Cultural identity and acquisition planning for English as a second language in South Africa

by

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Table 5.74: Pearson Product-Moment correlations between the ethnic identity items and the English L2 proficiency of Southern Sotho respondents

Table 5.75: Pearson Product-Moment correlations between the racial identity items and the English L2 proficiency of Southern Sotho respondents

Table 5.76: Racial identification as predictor of the English L2 proficiency of Southern Sotho respondents

Table 5.77: Pearson Product-Moment correlations between attitudes towards the in-group and the English L2 proficiency of Southern Sotho respondents

Table 5.78: Pearson Product-Moment correlations between the attitudes towards the out-group and the English L2 proficiency of Southern Sotho respondents

Table 5.79: Pearson Product-Moment correlations between the ethnolinguistic vitality items and the English L2 proficiency of Southern Sotho respondents

Table 5.80: Ethnolinguistic vitality as predictor of the English L2 proficiency of Southern Sotho respondents
Chapter 1

Contextualisation of the problem

1 Introduction

The problem central to this study involves two contexts: the language planning context for learning English as a second language,¹ and the context of social models/theories/approaches² of L2 learning and their ability to explain variability of English proficiency in multilingual South Africa. Multilingualism can be regarded as a societal and/or an individual phenomenon. In the South African context, both uses of the term apply. Languages from at least five different language families (Bantu, Germanic, Dravidian, Polynesian, Chinese) are used in the South African society (Mesthrie, 1995: xv). On an individual level, many South Africans report speaking and understanding five or more languages (cf. Table 4.5, Chapter 4; Mesthrie, 1995: xvi; Reagan, 1995: 321). It is in a multilingual context that this study hopes to revisit the context of learning English as a L2.

1.1 Problems at the level of English L2 proficiency in South Africa

English holds an ambivalent position in multilingual South Africa (Norton Peirce, 1989: 401; Hartshorne, 1995: 307; Titlestad, 1998: 33). It is seen as a priceless national resource by many people, while others regard it as an environmental hazard that could eventually result in language death/murder for other South African languages (Titlestad, 1998: 33; Bruckmann, 1998: 179). Although English is the first language³ of less than 10% of the South African population (Beukes, 1991: 91; Lemmer, 1995: 83; Mesthrie, 1995: xvi; Ridge, 1996: 16), many South Africans choose to or are forced to acquire it as a L2. English seems set to play an important role in specific domains (for example, in the business world and in education) in

¹ From now on, "L2" is used to refer to "second language". The writer wants readers to read "second language" and not "L2". Therefore, "a L2" is used and not "an L2".
² From now on only "approaches" is used – except where model/theory forms part of the formal appellation of the approach. "Model" and "theory" have very specific meanings in scientific discourse, whereas "approach" refers to a more general attempt to come to a closer understanding of a phenomenon.
³ As Deurnert (2000: 395) points out, there is no simple answer to the question, what is your mother tongue? The term, first language, is used as a synonym for home language and mother tongue or what McArthur (1998a: 43) defines as English as a native language (ENL) in this thesis. From now on "L1" is used to refer to "first language".

South Africans ascribe various personal benefits to knowledge of English. Many black South Africans regard English as an instrument of upward economic mobility (Mathiane, 1989: 7; Du Plessis, 1991: 338; Sarinjeive, 1994: 398; Lemmer, 1995: 83; Lazenby, 1996: 30-35; Bosch & De Klerk, 1996: 235; Verhoef, 1998: 35). English has almost become synonymous with education or “being educated” (Mawasha, 1987: 107, 111, 113; Ndebele, 1987: 14; Sarinjeive, 1994: 398; Bosch & De Klerk, 1996: 235). The overwhelming desire of black parents to ensure an English education for their children is one expression of the perception that to be educated means the acquisition of knowledge and expertise through the medium of English6 (Mawasha, 1987: 113; Lemmer, 1995: 84). A further expression of this assumption is the confusion of proficiency in English with cognitive academic proficiency. Some researchers have argued that the lack of academic achievement of black learners in South Africa is basically caused by a lack of English L2 proficiency (for example, Pienaar, 1987: 19). Researchers like Pienaar sincerely believe that if the English L2 skills of their learners could be improved, they will become more academically successful. Research reported by Agar (1990), Henning (1994), Starfield (1994), Kapp (1998), Olivier (1998) and Volbrecht (1992; 1994) clearly dispose of this incorrect assumption. They argue that other factors also impact on the academic achievement of black learners in South Africa. Ndebele (1987: 14) also asserts that “the fracture between the acquisition of knowledge and the acquisition of English must be brought about. This is in the obvious recognition that the sphere of human knowledge is much wider than any one language can carry”. English is also regarded


... in this climate parents, learners and some teachers often seem to believe that English has an almost magical power: ‘If you know English well, desired things will follow’.

Despite such strong motivation to learn English (also reported by Webb, 1996), and its high status in South Africa (Mathiane, 1989; Langtag, 1996: 13, 15, 69), several teachers and researchers observe low levels of English L2 proficiency among South Africans. Bruckmann (1998: 180) reports that findings from a recent study by Proctor (1996) “has shown that fewer than half of students enrolling at a college of education had a reading level of standard 5 or higher”. This evidence gives substance to claims made earlier by other researchers. Lemmer (1993: 150) claims that “teachers in black schools ... often lack the English proficiency that is necessary for effective teaching” and as a result, their pupils “still do not have the command of English that is necessary for school success”. Jacobs (1994: 16) identifies the frustrations and problems caused by limited spoken English proficiency of students in tertiary education, and its potential effect on academic achievement. Webb (1996: 180) states that “most black South Africans do not have an effective competence in English”.8 (Cf., for example, Beukes’ (1991: 95) report on SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation) surveys that aimed at determining whether South Africans understood “complex” English). These observations indicate that the levels of English L2

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6 English escaped stigmatisation as language of the “coloniser”, mainly as a result of the Afrikaans scapegoat (Cluver, 1995: 185).

7 This is not only true for English in South Africa. World wide, English is regarded as an important language of wider communication. It is, for example, seen as the world language of science and technology (Kaplan, 1990: 7; McArthur, 1998a: 208-212).

8 This is not equally true for white Afrikaans learners of English as a L2 (Titestad, 1998: 34). Some researchers have argued that white Afrikaans learners of English as a L2 have the benefits of L1 medium education and relatively effective English L2 teaching that result in them becoming additive bilinguals who cope well with education in English, if required. According to Lemmer (1995: 87), white Afrikaans learners are “children from a dominant language group [that] add a second language to their existing repertoires of skills at no cost to the development and maintenance of their mother tongue”. De Klerk and Bosch (1995: 19) hold that race and linguistic affiliation had historically determined education and employment opportunities in South Africa. Because of the advantaged conditions under which they acquire English as a L2, white Afrikaans learners, therefore, become additive bilinguals.
proficiency achieved by South African learners are inadequate to effectively facilitate access to some domains, for example, learning in higher education.

1.2 Problems at the level of language planning

The area where this problem [lack of desired English L2 proficiency] must be addressed is in acquisition planning. Acquisition planning (Cooper, 1989a: 33, 157) refers to "language teaching as an object of policy making" or "the organized efforts to promote the learning of a language". Although this term had only been conceptualised in the past decade, Schuring (1992: 251) points out that, "Die ondernwytsaalbeleid handel dus hoofsaaklik oor taalverwerwing". The language in education policies of previous South African governments, therefore, all resulted in organised efforts to promote the learning of languages, including English. These language in education policies could, therefore, be regarded as unintentional acquisition planning efforts. In other words, acquisition planning was conducted in South Africa, although the label (acquisition planning) was only coined in 1989. Current (and deliberate) acquisition planning efforts for English as a L2 in South Africa (as expressed, for example, in the Langtag report), are hampered by two problems: a lack of overt acquisition planning goals for English as a L2 and a lack of baseline information about language and social attitudes of learners. In this study, discussion of recent language planning efforts in South Africa will focus on the Langtag (1996) report, because it presents one of the most encompassing frameworks for future, national language planning. It is postulated that this influential report would affect future language planning efforts in all domains of the South African society.

Firstly, the Langtag (1996: 8) committee was an advisory committee that aimed, in the spirit of democracy and an attempt at "bottom-up" language planning, for an "enabling framework rather than to put forward a prescriptive blueprint" for language planning in South Africa. The Langtag report, therefore, does not list specific acquisition planning goals for the respective official languages. This is in line with language treatment in the Constitution of South Africa. Bruckmann (1998: 180) states that: "The Constitution recognises eleven languages without giving any special status to any of them". This approach to policy development is dangerous. English might become a power tool that divides South Africans into a relatively small elite, who are fluent in English, and a majority, who are not able to conduct their lives and business in English (Hartshorne, 1995: 317; Titlestad, 1996: 163; Gough, 1996: 70; Bruckmann, 1998: 181). Such a drive towards politically correct official multilingualism and language equity obscures the special position of English in South Africa. With other scholars, it is argued in this thesis that it is important that acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa receives special attention because of the potentially dangerous situation of creating a divide between people in South Africa.

Verhoef (1998) identifies a related problem. According to her there is a discrepancy between an official and political sanction for more functions performed in African languages, i.e. multilingualism (for example, Langtag, 1996; Titlestad, 1996), and the insistence of black parents on English medium education for their children (for example, Carey, 1993: 34; Langtag, 1996: 82; Mawasha, 1996). In a study by Bosch and De Klerk (1996: 242, 245) attitudes of Xhosa speakers in the Eastern Cape clearly illustrate this discrepancy. Consistently, these Xhosa speakers displayed "a definite preference for English alone (and not a combination of languages including English)". This discrepancy indicates that the underlying motivation for the multilingual official language policy is political correctness. The official multilingual language policy (as expressed in the constitution and expressed by the Langtag report) should be interpreted as an attempt at displaying a positive attitude towards language equity, rather than a need expressed and lived by members of a society that wish to function multilingually in formal domains. Against this background, Luckett (1993: 54) remarks that the promotion and development of African languages will require great political will on the part of the black middle class. Edwards (1994: 174) reminds us that "to be successful, language planning does not only depend upon the blessing of the powerful [for example, politicians who decide on the content of constitutions and the establishment of advisory committees], it also requires acceptance from those whose linguistic habits are to be affected". What is necessary for more informed
language planning in this regard, is more comprehensive information about the language and social attitudes of South Africans (Luckett, 1993: 42).

Many language planners and researchers of language planning argue that language planning should be seen as integrated into general social planning (Rubin & Jermudd, 1971: xiv, xvi, xx, xxi; Kelman, 1971: 42, 46; Rubin, 1971b: 309; Cooper, 1989a; Luckett, 1993: 42). Therefore, information about social, cultural and political dimensions of society should be incorporated into language planning. Schiffman (1996: 2) points out that there usually is a great discrepancy between language policies as stated and language policies as they are implemented. The apparent “poorly selected” language policies could be caused by several factors: “accidents of history” or they might be simply misguided or wrongheaded. He then argues that the “linguistic culture” of politics would explain a lot about the language policy choices made by these countries. Schiffman (1996: 5) defines linguistic culture as “... the set of beliefs, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language, and religio-historical circumstances associated with a particular language”.

Although Schiffman (1996: 17) accepts that policy and reality are separate issues, he argues that an understanding of the linguistic culture of a society could present valuable information about the language policy selected. He (1996: 54) is also of the opinion that ideally policy and the reality/society it is created for (or preferably with) should “fit”. It is postulated in this thesis that a better understanding of the cultural identity of language users could provide valuable information that could facilitate this fit” and consequently improve acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa.

Secondly, acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa can benefit from more detailed information about learners’ language attitudes and social attitudes. According to De Kadt (1999: 198), we know too little about “... actual language learning by South Africans, any additional information concerning language beliefs, attitudes and motivational orientations ... may well be of value to materials developers”. This also applies to language planners – specifically those interested in acquisition planning. This is a need that is also identified by Du Plessis (1991: 251), Bosch and De Klerk (1996) and the Langtag committee (1996: 2, 14, 20, 25, 26, 116, 125). The Langtag report (1996: 116) states:

In order to give effect to the strategies suggested, reliable baseline information and targeted research are required ... In particular, the Subcommittees stress the need for targeted research ... [in the long term] to determine the degree of language shift and language maintenance as well as other sociolinguistic trends.

These remarks point to an important problem: acquisition planning efforts for English as a L2 in multilingual South Africa are (and were) not effective enough. Although many South Africans are highly motivated to learn English as a L2, and although a lot of effort went and is going into this process (Webb, 1996: 179; Kapp, 1998), the levels of English L2 proficiency achieved remain low or inadequate to give learners access to the domains/functions they plan to engage with by learning English as a L2. This potentially dangerous situation is not effectively addressed by the Langtag (1996) report (an encompassing, current language planning document) that aims to create an “enabling framework” rather than present a “prescriptive blueprint” for future language planning in South Africa. If the tentative suggestions of the Langtag report are not followed by more overt language plans, acquisition planning for English as a L2 would not be effective. In addition, the information required to improve acquisition planning efforts (information about language and social attitudes of L2 learners) is not always available.

1 This implies that both the unintentional acquisition planning that resulted from language in education policies for South African education in the past, as well as the tentative acquisition planning goals put forward by the Langtag (1996) report, could be improved.
The "Language in education" chapter in the Langtag report (1996) states that its work is informed by the values and goals of the (then) interim constitution. One of the values and goals it focuses on is "the cultural thrust in which it is hoped that genuine respect for language and cultural diversity will become a definite characteristic of the people of South Africa" (Langtag, 1996: 124). It is postulated in this thesis that knowledge about the cultural identities of English L2 learners and the role language plays as part of their cultural identity could provide the information needed to improve acquisition planning for English as a L2 in multilingual South Africa. Luckett (1993: 42) and Bosch and De Klerk (1996: 234) also identify knowledge about the language attitudes of people as an important element for successful implementation of a language plan.

1.3 Problems at the level of social approaches to L2 learning

Both researchers from the fields of L2 acquisition (or applied linguistics) and language planning are interested in the question: why are some learners of second languages more successful than others (Tollefson, 1991: 22; Ellis, 1994: 197). According to Tollefson (1991: 22): "In the past twenty years, their [researchers in the fields of L2 acquisition research and language planning] search for answers [concerning L2 proficiency] has increasingly focused on a limited set of factors called "learner variables". Although L2 learning research acknowledges the importance of social factors from the beginning (Ellis, 1997: 137), social models of L2 learning form a small part of the L2 learning industry that is dominated by the focus on individual learner differences (Ellis, 1997: 37, 51).

The various social models of L2 acquisition that are available, suffer from two shortcomings that interfere with their potential use as tools to solve the language planning information needs. The first one of these problems concerns the notion of "integrative motivation". The second problem concerns the construction of the identity of the language learner as necessarily developing from being monolingual in the L1 through an interim bilingual phase towards achieving the goal of being a monolingual L2-speaker.

Firstly, then, a social model of L2 learning needs to be sensitive to differences that exist in the language learning context. Some of these differences are not recognised thoroughly by current social models. The consequences of simplified constructions of the language learning context can be seen in the construction of the notion of integrative motivation. Gardner (1985) and Ellis (1994, 1997) identify six models of L2 learning that make use, in varying degrees, of the notion of "integrative motivation" (a social-psychological construct):

- social psychological model of Lambert (Gardner, 1985: 132-135);
- acculturation model of Schumann (Gardner, 1985: 135-137; Ellis, 1994: 230-234);
- social context model of Clément (Gardner, 1985: 137-139);
- intergroup model of Giles and associates (Gardner, 1985: 139-142; Ellis, 1994: 234-236);
- socio-educational model of Gardner (Gardner, 1985: 145-166; Ellis, 1994: 236-239); and

Van der Walt (1997: 36) states that, "[e]mpirical research in support of a relationship between motivation and L2 achievement/proficiency offers fairly mixed results". According to her (1997: 36), Gardner and his associates find that integrative motivation is invariably related to L2 achievement, while Oller and his associates and Clément and his associates find negative relationships or no relationships between L2 proficiency and integrativeness. Integrative and instrumental motivation, anxiety, risk-taking and conscientiousness are all related statistically significantly with English L2 proficiency in Van der Walt's (1997: 139) study. Generally, integrative motivation is linked more consistently to successful language learning (Edwards, 1994: 65-66; Bosch & De Klerk, 1996: 244; De Kadt, 1999: 201), although Bosch and De Klerk (1996) and Van der Walt (1997) hold that the two probably influence each other.

Lambert initially coined the term integrative motivation to refer to "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other [language] group" (Lambert 1974: 98)" (in Gardner, 1985: 133). In the other social models of L2
learning integrative motivation is defined more strongly to refer to a wish to integrate/acculturate with the target language community and not simply an “interest” in (or “openness” towards) the target language community and its culture. The acculturation model of Schumann expresses this definition of the integrative motivation the strongest (Gardner, 1985: 135). He defines acculturation as “the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language (TL) group” (Gardner, 1985: 135). Unsuccessful learners of second languages, therefore, fail because “they are unable or unwilling to adapt to a new culture” (Ellis, 1997: 40). All the social models of L2 learning attempt to show that:

learners who wish to assimilate – who value or identify with members of the target-language community – are generally more successful than learners who are concerned about retaining their original cultural identity. They are more successful than learners who merely wish to increase their salary or employment options (Tollefsen, 1991: 23).

The multilingual and multicultural character of the South African context poses a strong challenge to the main assumptions underlying these social models of L2 learning. From the perspective of language planning, integrativeness is a problematic predictor of English L2 achievement in South Africa (Lanham, 1985: 248; Nortje & Wissing, 1996: 141; Bosch & De Klerk, 1996: 246) for three reasons. First of all, English is learned by South Africans to communicate and better understand (Lambert’s definition of integrativeness) speakers of South African languages other than English, across language boundaries. English, therefore, operates as a lingua franca in South Africa and this provides a mainly pragmatic (Luckett, 1993: 50; Bosch & De Klerk, 1996: 235) motivation to learn it as a L2. Secondly, the target language group (English L1 speakers in South Africa) is a small group with fairly exclusive group boundaries. Bosch and De Klerk (1996: 245) found that this group, like other groups in South Africa, is also “protective of their identity as a cultural unit”. Thirdly, lack of contact between learners of English as a L2 and L1 speakers of English is a concern for researchers of English L2 learning (Desai et al., 1992: 12; Luckett, 1993: 47-48). Integration with the South African English L1 group is, therefore, not a reason for learning English in South Africa (Lanham, 1985: 248; Nortje & Wissing, 1996: 141; Bosch & De Klerk, 1996: 246), and successfully mastering English is not enough reason to be accepted as part of the English-speaking South African community. Buthelezi (1995: 243) argues that apartheid laws limited contact between black learners of English as a L2 and L1 speakers of English to the extent that no integrative notions for learning English could prevail. Economic reasons provided a strong instrumental and pragmatic motivation for black people to learn English as a L2 (Buthelezi, 1995: 243).

Bosch and De Klerk (1996: 235) add another perspective to the debate about the integrative motivation for black people to learn English as a L2. They refer to the existence of “a certain amount of linguistic schizophrenia in Africa”. Black English L2 speakers are pulled two ways: on the one hand, they want to be able to use English well, and on the other hand, they don’t want to loose touch with their true linguistic identity. This attitude could influence English L2 proficiency. Although English is admired, people avoid attempts to speak it well. These differences between the language learning context in South Africa and the learning context of immigrants/minority groups in a monolingual environment – the prototype situation for the study of integrative motivation - renders the very construct of integrative motivation problematic.

The second problem with social models of L2 acquisition, which follows from the first one, is the assumption that the learner's identity develops from that of a monolingual L1-speaker through an interim bilingual phase towards the stable final state of a monolingual L2 or (at its most complex) a bilingual speaker. Wardhaugh (1987: 17), for example, argues that multilingual situations may be inherently unstable and a bilingual situation might be:

... no more than a temporary expedient, a somewhat marginal phenomenon, because when one language encroaches on another, bilingualism may prove to be only a temporary waystage to unilingualism in the encroaching language as the latter assumes more and more functions and is acquired as the sole language by greater numbers of people.

Similar models are at work in the field of literacy development. In its survey of literacy efforts in South Africa, the Langtag report (1996: 29) finds at least three...
models that aim to lead learners to literacy: the models "range from straight-for-
English models through transitional bilingual models to curriculum models with a
multilingual philosophy". Even the models that allow for stable bilingual proficiency
to be developed do not place sufficient emphasis on the acquisition of
multilingualism.

This assumption is present in Schumann's Acculturation model. According to
Gardner (1985: 135), "Schumann's major proposition is that L2 acquisition is just
one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the TL
(target language) group will control the degree to which he acquires the second
language".

Although the aim is to learn a "second" language, total acculturation (and not bi-
or multilingualism) is seen as the only way to achieve this goal. This assumption of a
"single" and static identity is also prevalent in, for example, Giles' Intergroup model.
According to this model, "Learners from minority groups will be unlikely to achieve
native-speaker proficiency when their ethnolinguistic vitality is high ... [and] they
will achieve low levels of communicative proficiency because this would seem to
detract from their ethnic identity" (Ellis, 1994: 234-235). The "simplex" view of
identity underlying these models does not take into account a complex, multidimensional identity construct as prevalent in multilingual and multicultural
societies.

Such a simplex identity construction informs the entire notion of integrative
motivation. The failure of integrative motivation as explanatory device is, therefore,
the consequence of this flawed assumption about identity, an assumption that
factualy misrepresents the language learning context in South Africa. In connection
with African society in general, Bamgbose (1991:3), for example, states that "a
person who speaks several languages is to be regarded as a better integrated citizen
than one who is only proficient in one language". The cultural identity of African
citizens is multidimensional (multicultural and multilingual) and the acquisition of
more than one language is one expression of this multidimensionality.

An alternative conception of the social factors influencing L2 proficiency, emanating
from the research of Norton Peirce, is much more useful to the South African context.

Norton Peirce (1989; 1995) argues that asserting different forms of social identity in
different contexts is more instrumental in L2 learning than attempts to integrate with
the target language group and culture. By setting up countercourses and by
resisting subject positions such as "L2 learner desiring to integrate with dominant
group by means of learning their language", L2 learners claim the right to speak their
L2 (Norton Peirce, 1995: 23), and this leads to use of the L2 and ultimately learning it
more effectively. She is sceptical of the implications of the teaching of English so
"that [it] promotes a student's uncritical integration into a society" (Norton Peirce,
1989: 407). These notions expressed by Norton Peirce (1989; 1995) have also been
utilised in South Africa by Clareece (1992) to address the issue of language and
power in the South African tertiary context. In the context of general academic
achievement, Cummins (1995: 2) regards negotiating identity as fundamental to the
academic success of culturally diverse learners.

Given the multicultural and multilingual nature of the South African society that
acquires English as a L2, the cultural dimension of social identity is the central aspect.

For the purposes of the introduction, cultural identity is defined as follows:

Cultural identity is a complex, ascribed type of social identity that takes
various forms in different contexts. It encompasses objective and subjective
attributes. Subjective attributes of cultural identity are expressed as one's
attitudes towards the cultural values and language/s of the own group; one's
identification with the own ethnicity and racial identity; and one's attitudes
towards the own and other groups.

This conceptual definition is a synthesis of reading about cultural identity from
several disciplines (for example, Barker, 1999; Brock & Tulasiewicz, 1985; Fishman,
1997a; Friedman, 1994; Hall & Du Guy, 1996; Kramsch, 1998; Kravetz, 1985;
Larrain, 1994; Norton, 2000; Preiswerk, 1979; Segers, 1997; Tajfel, 1982;
Wardhaugh, 1987). The operationalisation of the construct cultural identity is
discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

This construct potentially holds the key to addressing the acquisition planning
problem for English as a L2 in South Africa and may be crucial to a more accurate
social explanation of the variability in English L2 proficiency of South African

17 Norton (2000: 5) defines identity as, "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world,
how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities
for the future". Language plays an important role in the process of negotiating identity.
learners. A better understanding of the cultural identity of L2 learners could improve
guiding this study is that an increased
acquisition planning efforts, as well as social approaches towards L2 learning.
Ultimately, a social perspective on L2 proficiency could provide new insights into
variability in L2 proficiency in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

1.4 The problem defined

The essence of the problem seems to be that:

Students at ex-DET [Department of Education and Training] schools generally
spent 12 years learning English as a subject while using it as a medium of
instruction for eight of those years. One may well question then, why students
still struggle with English (Kapp, 1998: 26).

Additionally, one should consider that English undeniably holds high status in South
Africa and that black parents and learners have repeatedly illustrated their interest
(and, therefore, strong motivation) to learn English as a L2. Despite their exposure to
English as a medium of instruction and despite their overwhelmingly positive
attitudes, low levels of English L2 proficiency are widely reported.

A particular concern is that black learners learn English as a L2 in order to access
higher education. Reports of low proficiency often state that the English L2 proficiency achieved by black learners does not facilitate learning in the higher
education context. The low levels of English L2 proficiency indicate that acquisition
planning (in the past and currently) for English as a L2 is not effective enough.

Several researchers indicate that successful implementation of language planning is
dependent upon a thorough understanding of the linguistic and social attitudes of the
learners for (and with) whom the language plan is developed (Breton, 1996: 178-179;
Bosch & De Klerk, 1996: 247; Verhoef, 1998: 48-49). This information is not readily

Potentially, one would like to look toward established social approaches to L2
learning for such information. However, these approaches do not enable a thorough
understanding of learning English as a L2 in the multilingual South African context.
As indicated, the approaches fail to provide a conceptual basis for studying English
L2 acquisition in the South African context, because, the focus on integrative
motivation overlooks the influence of cultural identity on L2 proficiency.

Current models also display an essentialist and static view of cultural identity
irrelevant to a description of any South African cultural identity. The latter should be
viewed as in line with current thinking about cultural identity as a plural and dynamic
Because of these assumptions, it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain the
information required for effective acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South
Africa by means of these approaches.

2 Central theoretical statement

The central theoretical statement that guides this study is that an increased
understanding of the cultural identities of English L2 learners provides information
required to improve acquisition planning18 for English as a L2 in multilingual South
Africa.

This study has one main purpose:

• to determine how a better understanding of cultural identity can improve
acquisition planning for English as a L2.

In order to realise this purpose, the secondary aims of the study are:

• to analyse the acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa,
• to determine the English L2 proficiency of two groups of L2 learners of English in
   South Africa (L1 speakers of Afrikaans and Southern Sotho respectively) as
   representatives of the broader L2 community in South Africa,
• to describe their cultural identities,
• to determine if aspects of cultural identity are related to the English L2
   proficiency of the subjects (Pearson Product Moment correlations), and
• to determine if aspects of cultural identity contribute to variance in the English L2
   proficiency (stepwise multiple regression analysis) of the subjects.

18 This implies that both the unintentional acquisition planning that resulted from language in education
policies for South African education in the past, as well as the tentative acquisition planning goals put
forward by the Langtag (1996) report, could be improved.
The final outcome of this study is to draft a proposal to improve acquisition planning for English as a L2 in multilingual South Africa.

3 Method of research

A detailed discussion of the research methods utilised in this study is presented in Chapter 4. The following brief discussion is included in this chapter as a means of introduction and preliminary overview of the study.

3.1 Review of literature

Literature about acquisition planning in multilingual contexts, cultural identity and social approaches to L2 learning was reviewed. From this survey, a working definition of language planning and cultural identity was formulated. The relevant literature on language planning in South Africa was analysed in order to determine the state of acquisition planning for English as a L2.

3.2 Empirical investigation

The empirical investigation is mainly focused on the realisation of the secondary aims of the study.

3.2.1 Design

Correlation and stepwise multiple regression analyses were calculated. Statistical and practical significance were considered.

3.2.2 Subjects

White Afrikaans learners of English were selected, because Titlestad (1998: 34) argues that their situation is different from the other L2 learners in South Africa. Southern Sotho speakers represent another sector of the L2 learning population. Except for very small European immigrant populations, all the other learners are speakers of Southern Bantu languages. These languages are very similar from a linguistic point of view (Wessels, 1996: 173), and the English spoken by these learners, termed Black South African English (BSAE20), is largely the same irrespective of the individual first languages (for example, Buthelezi, 1995; Gough, 1996; Wissing, 2000). These speakers share the same socio-political history as well. Given the linguistic and social (near-) identity, it seems reasonable to accept that the Southern Sotho learners could be regarded as representative of BSAE-speakers. Despite these arguments, no attempt will be made to generalise results for Southern Sotho respondents to that of speakers of BSAE with a different African language as L1. Southern Sotho learners of English as a L2 are regarded to represent one group of BSAE speakers other that the white Afrikaans respondents. Afrikaans and Southern Sotho are the two most prominent home languages in the Vaal Triangle region where the study was conducted. Findings from this study would, therefore, be useful in this context.

A stratified random sample (variables that are controlled for are: home language, age, gender and linguistic and educational context) of the following subjects was selected to participate in the study:

- 80 Afrikaans speakers of English as a L2 from an Afrikaans-dominant high school context (learners in grades 11 and 12);
- 80 Afrikaans speakers of English as a L2 from a more multilingual high school context (learners in grades 11 and 12); and
- 80 Southern Sotho speakers of English as a L2 in a multilingual tertiary context where English is used for formal functions, for example, as medium of instruction (first year students).

No attempt is made to compare the results of the Afrikaans and Southern Sotho respondents statistically. Owing to the very different conditions in which these learners learn English as a L2, and their vastly different socio-economic situations, such a comparison would be invalid. Therefore, statistical results are reported within groups. In this manner, apples can be compared with apples. In other words, given that conditions for learning and social context are very similar for all the Afrikaans respondents that participated in the study, the aim is to determine what the cultural identity profiles of more successful Afrikaans learners are. The same question is answered for Southern Sotho participants. Once these cultural identity profiles have

19 Coloured Afrikaans learners of English are not included in this study for two reasons: the absence of a comparable and standardised coloured racial identity attitude scale and the scarcity of coloured participants in the region where the study is conducted. The results of this study, therefore, only pertain to White Afrikaans learners of English as a L2.

20 A term used by other researchers as well, for example, Wright (1993: 1).
been described within groups, an attempt would be made to analyse these profiles of more successful Afrikaans and Southern Sotho learners for correspondences.

3.2.3 Variables

The dependent variable of this study is English L2 proficiency as measured by the "Proficiency test English L2 advanced level" (Van der Schyff, 1991). Independent variables are aspects of cultural identity. These include:

- Self-ascription of cultural identity and characteristics of cultural identity (open question);
- Attitudes towards phenotypes of culture;
- Identification with different groups in South Africa;
- Values (social);
- Ethnic identification with the own group;
- Racial identity attitudes;
- Attitudes towards own and other groups;
- Language usage and preference; and
- Ethnolinguistic vitality of the own group.

3.2.4 Instrumentation

Standardised tests and questionnaires that have preferably been used in the South African context previously were selected. The instruments selected included:

- Proficiency test English L2 advanced level (Van der Schyff, 1991; Chamberlain & Van der Schyff, 1991);
- Self-ascribed cultural identity and characteristics and phenotypes of culture (Bornman, 1995);
- Identification with different groups in South Africa (Bornman, 1995);
- Sections of the Values Scale (Langley, 1992; Langley et al., 1992);
- Ethnic identification (Bornman, 1995);
- Black and white racial identity attitude scales (Helms, 1993);
- Attitudes towards own and other groups (Bornman, 1995);
- Language usage and preference (questions developed by the researcher); and
- Ethnolinguistic vitality (Bornman, 1995).

A section requesting biographical data was also included (adapted from Bornman, 1995). Permission to use tests and questionnaires was obtained from all authors. Bond (quoted by Gudykunst & Schmidt, 1988: 7) finds that the language of a questionnaire is a sensitive issue in the gathering of socio-cultural information from subjects. Using a matched-guise technique, Cooper (1989b: 48-49) also reports that traits could be misinterpreted if the questionnaire is not translated into the L1. Spencer (1997: 61) also acknowledges the possible influence that the language of the questionnaire might have on the results. The cultural identity instruments were, therefore, translated into Afrikaans and Southern Sotho and the subjects could choose in which language they wished to complete the questionnaire.21

3.2.5 Data collection procedure and analysis

The procedure of data collection and analysis is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The data were analysed with the SPSS statistical programme and Dr Philip Pretorius (from the Vanderbijlpark campus of the Potchefstroom University) acted as statistical consultant. Pearson Product Moment correlations were used to determine if there were any relationships between the dependent (English L2 proficiency) and the independent variables (aspects of cultural identity). A stepwise multiple regression analysis was also conducted: the English L2 proficiency scores were regarded as criterion measures and the different aspects of cultural identity were regarded as predictor variables. Statistical and practical significance are reported.

4 Overview of chapters

The aim of Chapter 2 is to establish a working definition of language planning and to focus on acquisition planning or the language-in-education debate for English as a L2 in South Africa. In Chapter 3 an operational definition of cultural identity is offered on the basis of a detailed examination of this construct. In Chapter 4 the empirical

21 The sections from Bornman’s (1995) questionnaire used in this study (sections A, C, E and G of the questionnaire, cf. Appendix A), as well as the questions from the "Values scale" are available in Afrikaans.
investigation employed to realise the secondary aims of this study is presented. Detail about instrumentation and methods of data collection procedures and analysis are included. Chapter 5 contains the presentation and discussion of results. The proposal to improve acquisition planning for English as a L2 in multilingual South Africa is presented in Chapter 6, based on the findings of Chapter 5. Conclusions are also presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2

Acquisition planning

1 Introduction

In this chapter, four issues are addressed. Firstly, a working definition of language planning is established. Secondly, the definition of acquisition planning is discussed in more detail. Thirdly, an overview of acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa is offered. This includes an analysis of the unintentional acquisition planning for English as a L2 that formed part of language in education policies in the past and the current acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa as expressed in the Langtag (1996) report. Lastly, the specific approach to acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa is stated. This section further contextualises the problem at the level of language planning addressed in this study [cf. §1.2, Chapter 1] and it realises one of the secondary aims of this study: to analyse the acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa [§2, Chapter 1].

2 Definition of language planning

It is not the main aim of this thesis to present a comprehensive overview of the history of language planning and the current status quo of the discipline. This discussion should be viewed as an attempt to situate acquisition planning (the main focus of the study) within the broader language planning context. In order to select a working definition of language planning, selected aspects of language planning need exposition. These aspects include orientations towards and definitions of language planning and a discussion of the language planning processes relevant to this thesis.

2.1 Introduction

As will become clear in the ensuing discussion, researchers disagree about the relative status of language planning as a discipline. Disputes among researchers concentrate on two issues: the allocation of a “parent” discipline for language planning and a comprehensive and widely accepted definition of language planning. [The latter concern is dealt with in §2.2, Chapter 2]. A discussion of the “address” for language
planning as a discipline provides useful further contextualisation for the problem of the thesis and is, therefore, included.

There seems to be little agreement about a “parent” discipline or field of enquiry for language planning (Cooper, 1989a: 42-45; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997: xii, 14). This is mainly because a variety of disciplines impacted on language planning studies. Cooper (1989a: 42) identifies applied linguistics and the sociology of language as fields that overlap with language planning. Other scholars share this view. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: xii) state that “most applied linguists have been asked in some context to function as language planners”, and Machan and Scott (1992: 10) regard language planning as an issue dealt with in a study of the sociology of language. It is easy to perceive the overlap of the fields of both applied linguistics and the sociology of language with language planning. Generally speaking, applied linguists and language planners both are interested in solving language “problems” (Cooper, 1989a: 44). The relationship between the sociology of language and language planning is equally salient: both deal with broad issues concerning the relationship of languages to society (Cooper, 1989a: 44; Machan & Scott, 1992: 10). Other researchers regard language planning as being a part of the sociolinguistic paradigm (Mesthrie, 1995: xviii; Blommaert, 1996: 199) and then perceive the sociology of language to be a constituent part of this paradigm. According to Edwards (1996: 29), an interest in language and society could be regarded as an interest of applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and/or the sociology of language.

This study aims to work within the framework of the sociology of language. Spolsky (1998) distinguishes between the different approaches researchers take towards a social study of language. He (1998: 3) defines sociolinguistics as “the field that studies the relation between language and society, between the uses of language and the social structures in which the users of the language live”. He (1998: 6) further identifies two broad manners of sociolinguistic study: micro-sociolinguistics and macro-sociolinguistics. The goal of a micro-sociolinguistic study might be to determine how specific differences in the pronunciation of English in South Africa lead people to make judgements about the education or economic status of speakers.

Macro-sociolinguistics focuses on the whole of a language variety (any identifiable kind of language). “In macro-sociolinguistics, we treat language … alongside other human cultural phenomena” (Spolsky, 1998: 6). Questions asked in the context of macro-sociolinguistics include discussions of language maintenance and/or language shift of, for example, immigrant communities. Macro-sociolinguistics is also referred to as the sociology of language (Spolsky, 1998: 6). This implies an emphasis on the role of language in society as contrasted with a study of social influences on language. Language planning and the relationship between language and identity are phenomena that are often related to a study within the context of the sociology of language (Spolsky, 1998: 6-7).

The purpose and aims of this study are clearly situated in the framework of a study of the sociology of language. The study plans to investigate possible links between aspects of cultural identity (a part of one’s broader social identity) and acquisition planning for English as a L2. The operational definition of cultural identity adhered to in this study [cf. Chapter 3] emphasises the multidimensional nature of the construct. Cultural identity serves as an umbrella term that encompasses several aspects of one’s dynamic social identity. Also akin to this approach, the study aims to investigate the sociology of language. The study aims to investigate a variety of aspects of cultural identity in relation to acquisition planning for English as a L2. The focus of the study is, therefore, not so much on internal language specific detail. It rather hopes to link aspects of the multidimensional construct cultural identity to the acquisition planning for English as a L2 for participants living in multilingual South Africa.

A discussion of the exact designation of a “parent” discipline for language planning is valuable only in so far as it provides a context that points to insights, methods and findings that are potentially useful to understand language planning better (Cooper, 1989a: 45). For the purposes of this study, there is no need to select either applied linguistics or sociolinguistics (in particular the sociology of language) as the main framework. The focus of this study on acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa requires the use of insights from both disciplinary contexts. Although acquisition planning is an aspect of language planning, it is closely related to debates about language in education (traditionally the domain of applied linguistics). This study could greatly benefit from insights of both “parent” disciplines.
2.2 Orientation towards and definitions of language planning

Cooper (1989a: 29) is of the opinion that there is little agreement about a definition of language planning or the activities that form part of language planning efforts. Verhoef (1991: 28) agrees and argues that, although the discipline of language planning has developed tremendously since the 1970s – there is still no single, standard definition of language planning. In contrast, more recently, Blommaert (1996: 199) argues that "[f]rom then onwards [the 1960s and 1970s], the term 'language planning' stood for a particular body of work and literature, and for a more or less neatly definable set of research and implementation activities".

Instead of fixating on the existence and/or uncovering of a single definition of language planning and implementation activities, he acknowledges the existence of a "body" of work and a "set of activities". This less idealistic or essentialist view regarding the search for a single, ultimate definition of language planning allows one to progress beyond the paralysis of definition creation or selection to more important concerns. An example of a more productive approach to an analysis of definitions of language planning is to ask why more than one definition of language planning exists?

In this spirit, Du Plessis (1991: 68) claims that some definitions of language planning are gaining more importance. He (1991: 149-179) argues that the existence of different definitions of language planning is proof that different orientations to language planning exist and these ideologies are reflected by different definitions. Differences between language planning definitions are, therefore, not academic, but related to underlying ideologies of the language planner or researcher who creates or selects the definition. As introduction to a discussion of definitions, an overview of different orientations to language planning is in order.

Language planning is never a neutral activity (Du Plessis, 1991: 149; 167). A taxonomy of language ideologies includes: linguistic assimilation, linguistic pluralism, vernacularisation and internationalisation (Cobarrubias, 1983: 63-66). **Linguistic assimilation** refers to the ideal that all language users who cannot use the dominant language must be able to function in it, irrespective of their origin. Deumert (2000: 401) states that: "The ideology of linguistic assimilation is based on the belief that everyone should be able to speak and function in the dominant language of the community or nation". Processes such as colonisation, annexation, immigration and migration often result in linguistic assimilation. **Linguistic pluralism** encompasses the ideal that many different language groups could co-exist on an equal basis and have the right to maintain and cultivate their respective languages. Degrees of pluralism are possible. One could conceive of a continuum where declaration of all languages in a multilingual country as official languages is the strongest form. **Vernacularisation** is the attempt to restore (revive) and/or elaborate an indigenous language to function as official language. **Internationalisation** refers to the ideal of adopting a non-indigenous language as official language or as medium of teaching and learning. These language ideologies could also manifest in different combinations. Each of these ideologies expresses a different approach to language planning.

Based on the above taxonomy, at least five different orientations to language planning have been identified: language as a problem, language as a right, language as a resource, language as an instrument, and language as sentiment (Du Plessis, 1991: 156). According to Du Plessis (1991: 168), the most popular orientations (language as an instrument, language as sentiment and language as a problem) link strongly with ideologies of linguistic assimilation and internationalisation. The orientation of language as a right and language as a resource links with linguistic pluralism and vernacularisation. In similar fashion, Heugh (1995a: 331-332) argues that "... there is a relation between segregation and the view that language is a problem; between integration and the view that language is a right; and between multiculturalism or interculturalism and the view that language is a resource".

It is also possible to relate the language as sentiment approach to linguistic pluralism. Du Plessis' (1991: 167) own discussion of the maintenance of minority languages in multilingual communities (often linked to identity maintenance) seems to link the language as sentiment approach to the ideal of pluralism, although he introduces it as related to the ideologies of assimilation and internationalisation.

The prevailing definition of language planning is based on the ideology that language is a problem. Ruiz (1988: 18) explains the prevalence of this definition by arguing that language planning often occurs in the context of national development. In this
context, language, therefore, becomes one of several problems of a country en route to modernisation and/or independence. A second explanation concerns the unique socio-historical context of multilingual communities and a concern with the social disadvantage of particular speech communities. Typical social disadvantages (for example, poverty and lack of educational achievement) are often equated with language problems. [See §3.3.2 and §5.2, Chapter 2, for a discussion of a manifestation of this argument in the South African context]. Language is regarded as the underlying problem (Du Plessis, 1991: 163). Thirdly, some languages are regarded as less prestigious and less able to function in modern contexts than other languages. There are many people who believe that maintenance of small/minority languages will harm the speakers of those languages. This is a typical English monolingual argument and the solution is seen as becoming monolingual in a “worth while” language. The mere existence of multilingualism is regarded as a problem (Du Plessis, 1991: 164). This approach does not recognise or account for any link between language and identity.

Relevant to this thesis is a discussion of the orientation of language as sentiment, language as a right, and language as a resource. All three of these orientations link to some extent with a debate about language and identity. In the language as sentiment approach, the symbolic value of a language is emphasised and language is regarded as one of the most powerful symbols of identity (Du Plessis, 1991: 159; Swanepoel, 1992; Luckett, 1993: 40). A discussion of the history of Afrikaans language planning shows that this is the view held by many Afrikaans language planners (§3.3.1, Chapter 2). According to Ruiz (1988: 17), language planning based on criteria of the language as sentiment orientation entails devastating social consequences. Ruiz (1988: 17) is concerned with the potential dividing power of language policies of this nature in multilingual countries. Kelman (1971: 30) argues that the language as sentiment orientation could be regarded as positive and negative. He argues that a combination of the orientations language as instrument and language as sentiment could result in positive language planning. In the South African context, we have seen this concept (language as sentiment) stigmatised by the negative manifestation of this orientation towards language planning mainly driven by Afrikaans language planners and politicians (Luckett, 1993: 39-40). More recently, Fishman (1997a) deals with positive ethnolinguistic consciousness and concludes that it is salient in some speech communities. Language planners and language teachers would improve their practices if they understood these sentiments better.

The language as right approach is also linked to language and identity. The main motivation behind the language as right approach is the protection of minority groups and their identity (Du Plessis, 1991: 165). Ideally, multilingual communities should emphasise the language as resource approach. In this context, speakers of minority languages should be regarded as important experts of a scarce resource in the multilingual country (Du Plessis, 1991: 167).

In an attempt to understand the different ideologies that inform different definitions of language planning, Du Plessis (1991: 69–71) classifies language planning definitions into four broad categories: language planning as a solution to language problems; language planning as an agent/form of language change; language planning as a form of social manipulation; and language planning as a form of social intervention. His very useful categorisation is used as a framework for a discussion on definitions of language planning for this thesis.

2.2.1 Language planning as a solution to language problems

Several researchers conclude that the majority of the definitions emphasise that language planning is an organised attempt to find solutions to language problems on national level (for example, Du Plessis, 1991: 181-210; Verhoef, 1991: 23). Du Plessis (1991: 70–71) quotes examples of definitions, as given by Rubin (1973: 1), Fishman (1973: 23-24) and Eastman (1990: 2), that regard language planning as mainly focusing on solving a language problem.

These definitions bring three important concepts to the fore: language “problems”, language problem “solutions” and language planning “agents”. In this definitional framework, language planning is directed towards “special” situations and this often implies a multilingual context (Blommaert, 1996: 202). The mere existence of multilingual societies poses a “problem” to the language planner who regards language as a difficulty. Heugh (1995a: 331-332) argues that viewing language as a “problem” can be directly related to ideologies of assimilation and this links to Skutnabb-Kangas’ (1995: 597) identification of the “ideology of monolingual reductionism”. If a language planner perceives of language as a “problem”, the aim
of language planning will be to reduce linguistic complexity. One can, therefore, predict that definitions of language planning that focus on language as a "problem" will lead to the assimilation of minor languages.

The idea that "solutions" must be found to language problems leads to a fixation among some language planners to find the "perfect" or ideal solution to language problems. When one keeps in mind that language planning is but one aspect of social planning, usually a result of political decisions (Reagan, 1995: 319; Blommaert, 1996: 217; Deumert, 2000: 399), the implementation of "ideal" language planning solutions is clearly impossible. Marivate (1993: 103) has a very clear understanding of this relationship between language and social planning. In 1993 she begs authorities to "fund research on African languages and how they can be integrated within the developmental goals and practices that will in future be targeted". An idealistic view of language planning could lead to implementation paralysis, but when regarded as part of broader social planning, language planning should gain a new focus.

Language problem "solutions" are also related to two other aspects: organisation and scope. The organised nature of language planning refers to the decision-making aspect and the institutionalised approaches to implementation of language problem solutions. Inclusion of this idea in a definition of language planning ensures that only certain types of language planning activities (those that were carefully planned and executed by certain institutions, usually national government) are regarded as part of language planning exercises. More informal types of language planning are excluded by these definitions. The execution of "top-down" or "bottom-up" language planning activities form part of this discussion. In the spirit of multicultural theories, top-down language planning is condemned as flawed (Hough, 1995a: 336). The scope of language problem "solutions" refers to government involvement and the extent of communication problems that need to be solved. Again, this type of definition might exclude language planning conducted by institutions other than national government.

Du Plessis (1991: 180) argues that a noticeable gap in language planning literature (fixated on language problems) is the lack of a comprehensive definition of language problems. Haugen (1983: 286-287) imparts an important insight into the possibility of solving language problems by means of language planning. He is of the opinion that until we can predict with certainty how much of language change is the result of uncontrollable underlying social forces, we will never really be able to assess the impact of language planning. The cardinal question raised by Haugen is whether all language problems could ultimately be solved by means of language planning.

The concept "motivation network", coined by Neustupny (1968), is relevant to the question above. According to Du Plessis (1991: 191), this concept affords us insight into the social links of language problems. Neustupny (1968) argues that, in order to decide which types of solutions can be included in language plans, the motivation network between language problems and related social phenomena must first be determined (Du Plessis, 1991: 191). Without taking this relationship into account, a language policy has little chance of succeeding. Neustupny, therefore, argues from the point of view prevalent in many examples of language planning literature: language problems do not exist in isolation; they are embedded in broader social contexts (Du Plessis, 1991: 192).

Theoretically, it is, therefore, impossible to solve all language problems with language planning. Du Plessis (1991: 192) uses the example of resistance in Afrikaans to language mixing or "anglicisms" to illustrate the working of motivation networks and its possible contribution to language planning. He argues that the language strategy of language purism is not particularly successful in addressing this language problem, because it does not address the broader social situation, that of Afrikaans speakers and their contact with English. This contact occurs on two levels: contact with English in South Africa (for example, as lingua franca when contact with speakers other than Afrikaans is established), and contact with English globally or internationally (for example, through television, music and we can add the Internet). The real cause of the language problem is social contact with English and this situation can probably not be removed! According to Du Plessis (1991: 194-195), language mixing in Afrikaans could primarily be ascribed to the culture and the social world of the Afrikaans-speaking person, cast in an English mould (1991: 194-195). In other words, the best language policy in the world would have no chance of success. If one accepts that the main setting for language problems is social systems or forces (Du Plessis, 1991: 197, 200), it is postulated in this thesis that an understanding of the cultural identity of Afrikaans users of English would better inform language planners if they want to prevent or lessen language mixing. This would be a more effective
way of enabling the language planner to fully comprehend the social system within which the language plan should be able to function.

Of particular importance to this thesis is Fishman’s (1968) distinction between nationism and nationalism. Fishman focuses on the language problems of developing countries and he discusses this in the context of the distinction between nationism and nationalism. According to Fishman (1968: 39), the language problems of developing countries are directly related to the relationship between language and nationalism. Fishman (1968: 40) postulates that nationalism functions at two levels: the level of the nation, a political-geographical entity, and a level of nationality, a socio-cultural entity. He distinguishes between nationism (nationalism of nations) and nationalism (nationalism of nationalities). Paulston (1987) uses a similar distinction when she refers to geographical and ethnic nationalism. The language problems of countries that strive to achieve socio-cultural unity (geographical nationalism) are, therefore, related to language maintenance, language development and language elaboration. The language choice has been made and the symbolic value of this language is elaborated and strengthened. The language problems of political-geographical groups (ethnic nationalism) are related to identity and group identity (Du Plessis, 1991: 201). For these nations is it inconceivable that their identity could be maintained without their language.

According to Du Plessis (1991: 202), this is not an accurate explanation of the situation. He argues that in countries that strive to achieve socio-cultural unity, functional and effective communication is the problem. That is why the issues such as choice of language and literacy are prominent. Political integration is, therefore, dependent upon access to and effective use of the chosen national language and not primarily a question of identity or unity. Du Plessis’ (1991: 202) attempt to divorce language and identity issues is quite understandable for two reasons: the abuse of these links in the history of South Africa [cf. §3.3.1 and §3.3.2, Chapter 2] and an attempt by scholars all over the world to study this link objectively, rather than subjectively (Fishman, 1997a).

The salience of the language and identity link for Afrikaans-speaking people has been uncritically transplanted by them unto other groups in the country to achieve one goal: racial separation of communities. It is understandable that South African scholars (particularly those who fought against apartheid) would be suspicious of ideas that link language and identity. The resurgence of ethnicity all over the world (Wardhaug, 1987: 40; Anderson, 1990: 119; Fishman, 1997b: 339) and the tenacious insistence of political parties all over the world to use this link as a potential mobilising drive show that ignorance of these possible links is dangerous. Although scholars might disapprove of the possible negative use of these links between language and identity (in communities where the link is salient), it will not make this link disappear.


> It was not so much that my earlier efforts began to strike me as wrong in and of themselves, as much as they began to strike me as looking in from the outside and commenting upon a gripping human experience (a typical scholarly stance), rather than trying to understand it from the inside and to convey it from that perspective.

He argues that “the essence (sic) of national identity does not reveal itself through the microscope; it does so through the ethnic prism with which members of an ethnonational group view themselves and the world” (1997a: ix). In other words, objective scholars studying the links between language and identity might see one or even several levels of the object of their study, but only an inside view can reveal a more complete understanding of the phenomenon. This is a completely new way of observing this phenomenon: a way that acknowledges that for people who experience salient and positive links between language and identity, this is a very real matter, whether scholars want to believe it or not. These people also do not experience this link as a “problem”. An important inference made by Fishman (1990: 13) is that “social theory knows much more about fostering change ... and advancing individual authenticity via liberation from repressive societal regulation than it knows about fostering continuity”. This is also an area for further research identified by Luke and Baldauf (1990b: 350). Although this is not the main aim of this study, a scrutiny of cultural identities might bring one closer to understanding how language maintenance functions in the South African context. This might be very useful information for the language planner.
To some extent, language planning scholarship created a “deficit” approach towards peoples that express their ethno-linguistic consciousness in positive terms. Fishman’s (1990: 6) metaphorical rendition of the “deficit” or problem approach towards language diversity is worth quoting extensively:

The most general reason for the neglect of RLS [reversing language shift] is probably the fact that RLS is an activity of minorities, frequently powerless, unpopular with outsiders and querulous among themselves; it is an activity that is often unsuccessful and that strikes many intelligent laymen and otherwise intelligent social scientists as “unnatural”, i.e. as counter to some supposedly natural drift of historical events or the obvious direction of social change ... Indeed, RLS efforts are often like the ‘gomers’ or ‘crocks’ that constantly reappear in the emergency rooms of major metropolitan hospitals - elderly, complaining individuals who neither die nor get better and for whom nothing effective can seemingly ever be done ... Crocks take up scarce resources (staff time, energy, funds, supplies, equipment) and contribute disproportionately to staff burnout. They are no more than obviously ‘suspect’ and unpopular reminders of the failure of modern medicine to be able to cope with chronic social and individual health problems, particularly those that are characterised by a goodly overlay of social pathology, on the one hand, and that are seemingly irreversible, on the other (my emphasis).

This thesis will consequently regard the language diversity of South Africa as a resource and not as a problem. The ultimate definition of language planning adhered to in this thesis will also have to reflect this stance.

2.2.2 Language planning as an agent/form of language change

In the context of such a definition of language planning, two perspectives are possible. Language planning could be seen as the agent of language change or as the form of language change (Du Plessis, 1991: 73). Haugen’s (1966: 162) definition is an example of language planning seen as the agent of language change: “I think we can define language planning as the evaluation of linguistic change”.

Language planning can also be seen as a form of language change. Rubin (1973: 4) offers an example of this definition of language planning: “Language planning is deliberate language change, this is, changes in the systems of language code or speaking or both that are planned by organisations established for such purposes or given a mandate to fulfil such purposes”.

According to Du Plessis (1991: 75), two types of language change are usually referred to: corpus changes and status changes. He correctly argues that almost all definitions of language planning regard corpus and status changes as relevant to a definition of language planning (Du Plessis, 1991: 75). Corpus changes refer to linguistic changes and status changes to language changes within the speech community. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 29) define corpus planning as those “linguistic decisions which need to be made to codify and elaborate a language or languages”. They state that status planning “consists of those decisions a society must make about language selection and the implementation to choose and disseminate the language or languages selected”.

It is in this respect that Cooper (1989a: 45) brings about a new focus when he defines language planning as follows: “Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes”. With this definition, Cooper (1989a) adds a third language planning activity (acquisition planning) to the relatively well known activities, corpus and status planning. He defines acquisition planning as “language teaching as an object of policy making” or “organized efforts to promote the learning of a language” (1989: 33, 157). [The reception of this addition to language planning activities is discussed in §3.1, Chapter 2]

The idea that language planning is directed at language change is central to this thesis. The language change at stake is the improvement of the English L2 proficiency of South African learners. Language change, however, is also regarded as a component of larger social changes. A brief discussion of Cluver’s (1991) insight into socially relevant research is appropriate at this point. Cluver (1991: 142) identifies three types of research: theoretical, applied and socially relevant. Theoretical and applied research are well-known in the scientific community. Socially relevant research is relatively new. Cluver (1991: 137) defines socially relevant research as research that aims to study a socio-political system that deviates from a given norm, with the aim of changing the system. The “problem” in socially relevant research is not studied because it is intrinsically interesting. The “problem” is selected because its solution could potentially improve social reality.

As an example of socially relevant research, he discusses language planning. Language planning forms part of broader social planning in such an approach. An assumption of this approach is to regard society as an ecosystem kept in balance by
internal forces driven towards change and external forces that work towards the maintenance of the status quo. According to Cluver (1991: 141), two of the most pertinently socially relevant issues to study in the context of English L2 learning in Namibia are: which variables influence the spread and establishment of English as official language and how can these variables be mobilised? These questions delimit a domain in which studies about language attitudes and language loyalties can be fruitfully conducted. Results from these studies would contribute to quick and effective implementation of the Namibian language policy.

A study of acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa that aims to identify social factors internal to a multilingual language system that contributes to additive bilingualism is, therefore, a socially relevant project.

2.2.3 Language planning as a form of language manipulation

The manipulative aspect of language planning could be approached from two perspectives: one perspective is related to seeing language as a resource (or social asset) or language change could be regarded as something to support or contest (Du Plessis, 1991: 77). An example of a definition that supports the first approach is that of Eastman (1983: 29): “Language planning is the activity of manipulating language as a social resource in order to reach objectives set out by planning agencies which, in general, are an area’s governmental, educational, economic, and linguistic authorities”.

Within the sociology of language, social mobilisation can be linked to phenomena such as ethnicity and nationalism. Language is seen as a resource used by an ethnic group to enable a struggle against social disadvantage (Du Plessis, 1991: 78). According to Paulston (1987:22-35), this form of social mobilisation could be manifested in four forms: ethnicity, ethnic movements, ethnic nationalism and geographical nationalism.

Secondly, language change could be regarded as something to support or to contest. Cooper (1983: 17) provides a definition based on this approach: “language planning can be viewed as an attempt to win or block acceptance for changes in language structure or use”.

It seems that Du Plessis’ contention, motivated by Ruiz (1988), that the orientation of language as a resource represents a potentially important redirection for language planning (Ruiz, 1988: 25, 29) is borne out by current orientations towards language planning (cf. Heugh, 1995a; Langtag, 1996). Regarding language as a resource is becoming an increasingly important definition of language planning. This indicates a move away from regarding language as a problem or language as a right (Heugh, 1995a: 332). In this thesis, language diversity is seen as a social resource.22

2.2.4 Language planning as a form of social intervention

According to Du Plessis (1991: 80), these definitions are scarce. Karam (1974: 106) quotes an early definition by Halliday that is one of the rare examples of this form of defining language planning: “language planning can be seen as a very conscious attempt at intervention in the self-adapting process of language and of sociocultural development”. Weinstein (1983: 37) regards this as mainly a political matter: “[t]he entire process from the idea of intervention, a political matter, to observable change in behaviour, a linguistic and social matter, is language planning”. Verhoef (1991: 22) and Du Plessis (1987a: 6) share this perception. They both regard language planning as a dimension within language politics.

Definitions related to the idea of social intervention regard language planning as functioning within the broader social context. This type of definition also seems to become more and more important. Several authors (over different periods of time) have expressed this view. A strong and recent exponent of this view is Blommaert (1996: 217): “[w]hen ever we indulge in ‘language’ planning, we should be aware of the fact that we indulge in political linguistics”. The increased acceptance of this view of language planning is symbolic of a much more practical (vs. idealistic) approach to language planning. Very few language planners or researchers of language planning are of the opinion that language matters are planned with the sole idea to implement well-researched linguistic choices. Fishman (1971: 13) offers a very relevant example of this phenomenon when he argues that “there has been relatively little redrawing of colonial boundaries, either along ethnic or other sociocultural integrative lines, neither at the time of independence, nor since”. The view that language is a social resource and that language is planned within the broader

22 “Social resource” could refer to an economic and cultural commodity.
context of social matters, worked together to bring about this more realistic perspective on the motivating forces preceding language planning.

2.2.5 Working definition of language planning

Cooper's (1989a: 45) definition of language planning is adopted as a working definition in this thesis:

Language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes.

This working definition is adopted for language planning for three reasons. First of all, it is sufficiently broad: it allows for the existence of deliberate top-down and bottom-up language planning approaches. Secondly, it adds acquisition planning as an activity to be conducted as part of language planning. As argued in Chapter 1, acquisition planning for English as a L2 is not effective enough in South Africa and its improvement is the focus of this study. Thirdly, it functions in a context that regards language planning as a form of language change and as inextricably linked to social change. This enables a view of language as a resource. The latter two concerns expressed in this definition are central to this study.

2.2.6 Summary

If one considers all four approaches in defining language planning, two broader categories can be extrapolated: language planning perceived as a problem solving process and language planning as a deliberate language change process (Du Plessis, 1991: 86-87). From this overview of definitions of language planning, it is clear that the idea of language problems is prevalent in the majority of the classical definitions of language planning. Du Plessis (1991: 82) finds the idea that language planning is defined as solving language problems problematic for three reasons. One of his main concerns is the lack of an encompassing definition of language problems. Another concern is that language planning is seen as mainly a “solution” activity and thirdly, the limitation of language planning to national or government level solutions (Du Plessis, 1991: 82). The latter limitation excludes other language planning agents and...

Du Plessis regards this as an unnecessary limitation. The idea that language planning is mainly related to offering solutions to language problems is problematic because of two underlying assumptions communicated by this view. One underlying assumption is that language planning is the only answer to language problems and, inversely, a second underlying assumption is that language planning is only connected to language problems (Du Plessis, 1991: 83). Language cultivation is, for example, not necessarily linked to a language problem.

This view of language planning is losing popularity and is increasingly being replaced by a view that language is a resource and not a problem. Different perceptions of language planning are popular today: language is regarded as a resource and as a right, and not only as a problem (Du Plessis, 1991: 84; Heugh, 1995a: 331-332). In the African context, regarding language (especially multilingualism) as a “problem” is increasingly shown as short-sighted. It is only from the perspective of monolingual settings that multilingualism is often regarded as a “problem” (Skutnabb-Kangás, 1995).

3 Focus on acquisition planning

Few language planners or researchers of language planning have automatically included Cooper’s (1989a) addition (acquisition planning) to the language planning process. In the South African context, language planning scholars generally exclude Cooper’s addition of acquisition planning as a language planning activity (cf. Cluver, 1991; Du Plessis, 1991; Reagan, 1995; and Titlestad, 1996). Very few scholars have supplied reasons for their inclusion or exclusion of acquisition planning as part of the language planning process. Therefore, the reception of the concept acquisition planning needs exploration. Reasons for the inclusion of acquisition planning as a central concept in this thesis will follow from this discussion.

3.1 Reception of the concept of acquisition planning

Cooper’s (1989a) notion of acquisition planning as “sister” activity for status and corpus planning should by now (2000) be well-distributed in language planning scholarly circles. Very few recent publications (local and international) engage with this notion. It seems that scholars do not find it an important addition to language planning activities or they have not taken cognisance of it. To my knowledge, only...
planning is handled as a separate issue from corpus and status planning (1990: 18). In a survey of studies on education and language planning, he change (1990: 10; Ager, 1996: 5; Deumert, 1992; 251), Verhoef (1991) and the Langtag report (1996: 12) engaged with this construct in the South African context. The overview and general recommendations of the Langtag report (1996: 14) is organised “under the conventional language planning categories of status, corpus and acquisition planning” (my emphasis). In the international context, it seems that Herriman and Burnaby (1996) and Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) reacted to this construct.

Herriman and Burnaby (1996) uncritically refer to Cooper’s idea of acquisition planning as a third language planning focus or activity. They argue that acquisition planning is simply a new term for the language-in-education debate and as such it forms part of status planning. They argue that acquisition planning is a component of status planning because:

... an education through a given language will normally mean that that language is acquired in addition to the language spoken at home ... By planning a role for a language in education, one is planning for its acquisition and its place and status in society (1996: 4).

Conversely, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 121) reject Cooper’s addition of acquisition planning, because, according to them: “The notion of ‘acquisition planning’ suggests an independent process”. They regard the conceptualisation of acquisition planning as a failure to embed educational language planning within the context of corpus and status planning and regard this as “a major cause of failure of independently implemented acquisition planning” (1997: 121). Even more than that, the major thrust behind Kaplan and Baldauf’s (1997) rejection of the addition of acquisition planning is their belief that the education context cannot and should not be the main focus of language planning implementation. Educational language planning should be regarded as one of several contexts for social planning.

In earlier work, Baldauf (1990a: 14) argues that language planners (often government officials) frequently assume that language planning (or general language development) is supposed to be “... ‘realized’ through language-in-education policy”. In his rejection of this assumption, he argues that “... education is a tool, part of the process of language development, rather than a major force in ‘directing’ language change” (1990: 18). In a survey of studies on education and language planning, he finds evidence of “both language planning and language-in-education policy development” (1990: 19). In some studies it is stated that:

... general language development and change for whole communities has been driven by the needs of the educational system and has been evaluated from an educational perspective, with little consideration for the broader implications of education policies (1990: 19).

In the same volume, Kaplan (1990: 5) states that:

Because language planning is so central to the functioning of entire nations ... language planning ought to be a function of the highest levels of government; unfortunately, the centrality of language in the operations of government is not widely perceived, and language planning activities have tended to be relegated to the educational structures of government.

He continues to argue that:

This is not to suggest that the education sector does not have an appropriate role to play; to discuss the role of the education sector, it is important to differentiate between language planning and language-in-education planning ... A serious problem in the history of language planning has been the confusion of these two functions (1990: 9).

Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), therefore, regard Cooper’s addition of acquisition planning to language planning activities as the embodiment of their two greatest fears: that language planning will be relegated to the educational sector and that acquisition planning will not occur fully integrated with corpus and status planning. Underlying their concerns is a fear that language planning will be divorced from social planning in general. On one level, their argument is fallible, because it is inconsistent. The argument that acquisition planning fails if it is not embedded in the wider context of corpus and status planning also holds true for the interdependence between corpus and status planning, an issue mentioned by several other researchers (for example, Kaplan, 1990: 10; Ager, 1996: 5; Deumert, 2000: 387). In other words, corpus planning will not be received enthusiastically in a community when status planning has not arrived at a sufficiently powerful consensus to make sure that, for example, orthographies or grammars are supported by communities.

Kaplan and Baldauf’s (1997) rejection of acquisition planning as a third language planning focus or activity (based on the assumption that it indicates that acquisition planning is handled as a “separate” issue from corpus and status planning), therefore,
is invalid, because the same argument could be raised about corpus and status planning. Cooper (1989a: 33) argues: “Since function, form and acquisition are related to one another, planners of any one should consider the others”. The success of corpus and status planning are just as dependent on each other as the success of acquisition planning is on both.

Kaplan and Baldauf’s (1997) second concern (that language planning implementation in the educational context alone will not result in effective language planning or language development in a whole community) is, ironically, one of the main claims made over and over by Cooper (1989a: 3, 20, 35; 164-182). He, for example, states that:

One of the aims of this book is to demonstrate that an understanding of language planning demands an understanding of the social changes which promote it. This book, then, is about language planning and the changing social context in which it is embedded (1989: 1).

It seems that they misunderstand Cooper (1989a) when they argue that a focus on acquisition planning might obscure the role many social agencies have to play in an attempt to successfully affect language behaviour. This is clearly a concern also considered by Cooper (1989a).

Cooper (1989a: 33-34) argues that there are two reasons for the addition of acquisition planning as a focus or activity of language planning. Firstly, he maintains that a considerable focus of language planning is directed towards language spread, “i.e. an increase in the users or the uses of a language or a language variety” (1989: 33). Planning that aims to increase the uses of a language or variety is part of status planning. If planning is directed at increasing the number of speakers (and consequently, the capacity of people to use an additional language), acquisition planning is the appropriate analytical category. Cooper (1989a: 120) further distinguishes status and acquisition planning as follows: “Status planning is an effort to regulate the demand for given verbal resources whereas acquisition planning is an effort to regulate the distribution of these resources”. Secondly, the number of language users affects status and corpus planning (Cooper, 1989a: 33). A large number of L2 users of a language will have a profound effect on the form (corpus and norms) of a language. The widespread debate in South Africa about standard South African English is proof of this concurrent effect.

In conclusion, it is revealing to consider Cooper’s (1989a: 34) own explanation for the poor reception of the concept acquisition planning. He (1989: 160) maintains that only one other researcher (Prato) regards language teaching as an object of language planning. He argues that the main underlying reason for this reluctance might be a “desire to distinguish language planning from applied linguistics, of which language teaching is a primary concern” (1989: 34). This thesis aims to actively exploit the overlap between language planning and applied linguistics in an attempt to offer a more complete explanation for the apparent failure of acquisition planning (in the past and now) for English as a L2 in South Africa. The nature of the acquisition planning activity (an entanglement of sociolinguistic and applied linguistic interests) expresses the interdisciplinary application aimed at in this thesis eloquently. Acquisition planning, therefore, is the central concept of this study.

3.2 Acquisition planning: a central concept in this study

In general, scholars regard status planning for English as a L2 in South Africa as a “non-issue”. As discussed previously (cf. Chapter 1) and below [§3.3.3, Chapter 2], English maintains a very high status in South Africa. Many scholars are of the opinion that “market forces”24 (Titlestad, 1996: 172; Titlestad, 1998: 36) ensure the future growth of English in South Africa. There seems to be little need for status planning for English as a L2 in South Africa. Corpus planning for English as a L2 in South Africa is also a “non-issue”, because South African English (and English world wide) has proven that it is functional in all the contexts people need to use it, for example, business and for academic purposes. English is definitely regarded as “schoolworthy” world wide.

Despite its high status in South Africa and despite its extensive corpus, acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa is not effective. And it is in this area that scholarly contributions are still invited. In order to substantiate why acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa is the focus of the study, a brief overview of the current acquisition planning contexts and “distribution” of English as a L2 is required.

24 Apart from economic considerations, parents who demand English education for their children are a remarkably powerful market force.
3.3 Overview of acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa

It is important to clarify first of all that “acquisition planning” for English as a L2 in South Africa is understood to include at least two types of activities. First of all, it includes language in education policies that, unintentionally, resulted in organised efforts to promote the learning of English. Although this term, acquisition planning, had only been conceptualised in the past decade, Schuring (1992: 251) points out that, “Die onderwysstaalbeleid handel dus hoofsaaklik oor taalverwerwing”. The language in education policies of previous South African governments, therefore, all resulted in organised efforts to promote the learning of languages, including English. These language in education policies could, therefore, be regarded as unintentional acquisition planning efforts. In other words, acquisition planning was conducted in South Africa, although the label (acquisition planning) was only coined in 1989.

Secondly, reference to acquisition planning refers to more deliberate acquisition planning efforts, for example, as presented in the Langtag (1996) report. It is clear that the Langtag (1996: 14) report conceives of more deliberate acquisition planning by regarding it as one of the conventional categories of language planning. In this study, the discussion of recent language planning efforts in South Africa will focus on the Langtag (1996) report, because it presented one of the most encompassing frameworks for future, national language planning. It is postulated that this influential report would influence future language planning efforts in all domains of the South African society.

In the spirit of a truly intercultural analysis of acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa, it is necessary to at least take cognisance of the main language planning trends or traditions that prevailed in the South African context before 1994. Where relevant, reference to historical events before 1900 will be made. In the main, this discussion, however, focuses on the history of language planning processes in South Africa over the previous 100 years. Broadly speaking, three overarching language planning traditions can be identified in the South African context pre-1994: language planning for the maintenance and spread of Afrikaans; acquisition planning for English as a L2 (or language of teaching); and language development (mainly corpus development and standardisation) of African languages.

Three distinct language planning histories, therefore, prevail in South Africa. On the one hand, the bulk of Afrikaans language planning scholars have focused on effective language planning for the maintenance and spread of Afrikaans for almost 100 years, mainly focusing on status and corpus planning. On the other hand, applied linguists and concerned educationists in South Africa have attempted during almost the same period to improve acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa. The “medium of instruction” theme dominates this debate. Separated from these two traditions, African language planning was conducted for several languages by several different language boards, mainly focusing on corpus planning and standardisation. The work of these language boards was probably perceived as illegitimate, because it was ordered by an illegitimate government, and any gains made towards corpus development for African languages under these conditions should be regarded as nothing short of a miracle.

The South African language planning history is clear proof that Cooper’s (1989a: 34) observation about the poor reception of the concept acquisition planning is also at work in the South African context. This “separatist” scholarly trend is aggravated in the South African context and could also be regarded as symptomatic of the modus operandi in apartheid society in which social planning was conducted for separate groups.

Contrary to Du Plessis’ (1987b: 58) observation, language planning and policy issues proved not to be “one of the fads of South African linguistics”. Language planning for all South African languages forms an integral part of current South African debates. In his brief overview of language planning as a discipline, Blommaert (1996: 201-204) states that:

Language planning is a tradition which flourished in the 1960s and 1970s, but waned in the 1980s. The 1990s, however, have witnessed a resurgence of attention to language planning, probably as a result of the new developments in South Africa.

According to Blommaert (1996: 203), South Africa “set an important precedent by allowing eleven languages to be used as official languages instead of the usual one, two or four of most other African states”. This is a complete reversal of Young’s (1987: 1) comment that the paucity of international inquiries into South African language planning and policy efforts can directly be related to “the ever-increasing
protest, by the international academic communities ... against South Africa’s apartheid policies”. It seems that the new South Africa does not only attract a lot of international academic interest, it is also seen by the international academic community as a trend setter in some respects.

An analysis of the current language planning context (with a special focus on the Langtag process) should be conducted with full mindfulness of the historical context of language planning in South Africa and its consequent influence on the formation of social structures. This is the only way in which a complex understanding of the current language planning context can be gained. The ensuing discussions are extremely brief and aim to only highlight the broad trends in these separate language planning enclaves. These sections aim only to provide a context within which an understanding of current language planning trends could be better comprehended. No attempt at completeness is claimed.

3.3.1 Language planning for Afrikaans in South Africa before 1994

Three main trends of the language planning history of Afrikaans are relevant to this thesis: the development and rise of Afrikaans; its subsequent decline because of its role in the apartheid hegemony and its battle with English.

Afrikaans remains a remarkable language because it is one of the most recent examples of the establishment of a modern language. The language development of Afrikaans is the direct result of tremendous political will and complete control of state power (Luckett, 1993: 53). Its particular setting, Africa, also contributes to its uniqueness. From 1652 onwards, the Afrikaans language was forged in Africa as a result of contact between the indigenous Khoesan, Dutch settlers and enslaved people from African and Asian origin (Roberge, 1995: 68; Cluver, 1995: 183-184).

Initially, Afrikaans was regarded as a “kitchen” language and it is only the oppression of English (under Lord Milner, after the Boer-Anglo war (1899-1902)) that “gave rise to an Afrikaans language movement and the development of Afrikaans as a modern standard language” (Cluver, 1995: 184). One could conceive of the history of Afrikaans as a long struggle for language rights (Cluver, 1995: 184). Afrikaans only received official backing after the Afrikaners gained political control in 1948 (Cluver, 1995: 184). From 1950 onwards the infrastructure for the elaboration and standardisation of Afrikaans was developed. Afrikaners involved with this process developed highly sophisticated technical skills in fields such as terminology development, lexicography and translation. Sophisticated infrastructure and skills for language modernisation are, therefore, available in South Africa and from 1990 onwards, these resources were more and more made available to African languages as well. Kloss’ opinion of the language development skills available in South Africa are quoted by Reagan (1995: 321-322):

As Kloss (1982: 21) noted, ‘In South Africa, more qualified scholars, White and Black, are working on this “linguistic engineering” than in all the rest of Africa. Even Swahili is well behind the South African languages in educational development, inspite of its easy lead in political status’. Term production and dissemination for African languages however still lag far behind Afrikaans.

Afrikaner politicians were engaged in a battle with the spread of English for a large part of the 20th century (Cluver, 1995: 184). The drive to popularise Afrikaans by making it a medium of instruction in African schools was motivated by the obvious spread of English in South Africa (Cluver, 1995: 195). Other scholars regard the link forged by Afrikaans people between their language and their identity as the most salient force underlying the introduction of Afrikaans into African education (Hartshorne, 1995: 309). However perceived, the Soweto uprisings in 1976 was a reaction to this attempt to introduce Afrikaans into African education. As a result of these events, Afrikaans and the process of language development and modernisation became stigmatised (Cluver, 1995: 185). Cluver (1995: 174) states that:

South Africa has a fairly sophisticated language standardisation and language modernisation infrastructure with all its major languages fully codified and standardised ... However, because this infrastructure was used mainly for one language (Afrikaans) which was developed far better than the others and because this infrastructure was later perverted to promote apartheid, it is stigmatised.

The last historical trend to take note of is the notion that Afrikaner politicians used Afrikaans as a symbol in their struggle for nationalism and in their attempt to remain in power in South Africa. Du Plessis (1987b: 60) states that: “It is probably common knowledge that the South African language policy [in the 1980s] is inspired by an earlier version of the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism”. The dominance of Afrikaner scholars in the language planning arena (Du Plessis, 1987b: 61) aided the
forging of links assumed between language planning and politics. Pokpas and Van Gensen (1992: 176) prove that, in the past, Afrikaans was ideologically manipulated. 

At the time of writing, many Afrikaans-speaking South Africans are coming to terms with the history of their language. In the past, the position of Afrikaans was enshrined and ensured as part of political dominance. It is a very new experience for many Afrikaans-speaking South Africans to wait and see if the language can survive without its powerful (political and economic) institutional support. Some Afrikaans-speaking South Africans feel that, "... under the new political dispensation ... 'Afrikaans (might be) the price Afrikaners will have to pay for Apartheid'" (Krog, 1998:99 as quoted in Balfour, 1998: 146). However, there are also positive indications that Afrikaans might continue to play a role as one of the languages in multilingual South Africa.

3.3.2 Language planning for African languages in South Africa before 1994

The main trends in the history of language planning for African languages are: they were dominated languages under the colonial and apartheid governments; an appropriate medium of instruction (language of teaching) for African learners remains problematic and the stigmatisation of ethnolinguistic links impairs development of the African languages.

The link between political power and level of development of a language is clearly visible when the situation of African languages in South Africa is considered. During early colonisation, African people were dominated by Dutch and English colonists and later by Afrikaans nationalists under apartheid. It is not a well-known fact, but by early 1900, many of the African languages had been codified and standardised and were used in education by missionaries (Cluver, 1995: 187). It is remarkable to remind oneself that Afrikaans was not even codified or standardised at that stage. The lack of political power of speakers of African languages impeded development of these languages; and following from this, "[their underdeveloped languages tend to help maintain their powerless position]" (Cluver, 1995: 187). Language policies in African education from 1910 onwards reflected the status and position of these languages and the political and economic power of speakers of African languages (Hartshorne, 1987: 83).

One of the major results of the powerless position of speakers of African languages under previous governments was that language planning decisions (which languages will be used, when, in which contexts) were made for them by Afrikaans, British or Dutch politicians (Cluver, 1995: 188). As a result of the 1953 Bantu Education Act, three language committees were established (between 1954-1957) to do language planning for African languages: a Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa language committee. The idea was "that terminology committees should be set up to produce manuals for the teachers etc. after which mother-tongue instruction should be introduced gradually in the secondary school" (Hartshorne, 1987: 90). Many South Africans probably experienced these committees as illegitimate and as a result, the people experienced a sense of alienation from the language development enterprise (Cluver, 1995: 189) and the stigmatisation of L1 education began.


The effective stigmatisation of the use of the L1 in education because of its perverted use during the apartheid regime to divide people, will provide many difficulties for any one who would like to reconsider this issue in the post-1994 South Africa (Verhoef, 1998: 40). Reagan (1995: 322) refers to this as the "challenge of ethnicity". Many South Africans experience a close link between language, ethnicity and apartheid. If one defends ethnicity as a possible legitimate experience, of which language may be a salient marker, one is suspected of defending apartheid. This unholy perception of ethnolinguistic vitality defies any introduction of new perceptions of L2 proficiency [cf. §5.1, Chapter 2] at the outset. This peculiar South African notion may frustrate many scholars in future. English L2 teachers who want to implement the most recent research findings that relate to the interdependency between L1 and L2 proficiency, might be frustrated in particular. An example of this frustration is Balfour's (1998: 149-150) argument that we need to "disassociate a
finding of language studies\textsuperscript{25} from ideological manipulation. This is easier said than done. This seems to be the biggest barrier in the process of building an increased role for African languages in education that probably will also increase levels of English L2 proficiency.

The final discernible trend in the history of African language planning is the "open-endedness" of the ANC's (African National Congress) approach to language matters. Several researchers perceived this notion previously (Hartshorne, 1995: 315; Heugh, 1995a: 340-344; Titlestad, 1996). Hartshorne (1995: 315-316) describes the precarious position of the ANC concerning language matters. Previous ANC policy documents (the Freedom Charter of 1955 and the 1989 ANC Constitutional guidelines) sufficiently vaguely grant all people "equal rights to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs" (Hartshorne, 1995: 315). This clause from the Freedom Charter (1955) is basically repeated in the 1989 ANC Constitutional Guidelines. The dilemma is to balance the need for a national, linking language against the need to recognise the equal rights of people to use a diverse set of languages. The latter part of this dilemma must have been particularly painful to contemplate from within the apartheid walls. On the one hand, the denial of full linguistic rights (and the consequent denial of appropriate financial resources to ensure language development) to speakers of African languages under the apartheid government certainly weighed heavily on the minds of these policy makers. On the other hand, this same apartheid government showed how language could be used as a weapon to divide a nation. Coupled with their knowledge of colonial and postcolonial history in Africa, this open-ended statement that leaves room for the recognition of language rights must be regarded as extraordinary. Heugh (1995a: 341) refers to this dilemma as the tension between multilingualism and the internal pressure for English. She argues that "it is not clear how the pressure from people for English can be reconciled with 'the deliberate fostering of multilingualism in schools'" (1995: 341). She warns that:

\begin{quote}
Fundamentally, the pull towards English by significant numbers of people is symptomatic of the hegemony of English, the power of linguicism, and the power of the economic sector... Should this not be addressed directly in ANC policy, the effect of a laissez-faire approach will ultimately be very much the same as maintaining the status quo [bilingual official language policy, Afrikaans and English], and the pull towards English and the Western paradigm will proceed unchecked (1995: 343-344).
\end{quote}

A possible consequence of this laissez-faire approach is that the status quo that prevailed under the previous government would simply be continued in the new South Africa. In other words, English will gain even more ground in African education.

Mawasha (1987) discusses some of the effects of an English medium policy in African education. According to him, a policy that affords high status to English in African education has a definite effect on language attitudes among black South Africans: to know English creates an aura of prestige (Mawasha, 1987: 113). This might have something to do with the fact that even the African languages are still taught through the medium of English in South Africa (Mawasha, 1987: 118). To some extent, cultural loss occurs when English gains hegemonic power as language of teaching in black education. The concern that English might overwhelm the black child’s culture is ever present (Mawasha, 1987: 113).

Ngugi (1986) uses the metaphor of the "cultural bomb" to describe the effect of cultural loss also identified by Mawasha. According to (1986: 28):

\begin{quote}
The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages... It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other people’s languages rather than their own... The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death-wish.
\end{quote}

In its extreme form, Ngugi (1986: 28) refers to this state as "colonial alienation" that can take two forms: "...an active (or passive) distancing of oneself from the reality around; and an active (or passive) identification with that which is most external to one’s environment". Jacobson’s (2000:b:19) recent report on the educational experience of one black child (Mahlatse Montjanes) provides an example of this reasoning and its possible consequences in the South African context. Nyatsumba’s account (in Brynard, 2000: 34-35) provides similar evidence.

A policy that affords high status to English as language of teaching also affects the self-image of black children in education. Mawasha states that (1987: 114):

\textsuperscript{25} He is referring to findings that show a high correlation between literacy in the L1 and literacy in English as a L2 and basic numeracy (Ballou, 1998: 150).
These two factors [education is western and English] define an educated Black South African as one based in Africa, but educationally westernised and with English as an important means of expressing such education. This could well confuse and confound the idea of being educated with whiteness ... All these things, however, need not be altogether negative, provided that a Black learner does not forget his roots and is always mindful of the fact that he switches to English to solve a communication problem which cannot be solved otherwise. He switches because he is stronger, not weaker – he stoops to conquer.

This is also a concern raised by Campbell (1996: 150): “One’s self-image and self-motivation plays a major role in one’s language acquisition and, therefore, cognitive development”.

The issues of anxiety and self-image raised by these researchers need to be integrated with research findings from more psycholinguistic studies. Van der Walt (1997: 143), for example, states that it is widely agreed that anxiety has an impact on a learner’s ability to learn. She (1997: 143) mentions several sources of anxiety: speaking spontaneously, problems with listening comprehension, testing situations and experiencing social discomfort. Ngugi (1986) and Mawasha (1987) highlight another important source of anxiety: denying the L1 and the cultural reservoir of the learner.

Other researchers, like Robb (1995), agree with them. Robb (1995: 15) argues that educators do not always share with parents, “what they know about the importance of maintaining and developing the home language for the social, emotional and cognitive development of the child”, and the possible effects it can have on learning achievement for their child. Robb (1995: 16-17) argues that to deny the cultural reservoir of the child (including the L1), results in a negation of the child’s experiences that will ultimately serve to undermine her/his self-concept. She (1995: 19) quotes research findings by Cummins that show that children achieve high levels of conceptual and linguistic skills in two languages in schools that: (1) reinforce the cultural identity of children, (2) foster an active collaboration between the school and parents, and (3) meaningfully use the languages of the child. The absence of these elements in a school programme will result in creating anxiety for participating children; and this may influence their learning achievements. Jacobson (2000b: 19) reports that this is exactly what happened to Mahlatse Montjane when she was enrolled in grade 1 (in 1998) in a former model-C school in Rosebank. The parents of Mahlatse testify that their child became a different person within 3 months in school.

She became unruly, anti-social, increasingly withdrawn and selfish, her self-esteem fell and they were worried about her progress at school (Jacobson, 2000b: 19). Halfway through her grade 2 year, they took her out of the former model-C school and enrolled her in a mainly black primary school in their community. They say that it took their daughter almost 18 months to become herself again. Although they are aware that the quality of education she is receiving now is poorer, they feel content that “at least she loves herself again” (Jacobson, 2000b: 19). A similar account is presented in an interview with Kaizer Nyatsumba (Brynard, 2000: 34-35). A better understanding of the cultural identity of learners like Mahlatse may, therefore, facilitate learning achievements in general.

Finally, Mawasha (1987: 114) argues that an English medium policy requires a relatively high level of communicative competence of black learners and teachers to facilitate educational success. He (1987: 114) states that:

The adoption of a second language as medium of education calls for a level of communicative competence approximating, not equal to, that of the mother tongue speaker, if both the teacher and the learner are able to realise maximum educational advantage from instruction through the medium of such a language.

This remains a particularly poignant issue in the education of black learners in South Africa today.

3.3.3 Acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa before 1994

The interwoven nature of the history of language planning processes in South Africa is very clear from the above discussions. English is an omnipresent role-player in the language planning processes for Afrikaans and African languages in South Africa. Ndebele (1987: 3-4) reminds us that, because of colonisation (and Afrikaans oppression in the South African context), the abilities of independent African states were severely limited in respect of linguistic choices at the moment of independence. In South Africa, it could be stated that the citizens became the inevitable heirs of English: they, (particularly black South Africans) had little choice in this matter. In a discussion of the “modern stranger”, Harman (1988: 161) argues that:

... choice is limited to those who have access. Resources – such as education, employment opportunities, gender, racial origin, lifestyle skills – are allocated
disproportionately and clearly have a critical impact on the individual’s ‘freedom’ to consume.

Discussions about English in South Africa (for example, the insistence of black parents on English education for their children), should never simplistically assume “choice” on the part of the language user. Language preference surveys should clearly take this matter into account when they interpret their findings. Alexander (1992: 178) explains that people will, for example, favour English in South Africa because it is the key to economic advancement and social status. “Choosing” other languages will coincide with changes in power relations. This reality again foregrounds the link between language planning and social planning.

English was involved in the very first battles for official languages in the post-1900 South Africa. During early colonisation, African people were dominated by Dutch and English colonists and later by Afrikaans nationalists under apartheid. Hartshorne (1995: 307) states that:

In South Africa, language policy in African schooling has revolved around the relative positions, power and status of English, Afrikaans and the African languages, and been determined by the political and economic power of those using the various languages.

Before the declaration of the 1953 Bantu Education Act, the education of black South Africans was mainly left in the hands of non-governmental organisations, of which missionary societies were the most active (Hartshorne, 1987: 84; Cluver, 1995: 188). Up to 1910, the major language issue in the education debate was the relative positions of English and the African languages (Hartshorne, 1987: 84; Hartshorne, 1995: 308; Cluver, 1995: 188). Afrikaans only started to play a role in the mid-1930s (Hartshorne, 1987: 87; Cluver, 1995: 188; Hartshorne, 1995: 308).

The declaration of the 1953 Bantu Education Act, after the Nationalist Party gained power in 1948, was an attempt to increase the role of Afrikaans in African education at the expense of English (Hartshorne, 1987: 90). An added concern was the development of the African languages for the purpose of mother tongue teaching. From 1974 onwards, a much more inflexible position towards the medium of instruction was taken by the government. Some subjects had to be taken in Afrikaans by African learners (mathematics and social studies) and English had to be used for sciences and “practical subjects” (Hartshorne, 1987: 96). This inflexible position lead to the well-known 1976 Soweto riots in which hundreds of school children demonstrated against this policy and died at the hand of the South African police.

In 1979, after the Soweto riots, a revision of the 1953 Bantu Education Act was accepted (Act no 90 of 1979) (Hartshorne, 1987: 98). This law determined that learners were to receive L1 education until the fourth year of primary school and they then had a choice of official language (Afrikaans or English) as medium of instruction after the fourth year of primary school (Hartshorne, 1987: 99-100). Hartshorne (1987: 99) reminds us that, if government accepted this kind of flexible act in 1953, it would have:

 avoided thirty years of frustration and futility of trying to force on people what they do not wish to have. After thirty years the wheel has turned full circle, language medium policy is very much what it was pre-1953 ... It is a tragic story of wasted, misdirected human effort and a lesson to all those who ‘know best’, think they can run other people’s lives and make fundamental decisions for them, instead of with them.

In 1987, Young (1987: 4) concludes:

Essentially, in my view, language planning in the context of South African education in the next decade is mainly about the nature, status, function and teaching of English as a medium of instruction in relation to the other 25 languages comprising our multilingual society.

Ironically, the declaration of eleven official languages in the Constitution for the post-1994 South Africa did not change the attitudes of speakers of African languages towards the use of African languages as media of instruction. The situation with the medium of instruction is still very much what it was pre-1953.

It is in this regard that Hartshorne (1987: 99-100) states the obvious – still relevant in black education today:

... English-medium education can be effective only if both teachers and pupils have the capacity to use English in the classroom at the level appropriate to the learning required by the curriculum, and also have textbooks and other materials in English that has taken these factors into account. Yet the effects of both policy and practice over the last thirty years have been to reduce this capacity seriously and to lower the standards of English throughout the system.

According to Hartshorne (1987: 100), the “DET [Department of Education and Training] is not geared attitudinally to mount an all-out attack on declining standards
of English in African education”. Mindful that educational changes and economic development take a lot of time, one could probably safely state that at the time of writing, “[l]anguage teachers in the most complex linguistic contexts ... those in African schools, are [still ...] those who have the fewest resources and support networks to fall back on” (King & Van den Berg, 1992: 27).

Hartshorne’s (1987: 100) observation about a lack of zeal among ex-DET teachers to attempt to impart high standard English teaching, reminds one of the statements by other scholars (Hartshorne, 1995; Heugh, 1995a; Verhoef, 1998) about the “open-endedness” of the ANC towards language matters. In a paper presented at the conference of the Linguistics Association for Southern Africa (LSSA), Du Plessis (1999) tentatively put forward an analysis of the national language planning context for South Africa that links to these notions. He argues that the multilingual national language policy (as documented in the 1993 Constitution) of South Africa is more a result of Afrikaans thinking about language matters (far rather) than it is an expression of democracy and linguistic human rights on the part of the ANC. This, according to him, might also be why implementation of the policy by the government seems to be lacking. Heugh (1993) expressed similar complaints earlier. She (1993: 28) states:

The laissez-faire position of the ANC in regard to its policy statements on language to date makes it clear that despite policy statements which argue for equal status for all languages and a proactive stance on African languages, there is a passive approach to language rights which is not accompanied by a strategy for implementation.

Verhoef’s (1998) more recent concerns about the implementation of functional multilingualism seem to suggest that this matter has not been resolved. To the ANC, the act of acknowledging linguistic human rights is sufficient. It does not mobilise the political will of the ANC to the extent that clear implementation strategies for multilingualism are announced. This might be the biggest challenge to language planners. According to Heugh (1995d: 24), the challenge is to reorientate our thinking about multilingualism and how it can be used to the advantage of the development of the country.

3.3.4 Conclusions

As a clear result of the power of their speakers, Afrikaans, English and African languages are at different stages in the language development process. Afrikaans and English need to be maintained; English is spreading and the status of African languages must be improved. The previous discussion clearly pointed to the integrated nature of language planning in South Africa. Not only does the planning for one language affect the position of others, language planning is also clearly seen as one section of broader social planning. Any analysis of acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa will have to keep this last point in mind.

4 Analysis of language planning in South Africa

For several reasons, an analysis of the complete language planning process in post-1994 South Africa is a far too ambitious project for the scope of this study. This study, therefore, aims to focus on the Langtag (1996) process as one expression of language planning in the current South African context.

One of the main restrictions to any analysis of a language planning process, is the inherent nature of language planning processes. To effect changes in the language behaviour of people is a tedious and time-consuming process and the outcomes of the process are always delayed far beyond the time of initial implementation. Rubin and Jernudd (1971b: xviii) and Cooper (1989a: 66) also identify this as a major problem with attempts to analyse the success of language planning. The Langtag report (1996: 13) acknowledges this as one of the fundamental assumptions of the Langtag process: “Language policy development and implementation take time”. Apart from this innate difficulty, it is often almost impossible to effectively assign cause and effect to outcomes in the language planning process. Matters of social development are inextricably linked and influences are never easy to determine beyond doubt. Researchers often have to be content with a fair amount of inferences from data not directly linked to the outcome or process they attempted to study. Lastly, the mere existence of some social conditions could render the planned language change

26 The outcomes of an analysis could be used for several purposes – one possibility is the attempt to evaluate the success of a planning activity. The concept of “analysis” is preferred to that of evaluation, because an analysis is narrower in scope than an evaluation. However, evaluation is seen as one outcome of an analysis. This use of the term analysis is akin to that of Tollefson (1981: 185).
unassailable, impossible to achieve. The influence of poverty on the academic achievement of black learners in South Africa is an example of such an insurmountable social effect that language planners might have to take into consideration, without having any real opportunity to change or remove its influence from the lives of their learners. Du Plessis’ (1991:192) analysis of attempts by Afrikaans language planners to rid Afrikaans of “anglicisms” is another example (cf. §2.2.1, Chapter 2). From these observations it is clear that an analysis of language planning has to be approached with great care, taking the complexities involved into consideration as much as possible.

Before any analysis is presented, it is important to briefly describe the relationship between language planning and language policy as conceived of in this thesis. Several researchers claim that, “... policy making is not planning” (Rubin, 1973: 7; Du Plessis, 1991: 56; Verhoef, 1991: 24). This raises an important point relevant to the approach towards language planning in this thesis. If a language policy is not carefully embedded within the context of broader social planning, it would probably not be implemented effectively. The establishment and declaration of a language policy can, therefore, not be regarded as the only components of language planning.

The relationship between language planning and language policy is conceived of as separate but interdependent stages of the same process. Kaplan (1990: 8) expresses this when he states that, “... language policy – [is] the inevitable outcome of language planning”. Eastman (1983: 206) also is of the opinion that the formulation of a language policy is an important component of the language planning process. Conversely, Appel and Muysken (1987: 47) are of the opinion that language planning is underpinned by language policy. According to them, language planning takes place only after language policy has been declared by a central government. Language policy is then often embedded into general government policy. The polemic about language planning and language policy confirms the need to adopt a holistic approach to the language planning process. Language policy formulation is an integral component of the language planning process (Du Plessis, 1991: 118, 175). Language policy establishment is not the only aspect of language planning, but it definitely is a component of the language planning process (Du Plessis, 1991: 139).

Bangbosi (1991) reminds us that very often policy declaration precedes planning. The approach towards language planning commissioned by the government of the new South Africa (after 1994) is a unique example of extensive language planning, related to broader social planning. The process (among other activities) involved the establishment of the Language Plan Task Group (Lantag) which had to advise the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology on the issue of establishing a framework for a national language plan for South Africa (Langtag, 1996: 7). One of the clear imperatives in the brief to Langtag was “to collectively devise a coherent national language plan which would encompass all state structure and civil society” (Langtag, 1996: 7). One of the fundamental assumptions of the Langtag process is: “Language policy is an integral part of general social policy” (1996: 12).

Subsequently, eight subcommittees were established to deal with language planning matters in different domains of society: Language equity; Language development in South Africa; Language as an economic resource; Language in education; Literacy; Language in the public service; Heritage languages, sign language and augmentative communication systems; and Equitable and widespread language services.

Langtag’s conception of the relationship between planning and policy making is made clear in a brief that the chairperson, Neville Alexander, addressed to chairpersons of the subcommittees:

... we are to identify the needs and priorities in regard to the realisation of the constitutional principles pertaining to the language question in South Africa and the implementation of the policies that derive from those principles. While there is, clearly, an element of policy-making implicit in this brief, our main concern is to point out to the Minister what needs to be done and how this can be done if the constitutional principles are to be effected in practice over a period of time (Langtag, 1996: 7-8).

He further states that, if the Minister accepts the recommendation of the establishment of PANSALB (Pan South African Language Board), it would be the duty of PANSALB to oversee implementation of the national language plan (Langtag, 1996: 8). It is stated that Langtag sees its function as the establishment of a framework that should enable others “to implement the process of working out all the essential details for ensuring the success of the official language policy” (1996:8) for different contexts that should follow. It is, for example, foreseen that:
the national Department of Education (DE) has to implement those aspects of the Language Plan pertaining to education in all phases which are consistent with the norms and standards agreed upon by educators. The Language Plan serves to indicate to the DE how its policy and practice articulate with those of other sectors and to what extent it would have a certain parametric significance (1996: 8).

The constraint on resources is presented as one of the main reasons for the “open-endedness” of the Langtag report (1996: 9). Contrary to criticism (for example, Titlestad, 1996), the committee sees this as a possible strength because the contributions of other researchers to flesh out the national language plan would add to its legitimacy. Language policies for several domains of South African society should, therefore, follow from the national language plan.

Against the theoretical background presented in previous sections of Chapter 2, this section aims to achieve one of the secondary aims of this study: an analysis of the acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa [cf. §2, Chapter 1]. In order to arrive at this outcome, three issues need discussion: the need for analysis of language planning, analysis of different language planning processes and, finally, an analysis of the current (post-1994) acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa, with a focus on the Langtag (1996) process.

4.1 The need for analysis of language planning

Evaluation of language planning is one of the main problem areas of the language planning discipline primarily because it does not receive enough attention by language planning researchers; and because few evaluation methods are available (Du Plessis, 1991: 380-381). The most important problem with evaluation of language planning is the lack of information (Du Plessis, 1991: 231). Very often, evaluation of language planning is based on subjective observations made by language planning researchers (Du Plessis, 1991: 231). Bosch and De Klerk (1996: 234) claim that: “Very few empirical studies have been carried out regarding the language attitudes in South Africa.” A prominent characteristic of studies that attempt to evaluate the success of language planning for Afrikaans (for example, Koch, 1988; Van Zyl, 1990; Verhoef, 1991) is the lack of use of quantitative and empirical methods. When these methods are used, they are used ineffectively according to Du Plessis (1991: 381), and this impedes the usefulness of data and limits possibilities for interpretation.

According to Du Plessis (1991: 383, 393), the foremost problem with the evaluation of language planning for Afrikaans is the lack of contextualisation. Afrikaans language planners do not take the South African socio-political context within which language planning for Afrikaans must be done into consideration. This is not unique to the South African or the Afrikaans context (for example, Rubin & Jernudd, 1971b: xv; Swan & Lewis, 1990: 213). Tollefson (1981: 185) also emphasises this:

It is essential, moreover, that language planning be analyzed with reference to its sociopolitical setting. Without an adequate understanding of the decision-making system within which language planning is carried out, researchers may fail to adequately understand or evaluate different language planning processes in different settings (my emphasis).

Du Plessis’ (1991: 383, 393) criticism of Afrikaans language planning is relevant. Unfortunately (and ironically), his own recommendations towards solving evaluation problems of language planning for Afrikaans are also focused mainly on the situation of Afrikaans in multilingual South Africa. Only 15 of the 23 (65%) recommendations keep the broader South African context in mind. These statements do, however, recommend that Afrikaans language planning attempts should focus on keeping the broader socio-political situation of South Africa in mind while attempting to conduct language planning for Afrikaans in South Africa. Recommendation 21 (Du Plessis, 1991: 393) is directed at countering a recommendation made by Verhoef28 (1991: 501) that a national language board must be established to co-ordinate language planning for all eleven language groups of South Africa. With the establishment of PANSALB, history has proven that Verhoef’s (1991) understanding of the South African language planning context was more accurate in this respect.

Du Plessis (1991: 214) draws a distinction between evaluation and feedback in the language planning context. Feedback is regarded as evaluation of the different

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27 They regard information about language attitudes as imperative to an evaluation of language planning implementation (1996: 234, 247).
29 Híerdie koördineringsliggaam vir taalbeplanning vir Afrikaans moet sitting geniet op ‘n nasionale Talenraad wat verteenwoordig bied aan die elf hoofstalgroep in Suid-Afrika. So ’n talenraad moet die taalbeplanning vir die meer talige Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing behartig. Die werksomhede van sodanige talenraad moet uiteindelik by die formulering van ’n voldoende nasionale taalbeleid vir ’n multitalige Suid-Afrika kan uitkom (Verhoef, 1991: 301).
components of the broad language planning process, and evaluation is the phenomenon of evaluation outside the direct language planning process. One could also conceive of the distinction as "internal" vs. "external" evaluation (Reagan, 1983: 154). Internal evaluation is concerned with obtaining information relevant to the language planning process, usually conducted by the language planning agent itself (Du Plessis, 1991: 217). The function of internal evaluation often is that of presenting a report (Du Plessis, 1991: 356). External evaluation is conducted by researchers on language planning and by language users themselves (Du Plessis, 1991: 218). External evaluation is conducted with the aim of doing a global evaluation of the complete-total language planning programme. Researchers studying language planning processes are usually interested in this type of evaluation of language planning. In this spirit, Rubin (1971a: 221) identifies four types of evaluation: evaluation and fact finding, evaluation and planning, evaluation and implementation and evaluation and feedback. It is the last type that is usually referred to as evaluation. The aim of this evaluation is to: (1) determine the outcomes of the language plan, (2) determine appropriate alternative strategies to improve the language plan, and (3) to compare the true outcomes of the plan with the expected outcomes (Du Plessis, 1991: 220).

Gauging the attitudes of language users is an important way to determine the outcomes of a language plan (Cooper, 1983: 62; Bosch & De Klerk, 1996) by means of, for example, questionnaires or matched-guise experiments. Another manner in which to determine language user attitudes is to analyse letters, newspapers and other articles (Du Plessis, 1991: 222). It is important to keep in mind that the evaluation of language planning programmes does not necessarily have to focus on language planning to act as an evaluative study. Language planners could infer a lot from language use patterns and sociolinguistic studies conducted with well established methods (Du Plessis, 1991: 229, 234). This is similar to methods used by Swan and Lewis (1990: 215-216). From questionnaire survey data about language use, they infer that:

a relatively high estimated use of Tok Pisin indicates a favourable attitude to the language, especially in a learning environment where all the pressures, in terms of lectures, seminars, tutorials, textbook reading and academic writing are in the direction of English. In such a situation, of course, the converse would not necessarily hold true: in an English learning environment a relatively low estimated use of Tok Pisin would not necessarily indicate an unfavourable attitude; it might simply mean that opportunities to use Tok Pisin rather than English were few and far between.

Two of the established methods used often by sociolinguists that could present useful information to language planners are census and survey/questionnaire data (Du Plessis, 1991: 230). Rubin (1983: 336) warns that census data do not always reflect the language preferences of participants, but should rather be interpreted as information about the social identities of participants. The method utilised in this study primarily attempts to come to terms with the cultural identities of English L2 learners. It is hoped that this data could provide the language planning researcher with useful information needed to improve language planning because it aims to gather socio-cultural data from these language users with the aim of comparison with language usage envisioned in the national language plan. This information could be complemented by existing census data.

4.2 Analysis of different language planning processes

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to incorporate all the related information to typologies of language planning processes. Readers are referred to Du Plessis’ (1991: 95-148) extensive discussion if they want to give this issue the necessary attention it should be afforded in debates about the theory of language planning. For the purposes of this thesis, Du Plessis’ (1991: 103-105; 117-118; 145-148) summaries of different typologies of language planning processes will suffice.

Du Plessis (1991: 96-97) argues that it is important to take note of Haugen’s (1966) conception of four dimensions of corpus planning. Haugen identified selection, codification, elaboration and implementation as the four major dimensions of this

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According to Du Plessis (1991: 118), Neustupny’s (1970) major contribution to a typology of language planning processes is his observation that these processes are carried out within a particular social framework. Du Plessis (1991: 124) also notes that Rubin (1971b) emphasises the evaluation of language planning processes. She approaches language planning from the perspective of general planning and according to her the planning process is characterised by four phases: fact finding, planning, implementation and feedback. Evaluation occurs at every one of these phases and it, therefore, has an ambivalent meaning: that of feedback and evaluation.

Bamgbose’s contribution is important in the African context of language planning. According to him, the language planning process is misrepresented by existing language planning models. Bamgbose (1991: 143-144) argues that one can give three answers to the question: “. . . does language planning take place in Africa, or is what happens largely language treatment?” One could argue that it does not take place, because language planning in Africa rarely conforms to a language planning model. Another possible answer is that language planning is not yet taking place, as soon as African scholars have taken cognisance of requirements of language planning models, it might happen properly. According to Bamgbose, many African scholars tend to apologise for the confused nature of language planning in African contexts. The third answer is the one preferred by Bamgbose (1991). Language planning does not take place if one measures it against existing language planning models, because the models are too restrictive to recognise language treatment in Africa as language planning. He also predicts that this situation is not going to change for Africa (or elsewhere where societal change is required) in the near future (1991: 143). He argues that, “[g]iven the nature of social planning, it is doubtful if the rigid processes of the planning model of language planning can be sustained” (1991: 144). He, therefore, concludes that existing language planning models “cannot account for many significant developments in language policy [in developing / newly independent countries], and that it should be modified if language planning, as a field of study, is to be relevant to most language situations, and consequently to [be] more meaningful and fruitful” (1991: 6, 12).

Du Plessis (1991: 143) also takes note that, according to Bamgbose, language planning does not always proceed linearly from one starting point (fact finding) through to presenting the language plan and then to a fixed closing point — that of implementation. Fact finding, for example, does not always precede policy formulation and evaluation does not necessarily only occur after implementation (Du Plessis, 1991: 144). Bamgbose (1991), therefore, proposes a multidirectional model where several directional possibilities for language planning are possible. Verhoef (1991: 31) states that the following of a strict/rigid language planning process (often used as a requirement for successful language planning) is the exception rather than the rule today. The “steps” in the language planning process are interrelated and cannot be conceived of as strictly compartmentalised sections (Verhoef, 1991: 64).

Rubin’s four steps (quoted in Verhoef, 1991: 61) in the language planning process are still relevant and useful today — particularly if one keeps in mind that they might not occur in neat progression — as initially suggested by Bamgbose (1991):

(i) Fact finding;
(ii) Theoretical planning, this includes:
   - Determination of aims
   - Determination of strategies/work plan
   - Anticipation of impact of language planning efforts;
(iii) Implementation; and
(iv) Evaluation / feedback

Reagan (1995: 320) also regards fact-finding, establishment and articulation of goals and strategies, implementation and evaluation as the four components of the language planning process.

If one accepts that language planning is an intensely political endeavour that forms part of broader social planning (Rubin & Jernudd, 1971b: xiv; Wessels, 1996: 171), the importance of appropriate socio-cultural and socio-political information about the language users with whom the language plan is devised is emphasised. In this context, information about the cultural identities of people would be useful, because it might provide an indication of their reactions to suggested language change. It is also
in this context that education and language planning are linked. Kelman (1971: 46-47; 49) argues that:

... language planning must be closely linked with economic planning. Educational efforts – including the systematic learning of the dominant language within the subordinate group – can help in bringing larger proportions of that group into the system. Beyond that, however, language problems are likely to persist until that group as a group is brought into the system through its economic development ... Whatever language policy is developed, its success may depend on careful co-ordination with educational planning and with economic and political development.

Several researchers regard appropriate information about the social, cultural, political and economic situation of language users as useful to inform language planning (cf. Rubin & Jernudd, 1971: xvi; Rubin, 1971a: 219; Hartshorne, 1987: 82). Hartshorne’s (1987: 82) argument is illustrative of a consequent result of such a consultative process:

Government policy in language, as on other aspects of education, will be most effective when it has the acceptance of ‘the user’ and when the latter is involved and participates in the decisions about education, including those on language, which are taken.

Schiffman’s (1996) notion of “linguistic culture" provides another way of conceiving of information that could be helpful in the initial fact finding phase of language planning or during implementation. He argues that the linguistic culture of polities31 would explain a lot about the language policy choices made by these countries. He defines linguistic culture as:

... the set of behaviours, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language, and religious-historical circumstances associated with a particular language (1996: 5).

Although he accepts that policy and reality are separate issues,32 he argues that an understanding of the linguistic culture of a society could present valuable information about the language policy selected (1996: 17). He is also of the opinion that ideally, policy and the reality/society it is created for should “fit" (1996: 54). It is postulated in this thesis that a better understanding of the cultural identity of language users could provide valuable information that could facilitate this “fit" and could, therefore,

31 Schiffman uses this term as synonym for organized society or the State (cf. Sykes, 1985: 793).

32 Cf. footnote 13 [Chapter 1] for a brief discussion.

improve acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa. Reagan (1995: 327) similarly argues that:

As long as language planning and language policy formulation is seen as a top-down activity, removed from those whose lives it affects most closely, and is perceived as an activity only for those with specialised expertise, it will most probably continue to be generally ineffective. What is needed, instead, is language policies devised in consultation with, and with support and involvement of, those they are intended to serve.

The evaluation of language planning processes should be an important, continuous component of the language planning implementation phase. Fishman (1972: 27) states that:

Like other types of planning it [language planning] requires evaluation and feedback in order to proceed more successfully (according to locally pre-specified criteria) in the future than it has in the past.

Information gathered about the implementation or reception of a language plan among its users could be used for at least two purposes: to improve implementation of the language plan and to evaluate the “legitimacy" of the language plan. Kelman (1971: 23) identifies two sources of legitimacy for a national system: "(1) the extent to which it reflects the ethnic-cultural identity of the national population and (2) the extent to which it meets the needs and interests of that population".

4.3 Analysis of current (after 1994) acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa

This section aims to: provide a brief discussion of the current context (after 1994) of language planning in South Africa; focus on the status quo of acquisition planning for English as a L2; and provide an analysis of the Langtag (1996) process. The Langtag (1996) process is analysed as one current example of acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa. The “accounting scheme" of Cooper (1989a) is used to analyse the language planning efforts as expressed in the Langtag (1996) report. The overviews presented in this section should provide one with an indication of trends in the current national language planning context in South Africa.

4.3.1 The current (after 1994) context of language planning in South Africa

The current (after 1994) context of language planning in South Africa is characterised by two different sentiments. On the one hand, there is great excitement about the
opportunity to work towards a national language plan for a truly democratic South African society. On the other hand, scholars have started to express their concern about the tentativeness of some of these language plans and the possible danger it could entail for the lives of ordinary citizens.

First of all, it is exciting to acknowledge that, at this moment there exists a very distinct and unique context for a study of language planning and policy efforts in South Africa. Previous official language policies of South Africa suggested that the people of South Africa are bilingual and the choice of official languages foregrounded the colonial languages or the languages of the apartheid governments. Titlestad (1996: 169) refers to this situation as “the old bilingualism”. At different times, Dutch or English, and later Afrikaans and English were declared as the official languages of South Africa (Schuring, 1992: 252-254). Although other indigenous languages had some status under apartheid governments, they were never declared as national official languages. The current national language policy situation in South Africa is very different from previous seemingly bilingual official language policies.

With the declaration of eleven languages in the new constitution (1993) of South Africa, the multilingual nature of the South African population is officially made visible for the first time. These eleven languages account for the Lis of more than 98% of the estimated 40 million people in South Africa (Ridge, 1996: 16).

The Langtag report (1996: 11) appropriately expresses the uniqueness of the context in which language planning and policy efforts are conducted in the new South Africa:

The historical and constitutional context in which we are setting out to draft a National Language Plan is one of the most favourable for any nation in the second half of the 20th century.

According to the report, the new constitution is among the “most progressive state documents in the world today ... [including] the fundamental principles on which a democratic language policy for a multilingual society should be based” (1996: 11). This new approach to language planning is expressed in the overarching acquisition planning goal identified in the Langtag report (1996: 17) as the “systematic planning for a situation characterised by multilingual proficient citizens”.

Secondly, scholars have expressed concern at the new government’s drive towards multilingualism. They fear that the drive towards multilingualism could obscure the special position of English as a L2 language in South Africa. Vague statements about acquisition planning goals for English as a L2 in South Africa, (for example, those mentioned in the Langtag, 1996 report), frustrate some scholars who are of the opinion that these issues need special treatment because of the potentially dangerous situation where acquisition of English as a L2 can act as an “excluding” device. True to its decision to arrive at an “enabling framework rather than to put forward a prescriptive blueprint”, the Langtag (1996: 8) report does not list specific acquisition planning goals for the individual official languages: all languages are treated as equal. This trend is visible in previous ANC and transitional language planning documents as well (Titlestad, 1996: 163-164).

Scholars argue that, if English continues to play a powerful role as lingua franca in South Africa (Wright, 1993: 1; Heugh, 1995a: 341; Lemmer, 1995: 83-84; Titlestad, 1996: 163), lack of access to English will disempower many South Africans (Gough, 1996: 70). In her proposals for linguistic human rights, Skutnabb-Kangas (1995: 616) includes the right of all citizens to become high level bilinguals (or trilinguals) in the L1 and one “official language”33 of their choice. This latter point is later improved to read “everybody whose mother tongue is not an official language in the country where s/he is resident, can become bilingual ... in the mother tongue(s) and (one of) the official language(s) (according to his or her choice)” (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995: 500). This creative tension between an enabling framework for language planning that includes all South African languages, and fears about the lack of explicit acquisition planning goals for English as a L2, characterises the current South African language planning context. For the purposes of contextualisation of the problem this study focuses on, it is important to discuss in more detail the special position of English as a L2 in multilingual South Africa.

33 She assumes that not all languages will be declared as official. In the South African context, this right could be expressed as the right of all South Africans to be high level bilinguals in their mother tongue and a language of wider communication that will give them access to education – of her choice.
4.3.2 The status quo for English L2 acquisition planning

Three issues dominate the current debate about improving acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa: standard English, the need to improve the English L2 proficiency of teachers and learners, and the position of the L1 in English L2 acquisition.

The issue of standard English in South Africa is a passionate, current debate. Two opposing views are championed. Ndèbele’s (1987) influential keynote address at the jubilee conference of the English Academy in 1986 is an exponent of the one view and Titlestad (1996, 1998) consistently takes up the challenge to state the opposing view. An in-depth discussion of this issue falls well beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet, a brief exposition of these opposing arguments is required, because these opposing notions are reflected in discussions about the acquisition of English as a L2 in South Africa and because Ndèbele’s (1987) discussion links language planning and social planning – a central concern in this study.

The main thrust of Ndèbele’s (1987: 13) argument is that South Africans must become critically open-minded about the acquisition of English. He is severely critical of any discussion of prescriptive standard English and argues that English in South Africa might become a “new” language altogether. He argues that English becomes the property of those who speak it and opposes a position where one states that “English belongs to all who use it provided that it is used correctly” (1987: 3). Of particular importance to the interests of this thesis is his view that “the issue of language should become clearer from the broad social perspective” (1987: 11). In a lengthy digression from the theme of his paper, Ndèbele (1987: 4-11) sketches the social conditions of oppressed black South Africans and he finally relates this to the position of English in South Africa. From this discussion one can infer that he believes that the role of L1 speakers of English in the L2 learning process would become less condescending only if L1 speakers and L2 learners could meet as equals. The inequalities in South African society are seen to influence language behaviour deeply. This is also expressed in the Langtag report (1996: 18): the “deracialisation and deghettoisation of the urban areas of South Africa will optimise the conditions for the acquisition of additional languages”. The emphasis might shift to the need for Afrikaans- and English-speaking South Africans to learn an African language and not only focus on the traditional approach to L2 acquisition which means speakers of African languages are learning English.

Conversely, Titlestad’s (1996) main argument could be summarised as follows. He is “in favour of an English close to the international standard as the standard and teaching model for English in South Africa” (1996: 163). He maintains that English will be the language that links South Africans to the international world and, therefore, South African English must be internationally intelligible (1996: 168). He also argues that we would cheat black parents if the English we teach on their demand does not give their children access to the advantages only brought about by standard English (1996: 169, 1998: 37). He also maintains that standard English can be spoken with any accent (1996: 170; Wright, 1993; Jeffery, 1992).

Jeffery’s (1993) distinction between spoken and written varieties of standard language is important to remember. He (1993: 17) reminds us that the standard language debate is basically a debate about selection of a written form as standard. According to him nobody has ever tried to prescribe a standard for spoken language (1993: 20). However, there are social standards of spoken language (accent) which nobody has prescribed, although everyone is instinctively clear about their social status. Results from matched-guise (and other) experiments with South African English L2 users consistently show that learners are biased in favour of spoken standard South African or even British English (Lanham, 1985: 246, 249, 250; Cooper, 1989b: 46, 47; Jeffery, 1993: 21, 22; De Klerk & Bosch, 1995: 27; Spencer, 1997: 58, 59). It, therefore, seems that accent does count.

It would be naive to assume that this debate with its opposing viewpoints could be “concluded” at this point in time. Two observations made by McArthur (1998b: 1) in a discussion on English in the world, in Africa and in South Africa, seem to support the view that this argument will be an “ever-lasting” one:

(i) … the everyday language acts of all users of English everywhere … are so vast and so varied that no one person, group, or system … can hope to catch and dialogue them.

(ii) … since a total grasp of the phenomenon is impossible, our efforts to describe, prescribe for, and teach English … are incomplete, indirect, and in the last analysis fictive …
A sensible approach to a consideration of these matters would have to include a simultaneous focus on three issues. One will have to consider (1) how the languages of the world relate to each other and (2) how this complex thing we call “English” fits into these relationships (McArthur, 1998b: 7) and, (3) concerning accent, one has to be transparent and inform learners that certain accents do carry certain stereotypical social connotations. A superficial remark would be to state that learners could then choose which accent they would like to acquire. An analysis of abilities of South African English L2 teachers would clearly show that not many of them are able to provide the “option” of a standard South African or British accent as role model for their English L2 learners.

The need for the improvement of English L2 proficiency of teachers and learners in South Africa has been raised for some time from different sources. In 1987, Hartsorne (1987: 99-100) stated:

It is stating the obvious to say that English-medium education can be effective only if both teachers and pupils have the capacity to use English in the classroom at the level appropriate to the learning required by the curriculum, and also have textbooks and other materials in English that has taken these factors into account.

According to Hartsorne (1987: 100), the effects of apartheid policy and practice concerning education and language teaching in education have reduced this capacity and lowered the standards of English throughout the black education system. Ndebele (1987) also alludes to this matter when he argues that language behaviour often is symptomatic of social conditions. If the social conditions do not change, the levels of English L2 proficiency might not improve either. McArthur (1998b: 7) warns that “there can be no quick fixes, and maybe not even medium-term fixes” for the linguistic and educational problems in the South African context. One cannot eradicate the effects of institutionalised racial inequality within a short period of time. Although the improvement of English L2 proficiency of teachers and learners should be an important goal, this alone will not solve the problem of poor black education. While we attempt to get on with the job of improving acquisition planning for English as a L2, we will have to allow the social engineers to do their work simultaneously.

The understanding of language proficiency brought about by the work of Cummins' and colleagues (for example, Cummins & Swain, 1986) has aggravated the complexities surrounding the proficiency of English as a L2 and its influence on the academic achievement of L2 learners. Initially, Cummins devised a distinction between two types of language proficiency: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1984: 136; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 152; Cummins, 1995: 57). He develops these concepts further, because he argues that “dichotomizing ‘language proficiency’ into two
categories oversimplifies the phenomenon” and this could lead to misinterpretation (Cummins, 1984: 138; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 152). He elaborates these initial concepts and suggests that language proficiency can be conceptualised along two continua, “while still maintaining the essential aspects of the BICS/CALP distinction” (Cummins, 1984: 138). The first continuum relates to the range of contextual support available when meaning is negotiated and the second continuum relates to the degree of cognitive involvement entailed in the communication task (Cummins, 1984: 138-139; Cummins & Swain, 1986: 152-154). In other words, he “originally used the terms basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) and later ... elaborated the distinction into a framework that distinguished the cognitive and contextual demands made by particular forms of communication” (Cummins, 1995: 57). He therefore maintains that, “the conversational and the academic” represents “the two faces of language proficiency” (Cummins, 1995: 55).

Accompanying these two different ways to conceptualise language proficiency, he also formulated the threshold and the developmental interdependence hypotheses. The threshold hypothesis entails the notion that children experience either positive or negative consequences of bilingualism. Cummins (1984: 107) states this as follows:

The attainment of a lower threshold level of bilingual proficiency would be sufficient to avoid any negative effects; but the attainment of a second, higher level of bilingual proficiency would be necessary to lead to accelerated cognitive growth.

The developmental interdependence hypothesis suggests that:

To the extent that instruction in L2 is effective in promoting proficiency in L2, transfer of this proficiency into L1 will occur provided that there is adequate exposure to L1 (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn L1 (Cummins, 1984: 143).

These notions, that bilingualism could be detrimental or beneficial to the cognitive development of children, and that competence in the L1 could determine competence in the L2 and, could therefore, influence academic success where the L2 is used as language of teaching and learning, are putting the spotlight once again on the role of the L1 (or mother tongue) in black education. Balfour (1998: 149-150) comments on results of a study on literacy levels reported by Barbara Ludman in the Mail and Guardian (13 June 1995). One of the findings is: “Literacy in the mother tongue was ‘highly correlated with proficiency in English and basic numeracy’ ... This finding seems to be a powerful pointer towards the use of mother tongue instruction for monolingual South African schools”. [This matter is also relevant to the discussion in §5.1, Chapter 2]. It is important to take note that this remains a hypothesis that is not easy to verify outside the special Canadian context (Leap & Mesthrie, 2000: 373).

Another criticism of the interdependence hypothesis is that there are many other variables that probably influence the academic success of learners (Leap & Mesthrie, 2000: 373). The relationship between L1 and L2 development (as conceptualised in the interdependence hypothesis) is, therefore, only one factor. However, the interdependence hypothesis remains attractive, because it offers an explanation of a substantial number of “phenomena related to language and school success in multilingual environments” (Leap & Mesthrie, 2000: 373).

For the purposes of this argument suffice it to say that a reconsideration of the role of the L1 in black education and the introduction of acquisition planning for English as a L2 will be heated in the light of the language planning history of South Africa. It would, however, also be irresponsible to ignore evidence that suggests that competence in the L1 could lead to competence in the L2, simply because it is a politically incorrect notion in the South African context. McArthur (1998b: 7) again suggests a possible solution to this impasse. He argues that an important function of “language engineers” in the new South Africa would be to conduct “consciousness raising [about language matters in general] across the board”. Dissemination of research findings about the relationship between bilingual language proficiency, cognitive development and educational achievement should be part of these agendas and road shows.

In another manner, English as a L1 could be impeding the success of English L2 acquisition. Harthorne (1987: 101) argues:

35 It must again be asserted that the position of white, Afrikaans learners of English as a L2 is different. The use of the term black in this context is required to distinguish between white Afrikans learners of English and learners of English that use an African language as L1 or mother tongue. Readers are also reminded that findings for Afrikaans respondents are only related to white Afrikaans experiences, because no coloured Afrikaans speakers participated in the study.
there is little likelihood of African pupils benefiting from an effective English-medium education as long as separate, vertically-segmented, racial education systems are maintained. Until a new cross-cultural mainstream South African education system is created for all children, African pupils will remain isolated from the very influences necessary to creating a natural environment for language learning and the effective use of English in their education. It is this issue, in which language policy becomes dependent upon broader education policy, to which the State must now give urgent and immediate attention, if the present crisis in education is not to turn to final tragedy.

Hartshorne echoes Ndebele’s (1987) call that the transformation of South African society as a whole should be a prerequisite or a simultaneous event that aims to improve not only English L2 proficiency, but also interpersonal relations between L1 and L2 speakers of English. It is only as social and economic equals that the English of black L2 users could benefit from contact with white English L1 users. Otherwise, interventions by white English L1 speakers will be experienced as patronising.

In conclusion, an analysis of acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa shows that acquisition planning is (and was) not effective. There is widespread concern about the levels of English L2 proficiency of South Africans. If one believes that language planning forms part of broader social planning (Rubin & Jernudd, 1971b: xiv; Wessels, 1996: 171), the importance of appropriate socio-cultural and socio-political information about the language users with which the language plan is devised is emphasised. In this context, information about the cultural identities of people would be useful, because it might provide an indication of their reactions to suggested language change.

4.3.3 Analysis of acquisition planning for English as a L2 as expressed in the Langtag (1996) report

The two preceding sections [§4.3.1 and §4.3.2, Chapter 2] have realised one of the secondary aims of this study (to analyse the acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa). It is clear that acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa is not effective: levels of English L2 proficiency prove this. This section [§4.3.3, Chapter 2] aims to use Cooper’s (1989a) accounting scheme to analyse the relative success of the Langtag (1996) process to establish a tentative framework for national language planning in South Africa. This will provide further background for the acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa. This section focuses on the Langtag (1996) report, because it presented one of the most encompassing frameworks for future, national language planning in South Africa. It is postulated that this influential report would effect future language planning efforts in all domains of the South African society.

Before this analysis can be conducted, a discussion of Cooper’s accounting scheme is required. Cooper (1989a) devises an “accounting” scheme that could be used to analyse a language plan. According to this scheme, evaluators of language plans should ask: “What plans for whom and how?” or “What actors attempt to influence what behaviours of which people for what ends under what conditions by what means through what decision-making process with what effect (Cooper, 1989a: 31; 98). Ager (1996) uses Cooper’s accounting scheme to analyse the language policies of England and France very effectively. Cooper (1989a: 58) regards his descriptive framework as a mould “wherein behavior may be poured to cool and harden for analysis”. It is, therefore, a very useful tool for the analysis of language planning.

4.3.3.1 Which actors devised the Langtag process?

Although Langtag admits that it is part of a “top-down” language planning process commissioned by the government of South Africa, it is claimed that this process is the culmination of a struggle by society (1996: 10, 12). It should also be kept in mind that the commissioning government is “democratically elected [and] legitimate” (1996: 10). Langtag also claims that a broad consultative process was followed.

4.3.3.2 What language behaviour would Langtag hope to affect?

The desired (ideal) language behaviour is functional multilingualism (Langtag, 1996: 16). This implies different levels of language proficiency, for different people, in other words, for languages to be used for different purposes.

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36 Legitimacy is understood in terms of Kelman’s (1971: 23) definition. Kelman (1971: 23) identifies two sources of legitimacy for a national system: (1) the extent to which it reflects the ethnic-cultural identity of the national population and (2) the extent to which it meets the needs and interests of that population.
4.3.3.3 With or for which people was the Langtag process devised?

The Langtag process is devised for the entire population of the post-1994 South Africa. This population is conceptualised as “... open to radical change and to social transformation in general” (Langtag, 1996: 11).

4.3.3.4 For what ends were the Langtag process devised?

Its linguistic aim is to devise “a democratic language policy for a multilingual society” (Langtag, 1996: 11). The aim is to assist South Africans to “function effectively in the multilingual milieu of South Africa” (Langtag, 1996: 13).

General language related ends include:

- To promote multilingualism; and
- To further the elaboration and modernisation of the African languages (Langtag, 1996: 11-12).

More specific language planning aims include:

- Status planning ends:
  
  Two status planning ends are mentioned:
  
  (i) To challenge the hegemony of English – and to a lesser extent Afrikaans; and
  
  (ii) To eliminate the negative stereotypes of African languages – decolonising the mind (Langtag, 1996: 15).

- Corpus planning ends:

  Three ends related to corpus planning are mentioned:
  
  (i) To change the negative attitudes towards African languages – this includes attempts to change the negative attitudes of many speakers of African languages towards African languages;
  
  (ii) To eradicate the lack of literacy materials for African languages (dictionaries, glossaries, popular magazines, journals); and
  
  (iii) To eradicate the scarcity of well-trained speakers of African languages as technical experts (terminographers, terminologists, translators, interpreters, literacy facilitators) (Langtag, 1996: 16-17).

- Acquisition planning ends:

  Three decisive factors in acquisition planning are mentioned:
  
  (i) The motivation, or lack of it, which reflects ingrained language attitudes;
  
  (ii) The need to create or build in incentives for the acquisition of specific languages by specifically targeted individuals or groups of people; and
  
  (iii) The need for high-quality training (with professional accreditation) of language educators and trainers (Langtag, 1996: 18).

- Non-language related ends include:

  (i) To promote national unity;
  
  (ii) To entrench democracy, which includes the protection of language rights;
  
  (iii) To promote respect for and tolerance towards linguistic and cultural diversity; and
  
  (iv) To promote national economic development (Langtag, 1996: 11-12).

4.3.3.5 Under what conditions was the Langtag process devised?

Situational

It is well-known that post-1994 South Africa is in the throes of transformation at various levels. This is expressed as follows in the Langtag report (1996: 11): “South Africa is in the midst of a rapid and deepgoing transition from a racist, patriarchal and authoritarian past to an anti-racist, anti-sexist and democratic future”.

Structural

The Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology of the South African government (Langtag, 1996: 7) commissioned Langtag. The constraints that bore on the work of Langtag included time and resources. This influenced the scope of the work of the committee. Only eight months was available and a budget of only R 800
000,00 could be allocated. Many committee members and their full-time employers, therefore, subsidised the process by offering their time, expertise and resources free of charge – for the national good (Langtag, 1996: 9). Owing to some of these constraints, all committees (Langtag, 1996: 9) could not conduct limited or prototype research.

**Informational**

The approach of the Langtag committee towards language planning includes the notions that:

- “Language is a resource, not a problem”;
- “Language is a fundamental human right” (1996: 12).

**4.3.3.6 Which means were utilised by the compilers of the Langtag report?**

One of the fundamental assumptions upon which the Langtag report is built is that: “Persuasion, encouragement and incentives rather than coercion are the appropriate policy stances in the highly sensitive area of language practices and language usage” (Langtag, 1996: 13). This tension between the “top-down” and “bottom-up” strategies plays out very obviously in attitudes surrounding English. It is clear from the Langtag committee’s approach (representing a “top-down” sentiment) that they want to fight the hegemony of English and improve the status of African languages (1996: 15-17). Contrary to this approach, the committee also holds that the language attitudes of citizens (representing a “bottom-up” sentiment) should be respected and that language plans have to take effect after full consultation with the people the plan is devised for (1996: 2, 5, 13, 16, 17, 26). If parents, therefore, demand an increased focus on English, language planners and language teachers should honour their wish.

**4.3.3.7 Through what decision-making process was the Langtag process devised?**

The democratically elected, representative, legitimate South African government decided to commission a language committee that could advise it on the formulation of a language plan for South Africa. The process is also regarded as a direct result of the struggle of South Africans for a democratic South Africa and a “bottom-up” process is envisioned where many stake-holders will have to work towards devising language policies for different contexts within the framework suggested by the Langtag (1996) report.

**4.3.3.8 With what effect was the Langtag report received?**

The Langtag (1996) report perceives of itself as only identifying the language needs and priorities that the South African government must attend to by offering an open-ended enabling framework that could guide this process. Many commentators were disappointed with the “open-ended” nature of the report and many agree that much more detailed plans (regarded as policies in this thesis) should be devised. At the time of writing, an overarching attempt to implement the multilingual national language policy has not yet manifested itself.

**4.3.3.9 Conclusions**

This analysis reveals the interwoven nature of language and social planning. The linguistic culture of the South African society is also largely revealed by this analysis. It is an intensely multilingual linguistic culture in which the historical power relations between its people are clearly reflected. The Langtag report (1996) succeeded admirably if one considers its status as an advisory committee that aimed to present a framework for further language planning efforts in South Africa. Considering the complexity of matters dealt with and the constraints, this process can truly be regarded “as one of the more significant developments in the second half of the 20th century” (Langtag, 1996: 11). An important next determinant would be to take note of the role of PANSALB in furthering the process within the framework suggested by Langtag and in monitoring implementation on various levels and in various domains. So far, PANSALB does not seem to be very effective. It seems to be constantly ruling against linguistic “violence” (for example, Jacobson, 2000a: 26), but it seems as if its proactive and monitoring functions are not effectively executed, or not well-disseminated. The effective functioning of PANSALB will be a major determinant of the ultimate evaluation of the success of the Langtag process.

With this analysis, one of the secondary aims of this study (to analyse the acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa) has been achieved. The remaining secondary aims of this study are:
• To determine the English L2 proficiency of two groups of L2 learners of English in South Africa (L1 speakers of Afrikaans and Southern Sotho respectively) as representatives of the broader L2 community in South Africa;

• To describe their cultural identities; and

• To correlate these measures in an attempt to establish the contribution that cultural identity makes toward an explanation of variability in the L2 English proficiency of the subjects.

These aims are addressed in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis and in Chapter 6, findings from this investigation are related to the analysis of the acquisition planning context for English as a L2 offered in Chapter 2 [§4, Chapter 2]. This thesis could be regarded as an attempt by an individual researcher to further tease out the guidelines for language planning in South Africa as stated in the Langtag report (1996).

It is one attempt to work towards a practical manifestation (Verhoef, 1998: 48) of the ideal of functional multilingualism as expressed in the constitution and the Langtag report (1996).

5. An approach to acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa

Finally, it is important to situate the discussion of English as a L2 in this thesis within the broader context of desired functional multilingualism as expressed by the Langtag report (1996). If this discussion is not situated within the framework of functional multilingualism, several incorrect inferences could occur and data from this study could be used incorrectly. A superficial analysis of the problem statement of this thesis proves this possible danger.

A brief summary of the problem of interest to this study could be that the English L2 proficiency of South African learners is (and was) inadequate. English L2 learners cannot, for example, access learning at higher education through English as a L2 effectively. A basic understanding of this problem statement could lead a person to make the following incorrect inferences:

• English L2 proficiency is the main reason for academic failure of English L2 learners that study at institutions where English L2 is used as language of teaching; and

• If a South African is not adequately proficient in English as a L2, she/he has little opportunity to progress educationally and economically in South Africa. Therefore, all South Africans should attempt at all costs to acquire English L2 proficiency.

In order to dispel these incorrect inferences, a more careful contextualization of the problem statement [§1.4, Chapter 1] is required. A more refined view of L2 proficiency is required first of all. Secondly, one should draw careful conclusions about the role of English L2 proficiency in explaining academic underachievement. Finally, in multilingual contexts, a blind “straight for English as a L2” project seriously jeopardises the linguistic human rights of the citizens in a multilingual polity. Moreover, for this type of language learning to succeed, “[t]he number of L1 English speakers should greatly outnumber that of non-English speakers” (Campbell, 1996: 153; MacKay & De Klerk, 1996: 217). The South Africa context, where there is a relatively small English L1 community and where contact between speakers of English as a L1 and L2 is not reportedly high (Luckett, 1993: 46-47; Wessels, 1996: 184-185; MacKay & De Klerk, 1996: 201), renders this approach a failure from the start.

5.1 An approach towards L2 proficiency

The type and level of English L2 proficiency desired by South Africans requires careful consideration. Rubin (1968: 35) reports that:

Learning seems to be generally respected in Paraguay. Most people want their children to finish at least three grades of primary school which permits them to be almost functionally literate (read and write some Spanish and do simple arithmetic).

37 Two definitions for functional multilingualism are offered in the Langtag report (1996: 16, 24). It entails the following ideas: "a policy of multilingualism does note imply that all languages have to be used for all functions, but rather that different languages may be appropriate for different functions" (1996: 24). On the other hand, it is also stated that functional multilingualism should not be regarded in the sense of a diglossic situation where the languages are forever doomed to be used in certain domains only (1996: 16). An open-ended functional approach is envisioned where, as languages emerge people in a domain later will be able to realize that they are so used.

38 This term is used as synonym for organized society or the State (cf. Sykes, 1985: 793).
In South Africa, at the time of writing, learners of English as a L2 want access to, among other domains, higher education by learning English as a L2. The outcomes of acquisition planning for English L2 proficiency are, therefore, very different from those aimed at by Paraguayan parents in 1968. This is a world wide trend (see, for example, Baldauf’s, 1990b: 273 discussion of English L2 proficiency expectations in Samoan). Kale (1990: 117), for example, remarks the following about the English L2 proficiency of learners in the Torres Strait:

However, the point holds that even advanced lexico-grammatical knowledge of a language and verbal fluency may not be adequate preparation for the academic demands of higher education.

The standards of proficiency required for English L2 learners in South Africa who want to access higher education in English is arguably much higher than that of basic literacy, numeracy and communicative competence.

Apart from awareness that the level of English L2 proficiency required to access higher education through the medium of English as a L2 is quite demanding, we also have to reorientate our ‘thinking of language proficiency in general. Cummins’ reconceptualisation of language proficiency [cf. the discussion in §4.3.2, Chapter 2] has certain implications for English L2 learning in multilingual South Africa. One of its main implications would be the revisiting of the role of the L1 in promoting proficiency in the L2 and consequently effecting the academic achievement of learners that are taught through the L2.

A well-known added difficulty will hamper any reconsideration of the role of the L1 in L2 learning in South Africa. The very idea of any role for the L1 in the education of black South Africans has been very successfully stigmatised by its abuse during the apartheid government to divide the peoples of South Africa (Marivate, 1993: 91; Reagan, 1995: 322-323). If one assumes that language development and socio-economic development are inextricably linked (as conceived of in the Langtag report), this terrible legacy of the apartheid government might, ironically, wield enormous power in the attempts of South Africans to reconstruct and develop the new South Africa. To complicate matters even further, Makoni (1995: 86) states that:

... the language forms most African children encounter during their primary socialization are so radically different from the ones they encounter when they are supposed to be receiving instruction through their mother tongue, that I would argue that African children are not receiving the benefit of mother-tongue instruction, but of step-tongue instruction ... so much for the arguments that it is beneficial, if not revolutionary for children to learn through their mother tongue.

This concern is shared by Matusa (1996: 79-93) who pleads for the recognition and use of dialects as languages of teaching and learning. Once again, it seems that the South African language context defies comfortable solutions to “problems”. A reconceptualisation of the use of the L1 in African education will have to take concerns such as those expressed by Makoni into account.

5.2 Proficiency in English as a L2 and academic achievement

Some researchers have argued that the lack of academic achievement of black learners in South Africa is basically caused by a lack of English L2 proficiency (for example, Pienaar, 1987: 19). Researchers like Pienaar sincerely believe that if the English L2 skills of their learners could be improved, they will become more academically successful. This is a very simplistic perspective on the complicated issue of academic achievement by L2 speakers in a context where they not only have to learn the L2 but also have to learn other skills through the medium of the L2.

According to some researchers, the language of teaching/learning is not the only contributing factor to the academic failure of black learners, a lack of cognitive development required for academic achievement is a bigger concern. Henning (1994: 87) states that, “[k]nowledge of the medium is not the problem”, an investigation of the interaction between cognition and linguistic proficiency (1994: 89) would provide a more refined view on this complex issue. Increasingly, researchers seem to hold the position that linguistic proficiency in a L2 is a necessary but not sufficient condition for academic achievement (Henning, 1994: 89). This confusion prevailed elsewhere as well. Collier (1989: 509) summarises it when she says:

We have assumed that the development of English proficiency would result in our students’ eventual attainment of the academic skills needed to succeed in school in a second language, at levels comparable to native English speakers.
This assumption is also reflected in the finding that academic development programmes are often linked to English language programmes at tertiary institutions in South Africa. This is clearly evident from renditions by, for example, Grewar (1988) and Ayliff (1993) about the programmes they taught respectively in their academic support and English Special programmes. Ayliff (1993: 181), for example, argues that: “English Special was the ideal course to which to link the first development programme in the Faculty of Arts at UPE [University of Port Elizabeth]”. The at risk students are channelled into this course and it aims to (among other things) “act as a bridging course to further academic studies” (1993: 183, 185).

Ayliff (1993: 189) argues that “academic literacy in English” could become a future goal of this English Special course. The confusion between “English academic language skills” and “general academic skills” will increasingly burden this English course.

Similarly, Grewar (1988: 56) argues that the problem with Fort Hare’s Academic Support unit was that “we had assumed that our main task was to ‘improve’ students’ English”. He then continues to argue that the apparent failure of their programme is that lurking behind this idea “was the assumption that ‘improving’ English means teaching English grammar” (1988: 56). His mistaken attack on grammar is exposed when he continues to discuss how they turned to “Buzan’s insights into the processes of reading and writing, and his methods of studying and making notes” (1988: 57) to transform their programme. He argues that a focus on brain-storming and mind-maps would “cure” them from their incorrect assumption that they must teach grammar to help students understand, read and write English. Grewar (1988) and his colleagues did not “improve” their academic development programme by removing English grammar teaching from the programme, but by adding academic skills useful to the tertiary educational context to it. It is doubtful whether this approach would improve the English academic language skills of their students. These are examples of the confusion many academics display when they use “English academic language skills” and “general academic skills” interchangeably (Van Rooy & Butler, 2000).

In contrast with this confusion, other researchers identify several factors which mitigate against academic success, other than academic language skills. Agar (1990) conducts a study that aims “to unravel the complexity of factors which might explain the high drop-out rate of black African English second-language speakers at a traditionally white English first-language university in South Africa [Witwatersrand University - Wits]”. He finds that, in general, a “disadvantaged education” could account for the high drop-out rates of these students (1990: 435). He identifies six of the most severe and general types of problems experienced by these students:

- A general shortage of cash for paying academic and personal expenses. A particular consequence of this problem is difficulty in purchasing prescribed texts.
- These students experience the academic workload as excessive. Some consequences of this perception are low levels of motivation and difficulty in passing exams.
- These students are used to memorise content that they do not necessarily understand. They find it difficult to engage critically with material and to take notes.
- The reading speed of these students is usually not adequate to enable them to do the reading required from a tertiary student. They also find it difficult to express themselves clearly in English.
- Accommodation and transport are usually a big concern for these students. They also have difficulty to balance family commitments with their academic work.
- Library arrangements are usually not appropriate for these students. They need extended times for library loans, they need to be able to take out more than the required number of books, and they usually need orientation in using the library optimally (1990: 448-451).


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39 Previously also referred to as academic support programmes.
40 Also see Volbrecht (1992 & 1994) for a discussion of this forged link between academic development and language development.
It is, therefore, argued in this thesis that it would be simplistic to state that academic underachievement of L2 learners in South Africa is caused solely by a lack of English language proficiency. The position taken in this thesis is similar to that expressed by Leibowitz (1994:19):

> It is to this resultant lack of proficiency with English that teachers and lecturers attribute the problems many ex-DET students have when studying at the new institutions. While this is certainly true in many cases ... it is not the only cause, or even the most significant one, for students' struggling at the new institutions.

Furthermore, it is argued that the “whipping up” of an English L2 course that addresses academic skills and that will solve this “problem” is based on a faulty premise. It is not possible to “fix up” an unprepared student with a single remedial course (MacKenzie, 1993: 119) that will enable her/him to “catch up” with the “main body of students”. McArthur’s (1998b: 7) observations on the language and education situation in South Africa are informative in this regard. He states:

> My specific awareness of the linguistic and educational situation in South Africa ... indicates that there can be no quick fixes, and not even medium-term fixes, and when we think in terms of what governments and schools might do, we move beyond the relatively simple idea of ‘language planning’ into the complexities of social and indeed language engineering of a kind that has already proved to be immensely destructive under authoritarian conditions and remains an intensely uncertain matter in a democracy.

It is not possible to transform unequal and inadequate education systems which were established and upheld over many years with one fell swoop in the form of a magical English course. A much more patient and overarching attempt at transformation of society in general and education in particular is required. It would be criminal if unsuspecting black parents and learners are mislead into believing that better proficiency in English will be the main catalyst that will change their life situations instantly and completely.

This study, therefore, wants to maintain a clear distinction between English L2 skills and academic language skills required by some learners in South Africa. The findings from this study should be seen as contributing to a better understanding of one aspect that influences the academic achievement of English L2 learners who study at multilingual institutions where English is the medium through which teaching is facilitated.41 With its social approach, this study also attempts to take wider cognisance of other social and cultural factors that influence academic success in general, and English L2 achievement in particular.

5.3 English as a L2 and linguistic human rights

Finally (and related to the above-mentioned implications of Cummins’ interdependency hypothesis for L2 learning in South Africa), a reconsideration of how a study of English L2 proficiency could help English L2 users in South Africa to claim their linguistic human rights is required. The formalisation of language rights is an international trend (Mitchell, 1996: 15). According to Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1995: 484):

> Linguistic human rights ... form part of the overall complex of human rights that has evolved in recent decades in an attempt to protect individuals and groups against inhumane treatment.

They argue that the issue of linguistic human rights should be of concern to applied linguistics (1995: 483, 500). Applied linguistics, by virtue of its attachment to and involvement in educational systems, has contributed to language death or language murder all over the world (1995: 484). Fortunately, professional bodies have increasingly become aware of the significance of linguistic human rights as declarations by, for example, TESOL (Teachers/Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages) prove. TESOL’s mission statement (as declared in 1993), “is to strengthen the effective teaching and learning of English around the world while respecting individuals’ language rights” (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995: 487). Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1995: 500) are of the opinion that:

> It is a challenge for applied linguistics to provide constructive models for the appropriate learning of first, second, and foreign languages, as a contribution to the peaceful diminution of social injustice and to the promotion of LHRs [linguistic human rights].

The ambivalent position of English in multilingual South Africa makes a consideration of linguistic human rights particularly thorny. According to Hartshorne (1995: 316), “all South African languages ... will find their place, probably alongside

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41 Although English is the language of teaching, learners use many languages of learning in these multilingual academic contexts.
English, as local and provincial languages in education, administration and government" (1995: 316 – my emphasis). He argues that English “has to become an inclusive language, accessible to all ... all have to be empowered to use it” (1995: 317). After firmly hedging the powerful position of English in the South African society, he cautions that language issues “have to be approached with respect, tolerance and a deep sense of regard for the rights of individuals in society” (1995: 317).

Through an investigation of the cultural identity profiles of Afrikaans and Southern Sotho learners of English as a L2 in South Africa, this study hopes to reconsider English L2 proficiency within the context of a multilingual and multicultural South Africa. This should contribute in at least two ways to highlight linguistic human rights in South Africa. First of all, it should lead researchers to carefully question the role of English in multilingual South Africa (Volbrecht, 1992: 4). Questions such as those asked by Tollefson (1991: 24) should form part of any study of English L2 proficiency in South Africa:

Why are virtually all individuals within some communities multilingual, while individuals in other communities seem unable to learn second languages, despite years of study in school? Is it because people in some communities are more motivated to learn? Why are immigrants in some countries bilingual? Is it because these immigrants are highly motivated? In societies with great differences in wealth, why are multilingual individuals often poor rather than rich? Is it because the poor have greater motivation to learn?

Tollefson (1991: 7) identifies what he refers to as the linguistic paradox of our time:

... societies which dedicate enormous resources to language teaching and learning have been unable – or unwilling – to remove the powerful linguistic barriers to full participation in the major institutions of modern society.

Ultimately, he argues that the very language policies of these countries act as the exclusion mechanism (Tollefson, 1991: 7). These types of questions should lead to answers that take the linguistic human rights of L2 learners into account.

Secondly, repositioning English L2 learning within a multilingual framework will bring with it a consideration of the role of other languages in the processes of English L2 learning. In this manner, a study of English L2 proficiency would not contribute to maintain linguistic inequalities, but would aim to highlight them. The attempt in this study to consider the complexities contributing to a lack of adequate English L2 proficiency by learners in South Africa should be regarded as an attempt at responsible and socially-conscious research. In the light of Cummins’ reconceptualisation of L2 proficiency, Collier’s (1989: 509) question highlights the interdependency of languages in multilingual contexts during the process of L2 learning and their possible combined role in academic achievement:

What level of proficiency in first and second language is needed to succeed academically in a second language? (my emphasis).

This study hopes to be aware of these subtleties all the time – considered in the context and reality of multilingual South Africa. The study, therefore, hopes to fall within the framework of what Heugh (1995a: 344) defines as “hard-nosed” multiculturalism. This incorporates an instrumental view of languages that recognises the wish of large sections of the South African society to acquire English as a L2 as an important focal point for policy implementation. In this context, it is believed that “effective mechanisms need to be implemented whereby all citizens have real access to [English]” (Heugh, 1995a: 344). This approach also supports language planning from below (Heugh, 1995a: 344). The attempt in this thesis to learn more about the cultural identities of Afrikaans and Southern Sotho speakers of English as a L2 should be seen as an attempt to improve language planning by learning more from the people for whom policy is intended.

6 Conclusions

In this chapter, four issues are addressed. The working definition of language planning [§2, Chapter 2] is that of Cooper (1989a). This definition satisfies the assumptions made in this thesis about language planning. Language is seen as a resource, language planning includes three activities: corpus, status and acquisition planning and language planning is seen as part of social planning.

Secondly, acquisition planning is discussed in more detail [§3, Chapter 2]. In this section the reception of the term is discussed and the centrality of acquisition planning as focus activity is explained. Cooper’s (1989a) own evaluation of the poor reception of the term is shared. He believes that the term is poorly received in contexts where researchers do not conceive of the language teaching situation as a part of language
planning, but as an applied linguistic endeavour. In this thesis, the overlap between these two fields of study (applied linguistics and language planning) is explored and insights from both fields are considered. It is interesting to take note that the Langtag report (1996: 11) conceives of language planning as an applied linguistic activity. This might explain their uncritical inclusion of acquisition planning, because it provides a link with the language teaching situation discussed in detail by several subcommittees. An overview of language planning activities is also presented in this section.

Thirdly, an overview of acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa is offered [§4, Chapter 2]. This includes an analysis of the current acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa and a discussion (analysis) of its apparent shortcomings. Low levels of English L2 proficiency reported by many researchers (for example, Deumert, 2000: 412) are regarded as proof of the failure of acquisition planning (in the past) for English as a L2 in South Africa. More recent acquisition planning goals for English as a L2 (as, for example, expressed in the Langtag (1996) report), are criticised by some scholars for their tentativeness. If one accepts that language planning is an intensely political endeavour that forms part of broader social planning (Rubin & Jernudd, 1971b: xiv; Wessels, 1996: 171), the importance of appropriate socio-cultural and socio-political information about the language users with which the language plan is devised is emphasised. In this context, information about the cultural identities of people would be useful, because it might provide an indication of their reactions to suggested language change.

Cooper’s (1989a) accounting scheme is utilised to analyse the Langtag process (1996). The Langtag (1996) process is regarded as one example of current language planning. An interesting observation from this analysis is the importance of distinguishing between language planning and language policy. The Langtag process (1996) did not conceive of itself as a language policy exercise. Contributors aimed to provide a planning framework within which policy making could commence for various sectors of the South African society. It seems that many South African scholars who claim that the Langtag process is vague misunderstand this intention. The reason for their unease with the Langtag process is that they misconceive of this as an attempt at language policy declaration, an intention disposed of in the Langtag report (1996). However, the success of implementation of the Langtag report (1996) is critically connected to the monitoring role that PANSALB must play. In this regard, it is clear that the only function PANSALB is performing is to give rulings against institutions that defy the multilingual nature of the officially multilingual language policy of the country (as stated in the constitution and advocated by Langtag). They appear not to perform a proactive role in developing, for example, an evaluation schedule for language policy progress across various domains in South Africa. Although acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa is not effective enough, the Langtag process could nevertheless be regarded as a successful exercise. Its final evaluation, however, depends on the critical performance of a very unsteady PANSALB.

The specific approach to acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa is stated [§5, Chapter 2]. This section further contextualises the problem at the level of language planning [cf. §1.4, Chapter 1] of interest to this study. This section again emphasises the complexities of the South African language planning context and the patience and caution language planners will have to have when attempting to influence the language behaviour of South Africans.

This section achieved one of the secondary aims of the thesis as stated in Chapter 1: to analyse the acquisition planning context for English as a L2 in South Africa [§2, Chapter 2]. Results from this analysis are linked to results that flow from the achievement of the other secondary aims of this thesis. Finally, both sets of results are used to provide information that could lead to the improvement of acquisition planning for English as a L2 in South Africa.