He also had mediation of subject content with IS, for example in the explanation of *sexual reproduction* in plants and *pollination*. CM's ability to respond revealed that with close interaction he could perform even better. He was able to respond and subsequently explain the concepts orally and this might be the reason that he strongly believed that AL learners should be given the opportunity to respond to assessment tasks in both the written and oral forms.

*4.6.3.3 Answer scripts*

(1)      Receptive level

CM had no problems with the comprehension of English at BICS level and therefore our conversations were conducted mainly in English, although on a few occasions I made comments in Yoruba to give him a sense of closeness and understanding. However, he had not yet attained receptive competence at CALP level. Although he could read the assessment questions fluently and seemed to comprehend the requirements of some of the questions as demonstrated by his scores in IS, there were occasions when he seemed to confuse the meaning of words. Some of his errors also reflected carelessness. In the CA2-BS, an item was, "State three (3) qualities of a receptionist" (MIB/CA2-BS, Q5). CM copied this question

to his script as "State three functions of a receptionist" and responded with the following, listing qualities:

(a) A receptionist must be punctual at all times

(b) She should be cheering


(2)     Expressive level

CM's handwriting was not very clear and sometimes made it difficult to determine whether or not his answers were correct. He could express himself clearly at BICS level, but he appeared to sometimes have challenges expressing his thoughts and ideas at CALP level, particularly in BS. The result was that he sometimes took longer than necessary to explain himself while answering questions on BS during the mediation, giving further evidence of limited vocabulary. CM's IS performance was however different. He seemed to understand the requirements of each of the questions but his responses were not always linguistically accurate. The questions CM left undone appeared to be those that required lengthy responses but could also have been left undone due more to lack of subject knowledge than to challenges posed by the LoLTA, for example MIB/CA2-IS, Q1(b) and MIB/CA3-IS, Q3. He displayed a number of weaknesses in spelling, some of which might be associated with a learning disability, e.g. reversal of letter sequence, as in *reciept* (receipt) and *commerical* (commercial). Others might be ascribed to the orthographic factor and/or negligence concerning sound-letter(group) correspondence, as in *atmospere* (atmosphere), *writting* (writing) and *pillination* (pollination). Table 4.11 contains CM's CA and examination scores in percentages. Figure 4.10 is a graphical representation of the same.

**Table 4.11     CM scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS $\bar{x}=39.5$ | CA2-BS $\bar{x}=50$ | CA3-BS $\bar{x}=45$ | EX-BS $\bar{x}=55$ | CA1-IS $\bar{x}=38$ | CA2-IS $\bar{x}=52$ | CA3-IS $\bar{x}=45$ | EX-IS $\bar{x}=50$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CM** | 30 | 40 | 27 | 40 | 51 | 70 | 55 | 63 |
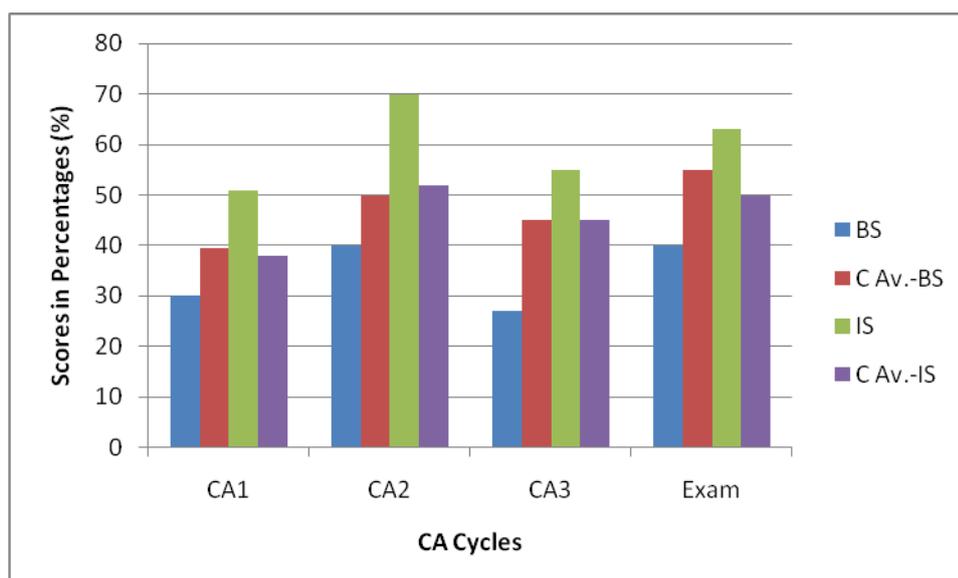
**Figure 4.10    CM – Comparison of CA and Examination Scores**

Table 4.11 and Figure 4.10 show that CM did not pass any of the BS assessments and his scores were consistently below the mean performance scores of Class C and D. His scores fluctuated in like pattern to the mean performance scores of Class C and D, but in terms of real difference he actually lost ground to the performance of his peers in the final two assessments (the difference increasing from 9.5% and 10%, to 18% and 15%). Relative to the mean performance scores of Class C and D, there was thus only limited improvement in CM's performance during the period of the study.  With IS on the other hand, CM never failed any assessment and his scores were consistently above the mean performance scores of Class C and D. In view of the small difference between the mean performance scores of Class C and D in BS and IS (CA-1 39.5% : 38%, CA-2 50% : 52%, CA-3 45% : 45%, Examination 55% : 50%), the difference between CM's performance in BS and IS is really great (CA-1 30% : 51%, CA-2 40% : 70%, CA-3 27% : 55%, Examination 40% : 63%).

*4.6.3.4 Discussion – CM*

(1)    Additional language factor

My decision not to engage in code switching with CM was informed by his fluent and articulate spoken communication as well as his ability to read the assessment questions fairly fluently, although there were instances of L1 interference in his pronunciation. On the surface, it could easily be concluded that he had little challenge of a linguistic nature until there was a need to use academic discourse, in which case he sometimes struggled. A closer examination of his assessment scripts and interview transcripts revealed that his AL proficiency was

indeed limited to BICS. He displayed a lack of comprehension of some functional assessment terms and his responses sometimes demonstrated confusion, emphasising the underlying difference between language proficiency at BICS and CALP levels (Cummins & Swain, 1986: 152-153; Cummins, 2001: 111-115 & 145-146). It is significant that he actually expressed an awareness of the difference between the demands of functional assessment terms and subject-specific terms, thereby drawing attention to the different forms of comprehension required during assessment. In holding the opinion that teachers should be present at assessments to explain any unclear points, he once more highlighted the possibility of the special needs of the AL learner during assessment. CM's comments further suggest that he believed that his teachers were not actually doing all they should to ensure that the learners maximise the teaching/learning experiences – thus further implying that there is a need for teachers to make concerted efforts to support and facilitate AL learners' understanding of the teaching on the one hand and the assessment questions on the other.

CM's handwriting was not easily legible and required patience on the part of the teacher, to take the time to carefully read through his work. For a teacher who is not willing to do this, his scores would obviously be affected. Though his challenges with spelling were not at all as extensive as those of the LIB learners, some of CM's problems with spelling (confusing the sequence of letters within words) suggest he might have had some degree of specific learning disability. A school system that accommodates AL learners should be geared to distinguish between learners' language-specific needs and errors pointing to the possible existence of a specific learning disability. CM actually recognised the additional challenge of the written form of the AL and argued for an opportunity for learners to explain the written version of assessment responses orally, which again might signify that he was aware of the effects of a learning disability on his performance. The possibility of inadequate preparation noted in respect of CM's poor scores in BS and his professed dislike of the subject might have a link with his perception that learners resorted to truancy to miss a CA because they could not understand the assessment questions. This observation, as well as his suggestion that the study be expanded to include all the learners, implies a deep awareness of the pervasive challenges and effects of learning in an AL.

The fact that CM was able to communicate and perform well in IS suggests that he was able to use language to construct knowledge despite the absence of scaffolding in the form of code switching by his teachers. Surprisingly, this did not translate into good performance in BS

which is generally perceived as having a lower level of language complexity in terms of terminology and concepts. This specifically has made me wary of classifying CM's language proficiency as having attained CALP level. Copying notes from other learners, the lack of recommended books and unwillingness to participate and ask questions during the lesson probably also contributed to his lower achievement in BS. Rote learning of concepts and terminology in IS cannot be ruled out as a possible factor in his achievement in the subject, particularly as he seemed to prefer IS to BS.

It is noteworthy that CM's performance profile in BS follows the same pattern as CF's, suggesting that there might be some truth in their description of inadequacy of the teaching style and classroom practices adopted by MIB-BS. There seemed to be little or no linguistic support for the learners, who were essentially AL learners. Other forms of support also appear to be non-existent. In the circumstances a teacher perceived as having a nonchalant attitude towards the learners' achievement and difficulty could certainly have a negative effect on the learners.

(2)     Impact of dynamic assessment

CM's remark that the glossary of terms was useful because it provided the meaning of key words, is an indication that he recognised the value of assistance with his vocabulary. His level of self-assessed language proficiency is reflected in his assertion that the words in the glossary were not new to him, but he used the glossary to check that he was making appropriate use of the terms. This is also an indication that he realised that clarifying the meaning of such words before attempting a response could result in better scores for him. This was further reflected in CM's comment that the spelling list would have been more useful if the meanings of the words had also been provided. His suggestion that being given the opportunity for two attempts on each assessment (oral and written) would help alleviate the challenges of those who had difficulty writing down their ideas, also implies that CM recognises the need for alternative forms of assessment to be used in face of an AL being the LoLTA, as indeed suggested by academics (Estrin (2000: 228-229; Gopal and Stears 2007: 15-17). He showed improvement in CA2-BS, but the scores dropped in CA3-BS and rose again in the examination. It is not clear why CM's scores in BS fell below class average all the way through. The negative impact of the teaching practices, lack of the requisite textbooks and his dislike of the subject cannot be ruled out and might actually have counteracted the mediation. The negative impact could perhaps have been removed or reduced had there been

better interaction with his teacher, further corroborating Vygotsky's theory on the relationship between social interaction and learning (Haywood and Brown, 1990:414; Kozulin & Garb, 2002:113). On the other hand, his scores in the IS, although consistently above class average and consistently a pass mark, failed to show significant improvement above the mean performance scores of Class C and D, suggesting that CM did not benefit from DA.

(3)     Affect

CM's desire to discuss different issues that had nothing at all to do with the project and having to be guided back to the study was an indication that he craved interaction with an adult or teacher. There seemed to be no avenues within the school and class for him to be heard, particularly because he was lively and opinionated. He seemed to have a desire to see improvement in his work and the work of the other members of his class, but there seemed to be a vacuum in terms of the guidance available. The large class sizes might be one explanation for seemingly limited interaction between some learners and teachers. How much interaction can be realistically expected between a teacher and over a hundred learners in the classroom for a lesson at the same time? CM's sensitivity to the comments and opinions of others was reflected in his comment that he took offence at being called "olofo[138]" by his teacher and therefore preferred not to ask questions and seek clarification in class. Not having avenues to express such emotionally distressful experiences can have severe consequences on the learner's ability to function in the classroom and may lead to other problems (Bolarin, 1996:143). He also probably found the teaching methods of MIB-BS (as recorded in the lesson observation) not to his liking. CM's disclosure that he was uninterested in BS and did not enjoy the lessons suggests that attitude towards the subject could also impact performance Obe & Nna, 2004:24). The comparison of his BS scores with the considerable progress made in IS during the period is a clear example.

### 4.6.4   Results in respect of Participant DF

*4.6.4.1 Debriefing*

(1)     CA1

Initially during the CA1 debriefing, DF seemed reserved and not too forthcoming. But as the interaction continued, she seemed to be reassured and participated more. She stated that many of her classmates did not understand English well and a good number of them had been

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[138] *Dense/brainless/dim-witted*

retained to repeat Basic 7. According to DF, this was largely due to their difficulties with English. She opined that many of the learners in her present class still did not understand English and would most likely fail CA1-BS and especially CA1-IS because they believed it was more difficult than BS. DF maintained that she did not find comprehension of the questions of CA1-BS and CA1-IS difficult, that the problems she encountered were largely due to her inability to express herself better and sometimes she was confused about the words needed to make up her responses. She did believe that having subject content explained in Yoruba by her private tutor aided her understanding, because the topics then became clearer. However, DF stated that she preferred to be addressed in English because she wanted her use of the language to improve. DF went on to explain that her parents always seemed very proud of her when she responded in English anytime they spoke Yoruba to her and this made her happy. She got support from home because her parents paid for after-school coaching by a private tutor and this, she believed, gave her the additional assistance she required.

| Researcher: | Does that mean you will pass all your tests well? |
|---|---|
| DF: | Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | Almost everybody says the same thing and some still fail. |
| DF: | Yes, Ma. But I wrote the answers. It was not hard. |
| Researcher: | So, why do you think the Integrated Science was easy? |
| DF: | I understand it. I know the answer... I have a lesson teacher.[139] |
| Researcher: | What do you think makes it easier for you? Does the lesson teacher teach all the topics again, or what? |
| DF: | No, Ma. He just explain my homework then I can do it. And I ask questions. |
| Researcher: | But in how many subjects? All of them? |
| DF: | (*Smiling*) No, Ma. Maths, Science, Business Studies and English. |
| Researcher: | What does he do that is different from your class teacher? |
| DF: | (*Excited*) Ha! He always explain in Yoruba when I don't understand. He will shout and say it in Yoruba and explain again. |
| Researcher: | Does that help? I mean, explaining in Yoruba. |
| DF: | Yes, I understand the Science and Maths very well. Yes, because I'm Yoruba and I hear (understand) the language but I don't want to be speaking it. |
| Researcher: | Why not? |
| DF: | (*Laughing*) My father always tell everybody that I don't hear Yoruba again, that I only talk in English. People like that. |
| Researcher: | And you like that... ? |
| DF: | Ma. Yes, Ma. My mother and everybody is happy. |
| Researcher: | Have you ever mentioned that you understand better when your topics are explained in Yoruba? |
| DF: | (*Sighing*) Uhmmm No, Ma. |
| Researcher: | But, why? |
| DF: | Ma, we have to speak in English in the school... |
| Researcher: | Yes, but... |
| DF: | I want to know it more. English is good. |

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[139] "*Lesson teacher" here refers to a private home tutor.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | But have you ever told your teachers that they should explain things to you in Yoruba? |
| DF: | (*Looking astonished*) Ha! No, Ma! They can punish somebody. We talk with English in class, not Yoruba. (DMS-DF/CA1-IS, 16-28) |

(2)    CA2

Confronted with the observation that she had been looking about quite a bit during the CA2-BS assessment, DF seemed surprised and said she was not aware of that or her other behaviours. She had only been thinking "hard". She suggested that she enjoyed the school assessments only because she was able to understand the teachers' questions and she passed well a lot of the time. She remarked that she sometimes felt sorry for those who always failed. She believed that some of them failed because they did not have anyone to assist them, while others did not even like coming to school, so they hardly paid attention to their work. For both the CA2-BS and CA2-IS, DF disclosed that she had used the glossary to check her understanding of the questions. She could not find use for any of the words on the spelling list because their meanings were not included as with the glossary. She also believed that other learners would benefit from the use of the glossary and she reiterated that many of the learners in her class did not really understand and speak English well. In her opinion, the only way for them to improve in their school work was to learn English and speak it all the time.

| | |
|---|---|
| DF: | (*Smiling in response to my question about CA2-BS*) It was good. |
| Researcher: | (*Smiling*) Why? Why do you think so? What made it good? |
| DF: | Excuse Ma, it was good. (*Smiles*) True. |
| Researcher: | I just want to know in what way it was good so that I'm sure you are not just being polite. Se o mo?[140] |
| DF: | Yes, Ma. OK, uhmmm when I read the questions I checked the words to be sure. |
| Researcher: | Were you then able to answer all the questions? |
| DF: | (*Looks at the floor, then her hands*). No, Ma. |
| Researcher: | So, which ones couldn't you do? |
| DF: | Number 1 and the last one. |
| Researcher: | What happened with those two? |
| DF: | I don't know that uhmmmm (*shaking her head*) I don't know. |
| Researcher: | But, I thought you said the glossary and spelling list were useful, that you used them... |
| DF: | (*Quickly trying to explain*) Yes, Ma. The one with the meaning, it was good. The other one, uhmmm ,the one with the words, I didn't write the words. |
| Researcher: | Is there anything else that could be done... I mean, how else can the tests be made easier for you to understand? |
| DF: | It was very good (*referring to the adapted questions*). Everybody should use it. Many don't know the English... sometimes I explain to my friends. Many don't know. They don't understand and they speak Yoruba at home. |

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[140] You know?

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | They speak Yoruba... |
| DF: | They must stop speaking Yoruba. They will not know the English and they will fail. I'm not happy when my friends fail. I don't want them to repeat. |
| Researcher: | Why does learning English mean they should stop speaking Yoruba? I mean, why do you think so? |
| DF: | Excuse, Ma. If they don't stop, they will never understand... |
| Researcher: | But I thought you understood your work better when it was explained in Yoruba? I don't understand... |
| DF: | Yes, Ma, I know. But is because I know the English and when I understand in Yoruba I can explain to my teacher in English. We must speak English in school. (*Sighing and shaking her head*) I don't know, Ma. |
| Researcher: | Ok, but... |
| DF: | (*Cutting me off*) Ma, the one you gave us can help others. I used the first part. |
| Researcher: | Yes, you said so. What was wrong with the other part? |
| DF: | No, oh, nothing, Ma. I didn't use the words there. That's all. And I didn't do some. |
| Researcher: | It didn't help with some questions, OK. We'll start with those questions. (DMS-DF/CA2-BS, 42-54) |

(3)     CA3

DF believed that CA3-BS and CA3-IS were not very difficult because she felt she was able to answer the questions. Despite her confidence, she still made faces during the assessments, apparently more out of habit than because of the extent of difficulty of the questions. This time she looked closely at both the glossary and spelling list. However, according to her, her responses to the questions in CA3-BS and CA3-IS again did not require the use of the words on the spelling list. But she wanted me to know that some of her classmates would not even be able to read all the words on the list and using them might therefore also be difficult. The challenges her classmates encountered were, according to DF, a direct consequence of their not having access to a private tutor after school. This was upsetting to her, particularly because there appeared to be nothing anybody could do about it.

| | |
|---|---|
| DF: | I like it, Ma. (*Referring to the adapted assessment format*) |
| Researcher: | Why? |
| DF: | The other one made it (*the assessment*) easy and this one made it easy too… I read the words to be sure that my answers is what I should write. |
| Researcher: | Good. So that means you will do better in this one then. |
| DF: | (*Pausing & hesitating*) Yes, Ma. I even like Inter Science (IS) before.[141] Yes… But excuse me, Ma (*lowering her voice*), are you giving the others? (*referring to other learners in the class*) |
| Researcher: | What? What do you mean? |
| DF: | Many of them in my class cannot read it. The word are big. They don't know it. |
| Researcher: | Some of those words are from your textbooks and the work your class is doing. |

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[141] *Direct translation from Yoruba, meaning, "I've always liked Integrated Science".*

| DF: | They don't know it. I'm not happy, Ma, because people don't have lesson teacher at home. |
| Researcher: | What about your school teachers? |
| DF: | They teach us, after the period they have to go for another one (teacher) to come. There is no time for them ... for us. |
| Researcher: | You know that there will always be those that don't understand everything and those that don't read their... |
| DF: | (*Interrupting me*) But, Ma, some they don't even understand the English very well. Our class teacher always beat people speaking Yoruba if she catch them. (DMS-DF/CA3-IS, 82-90) |

*4.6.4.2 Mediation*

With DF, I did not engage in code switching. From the beginning, our conversations were conducted in English because she made it clear that she preferred to use English and I also believed that she could understand and follow the discussions adequately. She seemed confident enough in her use of English and used the language with apparent ease and without signs of conscious effort, although some grammatical errors still occurred. As with the other participants, the core task in mediation was to establish whether or not DF could read and comprehend the questions. From the mediation process of CA1, she proved she could read the questions fluently and required minimal assistance. DF could also express herself at a level approaching CALP, adequately explaining the requirements of each item that formed part of the assessment and answering the questions orally. However, she made numerous errors in respect of subject/verb agreement, which were addressed during mediation. She recorded initial improvements during mediation, but some of the errors recurred during subsequent sessions. The mediation revealed that she required longer term consistent practice for lasting improvement to be achieved. She made it clear that individual private tuition was the kind of support that she believed could be of value to her and wanted our time together to continue. The questions she had left undone and those she got wrong (MIB/CA2-BS, Q1; MIB/CA3-IS, Q3; MIB/EX-IS, Q4 & 5) seemed to be as a result of memory lapses and possibly inadequate preparation rather than question comprehension.

*4.6.4.3 Answer scripts*

(1) Receptive level

DF was a fluent reader of English and her pronunciation was good. She did not seem to have any challenges with the comprehension of the questions and there was no need to translate questions or explain them in Yoruba. The subject terminology did not constitute any observable challenges. Her receptive language proficiency in the LoLTA was at CALP level.

She appeared to have a clear indication of what was expected of her in her CAs and examination. She could answer many of the questions orally and there was no sign of severe language difficulty in English. However, this level of proficiency appeared to be the outcome of private tutoring, where Yoruba was indeed used to explain the content that she did not understand, and therefore was possibly only subject-specific and not yet generalised.

(2)     Expressive level

DF had clear legible handwriting and there were no spelling errors in her work. Her expressive language proficiency in English for the specific subjects under study appeared to approach the CALP level. DF's challenges with writing her ideas were not as severe as those of other participants, but she lacked certainty, as demonstrated in her need to verify words from the glossary in writing her answers. Although she was able to attain a pass mark in the CAs, she could have performed better if her lexicon could be extended and the structure of her sentences improved. Her expressive ability was not flawless and was at best no more than average. She had challenges with subject/verb agreement and showed some elements of occasional bad grammar, but it did not affect the overall effective communication of her thoughts. Below are some examples from DF's scripts.

In response to the item, "State two functions of the skeleton"(MIB/CA2-IS, Q2), DF wrote:

"It protect the delicate part of the body"

"It support the whole part of the body"

In response to a question on the importance of kidneys (MIB/CA3-IS,Q2), DF wrote:

"Kidney are very important organs because it help the living things to pass urine from the body . . ."

Describing the process of inspiration (MIB/CA2-IS, Q3), part of DF's response was: "Inspiration happens in man when he breathe in air".

In the BS examination, in response to an item that asked about the advantages of credit sale (MIB/EX-BS, Q1), DF wrote: "It attracts one's feelings". Here it seemed as if she did have an idea of a probable advantage in mind, i.e. customers having a sense of appreciation for the credit facility, which she was unable to express. This suggests that she understood the question, but had difficulty finding appropriate wording when she forgot the formulation as learned by rote. Questions that required lengthy explanation were frequently left undone, supporting this suspicion. Questions requiring listing were on the other hand usually attempted and were quite often correct. Table 4.12 shows DF's CA and examination scores in percentages, and Fig. 4.11 is a graphical representation of the same.

**Table 4.12     DF scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS $\bar{x}=39.5$ | CA2-BS $\bar{x}=50$ | CA3-BS $\bar{x}=45$ | EX-BS $\bar{x}=55$ | CA1-IS $\bar{x}=38$ | CA2-IS $\bar{x}=52$ | CA3-IS $\bar{x}=45$ | EX-IS $\bar{x}=50$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **DF** | 50 | 65 | 69 | 70 | 50 | 58 | 60 | 67 |
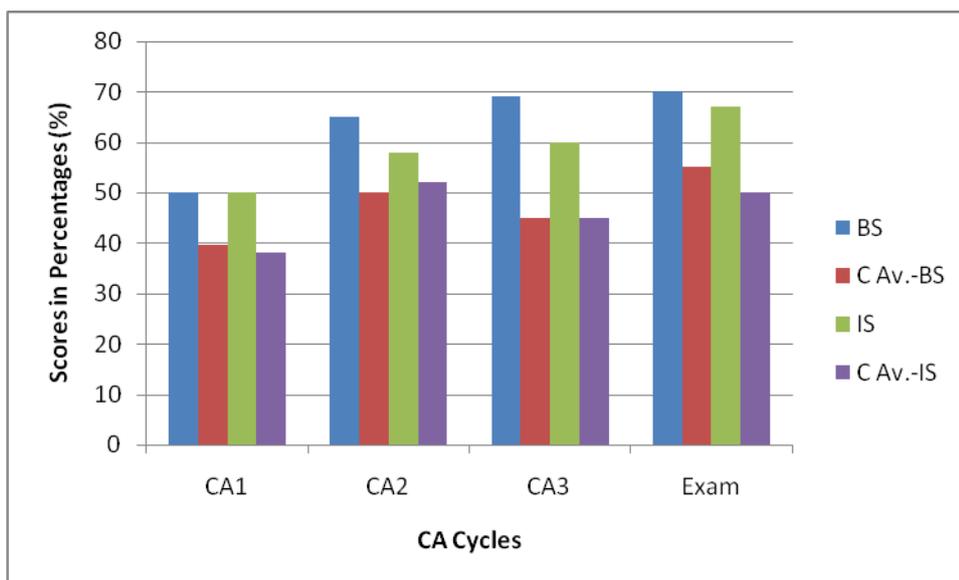


**Figure 4.11     DF – Comparison of CA and Examination Scores**

Table 4.12 and Figure 4.11 show that DF was a high ability learner, who passed in all the assessments and the examination in both BS and IS, and her scores were consistently above the mean performance of Class C and D. Relative to her own scores, she improved progressively from 50% in CA1 for both subjects to 70% in BS and 67% in IS. Relative to the mean performance scores of Class C and D, she also showed steady improvement. In BS, the initial difference of 10.5% between her score and the class average rose to 15% in CA2-BS, 24% in CA3-BS and 15% in ex-BS. In IS, the initial difference of 12% dipped to 6% in CA2-IS, then increased to the steady range of 15% and 17%.

*4.6.4.4 Discussion – DF*

    (1)    Additional language Factor

The ability of DF to read the questions and explain the requirements of each was probably reflected in her relatively high scores, demonstrating that her use of language was approaching CALP level and she seemed able to cope with the level of receptive language

proficiency required to comprehend her assessment questions. Her high achievement suggests that having ready access to assessment questions is crucial for all learners, thus echoing the assumptions that all learning areas are intrinsically related to language proficiency and that a high level of language proficiency is an essential aspect of the learning process in schools (Bamgbose, 1992 cited in Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004:73; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 143; Levin & Shohamy, 2008: 2). This corroborates the suggestion of academics (Cummins & Swain, 1986: 138; Gravelle, 2000: 159) that proficiency in the LoLTA impacts achievement. In this regard, it is significant that DF distinguished between her receptive and expressive skills, suggesting that learners are themselves able to experience the challenges of AL differentially. DF perceived her classmates' limited lexicon in the AL to be their main challenge and her own reliance on the mediational glossaries of CA2 and CA3 to verify the meaning of terms reflects an uncertainty about her own lexicon as well. That DF had some challenges with her grammar and sentence structure, could partly be due to interference of Yoruba because of direct translations of phrases from Yoruba to English. The value, even crucial importance, that DF's extra tutoring had for her proficiency in the AL was evident in at least two respects: it appeared not only to contribute to her high level of receptive language proficiency in English, but also to her understanding of the subject content. This leads one to conjecture that the method adopted by the tutor, to code switch for content that she did not understand, was a direct influence on her academic performance and an indication that she was proficient in Yoruba. But although she relied heavily on her tutor's explanations in Yoruba, she certainly did not want this known. In fact, she regarded proficiency in English as key to academic success. She was quick to point out that she preferred to speak English as much as possible and appeared to believe that dissociating herself from Yoruba was the best way to achieve fluency in English. She suggested that the other learners should also purge themselves of Yoruba and be fully immersed in the LoLTA. This type of reasoning is further evidence of subtractive bilingualism and the importance placed on English even by learners (Ada, 1991: 448; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 18 & 33), and a further indication of the limited understanding of the intricacies of L2 learning and the negligible importance placed on proficiency in the L1. The subtractive bilingualism appears to have been endorsed unequivocally in the pressure exercised by DF's parents, who proclaimed with pride that she did not understand ('hear') Yoruba, and in the way in which DF worked for their approval. Finally, the practice of the school, directed at immersion in the AL, seems to have translated into her perception that it was unthinkable to request any explanation in Yoruba of a teacher.

(2)     Impact of dynamic assessment

It is noteworthy that DF, as a relatively high achiever who had the benefit of private tuition, said she had found the glossary of terms in the adapted tests useful. The probability was real that she would not require the glossary because of the higher level of her capability and language proficiency. Utilising the glossary as a form of lexical self-checking demonstrated the gap in learning that even learners such as DF have, and the need to bridge that gap to achieve optimum academic performance. The continued challenges and the type of assistance and learning support she required would probably not have been clear under the customary circumstances of large class size and static assessment (Haywood & Tzuriel, 2002: 47). Declaring that a considerable number of her classmates would be unable even to read the words in the glossary and spelling list, illustrates her awareness concerning the extent of language-related challenges often encountered. DF's requirement during mediation was for the proper use of singular and plural forms of nouns and subject-verb agreement. The fact that some of the errors recurred during subsequent sessions despite initial improvements during mediation shows that incorrect usage had become habitual and she would require longer term consistent practice for lasting improvement to be achieved. Although DF disclosed that explanations given in Yoruba made subject content clearer, I did not mediate in Yoruba except for a few insignificant phrases occasionally since she was openly opposed to such support. DF's continued need for extra lessons and her belief that some of her friends failed because they did not have access to similar tuition imply that there was a gap of a linguistic nature in the teaching/learning that needed to be mediated and even the learners could recognise this. DF's mindset in terms of her needs could be a function of her profile (Table 4.1). Being from a small family, with parents who were probably comfortable and could afford to pay for private tuition, DF it appears, never explored any other avenues to improve apart from this form of tuition.


(3)     Affect

DF was reserved and calm, but not in an unfriendly way. Her unwillingness to openly use Yoruba because she wanted her parents to be proud of her ability to use English properly and also feared the criticism of her teachers, suggests the possibility of a lack of self-confidence and a need for the approval of others. This might be a function of her age (11years – one of the youngest) or an indication of immaturity and a need for adult support.

This points to effects of the promotion of subtractive bilingualism (Cummins & Swain, 1986: 33). On the other hand, her dedicated focus on English proficiency as well as her steadily improving performance profile during the period of the research could also be explained in terms of a high degree of motivation. Anyway, her positive attitude about assessment might not be unconnected with the relatively high level of her language proficiency, reflecting an awareness of the emotional strain that a lack of understanding of assessment questions placed on learners who were not proficient in the LoLTA. It was clear that she had empathy for the less able members of her class and desired that something be done to bridge the gap for all the affected learners. A cause for concern was the force in some of her responses that seemed to suggest some level of emotional stress caused by the ripple effect of the AL factor.

### 4.6.5 Results in respect of Participant DM

*4.6.5.1 Debriefing*

(1)    CA1

DM was friendly and alert, but appeared to have a lot of issues on his mind judging by his responses. He had a relatively good command of English, although it was not faultless, as there were still quite a number of grammatical errors in his utterances. He had seemed focused during CA1-IS and had written on a rough sheet of paper and on his palm. But before the end of the assessment, he had started making faces. Confronted with these observations, DM explained that he had been practising the answers he wanted to write before transferring them to his script in order to minimise his errors. He was not at all aware that he had made faces. He appeared to believe that he would do well in CA1, but he also revealed that there were times when he forgot what he had learned. DM stated that he enjoyed school, but was always unhappy when his results were not as good as he expected. DM liked IS and said that he would most likely perform better in the CA1-IS than in the CA1-BS. He thought IS was more interesting. In addition, he enjoyed the attention he got from passing the subject and he believed people respected him more anytime he disclosed that IS was his favourite subject. But the terminology was sometimes very confusing to DM and he believed assistance with learning the terms would help him perform better. He complained that the teachers' assistance and support was largely inadequate and even sometimes not forthcoming at all. He maintained that learners were often left to their own devices in the special support sessions after school when they should have had some form of guidance.

Researcher:    So, tell me more about the Science.
DM:            (*Smiling*) Science is nice. I like it.

| Researcher: | Why do you like Integrated Science? Is it that you find it simple or what? |
| --- | --- |
| DM: | Ha! No, Ma. Is not easy. Some topics are hard and the words are hard. |
| Researcher: | (*Somewhat confused*) OK? |
| DM: | (*Laughing*) No, oh. Excuse, Ma. Uhmmm, because I like Science people always ask me questions. They want me to teach them. Everybody know that Science is hard, so I have many friends. They ask me how I know it. |
| Researcher: | What about the ones you find hard? What .... |
| DM: | Maybe, Ma. You can help me, all of us. |
| Researcher: | How? |
| DM: | I mean, to tell them (teachers) to do lesson[142] for us. |
| Researcher: | But I thought there were lessons after school for everybody... |
| DM: | (*Looking worried*) Yes, Ma. We don't do it. |
| Researcher: | You don't? |
| DM: | No. Yes, there is lesson period but they (teachers) don't come, some of them. Somebody (referring to teachers) will say "Open page 5 or 10 and do the work". |
| Researcher: | Have you ever told your teacher that you don't understand the work? |
| DM: | (*Pausing*) Uhmmm, sometimes they will say (*imitating his teacher*) "Are you the only one in the class?" and sometimes there is no need because those that know the answer will do the correction on the board. |
| Researcher: | How? What do you mean? |
| DM: | Ma, like our teacher will say (*imitating his teacher*), "Who can do Number 1? Yes, you, come and do it on the board. OK. You, come and do Number 2" and then the others will copied them in their book. |
| Researcher: | But I'm sure if you ask questions they'll answer... |
| DM: | (*Shrugs*) Ha ... |
| Researcher: | Do they ALL do that? |
| DM: | (*Nodding*) Many, Ma. |
| Researcher: | (*Frowning*) I think... |
| DM: | (*Interrupting*) We are too many and the teachers don't want to answer all of us, I think. |
| Researcher: | All right. So, your Integrated Science test was fine? |
| DM: | Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | What about Business Studies? |
| DM: | Many people pass that one in my class. That's the one people who don't know Maths and Science like. |
| Researcher: | Does that mean you will do well in the Business Studies? |
| DM: | Yes, Ma. I will pass very well. (DMS-DM/CA1-IS, 15-29) |

(2)     CA2

During the CA2-debriefing the tone of our communication changed and some truths and details were addressed. The first thing I did was ask DM about his scores in CA1-IS, explaining to him that I had thought from our previous conversation he would do better. DM disclosed that his performance in CA1-IS was "poor" because he had not understood some of the questions and had written the wrong answers. He said that he had not told me that,

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[142] *"Lesson" here refers to extra classes/ coaching/ tutorials*

because he had not thought that I actually cared and really wanted to know the truth. CA2, he assured me, would be better. DM believed that the adapted assessment, particularly the glossary, was useful in confirming what the questions required and that it ensured that he understood the questions. It was clear, however, that DM wanted to use the spelling list like a memory aid. He wished the spelling list could be extended because there were words he had wanted to use and searched for, that had not been on the list. I had to now further explain to him that the aim of the project was not to tell learners the answers but to aid their understanding of the questions and facilitate their responses by bridging the language barrier.

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | How did your test go? |
| DM: | Very good, Ma. Thank you. |
| Researcher: | Yeah? That's what you said the last time and what did you get in your Science? |
| DM: | Uhmmm 40, Ma. |
| Researcher: | You see. What about Business Studies? |
| DM: | It's 40. |
| Researcher: | Do you remember what you said when I asked you about it? (*Smiling*) |
| DM: | (*Looking Down*) Uhmmm Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | What? |
| DM: | (*Smiling then frowning uneasily*) Ma, I think (*pauses*) I thought you were just asking. |
| Researcher: | What do you mean by that? |
| DM: | Ma, after tests everybody always ask how was it and everybody say the test was very good. |
| Researcher: | (*Frowning*) Really? |
| DM: | (*More confidently*) People just ask. Is normal. So you just say fine. Ma, I thought you just ask, I don't know that you want me to say, to tell you true... |
| Researcher: | Well... |
| DM: | (*Interrupting*) Ma, I don't know you care about it. |
| Researcher: | But I do. That's why I'm here... |
| DM: | (*Interrupting again*) Thank you, Ma. I will tell you. |
| Researcher: | That is very nice. I want to understand what makes some of your tests difficult for you, that's why I'm asking. |
| DM: | Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | (*Smiling*) So, what about this one? Bawo ni eleyi?[143] |
| DM: | (*Nodding and smiling*) Ma, this one is better. |
| Researcher: | Really? But mo n wo e now![144] (*Smiling*) You seemed to be re-reading the questions over and over. Then you were also staring at one point and to top that, o tun fi biro ati paper e sere.[145] Now tell me how was it, what was going on? |
| DM: | (*Laughing*) O o to, Ma[146], I will pass. OK Uhmmm but I didn't do Number 1. I didn't know what to write. |
| Researcher: | Did you understand the question? Se oye e?[147] |

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[143] *How is this one?*

[144] *But I was looking at you now!*

[145] *You were playing with your biro and paper.*

[146] *Truly, Ma.*

| DM: | (*Nodding*) Yes, Ma. But I didn't know what to write. |
| Researcher: | Was it that you didn't understand the question or that you understood the question but didn't know the answers? |
| DM: | (*After a short pause*) It was hard and is a new topic. People will not know it. |
| Researcher: | Didn't the glossary help? |
| DM | Yes, Ma. It help. |
| Researcher: | How? How did you use it? |
| DM: | (*Frowning*) Uhmmmm |
| Researcher: | I just want to know what was useful and what was not. |
| DM | I checked the words in the questions and it help me to answer them but the other one[148] is new. |
| Researcher: | OK, let's start with that one. (DMS-DM/CA2-IS, 28-44). |

(3)     CA3

DM seemed quite comfortable about his work and was confident that he could improve even more if he had assistance in understanding the questions and meeting the challenges of writing. He repeated that the glossary was a valuable addition to the questions, but again suggested that the spelling list should contain more words because he was already familiar with many of those provided. DM revealed that he had made a conscious effort not to do anything that I would have reason to ask him about during the debriefing. During the debriefing he also appeared to be calm and maintain control by avoiding eye contact and staring across the room a lot. DM, like other participants, reiterated the need for support in the form of additional tuition from adults other than their own school teachers. He suggested that more lessons in English would go a long way in helping him as well as others understand their work better, then only those who did not study would fail and learners would not fail because they did not understand the teachers.

| Researcher: | So, how was the Business Studies? |
| DM: | (*Nodding and smiling*) It was good, Ma. I didn't do anything this time? |
| Researcher: | What do mean? I thought you said the test was good. |
| DM: | No, I mean because I know somebody is looking at me. I was just doing the work. |
| Researcher: | (*Laughing*) Iyen nko?[149] Even those behaviours were noted, but at least now I know why you were looking straight and stiff. So, how did you find the test? |
| DM: | It was very good. |
| Researcher: | So, does that mean 100%? |
| DM: | Ha! No, Ma. But I tried oh. |
| Researcher: | What else can be done to see that you have a chance at getting full marks? That is, provided you study. |

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[147] *Did you understand?*
[148] *" … other one…" refers to the other topic covered by the question.*
[149] *What about that?*

DM:      (*Shaking his head*) Ma, we need another lesson teacher[150] to explain more. I think that will be good.

Researcher:      But, Uhmmm another lesson teacher? What...

DM:      (*Interrupting*) Ma, I think another person will be good. Then only the lesson will be their work and they can teach us more English... (*excitedly*) Yes! They can teach more English periods. Then everybody can understand and you'll only fail when you don't read your book but you'll know the English and you can answer some questions. (*Smiling, then heaving a sigh as of contentment and achievement*)

Researcher:      Is that important to you? I mean, how do you feel about all of this?

DM:      Is not good to fail because you don't hear [151]what the teacher is saying or maybe they don't teach you. (DMS-DM/CA3-BS, 44-50)

### 4.6.5.2 Mediation

I did not engage in code switching in my conversations with DM. The few times I used Yoruba phrases were just to put him at ease, and he thought nothing either of using conversational phrases in Yoruba. His receptive language proficiency in English was approaching the CALP level. The mediation revealed that DM could read the questions fluently, but his pronunciation was average. He could answer many of the questions orally. He was, however, unable to answer the following question: "Differentiate between (a) Sexual and asexual reproduction (b) self and cross-pollination" (MIB/CA2-IS, Q1). Mediation of this question showed that his inability to answer was probably due to inadequate preparation for the assessment, or to a memory lapse. His explanation, however, was that some of the assessment questions were taken from topics the teacher had just recently introduced and that he had not yet mastered. He believed that this made the questions more difficult to answer for many of them. Since he reiterated his need to ensure he had access to questions, the mediation with DM placed emphasis on the comprehension of the questions, i.e. at the receptive level, and distinguishing among various functional assessment words such as *differentiate*, *explain* and *describe*. DM's progress during the period of the research suggested that, the more proficient an AL learner is in the LoLTA, the more likely he is to make effective use of the glossary and other strategies provided to bridge the language barrier. DM seemed to gain from the interaction and appeared better able to comprehend some of the subsequent requirements of the assessment tasks. But DM's challenges lay chiefly in his limited vocabulary, which required much further attention. He had no idea how to address this challenge himself. Part of the mediation focused on various study strategies that he could adopt, which included practising the use of appropriate terminology and summary exercises

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[150] "*Lesson teacher*" *refers to private tutor*

[151] *The word "hear" as used in the sentence is a direct translation from Yoruba meaning "understand"*

of comprehension passages that required the constant use of the dictionary and thesaurus. He seemed elated that there were possible strategies that he could engage in by himself to improve. He displayed a yearning for any form of assistance and support. It appeared he took pride in his studies and wanted to do well and his statements suggested that he wished his teachers would do more to bridge the gaps, not just for him, but for all the other learners as well. DM seemed constrained by the apparent lack of guidance from teachers and he appeared to have potential, but needed much more interaction time to support his further growth than was available during the sessions.

*4.6.5.3 Answer scripts*

     (1)     Receptive level

DM comprehended our discussions and as such I did not engage in code switching although his language proficiency was just approaching CALP level. He could also read the questions fluently and seemed able to comprehend what the questions required. DM seemed, however, to have challenges with vocabulary. He admitted that some of the terms in IS occasionally proved difficult for him to understand. At each opportunity, he reiterated his need for any form of assistance to help him cope with the terminology and learn better.

     (2)     Expressive level

DM's work in some instances displayed the presence of language restrictions which hampered him in the proper explanation of the information he wished to present. In trying to elaborate, he lost clarity of expression, particularly when attempting to respond to the questions orally. DM's expressive language sometimes made it difficult to establish whether his challenges were with the comprehension of the questions, use of appropriate terminology, vocabulary, retention of relevant facts, or a combination of all the variables. To the question, "In what way does the amount of water you drink affect what you excrete?" (MIB/CA3-IS, Q4) DM's response was:

> "when we drink too much amount of water, if the sun is shinning and hot, we release just a little amount of water because some of the water has pass out from the skin which is sweat."

The interaction with DM, however, did reveal that the use of terminology and proper vocabulary constituted a serious barrier for him. For example, in CA3-BS and EX-BS, where an item in both required application of the meaning of the word "advantage", DM did not seem to know the appropriate terms to use in his response and the points he was attempting to

make were somewhat lost in his explanation. In CA3-BS part of his response to the question "State five advantages of credit sales" (MIB/CA3-BS, Q3) was; "You can gain from what you buy which you do not pay for it" To a similar question in the examination "What is credit sale? List five (5) advantages of credit sale (MIB/EX-BS, Q1), part of DM's response was: "If the person doesn't have money, the person can buy but will still pay the money"

The CAs in IS revealed some of the challenges DM had with spelling: *rhomatism* (rheumatism), *arithtics* (arthritis) and *carbon-dix-oxide* (carbon dioxide). The words misspelled were complex, and subject-specific terms. He did not record any other spelling mistakes and this fact demonstrates his underlying capability. L1 interference could be a possible cause of the errors, since he seemed to be writing the words as they would be pronounced locally. Table 4.13 and Figure 4.12 contain DM's CA and examination scores in percentages.

**Table 4.13    DM scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS $\bar{x}=39.5$ | CA2-BS $\bar{x}=50$ | CA3-BS $\bar{x}=45$ | EX-BS $\bar{x}=55$ | CA1-IS $\bar{x}=38$ | CA2-IS $\bar{x}=52$ | CA3-IS $\bar{x}=45$ | EX-IS $\bar{x}=50$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DM | 40 | 64 | 60 | 65 | 40 | 60 | 65 | 65 |
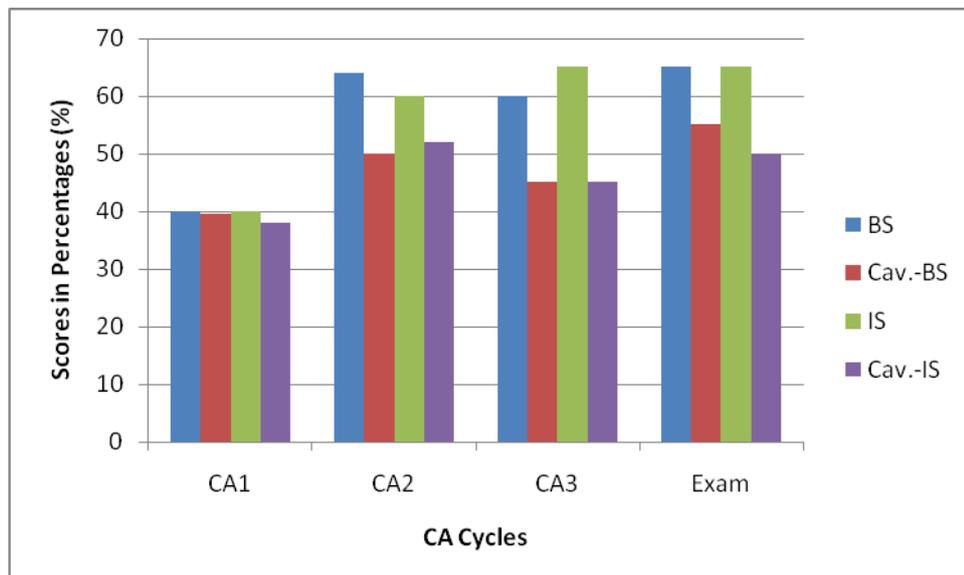


**Figure 4.12    DM – Comparison of CA and Examination Scores**

Table 4.13 and Figure 4.12 show that DM's CA1 scores were failing marks although even then, the scores were almost at par with the mean performance of Class C and D (CA1-BS:

40%, Mean: 39.5%; CA1-IS: 40%, Mean: 38%). But with CA2 there was considerable improvement in his scores (CA2-BS: 40%-64% and CA-IS: 40%-60%) which were now also above the mean performance of the Class C and D (CA2-BS difference of 14% and CA2-IS: 8%). With CA3, the BS scores dipped slightly (64%:60%), but so also did the mean performance of Class C and D (50%-45%), thus still giving DM a growing advantage of 15% rise above the mean. While the mean performance of Class C and D decreased in CA3-IS (52%-45%), DM recorded an increased score (65%) that was now 20% higher than the mean. The consistence with which he scored above the mean performance suggests that DM had considerable potential. The examination showed the same trend, with his EX-BS and EX-IS scores (both 65%) remained well above the mean performance of the Class C and D, by 10% and 15% respectively.

*4.6.5.4 Discussion – DM*

(1)      Additional language Factor

The fact that DM was a fluent reader and could answer the assessment questions orally was a reflection of the level of his language proficiency in English, which could be described as approaching CALP level. Though there was no apparent need to resort to the use of code switching, I found it interesting that DM appeared comfortable with the use of Yoruba phrases and exclamatory expressions such as "Rara, Ma"[152] or "Oti, Ma"[153]. Not dissociating himself from his L1 is an indicator that he used and transferred the knowledge acquired from L1 to his learning in the L2. According to Macdonald & Burroughs (1991: 30-31), the development of adequate cognitive functioning in the AL depends on the level of development of the L1, and DM seemed to have a well developed L1 and was at ease with its use each time the occasion arose. The fact that he had not yet attained the CALP level of proficiency was apparent in his poor use of subject-specific terminology and his English vocabulary generally. The same applies to his challenges with some spellings. Though his spelling needed improvement, those words he was grappling with were complex subject-specific terms and not high frequency functional words. DM's tendency to lose clarity of expression in the responses that required lengthy explanations could also be due to his underdeveloped vocabulary in the AL and/or to using direct translation of Yoruba (possible main language of thought) into English, the LoLTA. DM was frank about sometimes during assessments forgetting what he had studied, probable evidence of some measure of rote

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[152] *No, Ma.*
[153] *No, Ma.*

learning to compensate for the difficult terminology he complained about and the lack of guidance in appropriate study techniques. These difficulties, frequently observed with AL learners, were borne out by the visible sense of hopelessness with which he quoted the instruction of "Open page 5 or 10 and do the work" which, he claimed, occurred habitually during the special support sessions after school. DM's tendency to practise responses on a rough sheet of paper or in his palm during an assessment is a further indication of his uncertainty and sensitivity about error. While associating failure to perform well academically with the learners' failure to understand the work and the teachers' failure to teach properly, he regarded individual interaction with his teachers as unthinkable on account of the big class size. And all of this articulated with his recognition of the need for additional instruction in English, and realising that an understanding of the AL was key to their learning. His opinion that only those who do not study should fail and learners should not fail because they do not understand the language or because of teaching lapses, suggests that he clearly understood the inherent equity issues in the assessment of AL learners and he strongly believed that something should be done about it. DM suggested that immersion into English language learning was a possible way forward.

(2)    Impact of dynamic assessment

DM's felt need for mediation was clearly recognisable. He wanted more assistance than I could offer, actually requesting that I intervene within the school. There seemed to be an underlying, pervasive need for individual interaction and feedback, in the face of the large class size. He wanted assistance especially with the learning of concepts and terminology. This resonates in the use DM made of the glossary to cross-check the requirements of some questions. Without expansion of the spelling list to contain items that could jog his memory, he had no use for it. He ascribed much value to the linguistic mediation offered, emphasising that this was a gap that needed to be urgently bridged, although little or no specific development in this regard was noted in the products of assessment during the research. DM's performance profile as represented in Figure 4.12 suggests DA did positively impact his performance. Judging also by the consistence with which he out-performed the mean, DM could be described as a learner with high potential who possibly benefitted immensely from the interaction and mediation. Though there were slight fluctuations and a lull in the scores, his still showed improvement relative to the mean and this pattern suggests that DM would require longer sessions of mediation and study support for further improvement and academic gains to be attained by him.

(3)     Affect

Motivation and support, among others, are key factors for AL learners to develop language proficiency at CALP level (Nieman, 2006: 34; Opara, 2004: 83-86) and DM's utterances suggest that these were by and large absent from the learning environment of his school. Although he was cheerful and curious about things, his disposition could not mask an apparent lack of trust in the motives of the adults around him. This was demonstrated in his belief that people asking about his performance did not really care about him or the assessment, and so he was accustomed to just say it was "good", suggesting that he had a deeper level of feeling neglected and possibly unloved. DM's need for reassurance and admiration, as shown in his reasons for preferring IS to BS, suggested that there were emotional gaps that needed to be filled. This could also be a reflection of his age (11years – Table 4.1) and level of maturity. He displayed a tendency to hide his true feelings, as evidenced during CA3 and the debriefing when he tried to create an impression of control. One could sense some level of stress in the passion with which he discussed the issues of learners failing in subjects when they had not been adequately taught. DM appeared to have been motivated by the project. It really thrilled him that his opinion mattered and would be taken into consideration. The positive change in his attitude could also be a factor in his performance profile.

## 4.6.6   Comparative analysis of participants' results – MIB School

As for the LIB School, the analysis of the data of the four participants of the MIB School has shown the possible discrete effects of the use of an AL as the LoLTA on the participants and their attitude to school and assessment, and it has also shown some effects possibly ascribable to the use of CDA on their performance and attitude towards assessment. Again, the comparison of the findings concerning the MIB participants to be attempted now does not aim to generalise but rather to further aid clarity and understanding of the relationship of findings derived from one school. In addition to being situated within the middle income bracket, the MIB School involved in this research practised a language education policy approaching total immersion in the AL, i.e. educators and learners were expected to use the AL exclusively. MIB School participants indeed did not require extensive translation of my explanations for me to be sure they understood me. Initially with CF, the first participant, I engaged in code switching to ensure comprehension or to put the participants at ease, but as the MIB-data

collection progressed, this grew less since the participants responded mainly in English even when I spoke to them in Yoruba. Table 4.14 combines Tables 4.10 – 4.13 on the MIB School participants' scores, and Figures 4.13 and 4.14 present the BS results graphically from the perspectives of the CA Cycles and the participants' performance.

**Table 4.14     Combined table of MIB-scores: CA1, CA2, CA3 and Examination (%)**

| Participant | CA1-BS X̄=39.5 Score | CA1-BS Deviation from mean | CA2-BS X̄=50 Score | CA2-BS Deviation from mean | CA3-BS X̄=45 Score | CA3-BS Deviation from mean | EX-BS X̄=55 Score | EX-BS Deviation from mean | CA1-IS X̄=38 Score | CA1-IS Deviation from mean | CA2-IS X̄=52 Score | CA2-IS Deviation from mean | CA3-IS X̄=45 Score | CA3-IS Deviation from mean | EX-IS X̄=50 Score | EX-IS Deviation from mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CF | 30 | -9.5 | 50 | 0 | 22 | -23 | 35 | -20 | 20 | -18 | 25 | -27 | 45 | 0 | 50 | 0 |
| CM | 30 | -9.5 | 40 | -10 | 27 | -18 | 40 | -15 | 51 | +13 | 70 | +18 | 55 | +10 | 63 | +13 |
| DF | 50 | +10.5 | 65 | +15 | 69 | +24 | 70 | +15 | 50 | +12 | 58 | +6 | 60 | +15 | 67 | +17 |
| DM | 40 | +0.5 | 64 | +14 | 60 | +15 | 65 | +10 | 40 | +2 | 60 | +8 | 65 | +20 | 65 | +15 |

Figure 4.13
CA & EX-BS Scores MIB School
Assessment Cycles
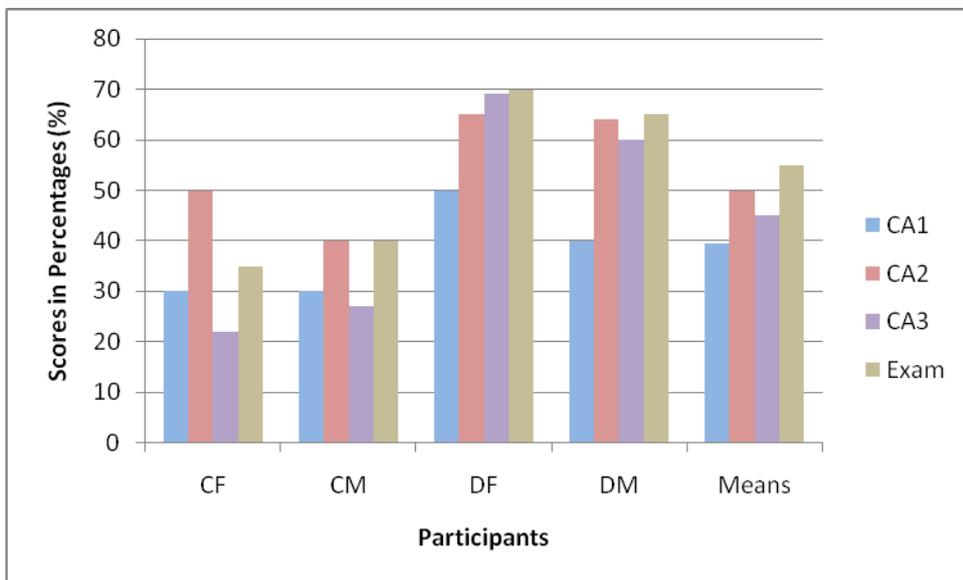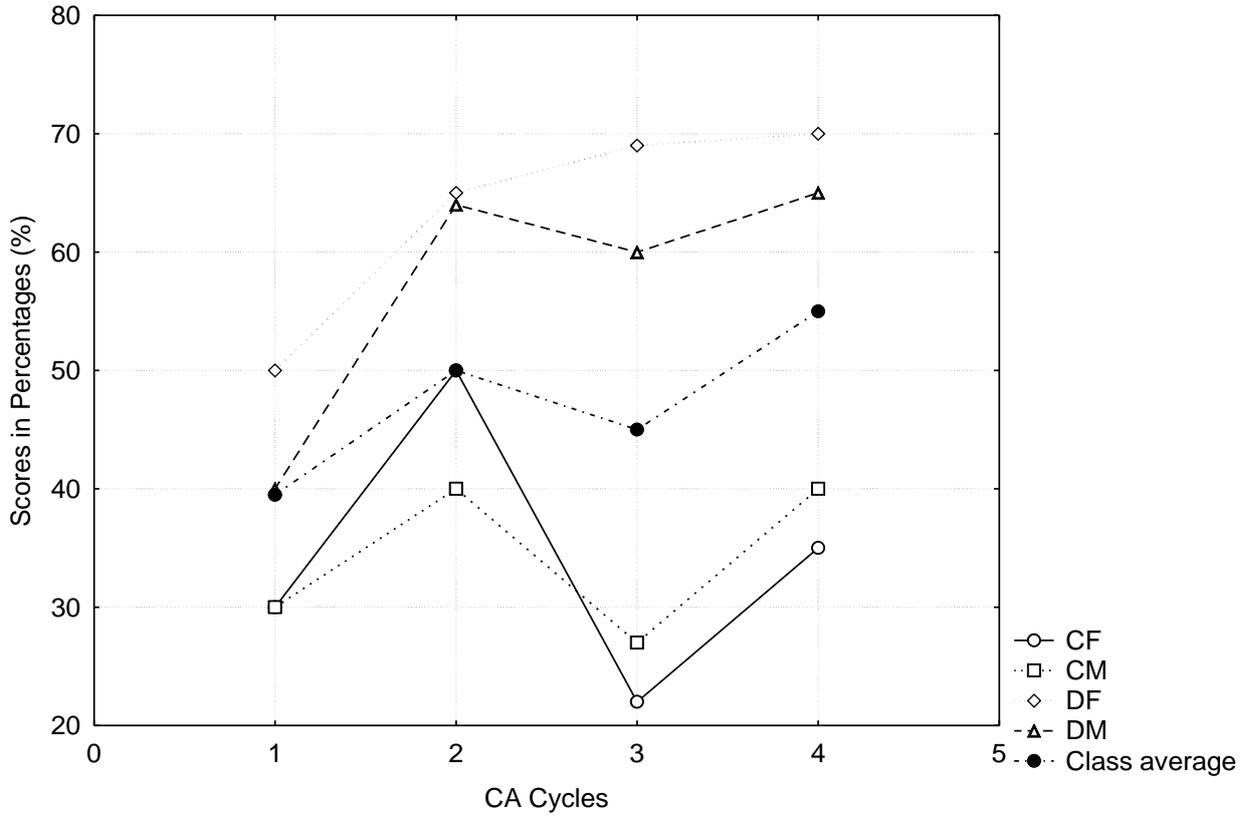


Figure 4.14    CA & EX-BS Scores MIB School: Participants

Figures 4.13 and 4.14 show that the same movements of improvement and decline among CA1 – CA2 (+10.5%) – CA3 (-5%) – examination (+10%) reflected in the mean performance BS-scores of Class C and D, occurred for all the participants excepting DF, who improved

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also from CA2 to CA3 (+4%). The difference lies in the extent of the variance in the scores, which might then be interpreted discretely as a function of factors such as DA, learning potential, lesson dynamics and affect. For CF, a learner with weak performance, the variance was especially great among all scores (+20%  –  -28%  –  +13%). CM, also a learner from Class C and with weak performance, had a somewhat flatter profile (+10%  –  -13%  – +13%), which might indicate relatively less susceptibility to either a Hawthorne effect or the influence of the teacher, as related in the case descriptions. The scores of both actually weakened relative to the mean performance scores of Class C and D, and both failed to score pass marks in the examination, which might be associated with the severity of the challenges inherent in a baseline score as low as 30%, and the pervasiveness of their AL challenges during a focused, short-term intervention. The extent of the decline in their BS-CA3 scores relative to the trend in the BS-CA3 scores of the other two participants might lend weight to their allegations about their teacher's laxness, or it might be related to some issue in the assessment itself, since their class was affected more than Class D. DF was the only participant starting with a pass mark at baseline, she consistently obtained the highest scores, and she was the only one showing improvement relative to her own score, however small, in every subsequent assessment. DM improved dramatically, by 24%, in CA2, from a baseline score (40%) that was virtually equal to the mean performance of Class C and D. His subsequent scores were all well above the mean and in terms of the range of scores from baseline to examination, his improvement in BS relative to his own scores was greatest (40%- 65%), all of which suggest good learning potential and steady benefit derived from CDA. A pattern worth considering in these data, points to the possibility that the low achieving AL learners (CF and CM) derived little or no benefit from the intervention, whereas the better achieving AL learners (DF and DM) were able to demonstrate greater learning potential. Figures 4.15 and 4.16 show graphically the IS results from the perspectives of the CA cycles and the participants.

Figure 4.15
CA & EX-IS Scores MIB School
Assessment Cycles
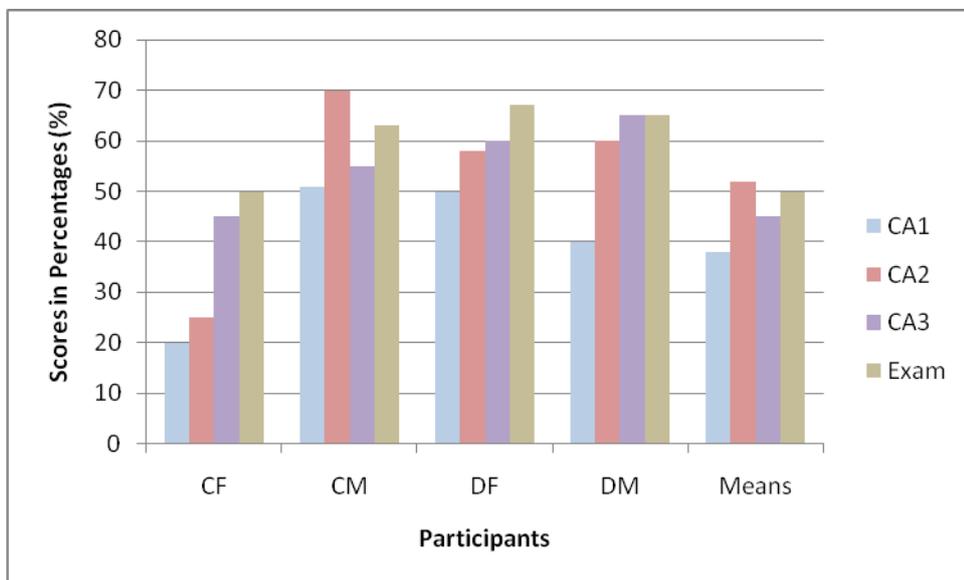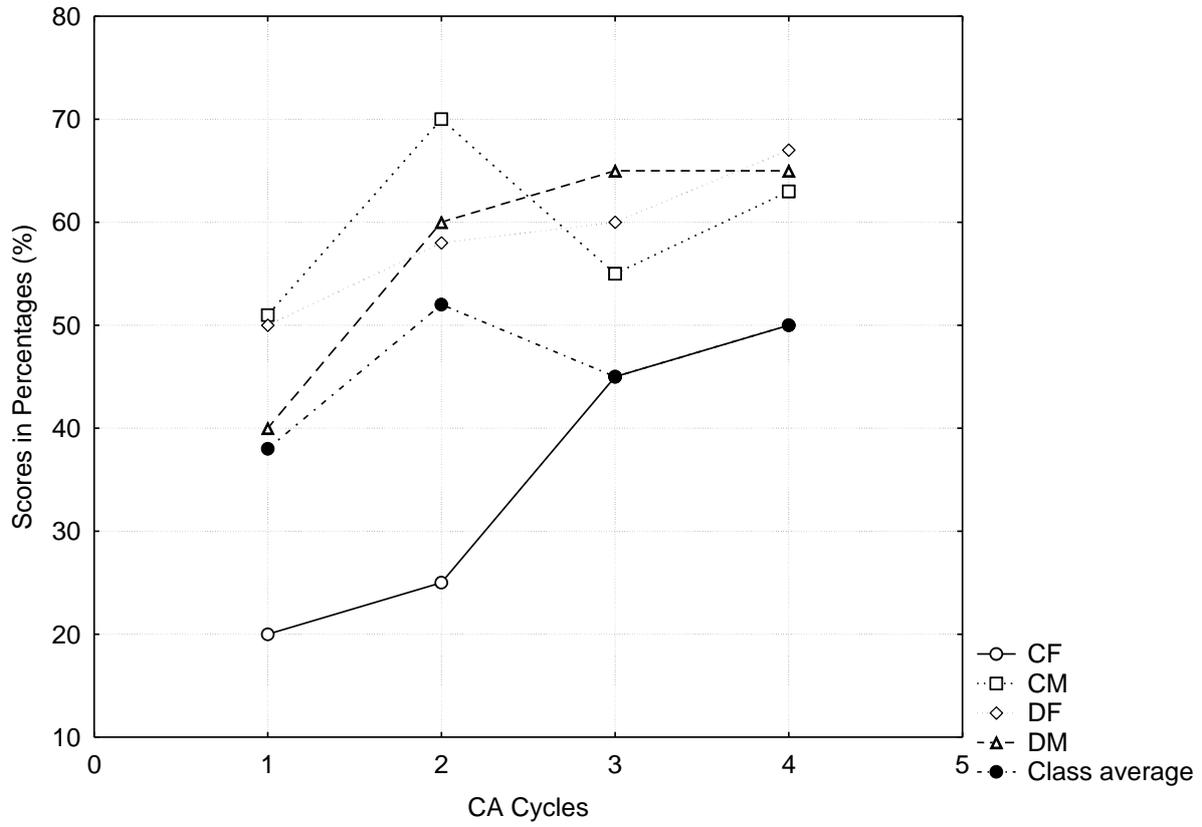


Figure 4.16    **CA & EX-IS Scores MIB School: Participants**

Table 4.14 showed that the mean performance scores of Class C and D for BS (39.5% − 55%) and IS (38% − 50%) were within a similar range and that both showed a decline in CA3. However, the participants' score profiles for IS differ from those for BS in a number of ways.

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From Figures 4.15 and 4.16 it can be seen that the IS-assessment scores of only one learner, CM, reflected the same movement of improvement and decline as shown in the mean performance IS-scores, and here the variance was greater. The other three participants showed consistent growth relative to their own scores with two, DF and DM, consistently achieving higher scores than the mean performance scores of Class C and D. In IS, CF not only made steady progress from her very low baseline score (20%), but she actually caught up with the mean performance score of Class C and D in CA3 (45%) and maintained this achievement in the examination, finally obtaining a pass mark (50%) and thereby disproving that a low baseline might always be expected to have a limiting influence on academic performance as suggested by the data of CF and CM in respect of BS. The IS scores have completely changed the perception of CM based on his performance in BS, from a less able learner to one with a higher learning potential and these scores thus make it pertinent to examine closely his frustrations with teaching and learning during the BS lessons. The relationship between CM's IS-scores and the mean performance scores of Class C and D (+13% - +18% - +10% - +13%) could signify a Hawthorne effect for CA2-IS, but for the rest calls to mind the stable profile of BM in the LIB School, i.e. of a learner with stronger intellectual potential, already well actualised, who did not benefit greatly from CDA. CDA appears to have been successful with IS when taking into account the progress made by the other three participants. This finding again raises questions concerning the difference in cognitive and linguistic demand between BS and IS, this time because of an apparently more consistent and greater positive effect of CDA on performance in IS than in the LIB School.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS AND FINDINGS

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Some of the key objectives of qualitative research have been described as an attempt to "explore, unravel and explain the complexity of different social worlds" (White, Woodfield & Ritchie, 2003: 287). Blaxter *et al*. (1996: 197) emphasise the importance of recognising and making explicit the researcher's role, thus making it possible to understand the meaning and significance of the results from the perspective of the researcher. This study was conducted to investigate the use of DA in the assessment of AL learners in mainstream education. The results and findings then have to be represented and interpreted bearing in mind the context from which they are products.

This chapter is a discussion of the results and findings from the study aimed at making "logical and conceptual links" (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003:279), arriving at syntheses and drawing conclusions. The chapter begins with a synopsis of the four preceding chapters of the thesis, then proceeds to examine the results and findings of the empirical work in relation to the AL situation (within the community, in respect of teaching and learning, in terms of challenges faced by the participants, and within the school), the application of DA (its influence on the assessment and performance of the participating AL learners) and the affective variables in respect of assessment (static assessment and DA) as these all articulate with the underlying theories that lead to the interpretation.  The chapter continues with a reflection on the research process, its strengths and value, limitations and lessons learned from the process. The chapter concludes with recommendations for addressing the matters arising from the study and suggestions for further research. On the whole, the chapter attempts to interpret the findings, seek explanations, and make sense of the contrasts and anomalies as well as the consistencies, while taking into consideration the individual contexts from within which they emerged. Making sense of it all, in other words, interpretation of the emergent results, is seen not as unilateral but as multi-perspectival in line with the interpretive paradigm that is subjective, personal and multi-faceted (Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Creswell, 2003:181; Tellis, 1997:16).

## 5.2    SYNOPSIS OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

The first chapter, as a background to the study, looked at the AL factor in education as a global phenomenon. Immigration into developed countries is on the increase and with it, cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) in classrooms. In addition, many learners in developing countries like Nigeria and other post colonial African countries, have to use an AL as the LoLTA – first, because of the multiplicity of the languages represented in such countries and second, because their official languages are foreign languages. The situation thereby creates a new generation of AL learners worldwide who are now said to outnumber L1 learners (Nieman, 2006:22-26; Skutnabb-Kanga, 1988: 11). Educators are sometimes unaware of the complexities of L2 and AL acquisition, and classroom practices often end up labelling AL learners as having learning disabilities, underachieving or emotionally unstable, leading to classification into one form of special educational needs programme or another.

There are other challenges associated with learning in an AL, and one of them is learners being assessed in a language in which they lack proficiency, in a static manner which does not accommodate the language barriers that are often associated with L2 and AL acquisition. Chapter 1 suggested that these AL learners lack proficiency at both the receptive and expressive level, and often can hardly comprehend or communicate, let alone be assessed, in the LoLTA without questions of validity and equity in assessment being raised. The continued use of such static assessment practices can have lasting effects on the learners and their attitude, especially when they are high stakes assessments that are used for classification and/or for selection and progression.

The chapter went on to indicate that there have been outcries against such assessment practices where static assessment has been used with AL learners. Other forms of alternative assessment and accommodations in assessment have been investigated and have not been fully able to cater for the challenges of AL learners. Chapter 1 suggested that DA be investigated as an alternative form of assessment for AL learners in mainstream education. The research question was therefore: **In what ways can DA contribute to a solution for the assessment of AL learners?**

The main question was unpacked to contain the following sub-questions:
(1)    How does DA influence the assessment and performance of AL learners?

(2a)   How does the use of static forms of assessment affect the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their own performance?

(2b)   How does the use of DA affect the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their own performance?

(3)   How should DA be conducted to prevent it becoming an undue advantage for AL learners?

Chapter 2 reviewed the relevant literature and attempted to establish a rationale for the use of DA with AL learners in mainstream education. The chapter examined cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) and the challenges surrounding AL learning with particular reference to Nigeria. An overview was conducted of the broad fields of assessment, academic and static assessment, purposes of assessment, continuous assessment (CA) and other relevant issues in the area of assessment such as validity, reliability and equity in assessment. Chapter 2 further focused on the issues of language-in-assessment, and research in the field of language and assessment. The concept of DA and its related theories and models, such as Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) and Campione & Brown's Graduated Prompting, were discussed and relevant research carried out in the field of DA was reviewed, as well as the issue of validity of DA as an authentic form of assessment.

The methodological explication in Chapter 3 commenced by highlighting the paradigm and the assumptions of the study. Though DA is essentially situated within the constructivist paradigm, this research was based on the interpretivist paradigm. This shift was necessitated because the study involved individual description of the learners and focused on their attitudes and perceptions. The chapter further discussed the research design, incorporating the participants, instrumentation, methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The study was an action research within a multiple case study. There were eight participants from two schools, four from each school. The research processes employed in the study were systematically described from Phase I to Phase IV. Phase I of the research entailed the actual commencement of the fieldwork and dealt with the initial contact and interaction with the participants and the first data collection, i.e. debriefing and mediation regarding the first continuous assessment cycle, CA1. During Phases II and III the participants wrote adapted mediational assessments and debriefing and mediation again took place and in Phase IV they wrote a mediational examination. The research process was cyclical in that data analysis of

each phase followed directly after the data collection to form the basis for the subsequent mediational assessment and ultimately the examination. The analyses were descriptive and not statistical, although some use was made of quantitative data. The small sample size and the focused uniqueness of each case study did not merit statistical and inferential analysis. The chapter concluded by outlining the ethical considerations of the research.

Chapter 4 presented the results and findings of the study. In order to minimise repetition, the presentation of the results commenced with a description of the context within which the study took place. This incorporated the general description of all the participants, the two schools and the classroom observations. The chapter then presented the results and findings covering the procedure during the four phases of data collection separately for each of the participants. The presentation of the results covered the debriefing, mediation, answer scripts and assessment scores of the participant, followed by a discussion which addressed, as the findings below do, the AL factor, the impact of DA and the participant's affect. For each school, the presentation of results concluded with a comparative contemplation of the participants' performance.

## 5.3    RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 5.3.1    The additional language situation

*5.3.1.1 Introduction*

In case study research, context is an integral component of the case (Henning *et al.,* 2004: 41) and this fact played out in the course of the research. The socio-economic and affective contexts within each of the schools were major factors that contributed to the findings, but none more so than the overall context of language. The discussions to follow are therefore personal interpretations situated within these specific and distinctive environments with their individual variables and are not intended as general statements governing all situations (Yin, 2003: 13). The findings from this study suggest that the challenges concerning AL proficiency experienced by the participants formed the unique linguistic context within which each of these learners resided both cognitively and affectively. The factors contributing to the linguistic context included the language of the community and immediate out-of-school environment including family/parental influence, the processes of teaching and learning, the participants' individual challenges in learning and the influence of the school as context. All

of these contribute strongly to my synthesis towards an understanding of the AL context of the study.

*5.3.1.2 Language in the community*

The participants' oral and written responses displayed a high level of interference of the L1 at least in the linguistic, sociolinguistic, cognitive and affective dimensions of their being. Their pronunciation was laced with Yoruba accent and their spellings were faulty, often based on writing words as pronounced. Whole sentences were sometimes translated directly from Yoruba, thereby blurring the clarity of the meaning and making it especially challenging for someone who does not belong to the community. The interference of the L1 with pronunciation appeared to be a general phenomenon with all the participants. To illustrate what challenges are implied in using English as the LoLTA in Nigeria, we could look at some letters of the Yoruba alphabet and their correspondent sounds in English. In Yoruba, for instance,

/a/ has the sound of /a/ in *bath*         /e/ has the sound of /a/ in *babe*

/i/ has the sound of /e/ in *be*          /o/ has the sound of /o/ in *bone*

/u/ has the sound of /oo/ in *book*

Hence, learners need to consciously learn the sound-symbol correspondences in the two orthographies. To further complicate the task, Yoruba has a so-called shallow orthography, in contrast with the deep, complex orthography of English. In Yoruba, words are written phonetically, i.e. according to the pronunciation of the component sounds on the alphabet table and this means there are no unpronounced letters or irregular spellings as in English. So, some spelling errors of some participants (AM, BM) are actually phonetic spellings and thus become understandable, e.g. "loamy" as "lomin" and "heart" as "hart".

Grammatical 'errors' made by learners in the AL sometimes carry psycho- and sociolinguistic overtones. For instance, in Yoruba singular nouns and proper nouns, (e.g. mum, dad, Mrs X) quite often take the plural form of the pronoun in spoken communication, depending on the relationship between the parties. Ordinarily one cannot refer to someone older or in a position of authority using a singular pronoun because the plural form signifies respect. So, in referring to the teacher as "they", CF below was obeying the rules of Yoruba which obviously is wrong in English:

Researcher: Ma a worry, ko kin se pe nma so fun teacher yin. Mi o ni so.[154]

CF: No, Ma. If <u>they</u> (teacher) catch you, <u>they</u> will beat you very well (DMS-CF/CA1-BS, 21).

The tenses also create confusion for those who are not proficient in the two languages. In Yoruba, actions that occurred in the past are described using the present tense and there is also no declension for verb-noun correspondence, it is denoted by adverbs of time and by the subject, and not by actually changing the verb form. So, often a direct translation from Yoruba to English results in grammatical errors. Below are examples where CF was referring to incidents that occurred in the past using utterances that were direct translations from Yoruba.

(a) CF: We <u>do</u> the correction in class. We <u>stand</u> up and <u>answer</u> the questions. (We did the correction in class. We stood up and answered the questions.)

(b) CF: I <u>check</u> for words on the paper. (I checked for the words on the paper.)

(c) CF: Yes, Ma. I <u>check</u> the words. It <u>make</u> it better. I <u>can answer</u>. (I checked the words. It made it better. I could answer.) (DMS-CF/CA2-IS, 43-51)

For the numerous differences between the two languages, ranging from phonology to syntax and orthography, learners require some measure of cognitive modifiability to accommodate the variations as they move from the use of their L1 used in their community, to the AL used in their lessons. The participants in this study did not appear to have much exposure to reading in either language and to them, it appeared, there was no fine line between the two.

Many learners in the communities to which the participants belonged have parents who are not competent users of English even at the level of BICS and who get by using Yoruba and Pidgin. Such learners (e.g. AF and AM) can be described as being linguistically hemmed-in because they are surrounded by people who do not speak the language they need to acquire to make progress at school. Hence, their only exposure to English, the LoLTA, is during their lessons in school. Even peer interaction in the schools, from the findings, seemed to take place in Yoruba and conversational communication in Yoruba, which was mainly at the level of BICS, was different to their required academic communication in English at the level of CALP in respect of content, linguistic complexity and lexicon.

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[154] *Don't worry, it is not as if I'm going to tell your teacher. I won't tell.*

The importance of the immediate environment in the home and community can hardly be over-estimated. Krashen's distinction (in Nieman, 2006: 26 & 27) between language acquisition and language learning suggests that language acquisition, *inter alia,* takes place through social interaction in specific contexts. It is an informal learning experience that largely happens unconsciously and therefore depends on the level of language usage being modelled for its quality and outcomes. By contrast, language learning, frequently of the AL or LoLTA, takes place in a formal teaching situation where rules governing grammar, word formation and their application are taught and the content and lexicon being presented are selective, as are also the goals and hidden curriculum. Krashen regards language learning as less effective than language acquisition, a dire conclusion for learners who need to achieve the level of CALP in the AL exclusively by means of exposure at school. However, Nieman (2006: 26) maintains that it is possible effectively to support the development of full discourse skills and concepts required for CALP by means of language teaching.

In discussing of the language proficiency of the participants and the results of this study, the choice and use of language within the immediate environment cannot be ignored. In Nigeria, English may have been placed in a position of prominence because, as suggested by Opara (2004:29), it appears to be a unifying element in a highly complex multilingual society where it is estimated that about four hundred indigenous languages are spoken (Bamgbose, 1995: 24). Though English is the official language of the country and by implication of the communities within which the study took place, local variations of English containing alterations to the grammatical structure are also in use, and press against the boundaries of the proper use of English grammar as well as pronunciation. This tendency, coupled with the everyday use of Pidgin, forms a formidable challenge for any individual, particularly AL learners who have to attain English proficiency at CALP level as well as assimilate complex subject terminology. In Nigeria, there is now a very thin line between the correct use of English and the accepted use of English based on interference of the local languages. Knowing where one ends and the other commences could be challenging. The link between some of the participants' errors in spelling and the local variation of the pronunciation of the words needs further investigation, as also the use of pidgin within the community as a confounding factor in AL learning.

The findings revealed that the language situation within the communities of both schools possibly constituted a limitation for the participants. This corroborates Vygotsky's suggestion

that the physical and social contexts within which learning takes place remain an integral part of what is learned (Haywood and Brown, 1990:414; Kozulin & Garb, 2002:113; Minick, 1987:118; Wood, 1998: 40), and that the concept of human development places interaction between children and more mature members of their culture at the heart of psychological growth. Where cultural tools such as language and speech that facilitate social construction and intellectual development are not distinct and focused, the challenges become more complicated. Vygotsky's emphasis on the importance of the social environment and the social construction of the mind as a means of intellectual development (Blanck, 1990: 50; Deutsch and Reynolds, 2000:312; Minick, 1987:121-126) seem to be borne out by the influences that the contexts of the LIB and MIB Schools had on the distinction between the results of their teaching and learning as considered in the following sections.

### 5.3.1.3 Processes of teaching and learning

The impact of teaching and learning conditions on learners' progress cannot be under-estimated and, as became evident during the course of this study, barriers may sometimes be almost overwhelming. As with the power of the language factor of the community, the severity of the barriers in the teaching/learning situation under study constituted a serious limitation to optimum learning and in some cases appeared to make other considerations even seem irrelevant. The challenges ranged from an outright non-conducive physical environment brought about by a serious breakdown of basic infrastructure, to inadequate teaching techniques and poor language models to learn from. In the LIB School, the lack of basic amenities appeared to make both teaching and learning very challenging. With no proper classrooms, the overcrowded classroom spaces were also without proper seating. There were no dedicated facilities such as laboratories and workshops. The library as a resource was non-existent (just a space provided). There was no electricity in the classroom spaces and no adequate toilet facilities. In addition, the learners were not provided with any textbooks or exercise books. Instructional materials, used extremely rarely, were improvised from scratch at the discretion of and personal cost to the teacher. This environment certainly did not appear conducive to learning. Since learning had to take place in an AL and the learners needed all the help they could get, it made the situation that much more challenging.

What the MIB School gained in terms of provision of basic infrastructure, it lost in the hugely overcrowded classrooms averaging more than a hundred learners per class. The whole context seemed to be pitched against teaching and learning from the outset. The situation was

compounded by the AL factor and the learners having underdeveloped language proficiency in the LoLTA and often even in their L1. It is noteworthy how in the MIB School even learners with above average performance (DF and DM) had failed to comfortably attain language proficiency in English at CALP level. Contributing factors were possibly that the school community endorsed a practice virtually of language immersion, in that they discouraged the use of Yoruba both in and out of the classroom. The larger society seemed to "glorify" the use of English with little regard for the version and standard of the language being learned. Unfortunately exposure to the correct form of English is rare in some communities.

The LIB School participants required considerable code switching for me to be certain that they had a good understanding of what the project was about and in particular for the debriefing and mediation procedures. This was despite the fact that the responses anticipated in the assessment tasks did not require the formation of lengthy or complicated sentences or advanced grammar. In the MIB School, code switching was less necessary but could not be ruled out either (with CF). Code switching functions on two levels, the receptive and the expressive. At the receptive level it aids comprehension and means that the teacher can act as mediator of understanding and at the expressive level it helps one to convey one's knowledge and understanding (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004: 75; Nieman, 2006: 32). In the study, the implication of code switching where practised, e.g. by LIB-IS, was that the learners were able to achieve some measure of comprehension of the lesson content. Subsequently having to prepare for an assessment from English notes and textbooks without the help of code switching and independently having to make sense of assessment questions in English, again without the help of code switching, was a grim reminder of the fact that the AL as the LoLTA certainly does not go away. Moreover, achieving some understanding did not ensure any communicative competence at the expressive level. English was still the medium of expression of whatever had been learned. Code switching to convey understanding was not permitted – instead, learners frequently were stringently penalised for the slightest of errors. During the mediation, I was able to accommodate the participants in such a way through code switching that they could actually convey their knowledge and understanding. Indeed, code switching was used systematically in DF's private lessons while she put up a front of an English-only learner.

LIB-IS's use of code switching during the observed lesson was an indication that she understood that the learners in her class lacked proficiency in the LoLTA even at BICS level and wanted to maximise the learning experience by ensuring that comprehension of the lessons was achieved. The use of Yoruba and particularly code switching on the part of LIB-IS appeared to initiate and promote interaction. The impression I got was that she used code switching/mixing as an inclusive strategy to get the learners engaged in set activities. Each time she followed up her statements with a Yoruba translation the learners responded well and contributed to the discussion. This strategy was effective in the sense that the learners, at least, responded in the classroom. Yes, LIB-IS seemed to carry more learners along in this way and made her lessons more interactive, but that *per se* did not seem to translate into greater achievement for the learners. They all still perceived IS to be a most difficult subject and the mean performance scores of Class A and B remained exceedingly low. As argued above, the first, highly probable, contributing factor to these results is that assessments were conducted in the AL. The learners were not allowed to respond in L1 or make use of lexical items from their L1 in their responses, and even if they were allowed, some learners would still encounter problems as not all of them were literate enough in Yoruba to be able to write the language. Though the code switching seemed to aid their comprehension at the receptive level and the knowledge was then seemingly acquired, a major hurdle remained in having to prepare for assessments purely through the medium of the AL and then having to either depend on recall of information learned by rote, or translate all knowledge back to the AL when expressing themselves. Code switching certainly did not serve the needs of these AL learners at the expressive level. Unfortunately the NNPE does not address the use of code switching in teaching and learning so there seems to be no guidance on the subject.

The inadequacies of policy to address the existing language-in-education challenges, and the poor implementation of the existing policy, even at the primary school level, makes it difficult for schools to construct a uniform practice regarding language use. The policy of total immersion implemented in the MIB School was in line with the dictates of the NNPE, in the sense that the LoLT from the fourth year of primary school (Basic 4) is "progressively" English (NNPE, 2004: 11). For learners in Basic 8, English, French and the language of the environment are core subjects (NNPE, 2004: 14). The policy appears to have led to a practice of subtractive bilingualism (Baker & Hornberger, 2001: 39, 71 & 224; Nieman, 2006: 29) in the MIB School. Criticism of this form of bilingualism stems from its assimilationist stance, of attempting to replace the L1 and culture of the learners (Nieman, 2006: 29).

A further look at the NNPE language policy for pre-primary and primary schools suggests that a phased transition from the L1 to the AL is intended. The policy document states that the L1 be used in the early years, probably supposing that by the end of Basic 3, there would be a good enough grounding in the L1 to then change to the AL as the LoLT. In the LIB School, it has not worked out that way and the standard of the AL is appallingly low. The responsibility for this low standard cannot be placed solely on the LIB School but it could be argued that the primary schools as well as the community also played a role: the primary schools in the sense that they did not adequately prepare the learners for using an AL as the LoLT and, as mentioned above, the community because the low and varied usage of the AL does not provide an appropriate model or support for the learners. The LIB School witnessed mixed practice, as some teachers appeared not to believe in total immersion and engaged in code switching while others did not. In the MIB School, again, subtractive bilingualism seems to have become deeply entrenched and the L1 is devalued. By and large, a support system for language learning and phased transition is lacking in schools and there is no uniformity of practice in respect of the LoLT, making it seem as if a language policy is virtually non-existent. Adopting a policy of total language immersion in schools without a concomitant intensive AL development programme, in a country with a language composition such as that of Nigeria, appears unrealistic. This is particularly so, when one considers the communities with different accents and languages, and the difficulty of obtaining adequately trained teachers in the AL. The practise of total immersion did not appear to solve the problems of proficiency in the LoLTA in the MIB School. In fact, one of the participants (DF) owned up to receiving private lessons in her L1 and some ( AM, BF, CM) used direct translation from the L1 to English, suggesting the course of their mental processing of ideas was from L1 to the AL (Levin & Shohamy, 2008: 10; Nieman, 2006: 28-29 ).

The AL challenge is further compounded by the level of complexity and linguistic demand of some subjects over others. IS was deemed more difficult than BS by most participants (AF, AM, BF, BM, DF and DM) apparently due to poor knowledge of subject terminology. The IS terminology was complex and finding Yoruba words for scientific concepts was daunting – so much so, that AM and BM wanted to drop the subject and speculated as to its pointlessness in their daily existence. BS was obviously less complex for the majority of the participants and easier for the teachers to present. This was probably why LIB-IS felt a great need to engage in code switching and did so unapologetically.

The AL factor in the teaching and learning made it essentially difficult to ascertain whether errors were due to lack of subject knowledge, language deficiency or learning disability or maybe a combination of all three. This substantiates the suggestion that teachers in multilingual and multicultural classrooms face the task of distinguishing between language-related achievement issues and other obstructive factors, such as genuine learning disabilities (Camilleri & Law, 2007: 313; Frost, 2000: 133; Lidz & Macrine, 2001: 77; Pena & Gilman, 2000: 543 & 547). The findings suggest that having resources to make this distinction is crucial. There appeared to be no special education consultants or co-ordinators and educational psychologists leaving a gap in the system.

According to Baker (in Datta, 2000: 9), international research carried out in multilingual societies suggests that "when two or more languages and cultures are present across a curriculum, there is value added in attainment and standards in classrooms rise" and it is further argued that there are many advantages to children who become bilingual, and especially bi-literate. So, why do parents, learners and the members of society generally believe that the AL is superior and should be the one exclusively learned/acquired and maintained? The answer, I suppose, could be traceable to a dearth of enlightenment programmes on the importance of the L1 in teaching and learning.

*5.3.1.4 Participants' individual challenges in learning*

The findings suggest particular areas in which the participants experienced the greatest difficulties. For instance, the learners in the LIB School seemed to have greater challenges than those in the MIB School with all aspects of reading and this necessarily impacted their learning overall. Pretorius and Ribbens (2005: 144) found, in a study carried out with Grade 8 learners in a township school in South Africa, that a lack of basic reading skills indeed had direct implications for the learners' academic performances. Some of the challenges the LIB participants faced included vocalising as well as following the words with their fingers when reading (AF and AM). This style of reading should long have been outgrown by learners in Basic 8, and at this stage could indicate an extreme degree of reading difficulty at the decoding level, and consequently risk of losing track of the textual content due to overload of the short-term memory. AF and AM were the weakest readers among the participants. BF struggled with recognition of key words and BM's reading, though slightly more fluent than the others', still required a lot of practice as well. The participants' reading comprehension

was also far from adequate, questions had to be translated, terminology explained before they showed signs of understanding and in some instances (e.g. AF), even that was not sufficient to ensure full comprehension. By contrast, the MIB School participants, excepting CF, were able to read relatively well. CF repeated words and phrases, which made the text sound somewhat confusing. CM, in his bid to rush through the reading, often tripped on words and then started over. DF and DM required minimal assistance with their reading although they also required assistance with pronunciation.

In all respects, comprehension was a considerable challenge for some of the learners, corroborating the findings of Barry (2002:113-114), who maintained that the English L2 speakers did not have the level of proficiency required for comprehension, to make inferences and critically evaluate texts used in the study and had also found it difficult to complete sections where they were required to write their own responses to demonstrate comprehension. The learners in the LIB School required extensive explanation (most times in Yoruba) to grasp the essence of the assessment questions. They demonstrated a lack of comprehension of the conceptual aims of questions. AF, for instance, still found it tasking to understand the discursive conventions of assessment even after elaboration in both English and Yoruba, leading to suspicion that she might be cognitively challenged to some degree. AM and BF seemed to benefit from the explanation of questions in both Yoruba and English, but then displayed further difficulty in writing down their thoughts. CF might have been able to perform better on my mediation than she did, had she not been too embarrassed to communicate her lack of understanding, and had she accepted assistance in Yoruba. She was so set against using Yoruba to aid understanding, that she expressed a preference for subjects that did not require too much writing so that her present level of proficiency in English would suffice to take her through. CF was not alone in suggesting that immersion in the AL was probably the way forward to ensure that learners achieve. DF also believed this. She confided that she understood her studies better when given explanations in Yoruba during private tuition, but her desire to make her family proud and her belief that the solution to all her learning challenges was proficiency in the LoLTA, caused her never openly to use Yoruba.

At the expressive language level, virtually all the learners appeared to have difficulty coping with terminology and subject-specific key concepts, and more so for IS than for BS. This finding is not surprising considering the extent of difficulty generally associated with IS, and suggests that lacking equivalent words for translation into Yoruba increased the level of

complexity of the IS terminology from the point of view of the participants. CF and CM were the only two participants whose scores in IS were better than in BS. These two participants (from the same class) appeared to have serious issues with the teaching methodology and attitude of the BS-teacher, resulting in a serious lack of interest in the subject and probably having a direct impact on their motivation and performance.

There was evidence of rote learning on the part of participants from both schools (AM, CF and CM). The findings seem to corroborate those of other studies ((Banda, 2000: 51; Barry, 2002: 106; Howie, 2004: 157; Howie and Hughes 1998: 5,6,75 & 77; Prinsloo, 2005:37) suggesting that, due to the AL factor, the participants saw no other way to cope with the complex terminology than to memorise learning content even without real comprehension. As a result, they found it exceedingly difficult to formulate answers in their own words when questions required them to *explain, differentiate* and *describe*. The tendency to learn by rote could be linked to the AL factor and is a critical setback for education in developing countries since it could inhibit learners' ability to think independently and contribute to discussion and debate. Higher order thinking, application of knowledge, synthesis and evaluation become virtually impossible where basic comprehension has not been achieved. The ultimate product of rote learning, especially where AL is a factor, are learners that fail to develop to their full potential, and who simply regurgitate what they have memorised and might not be able to contribute meaningfully to issues that affect them.

The findings further imply that, for the participants, processing their thoughts and ideas seemed challenging in varying degrees. DF and DM appeared able to process their thoughts and ideas better than AM and BF, but for some, like AF, it seemed virtually impossible. All the participants appeared to process their thoughts in Yoruba and then attempt to translate them to English. Hence, they read the questions in English, translated to Yoruba to attempt comprehension, then processed and mentally formulated their answers in Yoruba and then translated their response to English. This process of translation is very delicate, and I believe compounds the problem when the learner's English lexicon is limited. From the findings, translating back and forth appeared directly related to the issue of vocabulary building and to participants' varying lack of adequate vocabulary, ranging from functional assessment terms at the receptive language level, to subject-specific terms which made it impossible for most (AF, AM, BF, BM and CF) to express themselves clearly and achieve clarity in their written work. The findings are supported by the report of Howie and Hughes (1998) on the

performance of South African students in the TIMSS project that also identified these crucial language-in-assessment issues and concluded that they probably had a negative impact on achievement. Similarly, Aigbomian (in Ogunleye, 1999:184) also found that learners in Nigeria did not have the required level of academic language to comprehend the Physics concepts to the extent where they would meaningfully apply such concepts. Interestingly, various studies suggest a decline in competence of Nigerian AL learners in the LoLTA (Maduekwe, 2001: 107-108). The findings of this study certainly confirm that the standard of English is poor not only with subject terminology at the CALP level but frequently even at BICS level. The situation appears to be dire and has shown that there is much more at stake than merely addressing the assessment dilemma, but nonetheless learners should not continue to be assessed in a language in which they lack proficiency.

*5.3.1.5 Influence of the school as context*

The influence of the schools as distinct contexts that influenced the results and findings concerning the participants is considered below in light of the LIB and MIB Schools. This consideration is to further inform the discussion and contemplate the full effect of context in the study. It must be reiterated that no comparison is intended to arrive at conclusions that can be generalised or deemed universal. The context of each school is unique and erodes the basis for direct comparison of scores, but looking at the particular context might help identify its underlying role in the results of the study.

As discussed earlier, the LIB School had little or no facilities and resources to facilitate meaningful learning. The unavailability of resources in effect implies that there would be some difficulty promoting the culture of reading without a functional library, or developing the learners' interest in IS without an adequate science laboratory or instructional materials, or giving assignments and class projects where even textbooks are not available to the participants (AF, AM, BF & BM). The teachers' morale cannot but appear low when there are no tools to work with. But even in all of this, the standard of the learners, who are also a product of the immediate environment, and have passed on from primary schools within this social context, has to be taken into consideration. The immediate environment is one in which low socio-economic conditions prevail and these variables seem to have had an impact on the participants' (in)ability to achieve academically.

The LIB School community was one where the language within the community was largely Yoruba, Pidgin and the local variety of English, by far not the standard of language required to attain competence in the LoLTA at CALP level. It appeared also that the majority of the parents of the learners would not have had formal education, so even the basic background knowledge of the LoLT would have been poor. Lack of proficiency in the LoLTA translates to difficulty in the classroom. The participants in the study did not have the required proficiency even at the receptive level of BICS to cope with their studies. The gap between the level of the AL used in the teaching and the learning is highlighted by the fact that all the participants in the LIB School commented on their need for focused additional support for AL learning and/or learning in the AL. In the subject areas observed (BS & IS), the teachers appeared to have different language strategies. LIB-BS taught the BS lesson in the LoLT, seemingly in compliance with the language policy, while LIB-IS engaged in extensive code switching, seemingly to cater for the needs of the learners. The results suggest that both strategies were ineffective.

The MIB School was better placed and did have some facilities and resources. Some of the learners came from homes where the parents were apparently educated and in a position to assist them with homework and assignments, or could afford to pay for the services of a private tutor (e.g. DF). In the data there was no mention of adequate support from the school and teachers either, and the participants (CM, DF, DM) still expressed their need for support from other sources. The teachers observed gave their lessons in English, following the policy of the school that appeared to be total immersion in the AL and in the process promoting subtractive bilingualism. There appeared to be an objective to purge the learners of their L1, but this did not seem particularly helpful. The trend of downplaying the L1 probably started from the primary schools (Ohiri-Aniche, 2004: 4-6) and contributed to further underdevelopment of the L1, to the detriment of some of the participants (e.g. CF).

Some of the participants in the LIB School (AF and BM) were not proficient users even of Yoruba. In addition to possible reasons, such as an inadequate culture of literacy in the home, parents not aiding its acquisition and society devaluing it, or cognitive challenge, lack of proficiency in the L1 may also (as by CF in the MIB School) be occasioned by consciously dissociating oneself from one's L1. CF's attitude seems a reflection of the attitude of some educators and members of the larger society who embrace subtractive bilingualism (Ada, 1991: 448; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 18 & 33). Besides having implications for the

individual's sense of identity, subtractive bilingualism is also an indication of the lack of parents' awareness of the importance of L1 proficiency in AL acquisition. The concepts and skills that have been acquired in the L1 can be transferred to facilitate further learning in the AL, which thus implies that learners need to be cognitively equipped in their L1 (Datta, 2000:25; Levin & Shohamy, 2008: 10; Nieman, 2006: 28-29). Indeed, the findings suggest this to be true. Participants from both schools who were proficient in their L1 and embraced its use, although not always openly (AM, BF, DF and DM) and not always in the classroom, appeared able to benefit more from mediation and code switching.

On the whole, learning cannot be expected to take place adequately where the learners are not proficient in the LoLT. What we are sure to expect instead, is limited achievement. This is in line with the findings of previous research (Howie, 2004: 157; Theron & Nel, 2005:224 & 226). Observing the lessons and the interactions between the learners and their teachers provided possible explanations for some of the findings. It was clear from the observation of the LIB-BS lesson that the learners were not interacting freely because the lesson was conducted solely in the LoLTA and they failed to respond adequately. Meanwhile, LIB-IS' lesson was much more lively, probably because the learners were allowed to respond in their L1. The MIB School had both lessons conducted in the LoLTA, but only a fraction of the learners in the large classes actively participated during the lessons. The lesson observations in both schools gave me an insight into what could be expected from the assessment, but did not prepare me for the extent of the initial poor performance particularly in the LIB School and in IS. However, as in the negative, the participants' individual learning potential and the availability (or not) of learning materials, resources and facilities provided by both schools cannot be ruled out as contributors to the extent of success of the DA attained with each of them.

## 5.3.2    The application of dynamic assessment

### 5.3.2.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, educational assessment over the years has evolved from learner centred assessment of the learner, to assessment of learning and more recently assessment for the purpose of learning (Ellery & Sutherland, 2004:100; Estrin, 2000: 228-229; Grosser & Lombard, 2005: 44; James, 2008; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122-125). This shift is due to the realisation that assessment is pointless if it does not inform the decisions being made about

teaching, learning and learner needs. The shift in the view of assessment is of importance to the study, as it substantiates the necessity for a review of assessment practices with AL learners along the line of the new orientation. Van Aswegen and Dreyer (2005: 27) state that the fundamental role of assessment is to provide a "complementary methodology for monitoring, confirming and improving student learning". In formal education, learners now play a more active role and there is an "integration of instruction and assessment" (Van Aswegen & Dreyer 2005: 28). With the DA procedure used in this study, I tried to incorporate an understanding of the challenges faced during assessment by the participants as AL learners. The ultimate aim was the real adaptation of teaching by understanding those challenges as demonstrated in the mediational assessment process. Curriculum-based Dynamic Assessment (CDA) was used. According to Lidz (2002:73), CDA attempts to bridge assessment with intervention and its results inform instruction since the content of the mediation is the actual curriculum content. As becomes apparent in the following sections, its focus on determining the prerequisite knowledge base and facilitating metacognition was possibly influential in expanding the mediator's understanding of the participants' performance as well as in supporting the participants' progress. CDA mediation results spontaneously in response to the needs of the learner and there is no predetermined structure (Lidz, 2002:74; Murphy, 2002:34), hence in this study the structure for each participant was determined by his/her individual needs. I addressed the actual curriculum content presented in the LIB and MIB School at the time, focusing on the assessment materials and assessment process. The CDA could not go further and inform instruction, since being allowed to conduct research in the schools hardly gave me the authority to require that they change their instructional methods. In this section, I will endeavour to answer the first sub-question: How does DA influence the assessment and performance of AL learners? A linear perspective will be exercised, splitting the question to first look at the influence of DA on the process of the assessments and then consider the influence on the participants' academic performance.

*5.3.2.2 The influence of dynamic assessment on the assessment process with AL learners*
The mediational process focused largely on the participants' access to the assessment questions by mediating more in terms of language than content (Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001: 126). Particularly with the LIB School, mediation by and large took the form of reading support. Decoding and comprehension of the assessment materials became the focus of most sessions, when, due to the extent of the AL barrier, graduated prompting in respect of

conceptual processing was rendered somewhat ineffective. The severity of the AL challenges (especially with AF, AM, BF, BM, CF) often meant that processing the subject content itself was secondary to coping with basic communication in the LoLTA. Jitendra and Rohena –Diaz (1996: 12-14) reported similarly in their review of bilingual and special education issues in relation to language assessment of linguistically diverse students. In their case study, CDA of a language procedure was employed to assess the learning capabilities of a learner (Jose) and provide guidance for further instructional planning. The DA revealed Jose's need for continued instruction in English Language development with a focus on vocabulary. Samuels (2000:540) also showed that the use of CDA holds promise as the intervention yields useful information with the identification of language difficulties and the use of intervention strategies. The needs in the MIB School were slightly different in that the majority of the participants could at least read and understand generally what the questions required of them. So, support of metacognition to ensure focused comprehension of the questions and direction for the processing to arrive at appropriate responses here became features of the DA mediation.

The findings from the debriefing and mediation shed valuable light on the nature of the challenges in assessment that each participant had individually. Jitendra and Rohena–Diaz (1998: 182-185) report a similar finding in their description of a case study (with Rafael) of a curriculum-based language assessment process, where the results indicated that he should continue to receive instruction in both Spanish and English language development, particularly in vocabulary. Thus it is again confirmed that rich data are an attribute of DA, giving insight into the nature of the barriers and challenges encountered by participants and their ability to self-regulate (Deutsch & Reynolds: 2000; Lidz, 1987 & 1991; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001; Pena, Iglesias & Lidz, 2001). The predominant challenges to each of the participants were the following: From the LIB School, AF could neither decode nor comprehend fully text written in the LoLTA, even with translation. AM and BF when reading had to follow text with their fingers, sometimes vocalised while they were reading and had challenges in expressing their ideas. BM had limited vocabulary, faulty pronunciation and poor grammar. Of the MIB School participants, CF was a poor reader in respect of both fluency and comprehension. CM had poor language skills and trouble with pronunciation and was sometimes careless with his work. DF had difficulty with grammar and sometimes with construction of her ideas and DM had poor vocabulary.

The mediation consequently took the form of collaborative effort to decode the questions and/or establish understanding, thereby exercising a most decisive influence on access to the particular assessment and also some actualisation of metacognition which could hopefully transfer to subsequent assessment situations. Some participants (AM, BF, CF and CM) were primarily guided to read the questions more fluently, without repetitions. The reading mediation therefore frequently required intensive intervention, indicating the need for longer-term mediation through DA for these participants, before one would be able to claim more than temporary influence on their assessment, i.e. as to a stable and constructive effect. The mediation further dealt with making sense of the questions. Functional assessment terms were explored (AF, AM, BF and CF), often using code switching and code mixing, and questions were also often translated to Yoruba to clarify conceptual difficulties (AF, AM and BF). The extent of both these measures depended largely on the capabilities of the individual participants, which varied. Though code switching was used with CF, it was not at her insistence but just so I could ensure that there was full comprehension on her part. It was however not clear whether or not my code switching had any effect since CF consistently responded in English.

In the case of the LIB School participants, code switching proved essential to achieve comprehension of the questions. So, again, the influence of DA on the assessment of these participants was temporary. This finding highlights the vital importance of addressing the linguistic challenges in assessment in a sustainable and constant manner. Once comprehension was established in Yoruba, the focus of the mediation could shift to the appropriate expression of ideas in Yoruba and ultimately to translation of the constructed responses to English. This strategy of two-way translation (English → Yoruba; Yoruba → English) proved helpful with AM, BF and BM. They now seemed aware of the assessment requirements, and hereafter gave better oral responses to the questions in Yoruba. In cases where questions had been left blank, participants now responded to a level that would have earned them some marks, also corroborating the findings of Robinson-Zanartu and Aganza (2000: 463-467) in which their participant's language skills showed improvement with the use of DA, moving from BICS level with a difficulty understanding concepts and instructions at the required pace, to attaining language skills that had moved up to the CALP level. The L1 mediation and two-way translation process did not, however, remove the challenges of using appropriate vocabulary/terminology in the written expression of ideas in their assessment responses, as will be contemplated in the following section.

The focus of the DA and mediational practices in the MIB School was different from the LIB School. The language practices of the schools varied and the contexts also differed as discussed earlier, particularly in terms of the level of ability of the participants, hence their needs were different. With the MIB School participants, direct mediation generally addressed more than processing of the assessment questions at the receptive level of fluent recognition and comprehension, and it primarily offered support in respect of pronunciation and negotiating meaning at the interface between receptive and expressive language proficiency, the latter involving much attention to metacognitive functioning. The participants subsequently attempted better construction of ideas and clarification of the meaning of their statements that had previously been rendered confusing due to direct translation from Yoruba and/or poor vocabulary. DA provided CF and CM with the required assistance with subject-specific terminology, DM with distinguishing between various functional assessment words, to give the appropriate response, and DF with the individualised support she required through interaction.

In addition to the focused, direct mediation during post-assessment sessions discussed above, I also endeavoured to extend the mediation in three ways to a more distanced, indirect level during each subsequent CA or examination: linguistically simplified (i.e. mediationally adapted) questions devised in accordance with the suggestions of the participants during the debriefing sessions, a glossary and a spelling list. The participants unanimously agreed that the adapted questions made the assessments more comprehensible. This was indeed reflected in the observed behaviour of AM and BF, whose initial, visible frustration and anger due to a lack of comprehension of the questions, was replaced by behaviours suggesting deep thought, as they appeared enabled to shift focus to the response task at hand and thus to contemplating appropriate responses. AM, CM and DF showed some improvement in their comprehension of the questions while CF put in more visible effort in writing her responses.

The glossary was utilised by all the participants to clarify their understanding of some of the terms used in the questions. Some of the participants (AM and BF) from the LIB School used the glossary more than the others (AF and BM). All the participants in the MIB School used the glossary frequently in spite of the fact they were consistently exposed to AL at the CALP level during their lessons. One probable reason for some participants not using the glossary as much as others, as suggested by AF, might be due to poor reading skills and the inability to

cope with the increased volume of text to be read. AF opined that she was excited about the glossary and looked at it first even before reading the questions, but her use of the glossary was limited because she had poor reading skills and was frustrated by the additional reading required. Another reason for the varying degree of utilisation of the glossary might be the time factor, as indicated by BF. Despite using the glossary frequently, BF pointed out that since no extra time was awarded for the additional reading required, this could be a hindrance to the use of the glossary. Her opinion was that being pressed for time could cause the glossary to be completely ignored. It appeared that the participants used the glossary for both BS and IS. DF and DM indicated that they used the glossary more once they were familiar with it. The participants seemed to recognise the value of the explanatory information in the glossary and appreciated it. The more able participants, such as DF and DM, utilised the glossary as a form of lexical self-checking, demonstrating the extent of the impact their limited proficiency in the AL had on assessment and the participants' need for any form of assistance to aid their comprehension of the assessment question. It also further demonstrated the gap in the learning of AL learners that became apparent throughout the study and the need to bridge that gap to achieve optimum performance in their assessment.

The spelling list was also used frequently by some participants (AM and BM) and only occasionally by others (AF and CM). The spelling list was apparently used more in respect of IS than BS, because more words from the IS-list than from the BS-list appeared in the answer scripts and the words appearing on the IS-list were mostly spelled correctly in the scripts. AF ignored the spelling list because, according to her, many of the words on the list were not familiar to her, further emphasising how it appeared essential that there should be some degree of proficiency in the AL for the successful application of DA measures, even in the indirect form, and before any real effect can be anticipated. CM was the only participant who requested that the meaning of the words on the spelling list should be added. Interestingly, he explained that it would further aid comprehension, making it a possible reflection of the extent of the lexical support he believed he required. In CA3-IS and CA3-BS, BM and CF used words they had not been able to spell during an earlier assessment, correctly from the list. Overall, the more able learners seemed to value the spelling list more than those who performed less well, as it was deemed too long and the terms too complex by the lower achieving learners in the LIB School. The fear that participants might use the spelling list as a source of leads to enhance their recall, thus giving them an unfair advantage above the rest of

the class, did not seem to materialise, since they were contending with far more extensive language barriers, so that some (AF, AM and BF) could hardly decode the words.

The way it evolved that DA needed to be conducted in this study, revealed the relevance of using L1 in mediation with AL learners at various levels and also in both direct (individual) and indirect (group) contexts. It is especially relevant that mediation of assessment, i.e. mediation with a different focus than that customarily undertaken in the frame of DA, seems to have had positive effects as reported in this section. As indicated (p. 225), it also revealed that the areas of the participants' individual needs were in accordance with findings in other studies, such as a need for further instruction in both L1 and AL, a need for AL development and a focus on vocabulary and a need for mediated exposure to reading development with a focus on personally and culturally meaningful contexts. Some of the participants' needs were mediated successfully in DA, (e.g. decoding functional assessment terms, comprehension of questions and some pronunciations), while others, such as development of vocabulary at the expressive level of CALP, will require sustained intervention over a far longer period. In mediating the decoding and comprehension skills of reading, DA in this study could overall be said to have paved the process of assessment at the receptive language level. In confirmation, it should be noted that one outcome of the DA experience for the participants was that they all realised – and stated with some emphasis – that the linguistic complexity in the assessment questions needed to be addressed to facilitate their comprehension, and that they required across-board language intervention and support particularly for vocabulary building, general language proficiency improvement and also some measure of accommodation of the AL factor in the scoring of their assessments.

DA then appears overall to have had a positive influence on the assessment process for the participants: directly, by aiding the reading and comprehension of questions, and guiding appropriate oral responses; and indirectly, by mediating comprehension of the questions during actual assessment by presenting linguistically simplified questions and providing the glossary and spelling list. The use of the glossary seemed especially to empower the participants to exercise a degree of self-regulation in respect of comprehension of the assessment questions, suggesting that even indirect, non-individualised mediation in DA could have a positive influence in the assessment of AL learners generally.

The influence of DA in respect of the participants' responses to the assessment questions was less supportive and this would necessarily show an impact on their performance generally, to be discussed in the following section. In the view of the participants, DA merely at the receptive level of assessment, i.e. merely of understanding the questions, was not sufficient to address the challenges they faced in assessment. They asked most urgently for assistance also with expressing themselves in assessments. Some of the participants (e.g. CM) were actually of the opinion that oral assessment practices would have a positive effect on their performance scores, explaining that they would be able to relay their responses to the teacher without being penalised for incorrect grammar and spelling in their written language.

*5.3.2.3 Influence of dynamic assessment on the performance of AL learners*

All the participants welcomed the interaction of the research and my genuine desire to understand the AL challenges they faced. They seemed exhilarated that their opinion mattered in any way, and indeed they all (even the extremely challenged AF), believed that the DA process aided their understanding of the questions. As discussed in 4.5.6, the baseline performance scores of the participants in the LIB School were very low, but they showed improvement generally in terms of the range of the scores per cycle as well as some decrease in variance among the participants. AF did record progress relative to her baseline performance in both subjects, but only to the limited extent of her suspectedly limited cognitive potential and/or sorely constrained AL proficiency. BM also showed gains in both BS and IS within a limited range, probably because he as a strong performer and highly motivated learner might already have been functioning close to his full potential. AM and BF appeared to actualise a considerable measure of latent learning potential due to DA. In BS, AM and BF attained the pass requirement (50%) in the examination and surpassed the mean scores of Class A and B. Time must tell whether theirs will be a lasting improvement, or whether DA has to be used consistently over a longer period for long-term gains. With IS, none of the participants attained a pass mark and the profiles did not show the consistent improvement per CA noted for BS (probably due to a contextual factor around CA3-IS), but they all did manage some measure of improvement overall. BF's improvement in IS was especially noteworthy, since he started with a baseline performance of 0% (compared to the mean score of Class A and B, 18%) and managed to surpass the mean score for Class A and B by a fair margin in the examination (30% : 22.5%). From the performance data, more fully discussed in 4.5.6, it can be concluded that, in the LIB School, so sorely challenged in many respects, the effect of DA on the participants' performance scores was generally positive,

though obviously also influenced by individual factors. But their performance was also enhanced in other ways. AM, BF and BM sought individualised support from me and expressed a strong desire to improve, demonstrating the benefits of the DA interaction on metacognition and motivation, and the key role guidance plays in learning.

The range of the participants' scores and the mean scores for the Class C and D in the MIB School were relatively high in comparison with the LIB School and this could be related to their access to better facilities, resources and possibly home support. In the MIB School also, not all the participants benefitted on the same level and in the same way (see 4.6.6 for the detailed discussion). CF and CM's performance scores in BS actually weakened relative to the mean performance scores of Class C and D, and both failed to score pass marks in the examination. Contrary to the expectation that participants would perform better in BS than in the terminologically more complex IS, as indeed found in the LIB School, CF's performance relative to the mean performance score of Class C and D improved considerably in IS, and CM's remained stable. CM by far surpassed the mean performance of Classes C and D in IS all through the CAs and the examination, suggesting strong cognitive ability already well actualised, concurrent with limited benefit from DA, as also demonstrated in the stable profile of BM in the LIB School. The fact that both CF and CM performed better in IS and the negative trend in the BS scores of Class C overall, might be related to CF and CM's allegations about their teacher's inappropriate teaching methods, thus implying that mediation *per se* cannot guarantee improved performance in the face of adverse contextual factors. DF and DM's BS-scores were not only better than those of CF and CM in all the CAs and the examination, but also showed improvement relative to the mean performance score of Class C and D (see 4.6.6). DF never failed any of the assessments in BS or IS, and starting from a baseline score of 50% which was well above the mean performance score of Class C and D in both subjects, she showed strong improvement demonstrating good learning potential. It would seem that her private tuition (which indeed focused specifically on linguistic mediation) had possibly contributed to her relatively strong scores in CA1-BS as well as CA1-IS, but her further progress in both subjects (even granted their different levels of linguistic complexity) would seem to have articulated with the DA, suggesting that DA still had a particular role to play in the assessment of this privileged AL learner, and that negating her L1 as totally as she was trying to do, was not proving to be the solution to her AL challenges. DM initially seemed to be an average performer, in both BS and IS attaining a baseline score of 40%, which was within immediate range of the mean performance scores of

Class C and D (BS 39.5%, IS 38%).With DA, however, DM immediately took off with leaps and bounds, demonstrating really strong untapped learning potential. In virtually all the assessments, he showed the most improvement of all the research participants in comparison with the mean performance score of the relevant group (CA2-BS +14%, CA3-BS +15%, Ex-BS +10%, CA2-IS +8%, CA3-IS +20%, and Ex-IS +15%). DM's results thus appear to show how consistently and strongly DA could actually contribute to the improved performance of an AL learner with good potential.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that DA appears to have had a generally positive influence on the participants' performance in assessment, although to various degrees, and that contextual factors as well as individual learning potential played an important part in the variance. The results are an indication that latent learning potential possibly impacted the participants' capacity to respond positively to the DA used. Once the nature of the participants' AL challenges was identified and scaffolding provided, individually appropriate DA measures seemed to enable the participants' true ability to manifest in different degrees, for them to perform closer to their full potential even in the face of the AL factor. The positive results yielded in both schools are in line with the findings in other research (Chan *et al.*, 2000:608; Jitendra and Rohena –Diaz, 1996: 12-14; Jitendra and Rohena–Diaz, 1998: 182-185; Pena & Quinn, 1992: 271-277; Robinson-Zanartu and Aganza, 2000: 463-467; Samuels, 2000:525; Tzuriel, 2000: 177). The variability in the participants' performance would seem to support a finding by Kozulin and Garb (2002: 113-121), that EFL students with similar baseline scores performed differently on their post-test scores, in that learning remains a highly unique process and the individual factor may never be ignored. The failing mean performance scores for Class A and B for all the assessments suggest that by far the most of the learners in Basic 8 of this LIB School were contending with severe barriers to learning, one of which may certainly be using an AL as the LoLTA. Hence the participants' seemingly limited level of improvement within this context cannot be viewed in isolation. That they could record any improvement at all under the circumstances, was noteworthy. However, they seemed to require mediation sustained over a longer period, which would hopefully have resulted in even better achievement. In the MIB School, more resources and support were available to the participants, and the improvement in their performance is encouraging. In considering these possible conclusions regarding the influence of DA on the assessment performance of the participants, one may not ignore the possibility that the improvements recorded came about through the additional contribution of a combination of

many variables occurring in the interactions during the sessions of debriefing and mediation, besides the linguistically simplified questions, glossary and spelling list. The debriefing especially gave the participants' the opportunity to reveal their disposition to assessment and possibly express their challenges and frustrations, which in itself could have contributed to a Hawthorne effect. The opportunity created by the debriefing to deal with their emotions regarding assessment (albeit superficially), was important as affect cannot be ruled out as a contributing factor to learners' performance.

### 5.3.3 Affective variables

*5.3.3.1 Introduction*

Research has shown that it is not only learners' cognitive capabilities that determine achievement but that attitude towards the subject, among others, also impact performance either positively and negatively (Obe & Nna, 2004: 24). Cognitive and affective behaviours complement each other and emotions are integral to the formation of perceptions and attitudes. According to Bolarin (1996: 143), dislike of a subject or assessment can lead to tension, stress, confusion and loss of motivation, which in turn could even lead to truancy and dropping out of school. Motivation has been described as a key for the development of language proficiency at the level of CALP (Nieman, 2006: 34; Opara, 2004: 83-86) and by implication for achievement generally. A positive attitude could lead to a greater desire to learn and could thus translate to putting in more effort. Affect played a role in the study, as demonstrated by the results and findings. The role of affect is corroborated by Lidz (2002: 74-75), who reports the successful application of CDA with a 13-year old girl referred for poor academic performance and high anxiety within the teaching situation. Nieman and Pienaar (2006: 95), citing Sullivan and also Rice, state that "anxiety leads to ineffective communication and ineffective communication leads to anxiety" and that research has shown customary examinations to top the list of sources of anxiety among adolescents in Britain. This section highlights the role of affect in assessment and performance and attempts to answer the sub-questions: How does the use of static forms of assessment affect the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their own performance? and, How does the use of DA affect the attitude of AL learners towards assessment and their own performance?

*5.3.3.2 Attitudes of the participants to static assessment*

The participants appeared to have different attitudes toward assessment, but one underlining finding is that all, except perhaps DF, apparently experienced great discomfort being

assessed. Some academics are of the opinion that the level of discomfort, anxiety and stress caused by conventional assessment led to the introduction of continuous assessment systems in schools but that learners still react with different levels of stress (Israel, 2006: 1420; Obe, 1980: 10-13; Okoli, 2000: 8). Recognising the existence of individual considerations, the virtually overwhelming frustrations associated with the use of an AL in assessment were clearly in evidence as a contributor to their attitude. DF seemed to be the only participant who had a fairly positive attitude towards assessment. This might be explained from the fact that she was an able performer, the only participant whose baseline score was a pass mark in both subjects, and well above the mean performance scores of the group (+10.5% in BS and +12% in IS). She had sound communicative competence in the LoLTA (even though she had a private tutor and covertly utilised the L1 as a resource for comprehension). The extra assistance she got from home and her parents' focus on her AL proficiency possibly also contributed to a strong sense of motivation and some confidence, leaving her better prepared for assessment than her classmates.

The findings suggest that most of the participants viewed assessment in its conventional (static) form as a source of severe stress, largely due to their sense of helplessness during assessment and the hopelessness of anticipated failure. AF, for instance, wanted to be liberated totally from assessment and initially seemed fatalistic about the perceived 'fact' that she was unable to make any progress within the school system, particularly in IS, in one instance saying, "Mi o mo nkan ti mo ma ko mo. Mi o le se awon toku[155]", (DMS-AF/CA1-IS, 16), with complete surrender to her situation. The prospect of continually failing in her assessments appeared to depress her, and she remained both clueless and apathetic as to any measures that could facilitate her improvement. BM, on the other hand, a strong performer and a highly motivated learner, actually resented being subjected to assessment because he viewed the result as becoming the evidence of his limited ability. The visible signs of effort and tension displayed by some of the other participants (e.g. AM, BF) appeared related to their difficulties in overcoming the challenges (including the ripple effects of the AL factor) which faced them during assessments. According to Bolarin (1996: 143), the effort and tension experienced in assessment could lead to desperation and antisocial behaviours such as displayed by AM and CF who displayed the (ineffectual) coping strategies of denial and avoidance behaviour and AF who appeared to consider dropping out of school.

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[155] *I didn't know what else to write. I couldn't do the others.*

The nature of the assessments as administered in the two schools (a severely static, problem-focused form of assessment) also appears to have contributed to a lack of self-confidence and negative expectations, which were frequently mutually reinforcing (AM, BF, BM, DF), downright fear of judgmental criticism by teachers and peers (AF), feeling hunted by the 'fact' that teachers marked negatively, reacting to even slight errors and a resentful perception that teachers deliberately made assessments difficult (BF, BM), conflicting emotions in trying for the best possible product and avoiding the threats of error (AM), and a sense of anguish stemming from the conviction that he knew the answer, yet would be marked down for mistakes made in the process of writing it (BM).

The outcome of the problematic experiences, perceptions and feelings noted above appeared to be an outright dislike of the assessment practices occurring in the two schools. A comment by BF was, "Mi o mo nkan ti won fe ki a ko. Won mo o mo nje ki o le ni. Mi kin fe se awon test yen tori mi ni pass."[156] Another comment made by BM was, "Mo ma nsi awon nkan ti mo ba fe so ko nigba mi, ode ma nwa dun mi ti mo ba a si because I know it.[157] (DMS-BM/CA1-IS, 7-9). These reactions stand contrary to the whole aim of assessment as being for the purpose of learning which, as previously discussed, refers to assessment feeding back into teaching and learning in the classroom and thus being viewed as an intrinsic part of the learning process itself (Bouwer, 2005: 47; Ellery & Sutherland, 2004:99-100; Estrin, 2000: 229). By contrast, a subtle but devastating consequence of static assessment noted by participants concerns the lack of aftercare upon assessment, giving rise to a lack of trust and expectation in the school (CF, CM, and DM). They maintained that feedback and correction to assessment tasks were not properly conducted and amounted to inadequate guidance and possible set-up for future failure. Explaining how MIB-BS usually goes about doing correction in class, CF said "Uhmmm the people (learners) that know it they just say the right answer. But I don't know why is the right answer. Then we have to write another notes and teacher say we should ask those that know the answer later" (DMS-CF/CA2-IS, 47). A relationship between static assessment and teaching style would actually seem implied in the complaint. The problem escalated to the point that CF and CM appeared to need some

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[156] *I didn't know what the teacher was asking. They (teachers) intentionally made it difficult. I don't like doing the tests because I know I won't pass.*

[157] *I sometimes make mistakes while writing those things I want to say, and it hurts my feelings when I now get it wrong because I know the answer.*

guidance and possibly counselling regarding their negative attitude towards MIB-BS' teaching practices and BS, and the effect this attitude might be having on their performance.

The participants of the LIB School especially appeared to have low self-esteem and demonstrated helpless frustration at the overwhelming assessment situation. An example is BM's comment: "Excuse, Ma. Gbogbo nkan ni won ma n mark wrong. Nkan kekere ti eyan ba ti si ko abi ti o spell da da won ma wrong e ni. Ko da at all[158] (DMS-BM/CA3-IS, 75). Participants were afraid of the embarrassment that seemed to be a common consequence of incorrect responses to assessment questions. There seemed to be a sensitivity to negative comments (CM, DF) as demonstrated by the emotional distress experienced by being called names such as "olofo" (fool). All these seemed to translate into participants being fidgety, nervous, confused and sometimes angry during their assessments.

In summary, the participants demonstrated a negative attitude and outright dislike regarding their customary school assessments. This negativity and the contemplation of failure appeared to be a source of de-motivation, also causing intense anxiety and stress that were visible during assessment in the form of numerous behaviours. For participants such as AF who appeared to have resigned herself to careless indignation, it was only a matter of time, in my opinion, before she resorted to truancy and eventually dropped out of school completely, thereby corroborating Bolarin's (1996: 143) findings regarding the challenges in the Nigerian educational system. The negative attitudes of the participants regarding their experiences of assessment certainly appear to have adversely impacted their performance, substantiating the findings of Obe and Nna (2004: 24) that attitudes can affect performance both positively and negatively. A solution would be for the participants (and AL learners generally) to see assessment as an avenue through which further learning could be actualised and not as a punitive venture tailored to ridicule and embarrass them. Assessment should be an encouraging and motivating factor in learning and learners ought to be able to rest assured that the outcomes of assessment would be a true reflection of their knowledge and ability and would effectively lead to support in addressing the particular challenges to their learning.

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[158] *They (teachers) mark everything wrong. Every little error or small spelling mistake they'll mark wrong. It isn't nice at all.*

*5.3.3.3 Attitudes of the participants to dynamic assessment*

The debriefing and DA mediation created an avenue for the participants to express their feelings in respect of the subjects they were taking, the ways in which they were taught, the attitudes of the teachers and their perceptions of their challenges in assessment. With the opportunity for freedom of expression of thoughts came renewed self-confidence and enthusiasm for their work and the study. There was a display of genuine desire to improve their language and assessment situation. For instance, BF and CM wanted to open up discussions about every aspect of their school-life and had to be guided back to the project, creating the impression of a vacuum that needed to be filled. AM showed a desire to excel and a willingness to work harder even at home. This improved work ethic appeared to have been stimulated by the mediation. The immediate effect of the intervention, shown in AM's dramatic improvement in both subjects during CA2, is an indication of a bidirectional, mutually reinforcing influence: on the one hand, a reaction against the strong emotional impact of the linguistic barriers to his learning and on the other, a response to the experience of 'support'. AF on her part, as the mediation progressed, demonstrated visible effort to answer some of the questions and improve her reading. The participants seemed more confident to speak and take chances about their ideas. They seemed to feel they had no voice and were happy to find that their opinion was being sought on assessment issues concerning them and that mediational action was actually being taken to address their specific needs. This experience, together with their improved performance in subsequent assessments, ultimately appeared to boost their self-esteem, corroborating the work of Deutsch and Reynolds (2000: 323) who found that DA had a positive effect on learners in that it enhanced their self-esteem.

The use of DA in this study certainly appeared to reduce anxiety during assessment (e.g. BF, AM). A major contributing factor in both schools was seemingly the mediation itself, which fulfilled the need for individual guidance. AM, BM, CM and DM gradually became more at ease and better able to participate during the DA debriefing and mediation and AF lost some of her reticence. The participants, particularly AM, BF, CM, DF and DM, appeared to really appreciate the opportunity to explore a different form of assessment. They seemed to value the time spent on the assessment and some (BF) became so enthused that they suggested that other members of their class should also be incorporated in the study. DA seemed to effectively provide feedback to the participants and improved their attitude towards assessment. AM, BF and BM displayed a desire to improve their scores and appeared to be putting in more effort.

Overall, the participants appeared better motivated by the use of DA. This positive change in attitude could be associated with (or mutually reinforced by) both a greater sense of security during assessment and the sense of achievement derived from improved performance (e.g. BF and DM). Another possible contributor to the positive change in attitude was that they could make suggestions about ways in which the AL challenge could be mitigated. CF, however, just wanted to be assisted and treated properly. The participants' increased level of motivation was also reflected in their efforts to give lengthier responses and their steadily improving performance profiles (AM, BF, BM, CF, CM and DF). The improved performance could be explained partly in terms of a high degree of motivation during the preparation for assessment which, among others, also articulates with an increased sense of control during the actual assessment.

There appears to be some agreement among academics that affect (including motivation, anxiety, depression, stress, self-esteem) affects school work in terms of behaviour, learning and performance in assessment tasks (Deutsch and Reynolds (2000: 323; Nieman & Pienaar, 2006: 95-96; Obe and Nna, 2004: 24). The findings of this study have shown that DA appears to reduce the stress levels associated with regular assessment within mainstream education because of the feedback from DA that is tailored towards further learning and associated with the desire to establish without bias the true level of ability of the learner. Fraser (2006: 19) opines that all educators should be mediators of learning within the classroom, suggesting that educators should motivate learners through mediation of learning and the creation of a conducive environment in which communication, high levels of interest and positive feedback (from assessments) are actively engaged. The outcomes of this study are surely in agreement with this opinion and show that DA can go a long way in providing the learning support that is required to achieve a change in AL learners' attitude towards assessment. A Hawthorne effect cannot, however, be ruled out, especially where participants (e.g. AM and CM) improved dramatically in CA2 and then dropped back again.

### 5.3.4 Dynamic assessment: the way forward

*5.3.4.1 Synoptic overview*

As discussed in the sections above, DA as conducted in this study allowed interaction and opened avenues to the participants individually for a mediated solution finding process. It gave all the participants the opportunity to recognise and express, from their personal perspective, particular language barriers caused by lack of proficiency in the LoLTA and it enabled them to consider and test options to address their dilemma. More importantly, DA had a generally positive influence on the participants' performance scores and revealed that some of the participants appeared to have considerable reserves of untapped learning potential (AM, BF and DM), whilst even the weakest of learners academically (AF) recorded some, even if limited, improvement. The outcomes of the study suggest that, with more interaction time per session and administered over a longer period, the effects of DA on the performance of AL learners could be maximised. Secondly, and of relevance to the very tenets of DA, the outcomes suggest that DA results could be a more valid, true, reflection of the academic performance of AL learners.

In mediating linguistic assessment skills in the study, DA highlighted the nature and extent of the AL obstacles to successful performance in assessment and exposed these to be almost overwhelming in some instances (AF, AM and BF). In confirmation of the principle of assessment for learning, the results unequivocally point to the need for radically improved AL education in Nigerian schools, although factors such as the language culture of the immediate community, the SES of the particular learner, interference of the L1 in the AL and the school environment cannot be ruled out as contributing to the inadequate development of AL proficiency at CALP level among learners in Grade 8. Therefore, there are still unanswered questions in terms of what the findings would be if the contexts were controlled.

The DA procedures followed in the study contributed to reveal some of the stress, anxiety, helplessness, frustrations and even anger experienced by the participants during their regular assessments. The mediation showed that assessment is not necessarily an attempt to highlight the participants' failures and inadequacy, but could attempt to identify the areas within which they required mediation and effective manners in which that mediation could be rendered during teaching and learning encounters. DA in this study showed that assessment does not have to be a stressful, de-motivating experience, but could be a mutually beneficial learning

experience where the teacher too should be able to learn how best to make teaching more meaningful for AL learners.

On the whole, the mediation during the study seemed to have an increasingly positive influence on the participants' oral responses in the course of the three sessions, and the written responses, further mediated by means of linguistic adaptations to the questions, a glossary and a spelling list, showed improvements in terms of accuracy as well as a limited measure of linguistic enhancement. Mediating the reading of the questions, particularly with LIB School participants, was time-consuming because of their poor language skills. Obviously, this affected the amount of time left for us to negotiate the meaning of the questions and construct adequate answers. It would be safe to assume that, with more time available, more could have been achieved. During the mediation, I had to ensure that the participants did not lose any teaching time within the classrooms, although most of them expressed the desire to continue with the mediational session.

There are other issues that have to do with the feasibility of one-on-one interaction in terms of cost, expertise and training, but further research has to go into addressing these concerns and finding workable solutions to them.

### 5.3.4.2     *Addressing the challenges of dynamic assessment*

The use of DA had its challenges and did raise questions from some teachers who agreed that the research was worthwhile, but nonetheless wondered about the feasibility of the process, considering the extent of interaction required, the time during the school day that would be taken up and the level of training that personnel would have to receive. These concerns were real and I was aware of them from the outset since they constitute the main criticism against the use of DA (Bouwer, 2006: 55; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2001: 135). But the promising results of the study necessitate that solutions to the objections be sought.

The CDA approach adopted by Lidz (2001) uses the actual curriculum content of the learners and thus this technique seems readily applicable to mainstream education and can be adapted to the needs of AL learners. Using the actual curriculum content has the dual purpose of helping to establish the extent of processing difficulty a learner has and mediating the learning experience. This is obviously also true for AL learners. In the case of this study, an adapted

mediational assessment was developed, incorporating a glossary and spelling list, using the actual curriculum content and assessment questions for the participants. If further research finds any or all of these three measures to be effective as well as fully valid in the assessment of AL learners, it could mean reducing the number of mediators, thereby reducing the implications of both time and cost. The introduction of linguistically adapted mediational assessment could certainly curb the hurtful and damaging effects of labelling AL learners as cognitively challenged.

### 5.3.4.3 *Ensuring equity in dynamic assessment*

Assessment should give all learners "reasonable opportunity to demonstrate their understanding or skill" (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003: 121). Ensuring equal opportunity for learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding is an important aspect of assessment. In this study, equitable practices in the assessment of AL learners were part of the fundamental challenge of moving away from static forms of assessment with AL learners who lacked proficiency in the LoLTA. However, the issues surrounding equity in assessment are also important in the discussion of the use of DA. It was hoped that the use of DA could address some of the inequalities in the assessment of AL learners by mediating access to the questions so that they could demonstrate what they know, but care has to be taken to prevent the reverse of the inequalities that are associated with traditional assessments from occurring (Estrin, 2000: 228). By no means should undue advantage be accorded to any group of learners for any reason. It is therefore important to address the main research question of this study: How should DA be conducted to prevent it becoming an undue advantage for AL learners?

How does one guard against improper, inequitable application of DA? How could the issue of equity and fairness be resolved in using DA with only some learners? These questions can be addressed more readily in some circumstances than in others. In Nigeria, the vast majority of learners are AL learners, particularly in the government public schools. Consequently, the challenges of a lack of proficiency are commonplace and make it all the more essential to resolve the issues of inequality in assessment. The use of DA with AL learners appears to holds promise, but the practitioner will have to take care to remain within the confines of the linguistic focus of the mediation and consciously refrain from mediating subject-related knowledge or skills, i.e. handing out answers or providing solutions to problems. No undue advantage should be accorded those utilising the mediation. No information should be

imparted, apart from the mediation of the meaning of the questions. For learners who are more proficient in the AL, the mediation should simply become superfluous.

AM and BM's remarks that teachers were too strict in marking down even minor spelling and grammatical errors raises further questions concerning whether and in which form accommodations should be allowed for AL learners. Accommodations are a means of reducing inequalities in assessment without invalidly influencing the assessment results, particularly where there is a perceived barrier to learning, ranging from physical and learning disabilities to the issues of poor language proficiency of AL learners. According to Goh (2004: 39), the purpose of accommodations and alternative assessment is "… providing students with disabilities or ELLs (English language learners) an equal opportunity to perform on tests as their general population peers". But in terms of equity, how far can these accommodations go? This question necessitates a shift in the discussion from access to assessment at the receptive level of AL proficiency (the focus of the study), to recognition of the extreme difficulties observed in the participants' efforts to express their ideas in response once they understood the assessment questions. These difficulties at the expressive level have a strong impact on performance and should be addressed during teaching while some form of accommodation is also provided in assessment. Accommodation of expressive challenges could for instance be practised by grouping errors in terms of the level of incorrectness. Minor errors could be overlooked in the scoring and could subsequently feed back into the teaching in the classroom. There appears to be no quick fixes and easy answers and this study has certainly demonstrated that. The participants in the study obviously resented being marked down for incorrect spelling, bad grammar, lack of clarity and so forth, but caution is needed in respect of the demands of equity. Who determines the extent of accommodation and how will it be moderated? When should linguistic accommodation be withdrawn? These questions are debatable and all border on the quest for equity in assessment for all learners. Of importance also are issues of agreement on what level of proficiency in the LoLTA determines progression to the next class, or accomplishment or establishes that an individual should be acknowledged as having actually been educated in that language, in this case English? Finally, how proficient should an "educated" user of the LoLTA be, and can this be achieved if bad grammar and spelling are overlooked? These questions are part of those that need to be explored and researched in order to clarify the avenues for successful use of DA in mainstream education.

## 5.4 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

### 5.4.1 Strengths and value of the study

The use of a qualitative, multiple case study research design was a patent strength of the study. This design allowed for an in-depth, context-based analysis and understanding of issues in assessment affecting the participants individually at the interface of at least AL, learning, assessment, learning potential and affect. It ensured that the participants had the safe opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions on how the issues under discussion affected them individually and to engage with mediated assessment skills and mediational assessment materials, an area that was risky at best and sensitive, even painful, to some. The qualitative design also ensured that I could explore and clarify assessment responses, behaviours and comments that would have otherwise passed unprocessed. Ultimately, qualitative research meant that there could be a comprehensive, rich and meaningful representation of each AL participant's perspective and academic performance.

From the perspective of qualitative research methodology, the use of CDA in itself could arguably be considered a strength. In collecting data by means of a process of debriefing and mediation, there was close interaction with the participants over time, that enabled them to open up about the challenges they faced and the forms of assistance they believed could be of value to them, and to present a truer picture of their learning potential.

With regard to the actual encounter with participants, my proficiency in Yoruba enabled me to communicate with participants in their L1 and that proved to be of great value in the LIB School. Speaking the same language removed barriers of communication as well as trust that might have been there had that not been possible. It appeared to give those participants some sense of security and assurance that I could empathise with the AL challenges they faced. Proficiency in Yoruba facilitated "breaking the ice" and getting the learners to feel at ease, and enabled them to express themselves more freely. During the mediation there was also mutual understanding, so that it was easier to ensure comprehension by using Yoruba and code switching.

The small sample size per school meant that the limited time made available for data collection could be judiciously utilised. In order to ensure that the participants did not lose

teaching time, the debriefing and mediation sessions had to be timed. The small number of participants therefore meant that individual attention could be accorded to each of them. On the other hand, the data analysis indicated that the number was sufficient for nuanced interpretation, in that trends as well as differences became apparent.

The fact that no literature on research into the use of DA in Nigeria could be found, points, I believe, to the value of the study in breaking new ground in respect of the applications of DA. The study set out to explore the use of DA with AL learners in mainstream education and the possible contribution to the scope of DA, but in doing so also came to highlight many other challenges faced by AL learners in Nigeria and the severity with which they occurred. The study further revealed the discrepancies in language education policy and its implementation or lack thereof, as well as the impact this has on the learners within schools. The findings from the research suggest that the AL situation in the country has been accepted as the norm and hence not much is actually being done about it. This study reveals the apparently dire situation of these AL learners in terms of the LoLTA, opens up opportunities for debate on the subject of assessment of AL learners and serves as pointer to avenues for further research and eventually also hopefully for new policy and practice in mainstream education. The study has shown that addressing the assessment dilemmas of AL learners cannot, in Nigeria or anywhere else, be done in isolation of finding lasting solutions to the severe challenges of attaining proficiency in the LoLTA. While further investigating the use of DA as a bridging factor in the assessment of AL learners, ways of developing proficiency in the AL also have to be urgently delved into.

DA over the years has been used, among others, with learners that have learning disabilities, in special education programmes, in determination of learning potential and distinguishing between language disability and language difference. There has however not been much work done using DA with AL in mainstream education. In this study, the successful use of CDA in mainstream education with two subjects (BS and IS) simultaneously has contributed to the field of knowledge on DA. The findings suggest that CDA, apart from its focus on special education, identification of gifted learners and learners with learning potential, could be used in the CA and examinations of mainstream education possibly in various subjects. The use of mediational assessments, in terms of simplification of linguistic components of questions and inclusion of the glossary, could be considered a stepping stone into researching the use of such assessment formats in mainstream education. The study further contributed to the field

of knowledge by revealing that the use of CDA could contribute to unravelling the influence of affect regarding customary, static assessment and DA on learners' performance.

## 5.4.2 Limitations of the study

Qualitative research of itself sets specific limitations on the nature and extent of interpretation of its findings, and I have been fully committed to these, hopefully from a different perspective actually turning them into strengths. The small sample size, and the individual and contextual nature of the data mean that there is no allowance for the generalisation of findings. Conversely, the small sample ensured that there was a focused and judicious use of the available time towards gaining an in-depth understanding of the context and the participants in the study. Another effect of the small sample was that it rendered impossible the use of statistical analysis as a means of examination of the results. This meant that only one quantitative measure of central tendency, the mean performance, could be used in the analysis of the data. Although the findings cannot be generalised, however, the principle of applicability holds good, meaning that the findings have relevance for learners in similar contexts.

The fact that there was interaction between the participants and myself as the researcher could, in itself, have functioned to limit the trustworthiness of the data and consequently also of the findings. In qualitative research it is not possible to examine issues that deal with attitudes and experiences from a completely dispassionate point of view. Since interaction, the exploration of ideas and participants' experiences facilitate the development of meaning in qualitative research, it is sometimes difficult to establish that the views and personal convictions of the researcher have not infiltrated the results and findings (Belgrave & Smith, 2002: 248 & 254; Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 20, 35, 181 & 183; Mouton, 2001:141; Snape & Spencer, 2003: 7 & 38). In a study of this nature however, understanding of the context and affect play an important role in the interpretation of the findings and it therefore meant that the ability to empathise and to identify the challenges encountered by the participants was crucial to the data collection. On the other hand, the possibility of a Hawthorne effect on the participants' scores could not be ruled out when they were shown empathy, and the sharp rise in some of the CA2 results, levelling off again in CA3 and the examination, suggest that this indeed happened. I attempted, however, by means of constant reflection, to ensure that my personal convictions would not affect the reporting of the findings.

Given the unexpectedly low levels of the participants' proficiency in the AL, the study could have benefited by a more detailed linguistic and educational contextualisation of the data. It is clear that the issue under study essentially requires large-scale, multidisciplinary research. Within the limited scope of this study, I believe that observing the English language lessons (i.e. education in the LoLTA) would have aided understanding of the level of difficulty faced by the learners and some of the reasons why AL language education seemed to be failing them. Spending more time in discussion and observation with the subject teachers prior to commencement of the study would probably have given a better understanding of their current teaching and assessment practices and the reasons for the approaches and methods adopted.

It remains an open question whether applying DA (and mediation) over a longer period could have contributed to answering all the research questions with greater understanding. On the one hand, the use of mediation beyond the point of mastery of the assessment-specific terms and formats could amount to inequitable accommodation and it could also contribute to the development of learned helplessness. On the other hand, mediation over a longer period could have contributed to greater confidence in the participants, more time to address the assessment issues and challenges that occurred, opportunity to address the occurrence of linguistic factors at a deeper level and the opportunity to show in greater detail the potentials of DA in facilitating assessment for learning.

The limitations considered above notwithstanding, the study was conducted with utmost rigour bearing in mind that due to the design and nature of CDA itself, it did not set out to yield generalisable findings. The fact that findings cannot be generalised raises questions of validity, which over the years have indeed been central to the debate surrounding DA. Haywood and Tzuriel (2002: 58) concede that the problems of validity are "yet to be addressed seriously, much less solved". However, operating in all respects within the very curriculum of each participating school, observing and later manipulating the assessments developed and administered by the teachers themselves, and utilising as data the statements and assessment responses of learners generated during debriefings and mediations on the assessments themselves, have contributed strongly to the authenticity of the data and a circular effect of control of the research process, both of which are essential in claiming truth value for the findings. The results and findings are based on a small number of participants and their individual unique contexts. They are pointers to the nature of the strengths and

challenges of the use of CDA in mainstream education with emphasis on those particular contexts within which the study was conducted. Nonetheless, the observations were well documented and there were no misrepresentations of the participants' statements. I was cautious about not letting personal feelings and biases interfere with the study. Though the study was not designed as a large scale quantitative study precautions were taken to ensure that the data was handled meticulously and interpreted in good faith. The study sought to explore the use of DA with AL learners in mainstream education and their attitude to assessment from the perspective of the eight participants and in effect their subjective realities and opinion mattered and were represented. In the process the study also uncovered the depth of the AL challenges faced by these participants almost to the point of relegating everything else to a secondary position in order of importance.

One of the purposes of the use of CDA was to balance a system of assessment practices that was inequitable to AL learners, so an effort was made to ensure that no undue advantage would be bestowed on the AL learners who used them. The use of DA with AL learners should be viewed as bridging a gap and creating avenues for learning support. According to the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and the National Council of Measurement in Education cited in Killen (2003: 5), validity refers to the "degree to which a certain inference from a test is appropriate and meaningful" and the degree to which the "evidence supports the inferences that are made" (Killen, 2003: 5). On these grounds also, it is suggested that this study has been covered in terms of the requirements of validity.

In research, unforeseen circumstances often surface and have to be dealt with accordingly. This study was no exception and I encountered a few challenges at the practical level that obviously had to be accommodated in ways that would not compromise the methodological requirement of rigour. The first of these was that the schools allocated for the research lacked the very basic infrastructure that could have facilitated the yielding of trustworthy and rich data. This included a comfortable seating arrangement for the debriefing and mediation sessions (sometimes necessitating a change of location for sessions), and electricity for the audio-visual recordings (calling for battery-powered equipment). There were also time constraints for the debriefing and mediation sessions. Another technical difficulty encountered was that, while the participants used assessment questions printed on paper, the questions were written on the blackboard for the other members of the class. The dual access

to the questions was distractive and confusing to the participants who did not focus on the printed format alone. Finally, the lack of textbooks for the majority of the participants meant that their individual ability to adequately prepare for the assessments was in doubt, amounting to a confounding variable on the results.

### 5.4.3 Reflections on my possible influence on the findings

Personal involvement in all modes, including the emotional, is virtually unavoidable in qualitative research and this has to be put under reflective control from the very outset of the study. Researching within the interpretive paradigm, empathy can obviously stand one in good stead and should certainly replace reactions such as sympathy, concern, outrage, criticism and bias. This is not as simple as it sounds, and I constantly had to check myself early in the course of the fieldwork. During the data collection, I could not but empathise overtly with some of the participants and sometimes the teachers. Policy not implemented, badly maintained infrastructure that was in various states of disrepair and a host of other issues meant that the situation sometimes seemed dire. I constantly needed to reflect on the bias that a show of empathy could possibly effect in the generation of the data, in comparison with the possible advantages it might have in encouraging participants to be more forthcoming in the sharing of their challenges.

As it turned out, nothing could be taken for granted. Going into the research for me was about the challenges of exploring the use of DA with AL learners in mainstream education. But the contextual issues that reared their heads were so distressing that they could not easily be ignored. The order of priority for all parties involved was different, from the researcher to the participants, the teachers and even probably the school management. So, standing back and taking everybody's perspective into consideration was important for trustworthiness of the findings and this led to the realisation that change takes time and requires multi-faceted inputs and that this research, though important to me, was addressing only a minute part of the challenges faced by these learners and the education system as a whole.

An important challenge for me was accurately taking into consideration the importance and relevance of individual differences and contexts. The socio-economic, linguistic and educational background of the participants seemed to influence their baseline scores as well as their DA results. Parents' inability to provide the necessary tools of learning such as

textbooks and writing materials, even the basic shoes and uniforms, to their children, due to limited sources of income appeared to impact motivation as well as achievement of the participants. Therefore my questioning about their use of textbooks and workbooks, and my mediation of language-related assessment skills had to be done with sensitivity, and I even sometimes consciously refrained from asking a particular question.

### 5.4.4 Recommendations

#### 5.4.4.1 Introduction

It was apparent from the findings that the issues relating to AL could not be examined in isolation from the contexts within which the study was situated. It therefore makes it pertinent to make recommendations that not only focus on further research concerning DA in mainstream education and avenues of ensuring equity, but that also address educational practice, covering the application of DA, recommendations made by the participants based on their experiences, and my recommendations based on the challenges faced within each context that could have impacted the research process and possibly the findings.

#### 5.4.4.2 Further research

In the course of the study, several questions became apparent that need research, to further strengthen the use of DA in mainstream education. At the fundamental level of theory formation, the influence of the AL, the severity of the linguistic challenges encountered, mean that exploring the background of the classroom teaching of the LoLTA in relation to AL-in-DA and Al-in-assessment generally, is of primary concern. Of interest for further research also, are the extent of linguistic accommodation in assessment that should be allowed for AL learners and the level of AL proficiency actually desirable for the individual to qualify as having been educated in the LoLTA. Pertinent to the outcomes of this study, the use of the mediational assessment procedure as CDA, which included the linguistic simplification of questions, the glossary and the spelling list, ought to be further researched in order to fine-tune and strengthen its effectiveness. Finally, strong contextual influences were noted, in respect of the SES of the participants and a school environment that was not conducive to proper learning. Replicating this study under conditions controlling for negative factors such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of basic infrastructure, unavailability of requisite instructional material and textbooks is strongly recommended.

Of local import, i.e. at the level of application, research is proving essential into AL education practices in the feeder primary schools as well as the level of proficiency carried forward into the secondary school.

### 5.4.4.3 *Application of dynamic assessment for AL learners in the mainstream*

The findings of this study suggest that CDA holds promise for use with AL learners in mainstream education. The use of mediational assessment that comprises of linguistically simplified questions and a glossary of assessment terms hold promise with learners who appear to lack proficiency at CALP level. During the period of use of the mediational assessments, more time should probably be given, to accommodate the additional reading load that forms part of the adapted questions and glossary. In-service training could go a long way in keeping AL-related teaching methodology and techniques used by teachers, up-to-date, and this should then include CDA. However, the existence of various obstacles in practising CDA on a large scale is undeniable. The contextual challenges found in both schools in the study make it pertinent to recommend extensive measures by the authorities to ensure that the basic infrastructure of schools will be intact and the necessary resources such as textbooks, notebooks and access to other study materials will be available to all learners. This would control for extraneous factors that could influence the trustworthiness of the CDA results.

### 5.4.4.4 *Needs expressed by participants*

Some participants had suggestions of their own as to what could make the learning encounter within their schools more meaningful and worthwhile and would thus contribute to better performance in assessments. The first one deals with the quality of language teaching. The somewhat desperate suggestion that English, AL as a school subject, should be broken down into focused parts such as grammar, vocabulary and spelling and should even be taught by different language teachers, is an indication that the schools are not doing enough to ensure that the learners reach the CALP level of language proficiency. A second suggestion was that the assessment itself should be carried out twice, written and orally, for those who had not attained the appropriate levels of proficiency. Thirdly, they all believed that a support system independent of the schools, such as private tutoring or study support, was important for them to make progress. This is further demonstration of the participants' lack of faith in the capability of the schools to positively impact their achievement. Lastly, the participants

believed that the number of school subjects that they had to study were too many, given the AL challenges, and ought to be reduced.

*5.4.4.5        Educational provision and policy*

The recommendations made here are based on my interpretation and conclusions on the context within which the data were collected. They are the synthesis of my observations, interactions and reflections based on the context within which the study was conducted.

Firstly, the Nigerian language policy itself has to be critically re-evaluated and urgent research into appropriate strategies of addressing AL teaching and learning in schools have to be initiated, while government schools have to be properly funded and the necessary facilities and resources for teaching language and other subjects provided. An important issue, arguably even more so in the case of AL learners, concerns the number of school subjects offered by the curriculum. For Basic 8 there are 14 subjects, namely English, French, Yoruba, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Business Studies, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Home Economics, Information and Computer Technology, Agricultural Science, Christian Religious Knowledge/Islamic Religious Knowledge, Economics, and Introductory Technology. A closer look should be given to these subjects by the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education to find a principle for reducing them. AL learners contending with challenges of inadequate language proficiency should not be subjected to learning so many subjects in the AL at the same time since they lack the requisite language skills to cope. The subjects each contains subject-specific terminology that cannot but contribute to severe cognitive overload. Essentially removing the compartmentalisation of knowledge and reducing the number of subjects could furthermore enable learners to see the relationships and links among the subjects. Teaching language across a limited curriculum (i.e. LAC) of subjects could ensure that learners and other subject teachers do not continue to see AL proficiency development as the sole responsibility of the AL teacher. Learners should also engage with the AL during other subjects and could possibly in this way realise the importance of being able to use language to convey their comprehension. So doing, LAC, where all subject teachers take on the role of a language teacher as well, could be one method that could have a positive impact on learners' AL proficiency as well as their academic progress (Nieman, 2006:34-35).

The latest language teaching and vocabulary building strategies should also, intermittently, be introduced to teachers for effective teaching and learning to take place. To ensure that the

focus on language is not another form of subtractive bilingualism, tutorial systems should be used where learners could be divided into groups with a teacher who understands their language and they could work on the language proficiency and subject knowledge at the receptive phase where the learners could be encouraged to use their L1 as a resource within the groups. Further at the expressive phase they could also within such groups be assisted to develop expressive strategies that do not undermine their previous knowledge in their L1.

Secondly, appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that in-service-training is an integral part of the school system, to ensure that teachers keep abreast of the trends in education and also to remind them of the basics, which is so easily lost as the years go by. For instance, that CA should in itself be a form of learning support to address the recurring challenges of learners and not as an additional source of anxiety which it now appears to be. Teachers should be constantly reminded of the importance of ensuring that learners can think for themselves and apply knowledge based on adequate comprehension of the issues rather than learners who more or less lack basic proficiency in the LoLTA and are left no other choice than to depend on rote learning to get by. The lessons should de-emphasize note copying from the board and be more interactive, exploratory and engaging. The findings showed that many of the learners copy incorrectly any way and then memorised the incorrect spelling or altered meanings of words and ideas.

Thirdly, Nigerian public schools need to actively use the services of school (educational) psychologists and not expect teachers to be everything to everyone. A finding that articulates somewhat with this need, is that class sizes are much too big for any meaningful teaching and learning to take place, and should be drastically reduced to manageable numbers.

Lastly, there can be no doubt that under-provisioning contributed to the severe challenges experienced by the learners under study. Schools ought to consider seriously going back to the arrangement whereby all the textbooks are provided to the learners. This is particularly important where the SES of the community indicates that the majority of learners would not be able to afford the requisite textbooks. Also of relevance was the poor basic infrastructure, especially the lack of functional libraries that impeded development of the skills of independent reading, information seeking, projects and research, as well as development of a culture of reading for pleasure.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

No doubt there are considerable challenges ahead for the use of any alternative form of assessment with AL learners in mainstream education. This study has shown the magnitude of the challenges of using an AL as the LoLTA in two public schools. Financing the use of DA in respect of large-scale change in assessment practices would be tasking for any government, more so for one that has failed to provide and maintain even the very basic infrastructure and whose language education policy is proving gravely inadequate. Research into alternative methods of assessing AL learners therefore has to continue until some feasible solution can be arrived at. As mentioned above, this study has raised many other questions, but arguably the most important might be an investigation of the use of adapted mediational assessment incorporating a glossary of terms, by AL learners in mainstream education.

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**APPENDIX A**

| BEHAVIOUR | AF | | | | AM | | | | BF | | | | BM | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | CA1 | CA2 | CA3 | EXAM | CA1 | CA2 | CA3 | EXAM | CA1 | CA2 | CA3 | EXAM | CA1 | CA2 | CA3 | EXAM |
| FOCUSED | | | | | √ | √ | | | | | | | | | | |
| CALM | | | | | √ | | | | | | | √ | | | | |
| ANXIOUS | | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| FIDGETY | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| ALERT | | | | | √ | | | | | | | √ | | | | √ |
| IN CONTROL | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | | | | | |
| PAUSING/HESITANT | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | |
| WRITING ON ROUGH SHEET | | | | √ | | √ | √ | | | | | | | | √ | |
| RE-READING QUESTIONS | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | √ |
| LONG PAUSE BEFORE WRITING | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | √ | | | | | |
| FOLLOWING WORDS WITH FINGERS | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LOOKING ABOUT | | | | √ | | √ | | | √ | | | | | | | |
| MUTTERING | | | | | | | | | √ | | √ | | | | √ | |
| PENSIVE/REFLECTIVE | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | | | | | √ |
| TAPPING TABLE | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | | |
| READING OUT | | | | | √ | √ | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| CHEWING BIRO | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | | |
| STARING | √ | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | |
| FROWNING | √ | | | | | | | | √ | | | | | √ | | |
| WRITING ON PALM | | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | | |
| COPYING QUESTION | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SCRIBBLING | | | √ | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | |
| MAKING FACES | | | | | | √ | | | | | | √ | | | | |
| PLAYING WITH WRITING MATERIALS | | | | | | | | | | | √ | | | √ | | |
| LYING ON TABLE | | √ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RESTING HEAD IN PALM | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Participants' Observation Analysis - LIB School (BS)

# DEBRIEFING AND MEDIATION GUIDELINES

**Debriefing Guideline:**

A. Preliminaries i.e. settling down/introduction of the process/reiteration of the ethical guidelines

B. Ensure clarity about the objectives of the sessions

C. Performance evaluation

D. Corroboration of evaluation

E. Task Analysis (Perceived extent of difficulty)

F. Future task difficulty alleviation suggestions

G. Link observed behaviour during the assessment to task

**Questioning Guideline:**

1. How did you find the assessment?

2. What language factors (if any) contributed to the difficulty of the assessment?

3. Which of the questions made sense and which didn't?

4. What made it take so long for you to read the question(s) and/or to respond?

5. Why were you (muttering, staring, sighing, fidgeting, frowning etc.)

6. Was there enough time for you to put down your thoughts and ideas?

7. What could be done to help you process the questions faster and more clearly in the future?

8. Would changing the language or rephrasing the question make it clearer what you are expected to do? What should be changed and how?

**Progression Guideline:**

- Follow through any comment by the participants not covered in the guideline.

- Add questions as required by actual process.

- Focus on language-related issues.

- Reassure the participants without giving false hope.

**Mediational Procedure:**

A. Clarity of Intention

B. Engage with the participants in terms of willingness to be partners-in-progress

C. Establish the ease with which the participant can read and decode the questions

D. Explore the linguistic issues and challenges in term of receptive and expressive levels of language use

E. Explore the cognitive level of the participants in relation to linguistic complexities of the assessment

F. Solution-finding exercise

G. Suggestions for further reference

H. The way forward

I. Note adequacy of requisite prior knowledge of the subjects

**Procedural steps:**

1) Participant should read the questions on the assessment task without assistance.

2) Note points of correction without interruption

3) Read the questions to the participant (if necessary)

4) Ask the participant to imitate the reading of the questions (if necessary)

5) Establish the participant's level of comprehension of the questions in terms of language

6) What meaning does the participant ascribe to the task?

7) Ask leading questions that might aid comprehension

8) Assist with lexical and/or grammatical cues

9) Explain the task requirements (if necessary)

10) Ask the participant to respond to selected questions orally

11) Randomly select words/phrases/sentences to be written by the participant

12) What is the level of adequacy of the participant's responses to questions?

13) How could the participant's vocabulary use be described?

14) How proficient is the participant with spelling?

15) What is the nature of the sentence structure?

16) To what extent are the responses to the questions arranged in a meaningful sequence and how appropriate are they?

17) Establish whether or not the participant realises the apparent challenges.

18) Ask what the difficulties/challenges are.

19) Explore the suggestions the participant believes can facilitate his/her learning

20) Establish if the participant is able to recall and transfer the previous mediational outcomes to the next assessment cycle.

21) Establish the value/difficulties with the mediational assessment.

22) Clarify any issues/questions that arise from the adapted mediational assessment.

23) Note the participant's attitude towards the CA as well as the process we are engaging in.

24) Solicit suggestions for improvement of the assessment experience.

25) Establish, from the participant's point of view, whether any benefits were derived from the interaction

**Suggested questions:**

- What could be done to help you process the questions faster and more clearly in the future?

- How can the assessment be mediated for you?

- Would changing the language or rephrasing the question make the assessment easier? What should be changed and how?

**Mediational Assessment**

**Standard assessment: CA2-IS – LIB School** (questions written on blackboard, format retained)

1. Name three (3) major types of soil.

2. Which of the soil types

    (a) Has the largest pore spaces

    (b) Has poor water holding capacity

    (c) Is sticky and mouldable in wet form

    (d) Is the best soil for farming

3. List three (3) agents of weathering.

4. Define the following:

    (a) Ingestion          (b) Digestion          (c) Egestion

5. Complete the following table

| Gland | Juice secreted |
|---|---|
| Salivary gland | |
| Gastric gland | |
| Pancreas | |

6. List the enzymes that help in the digestion of food.

**Mediational Questions** (questions presented in print, format retained)

### CA2: Integrated Science

1. Write down the three (3) most common kinds of soil.

2. Which of the kinds of soil                                                      (a)
has the biggest pore spaces (the most space between pores)?
        (b) cannot hold as much water as the others?
        (c) is sticky and can be made into different shapes when wet?
    (d) is better than all the other kinds of soil for farming?

3. List three (3) things that make weathering happen.

4. Write the meaning of the following words:
        (a) Ingestion   (b) Digestion  (c) Egestion

5. Write the juice which comes from each gland:

**Gland**                    **Juice**

     Salivary gland

     Gastric gland

     Pancreas

6. Write the enzymes that help to digest food.

**Glossary of Terms**

|  | **Word**                **Meaning** |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| agent | someone/something that helps to do things, that makes things happen |
| best | better than all others |
| capacity | ability, power to … |
| define | give the meaning |
| juice | a form of liquid |
| largest | bigger than all others |
| major | most important / most common |
| mouldable | can be made into different shapes |
| secrete | produce, give off |
| type | a kind of |

## Word List

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Absorb | Carbohydrate | Catalyst |
| Cultivate | Digestive | Energy |
| Experiment | Function | Intestine |
| Loamy | Masticate | Muscle |
| Organ | Rejection | Solution |
| Stomach | Substance | System |
| Temporary | Tongue | |

Lagos State Ministry of Education
Ikorodu Local Education District
Lagos Road Ikorodu

18th June 2007

Dear Sir,

## Re: Research Project Involving UBE 8 Classes

I am currently a PhD student in the Department Educational Psychology of the University of Pretoria, South Africa. I am engaged in academic research into the use of dynamic assessment (DA) with learners who have an additional language (AL) as the language of teaching, learning and assessment in mainstream education. I require approval to go into schools in Lagos State to do the study.

*The research topic*

Investigating dynamic assessment as a means of addressing the assessment dilemma of additional language learners

### Purpose of the study

This study investigates the influence of DA as an alternative method of assessment for learners whose home language is different from the language of learning, teaching and assessment. I shall use a form of DA called general Curriculum-based Dynamic Assessment (CDA). My intention is to find out how AL learners respond to this method of assessment and determine the correspondent influence that the DA procedure has on learning and the performance of AL learners. It is therefore envisaged that the outcome of the research could add notably to the knowledge base concerning DA and perhaps also inform language education policy and implementation in Nigeria and other countries.

### Requirements

There will be purposive selection of two schools from Ikorodu Local Education District (LED) of the Lagos State Ministry of Education.

The research project requires the participation of UBE 8 (Grade 8) learners and the two subject teachers of Integrated Science and Business Studies. It involves observation of the participants during the continuous assessment cycles and examination of the first school term in the two subjects, and debriefing and mediation after the assessments. Participants will write a mediational version of all the assessments following CA1. All activities will be conducted in a manner that will not interfere with regular classroom schedules.

### Promise of confidentiality and anonymity

I will ensure that the identity of the learners and the school is protected at all times. All information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The participants' names will not appear in the research report or any publication related to the study.

The learners will most likely benefit from the experience, and it is hoped that more light will be shed on the use of dynamic assessment strategies that would be of benefit to teachers, as well as the educational system in general.

I look forward to a favourable response.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,


M. F. Omidire (Mrs)

…. August 2007

Dear Sir,

## Re: Research Project Involving UBE 8 Classes

I am currently a PhD student in the Department Educational Psychology of the University of Pretoria, South Africa. I am engaged in academic research into the use of dynamic assessment with learners who have an additional language as the language of teaching, learning and assessment in mainstream education.

The research project requires the participation of four Grade 8 learners, two from each of two classes, and their teachers for the subjects Integrated Science and Business Studies. It involves observation of the participants during the continuous assessment cycles and examination of the first term in the two subjects, and debriefing and mediation of the participants after the assessments. Approval to conduct the research in your school has been obtained from the Ministry of Education; Ikorodu Local Education District (LED) and a copy of the document is attached. All activities will be conducted in a manner that will not interfere with regular classroom schedules.

I will ensure that the identity of the learners and the school is protected at all times. All information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The learners will most likely benefit from the experience, and it is hoped that more light will be shed on the use of dynamic assessment strategies that would be of benefit to teachers, as well as the educational system in general.

It will be greatly appreciated if you could accommodate me in your school for this part of my research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,


M. F. Omidire (Mrs)

…. September 2007

Dear Parent/Guardian

**I am a PhD student in the Department Educational Psychology of the University of Pretoria, South Africa, interested in exploring the use of alternative forms of assessment with learners whose home language is not English. I hereby ask your kind permission for your child to take part in the project.**

The research topic is: Investigating dynamic assessment as means of addressing the assessment dilemma of additional language learners

The research will include observation of the participants while they take continuous assessment tests in Integrated Science and Business Studies, debriefing them on their test taking experiences thereafter, and mediating language skills that might help them in future assessments. There will be strict confidentiality and there are no forms of danger or risks resulting from the research. The research will not have any negative effects on schoolwork and your child's classroom activities will not be disrupted. Participation is voluntary and there are no penalties for non-participation or withdrawal from the project.

It will be highly appreciated if you give your consent on the form below for your child to participate in the study.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

M. F. Omidire

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I hereby give my permission for my child ---------------------------------------------------- to participate in the study.

Parent's/Guardian's name: ------------------------------------------------------------------------

Address: -------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Telephone: -----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Signature ------------------------------------------------------------ Date: -----------------------

…. September

Dear _____,

There are a few things I would like to find out about the school tests and examinations you take and need your help. This is a project I am doing to find out how we can make test taking a lot better. It would be nice if you participated in this project, so I'm going to tell you all about it to help you make up your mind.

This study will give you and me the opportunity to go over your test questions, for you to comment on the questions. You will be allowed to say anything you like and make suggestions. I will listen to you and see how we can help to make the questions easier to understand. I am asking you to be in this study because your parents/guardians have agreed that you may be part of our study.

**What will happen to me?**

Being part of the study means that when you have your continuous assessment tests in Integrated Science and Business Studies, you will sit in a separate room with me and not in your classroom. Sometimes we might video-record the session. I will not bother you while you are working during the tests, but wait till you have finished, and then we will discuss how the test was for you. It is alright if you don't have any questions for me, then I will just ask you some questions. It is not another test, so you don't have to worry. There are no right or wrong answers during our discussions, just answer truthfully.

**Will the project hurt?**

The project cannot harm you in any way. Nothing out of the ordinary is going to be done.

**Will the study help me?**

The study will let you be able to say the things that make your tests difficult for you and why you feel they are hard. It will also enable you to make suggestions about how you can better understand in the tests what your teachers want you to do. We hope the study will help you and others.

**What if I have any questions?**

You can ask any questions you have about the study. If you have questions later that you don't think of now you can ask me next time I am here at your school.

**Do my parents/guardians know about this project?**

This study was explained to your parents/guardians and they said you could be part of the study if you wanted to. But you can talk this over with them before you decide whether you want to be in the study or not.

**Do I have to be in the project?**

You don't have to be in this project. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to be in the project, you just have to tell us. You can say Yes or No, and if you change your mind later, you don't have to be part of the project anymore. It's up to you. If you agree to be in the project, please sign below.

_____

(a)　　Writing your name here means that you **agree to be in the project** and that you **know what will happen to you** in this study. If you decide to quit the project, all you have to do is tell me.

Signature of the learner 　　_____　　Date _____

Signature of the researcher _____　　Date _____

(b)　　Writing your name here means that you agree that **we can take photographs and audiovisual footage** of you during the project and that I may share these images during discussions with my supervisor, who is also bound by this undertaking of confidentiality. We will not share your name with the people who see the images. If you decide that we should rather not take photographs of audiovisual footage of you in the project, all you have to do is tell me.

Signature of the learner 　　_____　　Date _____

Signature of the researcher _____　　Date _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,


M. F. Omidire

**DEBRIEFING AND MEDIATION SESSIONS (DMS) – AF**


There had been preliminary introductions on days prior to the commencement of the CA cycles during which the project had been explained to the participants and consent for participation had been sought and obtained.

**Debriefing and Mediation - CA1-BS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | What we'll do now is talk about your test. Bawo ni? Kilo se ri si?[1] |
| 1. AF: | O da ma.[2] O fine. |
| Researcher: | (*Smiling*) That's very nice. So iyen mean pe o ma a pass dada abi?[3] |
| 2. AF: | Beni ma.[4] |

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[1] *How was it? How did you find your test?*

[2] *It was good, Ma.*

[3] *That's means you'll pass very well then isn't it?*

| Researcher: | Se ko wa si ikan kan ninu ti o ye e, abi ti o mo, abi ti o mo bi o se ma dahun.[5] |
|---|---|
| 3. AF: | Won wa ma.[6] |
| Researcher: | Nitori mo ri bi ose nse nigba ti awon yo ku sise lo. Awon iyen ni mo fe ka soro npa e. Somo, those are the ones we need to discuuss. Se o le se alaye fun mi sha?[7] |
| 4. AF: | (*Shakes her head in agreement*) |
| Researcher: | Awon wo ni o ye nibe.[8] Which ones? |
| 5. AF: | (*Frowning*) Mi o emm. Mi o ranti wan.[9] |
| Researcher: | But oye ki o ranti now. O nfi owo ara e sere, o tun ko iko kuko si ara papere.[10] |
| 6. AF: | Mo se mistake ni.[11] (*Looking away*) |
| Researcher: | Ki ni mistake to se?[12] Tell me so that we can talk about it. |
| 7. AF: | (*Looks down – no response*) |
| Researcher: | So mo pe nkan ti mo fe se ni pe gbogbo nkan ti o ba ye e, ki a wo ogbon wo ni a le da si so that wa mo bi o se ma a ma se ni ijo imi.[13] |
| Researcher: | Nkan ti a ma se ni isin yin ni pe a ma wo awon questions ti won bere lowo yin. Hen? Then a wa wo iyi ti o ma ba mi dahun ninu won. Oo need lati worry nitori ko kin se ara mark e ko kin se test imi. A a kan wo awon wo ni o le ati awon wo ni won o le. Se o ye e.[14] |
| 8. AF: | O ye mi, Ma.[15] |
| Researcher: | First thing ti a ma se nipe wa ka awon questions yen fun mi.[16] |
| 9. AF: | (*Stares at the floor, rubbing hands together*) |
| Researcher: | Oya ka bere.[17] |
| 10. AF: | (*Stares for a while, then begins slowly*) Uhmmm. |
| Researcher: | Just try. Ti o ba se mistake ma help. Eleyi o kin se test.[18] |
| 11. AF: | (*Couldn't read the questions at all*) |
| Researcher: | (*When AF had stopped*) Ok. O ma a ka tele mi ni. Se wa try iyen?[19] |
| 12. AF: | Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | (*She reads after me*). Good. Se o ri pe kole pupo.[20] |
| 13. AF: | (*Looking away*) Mo ri ma.[21] |
| Researcher: | Now let's answer the questions. Se wa dahun number one?[22] |
| 14. AF: | (*Stares at her palm, shakes her head*). |

### Debriefing and Mediation -     CA1-IS

| Researcher: | Ki lo se se ninu Science.[23] |
|---|---|

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[4] *Yes, Ma.*

[5] *Weren't there any items that you couldn't do, you didn't understand or weren't sure about what to do?*

[6] *There were some, Ma.*

[7] *I noticed you behaviour during the test and your expressions said as much. Those ones are the ones we really need to talk about, to find out why they were hard for you. Can you tell me about those questions?*

[8] *Which ones didn't you understand?*

[9] *I don't remember them.*

[10] *But you should try to remember. You were fidgeting and scribbling…*

[11] *I made a mistake.*

[12] *Tell me about the mistake you made.*

[13] *You know what I want us to do is to find strategies to use for all the questions that you couldn't answer so that the next time you come across them you'll have an idea of what to do.*

[14] *What we'll do now is look at the questions and pick some of them for you to answer.*
*Don't worry, it won't be part of your score and this is not another test. I just want to see which one is hard and which one isn't. Do you understand?*

[15] *I understand, Ma.*

[16] *The first thing we'll do is that you'll read the questions for me.*

[17] *Let's start.*

[18] *If you make a mistake I'll help. It's not a test.*

[19] *Read after me. Will you try that?*

[20] *Can you see that it's not so difficult?*

[21] *I can, ma.*

[22] *Will you answer number one?*

15. AF:    O da a ma. (*Nodding*) O wa OK.[24]

Researcher:    Se o sure? But kilode ti o wa now ka a kiri to nse oju. Ki ni o nsele ni awon igba yen.[25]

16. AF:    Mi o mo nkan ti mo ma ko mo. Mi o le se awon toku.[26]

Researcher:    Let's go over the questions and see.

17. AF:    *(Nods but does not attempt to read the question)*

Researcher:    Se o o fe kaa ni?[27] You don't want to read it?

18. AF:    (*Long pause*)

Researcher:    Ma a worry, iyi ti o ba le pe ninu e maa so fun e.[28]

AF could not read any of the questions and we ran out of time.

**Debriefing and Mediation - CA2-BS**

Researcher:    (*Smiling*) Se wa bami soro da a da ni eni?[29]

19. AF:    (*Smiling*) Yes ma.

Researcher:    Bawo ni Business Studies ni eni?[30]How was it?

20. AF:    O da a ma.[31]

Researcher:    Good? O da a?[32]

21. AF:    Beni ma.[33]

Researcher:    Se gbogbo nka ti o fe ko ni o ko ni? Gbogbo nkan ti won bere pata pata   loko? [34] You wrote everything and you'll get them right? Kilo wa lokan e ni awon igba to fi owo ara e sere, to n wo ra ra ra?[35]

22. AF:    (*Smiling*) Ah, Rara.[36]

Researcher:    So, ki ni o nsele ni oteyi ti o fin frown ti o npose, ti o dabi eni pe o tun binu?[37]

23. AF:    (*Looks down, hesitates*) Uhmmm…

Researcher:    It's OK. O o need lati worry. A a fe wa bi o se ma ye e da a da na ni. Ko si problem kan kan. At least iwo na a le contribute si nkan ta maa se to maa fi ye e . So, how was it? Bawo ni?[38]

24. AF:    O fine, Ma, o wa OK.[39]

Researcher:    (*Smiling*) So now. Bawo gan gan ni? Bawo lo se se? So oto.[40]

25. AF:    (*Smiling and looking down*) Mi o mo nkan ti mo tun ma a gba, mo ro pe o ye kin se da a da but mi o mo nkan ti mo tun ma a gba.[41]

Researcher:    Ma a ro yen pupo ni isin yi. Ti o ba a ti pe ti o ti nka we e, o ma a a ma ye e si ni. Mo fe ki a jo wa ogbon ta a ma a da si to ma fi le ye e da a da?[42]

---

[23] *How did you do in your science?*

[24] *It was good ma. It was OK.*

[25] *Are you sure? But why were you looking about, frowning and making faces? What was going on then?*

[26] *I didn't know what to write. I couldn't do the rest.*

[27] *Don't you want to read it?*

[28] *Don't worry I'll help with any one you can't pronounce.*

[29] *Will you talk to me more today?*

[30] *How was the BS today?*

[31] I*t was good Ma.*

[32] *It was good?*

[33] *Yes Ma.*

[34] *Was it everything you wanted to write that you wrote? Was it all the things that you were asked that you answered?*

[35] *What was going on in your mind at those times you were fidgeting and looking about*?

[36] *No.*

[37] *So, what happened this time? Why were you hissing, frowning and seemed angry?*

[38] *How was it? (Referring to the assessment)*

[39] *It was fine. It was OK.*

[40] *Tell me now, how was it really? Tell me the truth.*

[41] *I don't know what I'll score again I think I should do well but I really don't know what my scores will be.*

[42] *You don't have to worry too much about that now. After a period of conscious study and learning you begin to understand better. I want us to work out how to make it better for you to understand.*

26. AF:     O ye mi[43], Ma.
Researcher:     Sugbon o nla ti ready lati se ise, se o mo?[44]
27. AF:     Mo maa se.[45]
Researcher:     Wa a se e, abi?[46]
28. AF:     Mo maa se.[47]
Researcher:     Se wa a tun ka question yi fun mi jo?[48]
29. AF:     Yes, Ma. *Smiles uneasily looking at me*) Lees … four (*long pause*) pee … (*stops reading*)
Researcher:     List four personal qualities of a receptionist. (*Reading slowly, following each word with a pencil*) Repeat it after me, ma a ka tele mi.[49] List four personal qualities of a receptionist
30. AF:     Lees four pee … (*looks up*) peso na kwaliti of resetionis
Researcher:     Ki ni nwon bere? Ki ni won ni ko so?[50]
31. AF:     Resetionis (*frowning*)
Researcher:     Ok. Let's go back to another question. Je ki a pada sehin na. Question ta a dahun ni ekan[51]. Who is a receptionist?
32. AF:     Awon to ma njoko si ibi ise si office.[52]
Researcher:     Won kan kin joko nikan now. Awon ni a ma koko kan ta a ba wonu office awon la ma bere oro nipa office yen lowo won.[53]
33. AF:     Yes, ma.
Researcher:     Now, what are the personal qualities of a receptionist? Iru iwa wo loye ko ni? Iru eyan wo lo ye ki receptionist je?[54]
34. AF:     Won lati ma a toju office kin nkan kan ma a ba sele.[55]
Researcher:     Se wa a tun ka question yi fun mi jo?[56]
35. AF:     Yes ma. (*Smiles uneasily looking at me*) Lees … four (*long pause*) pee … (*stops reading*)
Researcher:     List four personal qualities of a receptionist. (*Reading slowly, following each word with a pencil*)     Repeat it after me, ma a ka tele mi[57]. List four personal qualities of a receptionist.
36. AF:     Lees four pee … (*looks up*) peso na kwaliti of resetionis
Researcher:     Ki ni nwon bere? Ki ni won ni ko so?[58]
37. AF:     Resetionis[59] (*frowning*)
Researcher:     Ok. Let's go back to another question. Je ki a pada sehin na. Question ta a dahun ni ekan[60]. Who is a receptionist?
38. AF:     Awon to ma njoko si ibi ise, si office.[61]

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[43] *I understand, Ma.*

[44] *Bur you must be ready to work, you know?*

[45] *I will do it.*

[46] *You'll do it won't you?*

[47] *I will do it.*

[48] *Can you please read this question again?*

[49] *Repeat it after me.*

[50] *What have you been asked? What have you been asked to say?*

[51] *Let's go back. The question we tried to answer before.*

[52] *Those who sit in an office,*

[53] *Not just anyone who sits in an office. They are the ones that you first of all come across when you enter an office and they give you information about the office*

[54] *What kind of people should they be? What qualities should they possess?*

[55] *They have to take care of the office so that nothing goes wrong*

[56] *Can you please read this question to me?*

[57] *Repeat it after me.*

[58] *What does the question mean? What does it require you to do?*

[59] *Receptionist.*

[60] *Let's go back to a question we answered earlier.*

[61] *Those who sit in a workplace, in an office.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | Won kan kin njoko nikan now. Awon ni a ma koko kan ta a ba wonu office awon la ma bere oro nipa office yen lowo won[62]. |
| 39. AF: | Yes, ma. |
| Researcher: | Now, what are the personal qualities of a receptionist? Iru eyan wo lo ye ki receptionist je? Iru iwa wo loye ko ni?[63] |
| 40. AF: | Won lati ma a toju office kin nkan kan ma a ba sele[64]. |

**Debriefing and Mediation - CA2-IS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | Se ko le ju.[65] |
| 41. AF: | Rara, Ma.[66] |
| Researcher: | Se o se da a da ninu e.[67] |
| 42. AF: | Beni, Ma. O da. O wa OK.[68] |
| Researcher: | "OK" na a ni gbogbo e abi? But ki ni o se ri paper yen gangan si?[69] |
| 43. AF: | (*Smiles*) O da a, Ma. (*Pauses*) Sugbon mi o lo ti ehin yen. Ha, O ti po ju. Iyi ti e koko fun wa yen, o pe kin to ka a tan[70] |
| Researcher: | But ki lo de to ma se oju se imu ati enu to ban si se lowo so fun mi na?[71] |
| 44. AF: | (*Smiling*) Mo ti se tan, awon iyoku o de dahun.[72] |
| Researcher: | Really? O ti se tan? Kilode ti o wa fun won ni iwe e nigba ti oti se tan?[73] |
| 45. AF: | (*Smiling*) Mi o mo nkan ti mo ma a ko mo.[74] (*Hesitating, then looking about*) Won maa raye ka nkan ti mo ko, won de maa ma bu mi isoju awon toku. Awon de ma a fi mi se yeye.[75] |
| Researcher: | But ki ni ki awa se si gbogbo wahala yi? Nitori se o mo, ki e le se daa da na ni. ki ni a le se ti o ma a jeki o le se da da, ko le pass?[76] |
| 46. AF: | (*Hesitating*) Mi o mo, Ma. Ko ti e ye emi na.[77] |
| Researcher: | Igbami, ti eyan ba mo nkan ti o le se ti gbogbo nkan ti won nko yin ni class fi le ye yin. A a je ki oya. To ba le so pe nkan bayi ati bayi ni ko ye mi. Tabi, bo ya ti e ba a se nkan bayi, a a ye mi si....[78] |
| 47. AF: | Igbami, mo ma n mo ro pe mo mo o (pausing) uhmmm di e di e awon nkan ti won nbere .... uhmmm sugbon mio nmo nkan ti maa ko, bi mo se ma a ko.[79] |
| Researcher: | But, duro se awon nkan ti won nbere ma nye e.[80] I mean really. |
| 48. AF: | (*Stares ahead*) |

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[62] *Not just anyone who sits in an office. They are the ones you first of all come across in an office and they give you information about the office.*

*What are the personal qualities of a receptionist? What kind of behaviour or attributes should they possess?*

[64] *They have to take care of the office so that nothing goes wrong.*

[65] *Hope it wasn't too difficult?*

[66] *No, Ma.*

[67] *Did you do well in it? (assessment)*

[68] *Yes, Ma. It was good, it was OK.*

[69] *Everything is OK? But how did you find the paper really?*

[70] *It was good, Ma. But I didn't use the one at the back, it was too much. The first time you gave us it took a while for me to read it all.*

[71] *But why do you still continue to make faces? Tell me why.*

[72] *I had finished and the others were wasting time.*

[73] *Really? You actually finished? Why didn't you submit your work, if you had finished?*

[74] *I didn't know what else to write*

[75] *They (referring to her teacher) will insult and embarrass me in front of the others who in turn will make fun of me later.*

*But how can we reduce all the challenges, because the bottom line is for you to do well. What do you think could be done?*

[77] *I don't know ma. I don't have a clue.*

[78] *Sometimes, if one knows what to do to ensure that you understand what you are being taught it helps, suggesting this or that might help.*

[79] *Sometimes I believe I know.... At least a little of what I am asked.... But I don't know what to write and how to write it.*

[80] *But wait, do you really understand the what you're being asked?*

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | Let's work on reading and understanding the questions first, then we'll go on to how to answer, abi? |
| 49. AF: | (*Seemingly confused*) Ma? |
| Researcher: | Je ki a ka awon questions yen, ki a ri pe o ye e na, ki a to wa bere si wa wo bi o se ma dahun won.[81] |
| 50. AF: | Mo ti gbo, Ma.[82] |
| Researcher: | Read the first question. Ka number one. |
| 51. AF: | (*Looking nervous*) Uhmmm |
| Researcher: | OK. Uhmmm, try the second one. Ka ikeji.[83] |
| 52. AF: | Uhmm ...? Three .... |
| Researcher: | Go on. Ma a ka a lo.[84] |
| 53. AF: | Doo. Uhmmm, Lees. three. *(looks down and then away)* |
| Researcher: | Name three major types of soil. |
| 54. AF: | (*Sighing*) Le ees Name three.... (*looking away*). |
| Researcher: | Ma a worry. Try lati kaa telemi.[85] |
| 55. AF: | Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | Name three major types of soil. |
| 56. AF: | Name three.... |
| Researcher: | ...major types of soil. |
| 57. AF: | ma ..ma ..jo type  soils. |
| Researcher: | OK. Uhmmm let's try that again and then try the next one. |
| Researcher: | Name three major types of soil. |
| 58. AF: | Lees name name three  three ma majo type soil. |
| Researcher: | Ka iyi to tele. OK ka awon yoku ni ikan kan [86]. |

There was collaborative reading, AF read the questions after me and attempted to pronounce the words with difficulty but could not answer the questions.

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | OK. That wasn't so bad was it? Ko ki nse pe ati ka a soro pupo ju naa now, abi?[87] |
| 59. AF: | (*Smiles and nods*) |
| Researcher: | Oya, let try to answer the questions. Kini won bere lowo e?[88] |
| 60. AF: | (*No response*) |
| Researcher: | Tun number 1 yen ka. Wo o daa da. Kini won ni ko se?[89] |
| 61. AF: | (*Looks down and then away*) |
| Researcher: | OK. Won ni ko so iru yepe orisi meta ti o mo. Je ki a bere pelu eyokan. So ikan ninu won .[90] |
| 62. AF: | (*Looks at palms and sighs*) |

She obviously did not know the answers to the questions.

| | |
|---|---|
| Researcher: | Se o mo pe "soil" ni won pe yepe to wa nile ti a ngbin nkan si? Se oti ri ibi ti won gbin agbado si ri, abi tomato?[91] |
| 63. AF: | (*Nods*) |

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[81] *Let's read the questions first and ensure that you understand before we start exploring how to answer.*

[82] *I agree, Ma.*

[83] *Read the second one.*

[84] *Continue reading.*

[85] *Don't worry. Try to read after me.*

[86] *Read the next one. Read the next one. Read the others one by one.*

[87] *It's not that reading really is that difficult now, is it?*

[88] *What does the question require you to do?*

[89] *Read number 1 again, what have you been asked to do?*

[90] *You've been asked to name three types of soil that you know. Let's start with one of them. Name one of them.*

[91] *You know that "soil" is what we call the substance on the ground in which we pant things? Have you ever seen where maize or tomatoes are planted?*

| Researcher: | *Oni iru yepe ti a ma ngbin nkan si, oni iru imi i ti ko se gbin nkan rara ti ko le gba omi duro, ode tun ni iru imi ti a fi nmo nkan bi ikoko* [92] |
|---|---|
| 64. AF: | (*Nods*) |
| Researcher: | Meteta ni oni oruko ti a npe won.[93] |
| 65. AF: | (*Nods*) |
| Researcher: | Se wa so oruko won fun mi?[94] |
| 66. AF: | (*Stares at her hands*) |

| Researcher: | *Se o le try?*[95] |
|---|---|
| 67. AF: | (*Smiling uneasily*) Yes, Ma. |
| Researcher: | Don't worry, just try. Ko si eniti o ma a punish e or any anything like that, so ole try.[96] |
| 68. AF: | Uhmmm soil. |
| Researcher: | Yes, but what is the name given to the soil. Oruko wo ni a npe soil na?[97] |
| 69. AF: | Said  ati garden |
| Researcher: | Very good but "sandy" soil ni won npe, nitoripe yeye lasan tio se gbin nkan ni.[98] |
| 70. AF: | (*Smiles slightly*) |
| Researcher: | Eyi to pe ni garden soil yen na yi ni oruko imi o but I'm happy that you could link that. Inu mi dun ntoripe o da bi enipe oti ye e. Iketa nko? [99] |
| 71. AF: | (*Smiles*) Uhmmm (frowns) uhmmm cloy. |
| Researcher: | Clay. I'm really happy. |
| 72. AF: | (*Smiles*) |

**Debriefing and Mediation        CA3-IS**

| Researcher: | But ki lo de to maa nse oju se imu ati enu to ban si se lowo so fun mi na?[100] |
|---|---|
| 73. AF: | (Smiling) Mo ti se tan, awon iyoku o de dahun.[101] |
| Researcher: | Really? O ti se tan?[102] |
| 74. AF: | (Smiling) Mi o mo nkan ti mo ma a ko mo.[103] |
| Researcher: | Se ki a bere pelu iyi ti ko gun ju. Se wa ka a tele mi? [104]. Read it after me ok? |
| 75. AF: | (*Nods*) |
| Researcher: | Mention, Mention. What's the next word? |
| 76. AF: | Three. |
| Researcher: | Good. Now the next word we will call in five parts before we call it together. Se o ye e? A pe e ni ototo ki o le baa mo pe, then a wa pe e papo.[105] Res – pi – ra – to – ry; Respiratory |
| 77. AF: | Res – pi – ra – to – ry; Respiratoory |
| Researcher: | Res – pi – ra – to – ry; Respiratory |
| 78. AF: | Res – pi – ra – to – ry. Respiratoory; Respiratoory. Res – pi – ra – to – ry; Respiratoory |

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[92] *There is a type of soil that we plant in, another that cannot be used for planting, it cannot hold water and yet another that can be used to mould things like pots.*

[93] *The three are known by different names.*

[94] *Will you tell me their names?*

[95] *Can you try?*

[96] *No one is going to punish you or anything like that, so you can go ahead and try.*

[97] *What is the name given to the soil? What is it called?*

[98] *It is called "sandy" soil because it is just ordinary sand that cannot be used for planting.*

[99] *The one you called garden soil still has another name but I'm happy because you now seem to understand. What about the third one?*

[100] *But why do you still continue to make faces? Tell me why.*

[101] *I had finished and the others were wasting time.*

[102] *Really? You actually finished?*

[103] *I didn't know what else to write*

[104] *Let's start with the one that is not too long. Will you read it after me?*

[105] *Do you understand? We'll pronounce it separately so that you'll learn how to say it, then we'll call it together.*

| Researcher: | The next word is 'diseases'. Ta a ba ka po it'll be Mention three respiratory diseases. Won ni ko so arun meta to ni se pelu bi a se nmi.[106] |
| --- | --- |
| 79. AF: | (*Stares at the floor*) |
| Researcher: | Kilode?[107] |
| 80. AF: | (*Looks up and makes a face*) |
| Researcher: | What's wrong? Kilo se e?[108] |
| 81. AF: | (*Shakes her head*) |
| Researcher: | Se wa a try?[109] |
| 82. AF: | (*Shakes her head*) |
| Researcher: | Kilode? O ti e fe try rara.[110] |
| 83. AF: | Mo ma a try, Ma.[111] |
| Researcher: | Very good. So, mention three respiratory diseases. So arun meta to ni se pelu bi a se nmi.[112] |
| 84. AF: | Communicable..... |
| Researcher: | So nkan ki nkan to ba fe so.[113] |
| 85. AF: | Communicable disease |
| Researcher: | Communicable diseases. Yes, are diseases but which ones have to do with the way we breathe? Awon arun wo ni o ni se pelu bi a se nmi?[114] |
| 86. AF: | (*Frowns*) |
| Researcher: | Se o mo pe ki a to le mii da a da, orisirisi uhmmm organs uhmmm awon nkan ti o wa ninu wa ni a ma nlo. OK, se o mo pe ti o ba mi sinu bayi, (*taking a deep breath*), ategun yen (oxygen) a gba imu e wole a de wa lo si aya e a gba lungs e ki o to de gbogbo ibi ti o ye ko lo[115] |
| 87. AF: | (*Continues to frown*) |
| Researcher: | Awon arun wo ni o somo bi a se nmi yen?[116] |
| 88. AF: | Tyfod |
| Researcher: | Typhoid. Uhmmm well, typhoid is a disease but not the one we want. But how do people contact typhoid? Ki ni awon eyan se ma nko typhoid?[117] |
| 89. AF: | (*Looks away*) |
| Researcher: | Se oti gbo nipa asthma ri tabi hay fever?[118] |
| 90. AF: | (*Frowns and then shakes her head slightly*) |
| Researcher: | Have you been taught? Se won ti ko yin?[119] |
| 91. AF: | (*Frowning and shaking her head*) Rara uhmm no. Oh uhmm beni, Ma[120]. |
| Researcher: | Can you attempt any of the questions? Se ikankan wa ninu awon nkan ti won bere wa ti o le dahun?[121] |
| 92. AF: | Rara. Oti, Ma.[122] |

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[106] *Say three diseases that have to do with the way we breathe.*

[107] *What's the matter?*

[108] *What's wrong with you?*

[109] *Will you try?*

[110] *Why? You don't even want to try at all?*

[111] *I'll try, Ma.*

[112] *Say three diseases that has to do with the way we breathe.*

[113] *Say whatever it is that you want to say.*

[114] *Which diseases have to do with the way breathe?*

[115] *You know before we breathe properly, there are various organs, those things that are inside us, involved. You know when you take a deep breath, the air you take in, oxygen, goes through to your lungs before it goes to different parts of your body.*

[116] *Which diseases are associated with that process of breathing?*

[117] *How do people contact typhoid?*

[118] *Have you ever heard about asthma or hay fever?*

[119] *Have you been taught?*

[120] *No uhmm no. Oh yes, Ma.*

[121] *Is there any of the questions that you think you can answer?*

[122] *No, Ma.*

Researcher: Awon nkan ti mo ko si yen nko? Awon alaye ti wa lori paper yen, the glossary nko?[123]
93. AF: *(Now a bit excited)* Yes.
Researcher: Yes? Kini o mean? What do mean by yes?
94. AF: Awon yen ni mo koko lo wo.[124]
Researcher: Kini o wa sele?[125]
95. AF: Awon nkan tan bere o ye mi, mi o mo nkan ti mo ma a ko. Mi o mo nkan ti won bere.[126]


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Researcher: Bawo ni test ti o se tan?[127]
96. AF: O da, Ma.
Researcher: Se o sure?[128]
97. AF: *(Smiling)* Eleyi da.[129]
Researcher: Inu mi dun. Bawo wa ni bi mo se se paper yen loteyi?[130]
98. AF: *(Smiling)* O wun ni mo koko lo wo. O jeki awon nkan tan nbere ye mi. Ikeji yen ti gun ju.[131]
Researcher: Too long?
99. AF: Mi o mo pupo ninu won. Mi o le ka a awon imi ninu iyi ti e koko gbewa na. Nitori e ni mi o se wo. Sugbon o da.[132]
Researcher: O da a sha? Ki wa lode ti o tun nfi owo leran, ti o nkun labele ti o tun nbo iwe e?[133]
100. AF: *(Looking away, then down at her hands)*
Researcher: Kilo sele?[134]
101. AF: Moti se tan, awoyoku o de daun.[135]
Researcher: Won daun? But so setan too to?[136]
102. AF: Moti pari awon ti mo mo.[137]
Researcher: OK.
103. AF: Mo fe kuro ninu ibe.[138]
Researcher: Se ole toto yen ni?[139]
104. AF: *(Looks away)*
Researcher: O ba kan fun teacher yin ni paper e ki o de bo o ta.[140]
105. AF: (Shaking her head) Won ma a raye wo ise mi. Won de ma no mi ti mo baa si. Nitoti e ni mo se ma nbo ise mi. Won ma a soro si mi niwaju gbogbo class.[141]
Researcher: Bawo ni o se nfeel nipa iyen?[142]

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[123] *What about the simplification of the language and the glossary?*
[124] *Those are the ones I first of all looked at.*
[125] *What then happened?*
[126] *I didn't understand the questions. I don't know what they are asking. I didn't know what to write.*
[127] *How was the test you just finished?*
[128] *Are you sure?*
[129] *This one was good.*
[130] *I am glad. How was the adaptation this time?*
[131] *That was what I looked at first. It helped me understand what I was asked to do.The second one was too long.*
[132] *I didn't know many of them. I couldn't read the ones on the earlier one you brought. That's why I didn't bother to look at this one. But it was good.*
[133] *It was good? Then, why were you resting your head on your palms, muttering and even covering your work?*
[134] *What happened?*
[135] *I had finished and the others didn't hurry up.*
[136] *They didn't hurry up? But, did you truly finish?*
[137] *I finished the ones I knew.*
[138] *I wanted to leave the place.*
[139] *Was it that bad.*
[140] *You should have just handed in your script and left.*
[141] *They (teacher) will have time to look at my work and beat me if I get something wrong, That's why I cover my work so that I'm not embarrassed in front of the class.*

106. AF:     Inu mi o kin dun rara. Mi o kin fe se test.[143]
Researcher:     So, se wa le ka questions yen ni oteyi?[144]
107. AF:     Yes, Ma. Mo ma a kaa.[145]
Researcher:     OK. Jeki a bere pelu number 1.[146]

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[142] *How does that make you feel?*

[143] *I'm never happy at all. I don't like taking tests*

[144] *So, will you be able to read the question this time?*

[145] *I will read it.*

[146] *Let's start with number 1.*