AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION
OF A HETEROGENEOUS GROUP
IN A MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

BY

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to

PROFESSOR EDWARD WOLFF,
Friend and Counsellor.

His language is wisdom and his message is the realisation of hope.
THANKS

Almighty God, His Holy Son and the Holy Spirit - for the grace which they pour into my life. Our Lady and Saint Patrick - for their intercession.

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My family and friends, who in spite of it all, unreservedly gave their support.
SINOPSIS

Suid-Afrikaanse maatskappye moet in die lig van die uitdagings van die sterk kompetisie van globale en plaaslike marke hulle fokus en metodologiese benadering ten opsigte van personeelopleiding en -ontwikkeling heroorweeg. Politieke druk om die magswanbalans binne die plaaslike werksituasie via optrede soos regstellende aksie aan te spreek, beteken ook dat die vaardighede, kundigheid and houding van die werknemers verbeter moet word.

Bestuursontwikkeling in die Afrox Opleidingsprogram soos ontwerp en geïmplementeer deur Afrox Beperk, word toegespits op die maatskappy se toesighoudende vlak en vorm deel van die maatskappy se regstellende aksiebeleid. Hierdie werknemersvlak reflekter die heterogeniteit van die Suid-Afrikaanse bevolking en sluit persone in wat uiteenlopende tale, kultuurgroepe en opvoedingsvlakke verteenwoordig.

'n Ondersoek na die luister- en leesbegripvlakke van die kursusgangers dui daarop dat die meerderheid van hulle nie toegerus is om voordeel te kan trek uit die komplekse taalgebruik in 'n tipiese bestuursprogram nie. 'n Begrip van en insig in die gesofistikeerde Westerse sakekonsepte soos verwoord in Engels vir Spesifieke Doeleindes, word nie suksesvol na die kursusgangers oorgedra nie en lei tot 'n onvoldoende om die gewenste uitkoms van die kursus te verwesenlik.

Gebaseer op die bevindings wat voortvloei uit die navorsing, word 'n aantal aanbevelings gedoen. Hulle het toepassingimplikasies nie slegs vir die Bestuursontwikkelingsprogram by Afrox nie, maar ook vir programme elders in die sakewereld wat tans nie aan die behoeftes van hulle Suid-Afrikaanse teikengroepe voldoen nie as gevolg van die linguistiese elemente wat die beplande leerproses ontwrigt.

ABSTRACT

South African companies, faced with the challenges of keenly competitive global and domestic markets, must reconsider their foci and methods of staff training and development. Political pressures to address the imbalance of power in local workforces by activities such as affirmative action also mean that the skills, knowledge and attitudes of employees must be improved.

The Management Development in Afrox Training Programme, developed and conducted by Afrox Limited, is targeted at the company’s supervisory level and forms part of the company’s affirmative action policy. This level of employee reflects the heterogeneity of the South African population and comprises persons of diverse language and cultural groups and educational levels.

An investigation into the listening and reading comprehension levels of the delegates found that the majority of them are not equipped to cope with the complex language used in a typical management development programme. An understanding of sophisticated Western business concepts, encapsulated in English for Specific Purposes, is not successfully transferred to the delegates and results in a failure to deliver the desired outcomes of the course.

Based on the findings of the research a number of recommendations have been made. These have application not only to the Management Development in Afrox programme but to business programmes which are currently not meeting the needs of their South African target groups because of linguistic elements which confound the planned learning process.
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Please note that this paper uses the pronoun "he" as a generic pronoun - within the context of this mini-dissertation it refers to both males and females.

CHAPTER ONE
THE RESEARCH, DEFINITIONS OF COMPREHENSION AND THE SECOND LANGUAGE USER

1.0 A Brief Description of the Research
This paper investigates the listening and reading comprehension of delegates on the Management Development in Afrox training programme which is conducted by Afrox Limited. The objective of the research is to ascertain if the English used in the programme is appropriate for all the delegates.

The majority of programme delegates are not English native speakers, and the English employed in the programme is investigated from the point of view of its suitability for English second language speakers. The spoken language used by the programme facilitators and the delegates and text in the training manual will be discussed in terms of the delegates’ listening and reading comprehension levels and skills.

The demographic profile of Afrox employees reflects the heterogeneity of South African society; this heterogeneity is conspicuous in the employees who comprise the target group for the Management Development in Afrox (MDA) training programme. Their diversity is indicated by their various languages, cultures, educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

1.1 The Rationale for the Research
It was this diversity which prompted the research into the language used in MDA. It is a sophisticated language with linguistic characteristics (syntactic and lexical complexity and cultural bias) which compound its level of difficulty. The English utilised comprises strong components of both English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes, and can be described as a sub-language. These features impede the comprehension of delegates who are not English first language speakers. Inadequate comprehension results in lowered effectiveness of the programme which, for its success, relies on an action learning approach, self-assessment and transfer of knowledge, attitudes and skills back to the job.

As part of its strategy to become more competitive in the domestic and global markets, and to realise its mission of becoming the most customer focused company in the
southern hemisphere, Afrox places a high priority on training and developing managers, including supervisors. The Management Development in Afrox programme is targeted at the supervisory level and takes into account staffing issues such as affirmative action policies.

During 1996, Afrox trained 692 delegates from many work centres around the country. At a cost of approximately R550.00 per delegate, company expenditure on the programme was in excess of R380,000.00 for the year (exclusive of out-of-town delegates' travel and accommodation costs, and indirect costs such as lost productivity and lost sales).

The MDA programme is crucial to Afrox in terms of (1) Monies invested in the programme and its delegates; (2) Its business planning to take the company into the twenty-first century.

The objective of the MDA programme may be summarised as follows: the upgrading of first line supervisors' competencies and their ability to achieve business objectives through their alignment with company goals. In the MDA process supervisors are engaged in an active learning experience which motivates continued learning and self-responsibility.

MDA programmes are led by one of three facilitators, each from a different background. However, all facilitators are au fait with the methodology of conducting the programme according to Afrox principles of training and development, and understand its role in the greater scheme of staff education, career pathing, succession planning and affirmative action.

1.2 The Research Methodology
The majority of the information which is transmitted in the programme is verbally communicated. With this in mind an examination of delegates' listening comprehension was considered to be of primary importance. However, reading comprehension could not be neglected because the reading function forms a critical means of information transmission, both in reading exercises required to be done during the programme and using the manual as a 'take-away' resource after the programme.

The research methods used in the investigation consisted of a theoretical section through a review of the current literature and an empirical component. The latter was carried out by observation sessions in the MDA programme and the use of questionnaires for delegates and facilitators.
The empirical elements of the research consisted mainly of qualitative research in the ethnographic tradition, using largely ethnographic analyses. Quantitative data were also gathered, their value being in their support or challenge of the qualitative data.

The combined quantitative-qualitative methodology was applied to the relevant raw data gathered from delegates' and facilitators' questionnaires and from the observation sessions to ascertain if the resulting evidence from each source was mutually corroborative, and was in line with the research findings described in the theoretical component.

The three areas of investigation and evaluation, the theoretical research, the observation sessions and the questionnaires, provided the means to subject the data to a process of triangulation. The application of triangulation reveals the presence or absence of constancy or similarities in findings which are mutually supportive and reinforcing, and from which definite conclusions may logically be inferred.

1.3 An Overview of the Paper

In the coming chapters, the following will be presented. Chapter Two presents a review of current literature of reading and listening comprehension, covering a wide range of issues such as comprehension processing, English for Specific and Academic Purposes and first language interference.

An explanation of cultural interference and its adverse effect on comprehension is given in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four examines the educational and socio-economic background of MDA delegates who graduated from the erstwhile DET system to ascertain how these elements adversely affect their comprehension of programme content. These delegates are non-native English speakers, a factor which plays a critical role in their comprehension skills and strategies.

Training and development programmes in South African industry and business are discussed in Chapter Five, with particular attention being given to the MDA programme and its link to Afrox's affirmative action policy.

The empirical research will be found in Chapter Six where the methods and areas of research are discussed in detail. This chapter provides critical confirmation of the delegates' comprehension levels which were made evident from data gathered in observation sessions and delegates' and facilitators' questionnaires. These data support information and findings derived from the theoretical research component.
Chapter Seven summarises the findings of the investigation and evaluation and makes recommendations to improve the programme's capacity to reach its desired outcomes.

1.4 Comprehension Defined
The theoretical research section of this paper is intensive and broad and reveals that there is a variety of definitions of listening and reading comprehension. To locate the reader within the scope of this paper, definitions appropriate to this research are provided.

1.4.1 Listening Comprehension
Dunkel (1993: 261 - 264) bemoans the difficulty which speech communication scholars, speech scientists and psychologists have had over the past seventy years in agreeing on a definition of listening to one's native language, and by rational extension, comprehension. In 1988 Wolvin and Coakley (Dunkel, 1993: 263) found the following numerous and varied differences in the meaning of the term listening.

Researchers perceived listening "to involve the hearer's analysing, concentrating, understanding, registering, (and) converting meaning to the mind."

Definitions of second/foreign language listening are equally diverse and range from the fundamental "listening is the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear", to the more inclusive idea that listening should be defined in terms of the various kinds of listening "critical, global, intensive, interactional, transactional, recreational, and selective listening" (Underwood, 1989 and Rost, 1990, respectively, cited in Dunkel, 1993: 263).

1.4.2 Reading Comprehension
Adey and Andrew (1990: 218) succinctly state: "This is what reading comprehension is all about: to find the main ideas and to be able to express them in our own words." This brief definition may not be lacking. Upon reflection it may be understood to encompass the concepts of language competence and personal experience, both crucial capacities for reading with comprehension which subsume other dimensions such as lexico-grammatical apprehension, evaluation and prior knowledge.

Smith (1994: 185) defines reading comprehension, or the extraction of meaning from text, as the reduction of uncertainty. He states that this reduction takes place when the reader is able to eliminate some or all the alternatives (of meaning) that a particular letter or word might convey. Considered superficially, this somewhat mechanistic sounding definition might appear inadequate. However, Smith agrees with Wallace that the reader brings to the text knowledge of the language system, knowledge of the world and opinions about the "world in general and the world of the text in particular" to

These definitions appertain to both native language reading and second/foreign language reading comprehension, although certain specifics such as first language and cultural interference would apply to second language comprehension.

1.4.3 Comprehension Defined for the Purposes of the Current Research

For the purpose of this research, listening and reading comprehension are defined as the ability of the programme delegates to understand programme content through the comprehension of:

1. The linguistic component of the programme in terms of verbal and written lexical and grammatical structures, including all English for Specific and Academic Purposes.

2. The information/education component of the programme in terms of the attitudes, knowledge and skills which Afrox deems necessary that the delegates acquire in the programme, which is grounded in an action learning methodology.

The level of delegates' comprehension must enable them to transfer back to their jobs company-prescribed information and competencies which are essential to their respective functions in the industrial and healthcare sectors of the company.

This definition of comprehension lays down that the delegates must have the capacity to pay appropriate attention to, and register, programme content to understand, analyse and act upon it in a way which encourages further congruous intellectual and behavioural activities back in the workplace. Further, their levels of comprehension would have to be expanded to include the ability to organise the new knowledge and skills in such a way which would benefit themselves and the company.

In other words, delegates' comprehension levels must facilitate the achievement of the programme's goals: they must ultimately contribute to the profitability of the company through their functional and supervisory roles.

1.5 The Second Language User Defined

For the purpose of this paper the second language user is defined in terms of the second language user who is a delegate on the Management Development in Afrox training programme. The definition is broad enough to include any mother-tongue speaker whose first language is not English and, therefore, includes Afrikaans, African and Asian mother-tongue speakers.
Drawing on Wallace's (1986 : 70) warning that second language (L2) speakers should not be viewed as a homogeneous group, it must be kept in mind that a group such as the one described above will have many different kinds of linguistic and other resources at their command. The resources that an L2 user has depend on factors such as social class, age, the circumstances in which the second language was acquired and the degree of mother-tongue literacy. L2 users represent a range of abilities and degrees of competence in English.

Wiles (1981) (cited in Wallace, 1986 : 70) says that there is significant difference in the proficiency of L2 users, ranging from very early stage second language use to advanced bilinguals.

This paper describes three language groups who attend the MDA programme:

1. The group of L2 users who, although their first acquired language is not English, nevertheless received an excellent level of education in which English was taught as the second language. This group also mixed academically and socially with mother-tongue English speakers from an early age. MDA delegates comprising this group are mainly Afrikaans speakers.

2. This group grew up speaking English and possibly another language, (eg, Tamil). This group comprises largely Asian delegates who attended a group/ethnic school in South Africa where equal, or near-equal exposure to English and the 'home' language is found. These delegates acquired English and their 'home' language in a naturalistic setting during childhood.

3. The final group of L2 users on the MDA programme may be perceived to have the lowest English skills. This group is composed of African mother-tongue speakers, some of whom are still actively acquiring English.

Wallace (loc. cit.) notes that the language of a group such as this is continually changing and approximating to the target language. This group may be said to be in the interlanguage stage of English development because they are still learning the language. However, this may not be true of the entire group. Older members have very probably reached a 'fossilised' phase of L2 development where little more change is likely.

This paper now turns its attention to a detailed discussion of the elements which adversely affect the listening and reading comprehension of English second language users and how they form barriers to such users effectively engaging in the English used in a training environment.
CHAPTER TWO
LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION REVIEW

2.0 Rationale for a Comprehensive Literature Review
During the empirical research component of this paper the writer became aware of the many critical factors in the research environment. To do justice to them all the literature review had to be broad and intensive.

The factors were:
1. The heterogeneity of the delegates in the MDA programmes.
2. The variety of considerations that had to be taken into account due to this heterogeneous group representing diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds, a wide range of languages and a variety of cultures.
3. The programme facilitators.
4. The sophisticated programme content which is communicated to the delegates in spoken and written/graphic form. It requires from the delegates a utilisation of four types of response: listening, speaking, writing and reading. These activities are performed as individuals and as members of large and small group interactions.
5. The language which is employed in the programme varies from the formal to the informal, and includes elements of English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes.
6. The learning approach - an action-learning methodology is employed.

The multifarious dynamics present in the research domain necessitated investigation into:
1. The delegates' backgrounds, and where relevant, the consequences of their background on their performance in the programme.
2. The many important linguistic elements.
3. Peripheral aspects such as culture which played too much of a determining role in learning outcomes to be ignored.
4. The programme material/content.
5. The chosen learning methodology.

6. The input of the programme facilitators and their interaction with the delegates.

Since most of the programme content is conveyed to delegates through the medium of speech, the listening comprehension is the focus of the researcher's attention. However, reading comprehension is not neglected as it has a critical function in the success of the delegates and the programme.

2.1 Listening Comprehension
A common model of comprehension assumes that there is an idea in a speaker's head which he encodes into words. The words are heard and understood by the listener, resulting in a shared understanding of the idea. In other words, mutual understanding is the inevitable result of a simple linguistic transaction. In this model understanding presupposes an effective transfer of information, mediated by language.

This is not an accurate explanation of how human beings understand language-encoded messages. The critical point to note is that each human being has a different life-experience, a unique mental set and a unique collection of interests. These profoundly affect his understanding of speech (Brown, 1990: 9).

2.2 A Summary of the Current Theory of Second Language Listening Comprehension
In 1993 Dunkel provided a comprehensive synthesis of current theory of second language listening. (All authors quoted in Section 2.2 are cited in Dunkel's article.)

The research into listening comprehension in a second or foreign language is still in its infancy and Dunkel (1993) believes that a great deal of theoretical and empirical research is required before an adequate understanding of the phenomenon is achieved. Much research into second language (L2) listening comprehension is justifiably linked to similar research into first language (L1) comprehension, but additional and specific research is required into the former because of its peculiarities.

Watson and Smeltzer (1984) list the following as factors which depress listening comprehension in an L1 and L2: (1) Personal internal distractions (eg, emotional disturbance, headache); (2) Personal disinterest in the topic of the message; (3) Inattentiveness; (4) Positive and/or negative emotional responses toward the speaker, topic or occasion; (5) Detouring (what the speaker says makes the listener think of something else); (6) Jumping to conclusions about what a person is going to say before it is said; (7) Over-reacting to the message; (8) Developing a counter-argument or rehearsing a response before the speaker is finished.
Faerch and Kasper (1986) cite 'inside-the-L2-head' factors of a psycho-sociolinguistic and experiential nature that affect L2 comprehension, eg, knowledge of the L2 linguistic code and degree of sociocultural competence. Oxford (1990) adds the importance of the L2 listener's ability to use cognitive strategies (involving deductive reasoning) and compensation strategies (intelligent guessing about meaning), as well as metacognitive strategies of an affective and social character.

Samuels (1984) contends that intelligence and language facility must be taken into account when assessing L2 comprehension capacity. To this Rost (1990) adds that the inferential quality of comprehension must also be given attention. This forms part of the bottom-up and top-down theory of listening comprehension. Inference has an intrinsic function in this theory whereby the listener connects and interprets incoming messages by connecting them through inference to existing knowledge held in long-term memory. Rost (1990) assigns the following inferential processes to the act of comprehension:

1. Making sense of the lexico-grammatical references.
2. Constructing propositional meaning through supplying case-relational links.¹
3. Assigning conceptual meanings in the discourse.
4. Assigning underlying links in the discourse.
5. Assuming a plausible intention for the speaker's utterance.

The bottom-up and the top-down theories of comprehension may be applied with equal validity to listening and reading. For this reason they are discussed in some detail.

2.3 The Bottom-up Theory of Comprehension

The bottom-up theory of comprehension, which came into prominence in the 1950s, states that the identification of the pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, lexical and phonological components of speech resulted in total comprehension. This theory is

¹ Foss and Hakes (1978: 100) and Barker (1985: 18) place much emphasis on the role of propositions in inference in comprehension. Barker says that they perform one of three functions: 1. They denote states or events; 2. They provide information about states or events; 3. They qualify parts of other propositions. In their explanation of how inference works in comprehension, Foss and Hakes argue that the first level of comprehension of a proposition is at a syntactic and lexical level, the second level of understanding is the meaning obtained through inferring the conveyed meaning, as opposed to the literal meaning, and the third level is inferring the real motivation of the speaker.
now regarded as inadequate. It is generally accepted that the bottom-up process must operate in conjunction with a top-down process if reading and listening comprehension are to occur (Dunkel, 1993).

This view in no way diminishes the importance of the bottom-up theory. It is self-evident that if the listener does not successfully comprehend all the components of speech listed above correct interpretation of the message will not follow.

Fromkin and Rodman (1988: 430) see the bottom-up process as an inductive one, and the top-down process as being deductive or predictive. In the former process, the listener or reader uses stored semantic, lexical and syntactic information received via the auditory or written medium. Fromkin and Rodman advance evidence of lexical and syntactic information being utilised in the process of comprehension by citing results of various experiments. For example, subjects make fewer errors when identifying words which occur in sentences, rather than in isolation. They also show better results if words occur in grammatically meaningful sentences as opposed to grammatically anomalous sentences. In other words, the attempted identification of words in ungrammatical sentences results in the most errors.

Fromkin and Rodman (loc. cit.) state that the presence of top-down processing is demonstrated by the fact that when subjects hear recorded sentences in which some part of the signal is removed and a noise (such as a cough) substituted, subjects 'hear' the sentence without a missing phoneme. The listeners, in fact, are not able to report which phonemic segment was missing. The roles of context, prediction and prior knowledge are evident here.

2.4 The Bottom-up/Top-down Theory of Listening Comprehension

Brown (1990: 11) states that a top-down comprehension process occurs because engaged listeners use relevant prior or background knowledge in their interpretation of the message. That is, listeners use knowledge of the physical context of the utterance, the speaker, topic, previous knowledge, etc, to transform acoustic signals into comprehensible and appropriate intake. Listeners are not passive processors, they are active in applying all available knowledge and environmental clues in their attempt to attain a successful interpretive process.

Flowerdew (1994: 9) also sees comprehension as a two-stage process. The first (bottom-up) consists of purely linguistic processing and the second (top-down) of the application of the results of this processing to background knowledge and context.

In his diagram of information sources in comprehension, Lynch (1994: 271) highlights that the listening process relies on multiple sources for information: schematic
knowledge and context having at least as important parts to play as knowledge of the language system in use. This is illustrated as Figure One. Lynch emphasises that the direction of the arrows leading to 'comprehension' underline the potential co-occurrence of top-down, expectation-driven processing and bottom-up, data-driven processing.

Figure One. Information sources in comprehension (Lynch, 1994: 271).

This model can be applied to MDA delegates in the following way. (Examples of only some of the relevant issues are provided).

(Please turn overleaf for the model.)
The delegate's level of education (formal knowledge) and knowledge acquired in the wider world (informal knowledge) must be adequate for the MDA programme at his time of entry. This is essential if he is to meaningfully participate in the programme and comprehensively benefit from it.

The delegate's background knowledge, rooted in his social/cultural experience, will facilitate or hinder his comprehension of MDA material, depending on its compatibility with programme content. Background knowledge, drawn from long-term memory representation, affects the process of comprehension. In other words, not only does new or fresh comprehension change the existing memory store, but the existing background knowledge also affects the course of comprehension.

The delegate's knowledge of the English discourse rules of facilitator-delegate interaction, and small and large group interaction will allow the delegate lesser or greater comprehension of the verbal behaviours encountered in the programme, dependent on his familiarity with such rules.

The more familiar the delegate is with the rules of verbal, physical, learning and social behaviours in an Afrox training and development programme, the more he will understand the physical and verbal interactions which take place. This enhances the total comprehension process.

If the delegate has an adequate level of comprehension of what is said by the facilitator and fellow delegates, he will be able to contribute his own knowledge/experience if his command of spoken and written English is sufficient. A knowledge of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which is used in the programme is critical.

The delegate requires:

- An adequate level of comprehension of the relevant English lexicon employed in the programme, including ESP and EAP.
- An adequate level of comprehension of the grammatical structure of the English used in the programme. He requires a grammatical sensitivity, ie, the ability to find analogous grammatical elements in sentences to comprehend elements of programme material in a holistic fashion.
- An adequate ability to cope with the sounds of English - accent, segmentation, rhythm, stress, intonation, etc, and paralinguistic features such as pitch, tempo and articulatory setting.

Figure Two. Information sources in the comprehension of MDA delegates.
(Based on Lynch, 1994: 271).

All the above components are crucial to satisfactory comprehension, and as such, are essential if the delegate is to benefit from the three-day MDA programme and take the
learned knowledge, attitudes and skills back to the workplace. A similar model can be applied to the reading materials used in the programme.

2.5 Crucial Elements of Successful Listening Comprehension

Flowerdew (1994: 10) adds real-time processing as a distinctive component of listening comprehension, while Ur (1989: 13 - 20) includes the use of redundancy and the ability to cope with 'noise', colloquial vocabulary and fatigue.

Prediction as a core part of the comprehension process is highlighted by current researchers of note, (for example, Flowerdew, 1994; Hansen : 1994; Tauroza and Allison, 1994; Ur, 1989), and its role cannot be over-emphasised. Existing or prior knowledge is also very important.

These elements are applicable to native (NES) and non-native English speakers (NNES). It is essential to stress early in this paper that the majority of delegates to the MDA programme are non-native English speakers. As second language (L2) English speakers they have to contend not only with the constituents of comprehension mentioned above, but also with first language (L1) interference and cultural interference.

Add to the list the unique and complicated difficulties of academic listening comprehension which all delegates to the Afrox MDA programme experience, and it will be seen that the matter of listening comprehension for these employees is a complex and intricate process. Memory, too, plays a vital role in listening comprehension, especially for L2 speakers.

2.5.1 Real-time Processing and Comprehension

Listening comprehension occurs in real-time. The listener must handle structural and meaning-based information and "relate the ongoing analyses of these two global information sources in language to each other", promptly and effectively integrating incoming syntactic and semantic information (Kilbom, 1992: 337).

A text which is heard (as opposed to read) is ephemeral - it needs to be perceived as it is uttered (Flowerdew, 1994: 10). A spoken message can be held in memory for only a short time while the working memory attempts to 'slot' the incoming signal into the appropriate catalogue of existing knowledge or long term memory (LTM) to make sense of it. It is the connection of incoming information with existing information which is the core of comprehension. New information is interpreted through current knowledge. Barker (1985: 17) describes the listening and comprehension process as beginning with a mental grasping for, and interpretation of, units of meaning, the phonological representation of which must be retained long enough for meaningful
relationships to be perceived. Once the underlying meaning has been extracted the "verbatim content of the constituents fades from the listener's working memory. Over time it is the core meaning of the utterance, not the form, that is retained." (loc. cit.).

2.5.2 The Role of Memory and Prior Knowledge in Comprehension
The linguistic code in which the text is transmitted must be compatible with the way in which the listener's knowledge is represented. He must understand all the elements of the code (its phonological and lexico-grammatical features) to interpret it correctly and connect it to appropriate existing or prior knowledge. Knowledge is stored in LTM in a way which allows it to be activated by new, incoming messages.

2.5.2.1 Prior Knowledge and Comprehension
Much has been written on how knowledge is stored in long-term memory. For the purpose of this research, the schema theory will be applied because it represents a logical way of showing how one's knowledge of the world is stored, and it pays specific attention to a schema theory of text, which is apposite for language research. The schema theory forms part of the cognitive approach to language comprehension, as defined by Just and Carpenter (1987: 9).

Cognitive theories comprise various aspects of normal human thinking, for example, problem solving, perceiving and manipulating visual images, reading, writing and aural comprehension.

The cognitive approach to language focuses on how information is processed, (eg, decoding the spoken and written word, mental message formation), and the mental representation of the information.

In simple terms prior knowledge is 'what we know'. It is the information which is gathered from a lifetime of perceiving, understanding, experiencing and learning and which is stored in long-term memory. Smith (1994 : 8) refers to it as "theories of the world" whereby everything one knows and believes is organised into a theory of what the world is like. He states that this theory is the basis of one's intellectual understanding of, and interaction with, the environment. Knowledge is categorised into mental schemata.

All information/knowledge held in schemata represents existing or prior knowledge and is used to comprehend incoming information. This is done by connecting the input to prior knowledge and the interpretation, evaluation, understanding, misunderstanding, accommodation, rejection, acceptance, affirmation or denial of the input is carried out according to what is held in long term memory. Comprehension of input is achieved through linking it to what is already understood in order to make sense of it.
This does not imply that prior knowledge is a static corpus of facts which is immutable to change. With comprehension comes learning through the addition of new facts, the correction of erroneous information and the generation of fresh ideas. Smith (1994: 10) thinks that learning is a consequence of comprehension, rather than its cause. Gagné et al (1993: 12) assert that we perceive input in order to group, compare, change or restate it, with existing knowledge.

Gagné et al (op. cit.: 81 - 89) argue that schemata are integrated units of declarative knowledge which can accommodate all three fundamental types of declarative knowledge: propositions, images and linear orderings.

Smith (1994: 7 - 16) agrees with them when they state that schemata abstract regularities and differences in categories of events or objects, and the emphasis is put on organisation of knowledge. Smith (1994: 11) states that it is this organisation or ordering of knowledge which allows us to interact successfully with the environment.

Just and Carpenter (1987: 11 - 13) also underline the important role the organisation of existing knowledge has on comprehension. They too believe that such knowledge is stored in an organised way in schemata, which they describe as:

"a framework containing a set of slots, with each slot labelled to indicate what type of information it can contain. ... A schema for a concept, such as a kitchen, contains slots for various kinds of information, such as appliances, users and activities. Each slot has possible fillers that can serve as default values. For example, appliances have the possible fillers: stove, refrigerator. The schema may be connected to other schemata, such as the schema for house. ... The schema may also be associated with more remote schemata, such as a kitchen in a restaurant." (Just and Carpenter, 1987: 11).

These researchers concur that comprehension is improved if the listener or reader has some 'forehand' knowledge about the subject. For this reason it is recommended that students be familiarised with a topic before they read about it, or listen to a specific passage about it to prepare the schemata for the new intake.

2.5.2.2 Memory and Comprehension

Because speech, whether in the form of dialogue or monologue (e.g., a lecture), is a continuous flow of information, the listener has limited, or no control over the verbal production of others. His auditory memory for speech sounds or sequences of sounds operates in conjunction with his abstract reasoning ability; that is, his ability to process complex, linguistically coded information and link it to existing knowledge in long term memory while he perceives it through sensory memory (SM).

Sensory memory refers to the very brief retention of information registered by the senses; it is known as iconic memory for visual inputs and echoic memory for auditory
inputs. It allows one to register briefly several inputs from the environment and to select items for further storage in short term memory (STM). The duration of SM is estimated at less than one second because after that time cueing has no effect (Greene and Hicks, 1984: 77).

STM is the 'working memory' or mental workspace in which information is processed before it is transferred into LTM. STM is engaged or concerned with the information which is stored in the memory, and with the operations' processes which take place within it. Gagné et al (1993: 41) believe it to correspond to awareness. The retention capacity of STM is limited - between six to eighteen seconds (Greene and Hicks, 1984: 78). However, memory span is concerned with the capacity of STM as well as its duration, and Peterson and Peterson (1959), (cited in Greene and Hicks, 1984: 80) reckon capacity to be five to nine items.

This limited memory capacity means that at the same time we listen to an utterance, we recode its strings of words into some other structured and abstract representation, and that this recoding has to occur at a very rapid rate.

This multistore memory may be depicted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Sensory Memory</th>
<th>Short term Memory</th>
<th>Long-term Memory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure Three. Multistore model of memory (Greene and Hicks, 1984: 74).

Gagné et al (1993: 40) present a more comprehensive model of memory as part of the human information-processing system which includes:

1. **Input**: The selective processes of sensory memory, working or short-term memory and long-term memory; retrieval processes which bring information stored in LTM into a state in which it can be used for current processing.

2. **Response generation activities**: These organise the sequence of responses and send messages to the appropriate effectors to execute the sequence, eg, in language production the messages must be generated in a grammatically acceptable form.

3. **Control processes**: These guide and monitor information-processing events.
2.5.2.3 Second Language Users' Cognitive Processing and Comprehension of Language

Barker (1985: 2) states that adult second language users develop their understanding of spoken language in a way very similar to children acquiring their mother-tongue in a
naturalistic manner. Children search for meaning by using the context and extra-linguistic information, (gestures, intonation, etc) to complement the verbal information which they receive. Clearly both the type and calibre of the language input, as well as experiential knowledge, affect listening comprehension.

In her discussion of the schema theory Barker notes that input is incomprehensible if it cannot be connected by the L2 user to his personal experience (existing knowledge) (op. cit. : 3). She says that understanding is dependent on meaningfulness gained from the relationship between concept and context. She quotes Einstein (1934/1947) to the effect that: "Concepts can only acquire content when they are connected, however indirectly, with sensible experience."

The cognitive processing and comprehension of incoming auditory messages are more difficult for those persons listening to non-native speech. The non-native speaker (NNS) passes through several stages in comprehending a second language. He slowly perceives some order in the initially undifferentiated noises; he perceives a regularity in the rise and fall of the voice and in the breath groups, he begins to distinguish the phonic and syntactic patterning and the recurring elements which give form to segments of speech. He will move through a stage when he recognises familiar elements in the body of speech but is as yet unable to recognise the interrelationships within the whole stream of sound.

With much practice the NNS moves beyond this stage and becomes competent in recognising the critical components which determine the message. However, even at this more advanced stage he may recognise the essentials of the message, but not be able to remember what he has recognised. This is because he is unable to concentrate his attention on the crucial elements of the message long enough to rehearse them subvocally before moving on with the continuing voice. All his attention is invested in mere recognition. Due to the high rate of information contained in sound sequences with which he is unfamiliar, he has insufficient capacity left for retention.

Comprehension of speech requires the retention of information from a whole sequence of sounds, not just from the last sound heard. As a result, when material is unfamiliar the inexperienced listener has a high-information content to deal with from each sound sequence. In other words, because the NNS cannot identify which words he must understand to comprehend the message as a whole, and which words he may safely ignore, the burden on his cognitive processes, including memory, is too great to allow for successful interpretation of the verbal input.
When listening to the average rate of speech the NNS is unable to retain the relevant elements from preceding sequences, through recirculation, and still absorb more information from the succeeding sequences.

The first difficulty the NNS experiences, and one that leads to considerable emotional tension and embarrassment, is that he might not be able to understand what is being said to and around him; this places him under great pressure.

2.5.2.4 Second Language Users’ Cognitive Processing, Memory and Comprehension of Language
L2 users' dependence on short- and long-term memory operations is more complex than that of L1 users.

A STM model which is currently widely accepted is a speech-based system which has a span which varies according to the type of material which must be remembered (Harris, 1992). This model contains the trace decay theory of forgetting (Brown and Hulme, 1992: 108; Ellis, 1992: 139; Greene and Hicks, 1984: 78) whereby information is lost from STM through decay. However, the decay of the memory trace can be temporarily avoided by the rehearsal (repetition) of the traces of decaying items. As long as all the items in a sequence can be refreshed within the decay time of the store, they can be maintained more or less indefinitely. But if the length of a sequence is greater than the decay time, recall error will occur.

This suggests that a bilingual person will experience STM breakdown. The outcome of this is a loss of fluency in second language production due to the reduced speech rate of an L2 user. Long-term memory also plays a role here because its capacity for the phonological forms of words is reduced in an L2 speaker/listener (Brown and Hulme, 1992: 105 - 118).

The implications of this for listening comprehension are that the loss of fluency, and accompanying communicative incompetence, results in comprehension difficulties for both monolingual and bilingual listeners of the bilingual speaker. The consequences are communication breakdown within dyads and groups; either discourse repairs have to be made or there is a failure of information transmission.

2.5.2.5 Real-time Processing:
Ur (1989, 6 - 20) reports that L2 users have increased processing difficulties when long passages of speech are presented in a formal manner, eg, lectures, broadcast reports. This is because uninterrupted passages lead to cognitive overload where speed of delivery (of prepared or familiar material), and level of formality impedes comprehension and results in fatigue. The L2 listener requires a slower delivery and
more 'breaks' than the native speaker to assimilate verbal intake. Verbal transfer of information such as lectures do not always provide this because the lecturer knows what he is going to say, and is able to do so with less use of redundancy.

A. Redundancy
Redundant utterances may take the form of repetitions, false starts, re-phasings, self-corrections, elaborations, tautologies and seemingly meaningless remarks such as "I know where you're coming from", or "Are you with me?". However, instead of distorting a spoken message, redundancies facilitate effective communication by 'stitching' together the fabric of discourse. They allow the speaker to amend verbalisations so he can re-articulate an utterance to bring about an improved mode of conveying the intended meaning. They also reinforce and confirm correct interpretation of intended meaning, and they provide the speaker and the listener with opportunities to check that correct interpretation is taking place and to make any necessary rectifications.

Wesche and Ready (cited in Lynch, 1994: 275) describe redundancy, both verbal and non-verbal, (gestural cues and visual support), as an essential component of lecturing to NNS. Where redundancy is absent, comprehension is lower.

B. Noise
Noise impacts adversely on L2 comprehension, regardless of whether the noise is literal (passing traffic) or figurative (indistinct pronunciation). While the L1 listener will be able to fill in gaps caused by noise, the L2 listener, whose grasp of meaning is slower than that of a native speaker and demands more effort, finds that these gaps compound the difficulties of L2 comprehension.

Ur (1989: 2 - 3) believes that this is due to three reasons:

1. The number of gaps is greater because there are more unfamiliar lexical items in the L2. Words which the L2 user might recognise and understand in a text, exist only in space in verbal discourse and pass by him at such speed that he has no time to reflect on possible, appropriate meanings. He must make split-second decisions about meanings.

2. The L2 listener is not sufficiently conversant with the sound-combinations, lexis and collocations of the L1 to make predictions or retroactive guesses as to what he missed. The gaps therefore, become more not less, and incomprehension increases as a consequence.

3. However, even when the number of gaps experienced is hardly more than those encountered in their L1, most L2 speakers come up against a psychological
difficulty. L2 speakers are under pressure to understand *everything*, even things that are totally unimportant, and they are disconcerted when they encounter an incomprehensible word.

The NNS who attempts to understand every word is disadvantaged both by his failure to do so, and ironically, also by his success. If the L2 speaker does understand every word he hears, he may find this counterproductive because effective listening is facilitated by the ability of the listener to ignore unimportant items. Native speakers (unconsciously) do this constantly: they filter out words or whole parts of sentences which are unnecessary to the successful comprehension of a message. For example, when hearing the following sentence:

"You have arrived at work to discover that the General Manager is away for a month on a special project and you are expected to handle all the items in your in-basket before he returns." (Afrox, 1996: 58.).

an English speaking delegate in the programme will automatically filter out the words "on a special project" because he instantly understands that they convey no significant meaning in the sentence. The L2 speaker on the other hand, already struggling with L2 overload, will attempt to decipher every word in the sentence and will be unsure of the significance of the General Manager's attendance at a special project. The L2 speaker might well be distracted from the real problem he is faced with in the passage, and will attempt instead to incorporate the General Manager's absence as a factor in the problem-solving exercise. Ur (1989 : 3) says that often, the L2 speaker "is in danger, as it were, of not seeing the wood for the trees." (An example of this type of occurrence is provided in Chapter Six when a description is given of how an L2 MDA delegate mistakenly perceived an authorial biography to be part of the plot of a narrative text).

C. Colloquial speech

Colloquial speech may be defined as speech which is not part of conventional, formal modes of expression, though still usable without being classified as slang. It is speech used in informal communication encounters, where the colloquialisms are commonly known to the user-group.

Because colloquial language is determined by a particular group it could also be regarded as a sociolect, as defined by Wardhaugh (1986 : 143 - 144): "Sociolects are statements about group norms ... To the extent that the groups are 'real', that is, that the members actually feel that they do belong to a group, a sociolect has a validity."

Colloquial speech is a collection of language habits which are appropriate to, and are consistently used by, a particular speech community. One speech community may
accept certain phonological variations and lexical/phrasal contractions as standard, while another community may not. But because the habits are used by an entire community they retain their effectiveness as vehicles of meaningfulness, and colloquial speech is efficient and valid.

Regardless of the fact that much of the vocabulary used in colloquial speech may already be known to the second language listener, he may not be familiar with it. This is because he will fail to recognise many words he has learnt but with which he is not yet sufficiently familiar to identify when they are sounded within the rapid flow of speech (Ur, 1989: 17). Comprehension of such speech (whether in the form of single lexical items, phrases or sentences) occurs only after considerable exposure to discourse.

This is mostly due to the speed at which the native speaker delivers his utterances. Despite any pauses, hesitations or false starts, once a native speaker knows what he is going to say, his individual utterances are often "delivered at a tremendous rate" (loc. cit.). The L2 listener does not have the time to search his memory for the meaning of something he does not immediately recall before the speaker makes his next utterance, and the listener must again cognitively process new input.

The listener has not yet learnt all the possible forms of English colloquial speech as they occur in swift speech, in an unemphasised position in sentences, juxtaposed with other words which may affect pronunciation.

This problem may be perceived as one of pronunciation and vocabulary. The L2 listener must become familiar not only with the swift sounds of informal speech, but the lexicon of informal speech. Ur (1989: 18) reports that it is the frequently occurring small function words such as 'for', 'to', 'him', 'is' and 'has' which, when unstressed as they normally are, are heard as /fə/, /tə/, /hɪm/, /ɪz/, /hæz/: known commonly as the 'weak' forms.

As further examples, Ur (loc. cit.) cites longer words which may be pronounced differently from the L2 listener's expectations, because their normal colloquial pronunciation does not agree with their spelling, and she states that some words may disappear altogether. The question "Where are they going?" may very well be sounded as "Where they going?", without a grammatical mistake being either made of heard.

Colloquial collocations are also troublesome to the non-native listener; there are some pairs or groups of words which are apt to occur together and become sounded as one. These combined sounds shorten, slur and partly assimilate one another. The L2 listener may become accustomed to well-known and consciously taught combinations
such as: 'can't', or 'he's', but more difficult to comprehend in rapid speech are: /æθə/ and /dʒəθə/ for "what are/do you..?" and "I don't know". All these variations are commonly produced by well educated, well spoken English native speakers.

These examples demonstrate that when colloquial language confuses the L2 listener for only a moment the delay will cause him to miss the next few sounds and lose the thread of the message.

D. Fatigue

Lengthy, uninterrupted passages of speech are problematic for L2 listeners because they cause fatigue. Concentrating on and interpreting unfamiliar sounds, lexis and syntax are considered more demanding than reading, writing and speaking because the NNS can set his own pace and make breaks where he wishes. In listening, the pace is set by an agent over whom the listener has little or no control, and breaks in speech might not be provided when the listener needs them. Also, because the listener is inclined to work much harder than necessary the chances of becoming fatigued are increased.

Ur (1989: 19) describes the varying effects of fatigue, saying that in a long listening comprehension exercise a learner's grasp of content is superior at the inception of the exercise. It becomes progressively worse as the exercise continues. This is partly due to a psychological phenomenon - people are inclined to remember the first of a series of visual or aural stimuli better than later ones (Greene, 1987; Greene and Hicks, 1984; Ur, 1989). It is largely due to the listener's energy being depleted and he can no longer absorb and interpret strange sounds. It may be assumed that the fatigue has a demotivating effect on the L2 listener's efforts to participate in second language discourse for lengthy periods.

E. Using visual and environmental clues to facilitate understanding

Ur (1989: 20) expresses her surprise at often finding that L2 users fail to use clues in the environment to optimise their opportunities of understanding a partially grasped phrase.

As mentioned above, listeners engaged in the top-down comprehension process use information gleaned from the environment which is frequently helpful to them when transforming acoustic signals into comprehensible and appropriate intake.

Ur (loc. cit) believes that L2 listeners analyse words in isolation, instead of linking them to the context in which they are presented, or to accompanying visual stimuli. Ur narrates details of listeners who have understood 'horse' for 'house' in spite of a picture
showing a house; or who have promptly sat down when she requested them to "come here", along with a gesture of invitation.

She thinks that the problem is not the lack of skill in perceiving and interpreting extra-linguistic clues, but the lack of ability to apply the skill when listening to the L2. The L2 listener's receptive system is overloaded. As shown above he has a plethora of dynamics to handle when trying to comprehend a second language; he has to work so much harder at decoding than the native listener. He has neither time nor attention to spare for absorbing extra-linguistic information given to him - he cannot cope with anything beyond the actual semantic significance of the words themselves. Those who are planning communication with L2 listeners should not ignore this aspect of listening comprehension.

2.6 Listening to Spoken English. Comprehension

In her publication *Listening to Spoken English* (1990) Gillian Brown stresses the importance of teaching appropriate and effective comprehension strategies to non-native listeners of English. Brown explains *why and how* L2 listeners experience comprehension difficulties because of *what* they hear when listening to English. The book has an important position in this paper because of those explanations, and because of the generally poor level of language teaching skills found in black South African schools which are in conflict with Brown's recommendations regarding language teaching.

The level of processing described in this section of the research relates to bottom-up processing.

It is crucial to a successful comprehension process that the second language listener listens effectively to *all the sounds* which he receives. By sounds is meant all the communicative signals which occur in spoken English and which act as channels of meaning. For example, the use of rhythm, stress, intonation and pitch are some of the vocal (phonological) strategies which speakers employ to convey meaning with the pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and lexical components of speech.

Brown (1990 : 150) points out that even two English speaking persons will fail to understand each other because the phonological codes of English differ from geographic region to region. Brown gives the example of some native speakers of Scottish English who find it exceedingly difficult to distinguish the Received Pronunciation (RP) in *pull/pool* or *cot/caught*, while some RP speakers cannot hear a distinction between the Scottish and English *where/wear* and *lock/loch*. 
Brown (op. cit. : 150 - 151) is of the opinion that because the rhythm which English speakers use causes many syllables to become reduced or even disappear, the L2 speaker must become cognisant of how rhythm operates.

Brown states that:

"It is essential in English to learn to pay attention to the stressed syllable of a word, since this is the best and most stable feature of the word's profile, and to those words in the stream of speech which are stressed, since these mark the richest information-bearing units. Listeners who fail to distinguish these are likely to flounder. ... They are likely to lose even more information if they do not know how to identify information peaks and how to use the information encoded in the distribution (of speech). On top of this, because the speaker is using a set of paralinguistic features which are differently deployed from those in the listener's language, the listener may misjudge the attitude of the speaker towards what is being said." (Brown, loc. cit.).

Ur (1989) has little faith in the overt teaching of the functions of rhythm, stress and intonation to learners because the patterns of these in spoken English are so varied. She thinks that they should simply be drawn to the language users' attention and that they should be left to acquire more knowledge of them intuitively through exposure to informal speech. However, it is important to note that Ur is speaking of native speakers.

Kreidler (1994: 15 - 28) disagrees with Ur and he contests her belief that English is too unpredictable to make it worthwhile to teach L2 users about its stress patterns. Kreidler states that there are general rules which account for the placement of stress in certain large classes of words; the rules are not infallible but he has found them to be workable for L2 users.

Kreidler argues that L2 users who have been taught the significance and correct use of stress in English pronunciation will be better able to comprehend what others say to them. He also maintains such L2 users need a knowledge of how to convert graphic forms to oral forms to build their spoken vocabulary. Without a grasp of the stress patterns of English they would not be able to decipher correct pronunciations from dictionaries and make intelligent guesses when reading - thus their potential for accurate reading, speaking and listening is constrained.

Kreidler contends that language teaching is incomplete without coaching of stress patterns because "(L)earning to pronounce a new language means learning to use (it), productively and receptively." (op. cit. : 16).

In this matter of overt teaching of stress patterns to learners of English as a second language, one must take into account the poor levels of English language teaching
found in South African (so-called) black teacher training institutions and in black schools. Scholars are taught by teachers who themselves are not proficient in the two productive forms of English (speaking and writing) and in its two receptive forms, reading and listening. Furthermore, the race groups in this country continue to be socially divided to a considerable extent and black speakers have little or no opportunity to practise English in social and/or informal situations. They are still limited to using English in those milieus (tertiary education institutions, the workplace, etc), where the language used is very much restricted (sometimes to the domains of a sublanguage or ESP and/or EAP) and little opportunity is available to improve their overall English skills.

With these thoughts in mind the writer believes that elements of the English phonological code should be consciously taught to non-native speakers where levels of education are low and varied opportunities to speak the language are few.

The L2 listener must learn to understand the function of the phonological codes of second language if he is to use these essential cues to comprehension.

A. Comprehension and its relationship with phonemic and structural mother-tongue interference

Aitcheson (1992: 13) defines phonemes as "the stock of sound units" which every language possesses. A phoneme is normally meaningless in isolation, and becomes meaningful only when combined with others. Sounds such as f, g, o, or d mean nothing separately, but take on meaning when combined in various ways: 'god', 'fog', 'dog', etc. This paper cannot accommodate a comprehensive discussion of phonemes, but as a measure of their complexity and scope it should be noted that Aitcheson lists no less than forty-four English phonemes, which can be divided into consonants and vowels, the latter being further divisible into relatively pure or unchanging vowels and diphthongs. Phonemes may also be classified according to form or allophone. This makes clear the multifarious nature and function of phonemes. Their use in English makes the language fraught with difficulty for the native speaker and even more daunting for the non-native user.

The orthographic form of a word may not always correspond directly with the sequence of segments which is heard when the word is spoken aloud, eg, the initial consonant in 'no', 'know' and 'gnome' is 'n' in each word, in spite of the orthographic variety used.

Where there is no phonetic overlap or co-incidence between a sound in one language and any sound in another, or where one language has a sound that is really foreign to a speaker of another language, he seldom has any difficulty in perceiving the sound, although he may well have problems producing it. This is because the 'novelty' of
such phonemes makes it simple for the listener to differentiate them from a native sound (Brown, 1990 : 16).

Brown elaborates this notion by asserting that speakers of all languages produce a much greater range of different phonetic sounds than the phonemic descriptions (of those languages) appear to suggest. Where overlap does occur, that is, where very similar or even identical phonetic sounds have to be interpreted as different phonemic tokens, there is much difficulty in teaching effective speaking and comprehension skills:

"The ability to perceive phonetic sounds as tokens of one phoneme rather than another is also limited by the possible combinations of phonemes in the speaker's language and by his knowledge of what words are possible in his language." (op. cit. : 17).

This can be explained, Brown suggests, because phonological systems "reside in the brains of the members of the speech community". This paper clarifies this by suggesting that listeners become attuned to the sounds of their native language from their day of birth. Condon and Sander, 1974, (cited in Turner, 1985 : 19) tested infants of twelve hours old and found they responded to the sound of language but ignored the sound of tapping; Turner (loc. cit.) states that "infants are able to pay particular attention to linguistic data as if they are sensitised to this from amongst the mass of sounds that assail them." Meadows (1993) supports Turner's stance.

The writer believes that babies mature in communicative competence within an intimate relationship of the sounds of their native language which is constant, consistent and meaningful in their environment.

Cargill, (1994 : 44) in discussing mother tongue interference, observes that the learner of English has to wrestle with many L1 interference patterns or habits which are extremely difficult to break. Not only must he learn new ways of using his articulatory muscles, he must listen for new phonological codes. Cargill warns that native English speakers are largely unaware of 'hidden pronunciations' which are barriers to the L2 listener's comprehension.

Cargill (op. cit. : 43 - 47) advances English slur patterns (palatalization) and the use of the internal and external sandhi rule as an example of such a barrier. Because English speakers do not speak in isolated words, but in what Ur (1989 : 13) calls syllable-strings, non-native speakers must, according to Cargill (op. cit. : 46) be helped to develop greater listening comprehension through an understanding of the legitimate phonological rules of English. Like Brown (1990) and Kreidler (1994), Cargill holds that L2 users should be taught phonological phenomena such as the role of palatalization in English if he is to "comprehend spoken English with any degree of accuracy." (Cargill, 1994 : 46).
However, L1 interference applies to more than the phonetic aspect of language. It applies to structural similarities and differences as well. Where structures are identical or similar, then L1 knowledge supports rather than interferes with L2 comprehension. Kroes (undated : 2) uses the example of a German speaker learning Afrikaans who finds the similar word order which exists in the two languages as facilitative in the learning, comprehension and production processes. An English speaker learning Afrikaans would experience L1 (structural) interference and would tend to produce utterances such as ‘Ek het geweet dat hy het geval.’

Much work has been done in South Africa regarding mother tongue interference when black speakers attempt to communicate in English (for example, Buthelezi, 1983; Jefferies, 1990; Roos, 1990).

Roos (1990) reports errors in the use of the definite and the indefinite article as (black) mother tongue interference in the use of English by students at the Vista University. Jefferies (1990) reports interference in the form of misuse of the negative in interrogatives, misuse of personal pronouns, over-generalisation and direct transfer of diminutives and overuse of the progressive form.

Kroes (undated) cites the following examples of L1 interference: pronunciation, lexical and semantic interference and interference which goes beyond the purely linguistic field in the form of interference through the inappropriate application of discourse rules, and the inappropriate use of body language.

The implications of mother-tongue interference for this research on comprehension are that the loss of fluency, and subsequent loss of intelligible output, create comprehension barriers for both monolingual and bilingual listeners of the bilingual speaker. Resulting confusion impedes the successful transmission and reception of information.

**B. Comprehension and its relationship with rhythm**

Rhythm is an integral part of English; its function is the facilitation of the transmission of meaning.

Brown (1990) specifies rhythm as a characteristic of every language, as well as being unique to each language, every language possessing its own rhythm. She strongly advocates that English second language users become aware of the rhythms of the target language because rhythm in English is not concerned merely with the basic sequence of consonants and vowels, but "is the guide to the structure of information in the spoken message." (op. cit. : 43).
Brown declares rhythm to be a constituent of all human physical activity which is extended in time. (Brown (op. cit. : 48) describes how physical and linguistic rhythm are combined in the frequent way of pronouncing *thank you* in everyday English whereby there is a nod of the head on the long consonant [k:]) and then as the head moves up, out of the nod, the unstressed syllable is uttered on the upbeat. Human speech contains a component of rhythm and Brown opines that the more organised the speech, the more rhythmical it will be. Thus, one would find that prose read aloud by a fluent reader has a more overt rhythm than does conversational speech which will probably contain pauses and false starts.

The rhythm of English is based on the contrast of stressed and unstressed syllables. Ur (1989 : 13) talks of the language as syllable-strings which run together to form a single sequence which is generally characterised by one heavily stressed tone. She explains that the rhythm of speech is based on these tones and to a lesser degree on other minor stresses. The stressed and unstressed sounds allow intervening lightened syllables to be pronounced very fast so as not to break the rhythm. In this way rhythm results in some sounds (single vowels or consonants, or clusters) being lost by the listener.

A lack of redundancy in speech has been described as a barrier to listening comprehension. Lack of redundancy must not be confused with the pauses, false starts and inarticulate repetitions of those who have lost the natural rhythm of English through having to search for the correct word, or repeatedly refine the expression of their thoughts. Lack of rhythm leads to incoherency in speech and impedes the comprehension of the listener. It is axiomatic then, that if the English second language listener is to optimise every chance of understanding what is said to him, he must become conversant with the rhythm of the language.

Brown (op. cit. : 52 - 53) is adamant that the function of stress is so important to comprehensible speech that she avows that "the stressed syllable of a word is crucial to its identification. ... The function of stress then is to mark the meaning of words, the information-bearing words in the utterance."

Brown (op. cit. : 45) states that not only does each language have its own rhythm, but so does each speaker - each speaker will set up what Brown characterises as a "dominant rhythmic foot." Even in well-articulated speech, such as occurs in a radio news broadcast read by an experienced and fluent L1 speaker, the stresses or sound patterns in the individual's speech will become compressed or elongated, resulting in either case in indistinct verbal production. For a more detailed explanation of this phenomenon, see Appendix One.
An element which further compounds the difficulty of the L2 speaker grasping the rhythm and stress patterns of the target language is, while all languages possess a rhythm, not all of them use the dynamic of stress to convey meaning. For native speakers of these languages the complexities of mastering the rhythm and stress patterns of English are many.

However, Brown gives pre-eminence to the importance of such mastery and accentuates the need for English teachers to tutor L2 users in this aspect of comprehension. She says that it is this aspect of spoken English more than any other, on which teachers of English to foreign and second language learners should concentrate. She firmly believes that it is essential that the L2 user can identify stressed syllables, and to make informed guesses about message-content from knowledge of rhythm and stress (op. cit.: 56).

C. Comprehension and its relationship with patterns of simplification in informal speech

In normal informal speech, when the speaker is concentrating on what he is saying and not how he saying it, he will articulate in what he considers to be the most effective manner - he will only make what Brown (1990: 56) calls "articulatory gestures that are sufficient to allow the units of his message to be identified". Articulatory gestures refer to the muscular actions of the tongue, lips, mouth and jaw of the speaker. Informal speech is reductionist in that the speaker will cut down on any unnecessary articulatory gestures which he believes he can do without while still getting his message across. For example, if his tongue is already in one position and the following consonant but one in a sequence requires the same tongue position, the intervening consonant will, in all likelihood, be smoothed out (if it is not initial in a stressed syllable).

In the literature this is commonly referred to as assimilation. Fromkin and Rodman (1988: 114) describe assimilation as causing change to "feature values of segments, spreading phonological properties." This is part of the 'theory of least effort' whereby the native speaker will make no more than those articulatory gestures which he considers necessary (Brown, 1990; Fromkin and Rodman, 1988; Ur, 1989).

For the native listener this mode of delivery is not problematic. In listening to normal English speech the English listener does not perceive it as a series of sounds which he then processes into discrete words. Native speakers of English do not listen as if they were completely ignorant of the language, of what is being said, and of how it connects to their previous experience. These speakers interpret input by engaging with it - predicting the ends of words and phrases, and occasionally, whole chunks of expression.
However, as pointed out in B. above, the listener must be able to identify at least the stressed syllable in a word, and its place in the word and the stressed words in the stream of speech to ensure comprehension.

Palmer (1936, cited in Brown, 1990: 100) calls speech "nothing more than a series of rough hints, which the hearer must interpret." These phonetic cues, explains Brown (op. cit.: 59), guide the listener and allow him to check his understanding (through feedback). But people are not dependent only on the sounds of language for correct understanding; they also harness the use of their short-term (or working) memory to operate on the incoming signal to relate it to existing information in long-term memory.

But non-native listeners of English have a different experience. They cannot cope with the acoustic blurring which occurs due to elision (the missing out of a consonant or vowel, or both) and weak delineation of word boundaries. Because of complex linguistic, social and psychological reasons (e.g., L1 and cultural interference, lack of confidence in the L2), they are unsure that they have gained an accurate understanding of what was said, of the speaker’s motivation for saying it, and of his opinions/attitudes on the subject.

They are also uncertain if they can rely on their own personal experiences to help them interpret the message. And if that were not sufficient to confuse them, they may also have difficulties with the forms of the language, its syntactic structures and the conventional lexicon needed to interpret (and talk about) the matter under discussion.

For all these reasons the L2 listener is less able to employ 'top-down' processing in arriving at an interpretation; he is more reliant on 'bottom-up' processing which is, as has been shown, an inadequate means of interpretation.

Brown reiterates the importance of a sound language education - she states that if L2 learners are exposed to the target language spoken relatively slowly, they will experience a "devastating diminution" of phonetic information at the segmental level when they attempt to comprehend the L2 delivered at the normal rate (Brown, 1990: 60).

D. Comprehension and its relationship with intonation and pause

In careful formal speech, where the speaker is conscious of his accent, pitch, voice range, etc, and is diligently applying attention to producing clearly pronounced and easily comprehensible language, the patterns of intonation and pause are what Brown identifies as the ideal (1990: 89). But in real-life/real-time processing the ideal rarely occurs and the L2 listener has to process less than perfect input.
Brown (loc. cit.) says that the speaker uses *intonation* (as well as pause and syntax) to 'signal' a listener how to take the information contained in an utterance. By intonation Brown means the *variation in pitch* of the speaker's voice.

In all languages speech is organised into stretches of sound continuum, co-extensive with grammatical structure, broken by pauses of various lengths. In English such stretches are often patterned intonationally around one dynamic movement of pitch which is more salient or conspicuous than other intonations in the same remark. In other words, a prominent pitch of voice falls on a particular syllable or word, and gives it additional weight or meaning in an utterance.

Brown illustrates the use of intonation as follows:

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\textbackslash...\textbackslash. \textbackslash...\textbackslash. \textbackslash...\textbackslash. \textbackslash.\textbackslash.\textbackslash. \\
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SHARES + have been FALLing + on the London STOCK market.

**Figure Five. Brown's illustration of intonation as depicted in a paratone.** (Brown, *1990: 92*). *(A paratone may be likened to the model of a paragraph)*

The most distinct phonetic cues are the high placing of the onset to the paratone, the brevity of the pauses within it, and the drift down in pitch height towards the low ending of the paratone.

Brown believes that the function of this patterning is to signal to the listener which tone groups are joined in some larger structure, and where the end of the larger structure occurs. Tone group divisions mark off coherent syntactic structures which the listener must process as units. The signalling is a facilitative instrument which the listener uses to extract meaning from what he hears.

However, as noted, this distinction is usually lost in informal, spontaneous speech, and the problem is exacerbated by the speaker using pauses (hesitations) to reword his utterance. Spontaneous speech is thus much less structured because it is inefficient from an intonational and pause point of view. Native speakers of a language can ignore false starts and hesitations and even slips of the tongue. L2 speakers on the other hand, have to learn how and what to select from all the phonetic information which they receive to construct a reasonable message from the entire, often confusing, acoustic signal.
When Ur (1989: 13) speaks of intonation she indicates that its importance derives from the great extent to which it often influences the meaning of an utterance. For example, a significant word may be stressed simply by being pronounced in a higher key, and such things as certainty, doubt or irony are implied by characteristic intonation patterns as much as by selection of vocabulary item.

Again Brown (1990: 7) accentuates the importance of L2 users being tutored in firstly, the existence of intonation in English, and secondly, how to understand its use in the comprehension of the language.

In reviewing the changing patterns of second language teaching over the past fifty years, Joan Morley (1993: 310 - 349) points out that current language didactic theory puts much emphasis on teaching pronunciation. Within this domain she includes work done on English dialects, on phonetics (with substantial information on English sounds, patterns and suprasegments), on phonological analysis and on intonation.

Although Morley is discussing speech production, it is logical that the L2 user who has had the advantage of been appropriately taught such phenomena will be acutely conscious of these things when listening to English. One may assume that his capacity for listening comprehension will be considerably strengthened through his exposure to such an education.

E. Paralinguistic information

Paralinguistic features contribute to the expression or display of attitude. Brown (1990: 112) describes their quality as affective and as such they convey the affective meaning of the speaker's output, rather than its conceptual meaning. They 'add value' to the meaning of the message by making clear the speaker's intent and thus facilitate listening comprehension. They are the phonetic characteristics of speech which do not form an intrinsic part of the phonological contrasts which comprise the spoken message. Their nature is such that it allows them to be discussed exclusively of vowel and consonant sequences, of word stress patterns and of intonation structure which determines where tonic syllables fall.

Paralinguistic features may instead be associated with what is popularly known as 'body language' which refers to gestures, facial expression, etc of the speaker. These features contribute to the listener's ability to accurately interpret the message. Body language is a component of the broader context of utterances in which what is said is interpreted. Paralinguistic features underscore the intended meaning of the speaker and reinforce the way in which he wishes the message to be understood.
Brown (loc. cit.) believes that listeners give more cognisance to the manner in which something is said, than to its verbal content. Lyons (1972) says that when there is a contradiction between the overt form of a spoken message and the associated prosodic and paralinguistic features, it is the latter which "determine the semiotic classification of the utterance." (cited in Brown, 1990: 113).

Paralinguistic features include:

1. **Pitch span** by which the speaker expresses, eg, surprise, anger, by the pitch he chooses in which to convey his message and feeling.

2. **Tempo** is classified as a paralinguistic feature where increased speed of speech delivery may indicate urgency, lack of time, or perhaps conveying a message which is distasteful to the speaker and/or listener and which the speaker wants to conclude as quickly as possible.

Brown (1990: 125) declares that slow speech cannot be associated with any specific set of attitudes. It may be the result of the speaker needing to think carefully during delivery, (or he might wish to convey the impression that he is thinking carefully), or the speaker may be fatigued and his delivery slows to match his less nimble cognitive processes. It is axiomatic that all paralinguistic features are interpreted within the wider range of the communication encounter, and that they are perceived to carry a message along with the speaker's verbal content, his body language and other factors of the encounter, such as the physical setting and the persons involved.

3. **Voice setting** is a paralinguistic feature which refers to the way in which the vocal cords can be adjusted to give different effects of voicing. Brown (op. cit.: 128) discusses two: normal and breathy. Normal is the setting which is unmarked and which is used when the speaker is not specifically emotionally aroused insofar as the emotion triggers off changes in the vocal cords. Within the breathy range Brown (loc. cit.) includes earnest, whispered and breathless speech which might denote a spectrum of emotions or attitudes such as sincerity or confidentiality.

4. Within **articulatory settings** Brown (op. cit. 129) includes anger, sterness, scorn and disdain as possible attitudes being conveyed. Brown suggests that tenseness in the muscles of the pharyngeal cavity is responsible for the delivery of the a message which implies a strongly felt emotion which is often not being expressed verbally.
Brown believes that it is important to teach L2 users how paralinguistic features function in language comprehension and to sensitise them to how they work across cultures where a misunderstanding of them will confound comprehension. Brown states that it is most probable that each society has some notion of an abstract norm of speech, but that when members of different societies come together the danger of misinterpreting the message is greater if the complexity of paralinguistic features is not properly appreciated by L2 users (1990: 115).

2.7 The Role of Prediction in Listening and Reading Comprehension

Listeners and readers who become good predictors develop improved comprehension. If the listener can make a good guess about what is going to be said next he will be more likely to understand it when he does hear it. In fact, he might even be able to do without it altogether. If he knows how someone is going to complete a sentence, then those final words become redundant for him - he may ignore them and begin to anticipate the next significant piece of information directed to him.

But for the L2 listener prediction is problematic because intonation and stress patterns play an important part in providing reasons for certain kinds of expectations. If one word in an initial phrase is stressed, the listener will usually expect some sort of explanation, eg, "Its not that aspect of customer service which concerns us ... ".

Ur (1989: 16) believes that prediction exercises would assist L2 speakers in becoming familiar with stress and intonation patterns which would enable them to practise and make use of prediction.

The ability to make predictions also depends on the speaker's choice of lexical or grammatical items. The non-native speaker, (NNS), upon hearing the words 'but' or 'however' may not know that they could safely predict something which contrasts with what went before. The use of a conditional verb such as 'would have' usually precedes or follows an 'if clause'; to begin a sentence with "The more .." signals another paired comparative later. These are only some of many examples which Ur cites (loc. cit.).

Prediction also depends on familiarity with the clichés, idioms and phrases of the second language, and it is usually only the most proficient L2 user who has this familiarity. Few NNS understand that 'jaded' collocates with 'appetite' or can guess the meaning of the unfinished phrase '(T)oo many cooks ..', and its meaning.

Smith (1994: 17 - 19) says that prediction is the "core of reading" because it facilitates comprehension in the following ways:
Because the reader is engaged with the text he is concerned with what is going to happen in the text in the immediate and distant future.

Because there is much ambiguity in language the reader needs to exclude some alternatives in advance by prediction.

Smith (1994 : 17 - 18) maintains that there are two reasons for people being accustomed to the process of prediction. (1) Because the world around them is constantly changing they are concerned about what is to happen in the future, and they continually make predictions about it to manage it; (2) Because there is so much ambiguity present in the environment, people need to exclude those things which are not applicable to a specific and/or current set of circumstances, to identify and interact with the circumstances as they really are.

Smith suggests that people become good predictors within the reading process because predicting is a practised life-skill which they usefully transfer to reading. The reader's prior knowledge of schemes, scripts and texts enables him to predict when he reads and thus brings meaning to what he reads by reducing ambiguity and eliminating in advance irrelevant alternatives.

Prediction fulfils a crucial function in reading comprehension by reducing ambiguity and eliminating in advance irrelevant alternatives. Prediction allows readers to generate comprehensible experience from what Smith terms "inert pages of print." (op. cit. : 18)

Once readers begin to predict what an author is likely to include in a particular text they will be motivated to read and see if their predictions are confirmed. Predicting engages readers in a natural part of the reading cycle - predicting as they gather information through the reading process, and then either confirming or disconfirming that information.

Predicting helps to develop readers' awareness of text organisation. As they predict the information texts are likely to contain, and then confirm or disconfirm their predictions, readers will begin noticing more about the kind of information that is typical of particular texts. This assists them to 'decode' the information and extract meaning from it. They will also become aware of headings and subheadings, underlining, numbering systems, etc, and begin using these features to assist them to organise incoming information (Feathers, 1993 : 60).

This growing familiarity with what Smith (1994 : 39) terms the "organisation of texts or genre schemes" increases the reader's ability to comprehend text content. The different characteristic forms which genre schemes have, help readers by giving them a
basis for predicting what a text will be like: that a novel will be divided into chapters in a particular way, that a training article will follow a certain format, and that a business letter will observe typical conventions.

Smith (op. cit. : 41) says that these conventional and characteristic structures of text assist readers in providing a basis for comprehension. If the reader does not know the relevant structures, then he will not understand the text, or his reading of it will be distorted. To make predictions readers use two kinds of information from nonvisual or prior knowledge.

Firstly, they search for information about the topic itself and use this to generate appropriate predictions. If the topic is hospitals, for example, the reader makes predictions about the geographical location under discussion, types of patients using the hospital, types of medical services provided, and so forth.

Secondly, readers use what they know about the text to guide their predictions. In a social studies' text, for example, a discussion of energy will probably include the kinds of materials - wood, gas, coal, uranium - used to create energy in a particular country, as well as information about why particular energy sources are used. In addition, it might examine the political controversy surrounding the use of certain energy sources. On the other hand, a science text dealing with energy, will treat the topic differently; forms of energy might mean kinetic and mechanical energy, as well as solar and atomic. Each form of energy might be defined, along with examples, and described in terms of where it fits in relation to other forms of energy. The predictions readers make about what they are likely to read about energy in a science text will probably be different from those they would make about a social studies' text (Feathers, 1993 : 60).

Friedman and Rowls (1980 : 190 - 194) discuss prediction as a reading comprehension skill essential to reading with understanding. They assert that an important consideration in teaching comprehension skills associated with predicting the author's message is how much information the reader/student has available to make accurate predictions.

The L2 user may be able to make accurate predictions, for example, regarding the conclusion of a story after having read only the title or after having read the first half of the story. Firstly, the reader is demonstrating the ability to make accurate predictions based on fewer clues. This ability to make predictions based on a minimum amount of information is an important aspect of growth in reading.
2.8 The Role of Inference in Comprehension

In this section, the word 'reader' in interchangeable with 'listener', and 'text' is interchangeable with 'spoken message'.

It is not uncommon for the reader to come across unfamiliar words in a text. When this occurs the reader must infer the meaning as best he can using contextual clues. The process of inferring word meanings can be conscious and effortful. The degree of attention a reader devotes to inferring the meaning of an unknown word may depend, in part, upon the word's perceived importance in the passage. If a word in a text is considered to be unimportant it might be ignored. Alternatively, if a word is important and the reader is processing the text carefully, he will give a great deal of effort to inferring its meaning.

The reader evaluates the word's importance from textual cues, eg, words that occur frequently or words in topic/heading positions would be seen as important.

Inferences must also be made from the syntactic structure of the text. When a text does not clearly indicate how its sentences or clauses are related to each other, the reader must infer the relationship.

Inference plays a role in other processes besides the integration of different parts of a text. At the referential level, a reader might have to infer that two different expressions are referring to the same person, or at the schema level, he might have to infer how a fact in the text fits into a particular schema slot.

There are two types of inferences. Backward inferences relate the most recently read text to some part of the text that came earlier, while forward inferences "enhance the representation of the currently read text for reasons inherent to the current piece of text." (Just and Carpenter, 1987 : 252).

Examples of backward inference are the following: "The supervisor commenced giving instructions. His orders brought about a prompt reaction from the wage-earners." To comprehend these sentences, a reader must infer that the "orders" in the second sentence refers to the "instructions" in the first sentence. A backward inference is necessary when the subject's reading objectives need a complete integration of the text information, but the information does not clearly show how the new information is related to the old.

An example of forward inference is the sentence: "The company's shares rose sharply." Forward inference might be that the shares were reacting to a positive factor.
According to Just and Carpenter (1987: 253) inferences have a probabilistic nature and this results in difficulties regarding the inference-making process. It is difficult to predict which of the many possible inferences will be made in the reading of a text. The choice of inference is reliant on reader and task. If the reader is comprehending at a shallow level, then very few inferences will be drawn, perhaps not even the necessary ones.

An L2 reader has a smaller chance than an L1 reader of making correct inferences. During a spoken discourse or a lecture, the rapid and ephemeral quality of the message makes it difficult for the L2 reader to draw accurate inferences at speed. Lack of knowledge about lexical items, syntactic structures and textual organisation all compound the problems for the L2 reader.

2.9 English for Specific Purposes: Listening and Reading Comprehension

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is concerned with adult speakers and their roles in their working and/or academic lives. Categories of ESP include different academic Englishes, eg, English for science and technology (EST), English for general academic purposes, as well as a number of occupational Englishes, eg, vocational and business English, also known as English for the workplace.

Speaking from a pedagogical stance, Mackey (1980) (cited in Roets, 1990: page unnumbered) defines ESP as:

"generally used (for) ... the teaching/learning of a foreign language for a clearly utilitarian purpose of which there is no doubt. ... This utilitarian purpose is generally conceived of as successful performance in work, work in which the English language plays an auxiliary role."

The following definition of ESP is based on Strevens' (1988: 2) interpretation of the characteristics of ESP language teaching:

1. **Absolute characteristics**
   - ESP consists of English which is:
     - Designed to meet specific needs;
     - Related in content to particular disciplines, job functions roles and activities;
     - Focused on language which is appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc, and analysis of such discourse.

2. **Variable characteristic**
   - ESP may be, but is not necessarily:
     - Restricted in the language skills required (eg, speaking only).
However, within the context of this paper, the definition of English for Specific Purposes is elaborated to allow the inclusion of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Robinson (1980: 7) describes EAP as English which is used as the medium through which the learner acquires knowledge, irrespective of the subject matter of the studies.

EAP, however, is not an instrument whose use is constrained to language only. It is a broader concept which comprises academic skills such as study skills, which Jordan (1989) (cited in Roets, 1990) sees as a key component of EAP. Jordan says that many students have difficulties with their studies due to a deficient background in study skills suitable to their studies. Jordan believes that EAP is an appropriate channel through which to teach skills such as note-taking, academic writing and participating in academic discussions or seminars.

EAP and ESP are language elements which cause further barriers in L2 users' comprehension. (From this point ESP will be taken to mean ESP inclusive of EAP).

2.9.1 ESP and Comprehension
2.9.1.1 Academic Listening
Flowerdew (1994: 11) says that ESP in the form of a second language lecture has its own distinctive features which impact adversely on L2 listening comprehension. Some of the differences between conversational listening and academic listening are differences in degree, and some are differences in kind.

Flowerdew (loc. cit.) points out four differences in degree. Firstly, he describes the type of background knowledge required to understand the lecture, when listeners will need a knowledge of specialist subject matter. Secondly, academic listening comprehension requires that the learner is able to differentiate between what is relevant to the main purpose and what is less relevant. Flowerdew (loc. cit.) rates this ability as paramount in successful academic listening comprehension because without it, the listener will be attempting to process too much input. The learner must be aware of what to absorb and process as essential lecture information and what to discard as unessential.

The third difference is the strúcture of general conversation and the usually one-sided structure of the lecture. Turn-taking does not occur to any great extent in lectures and often not at all. It will take place only if the learners are encouraged to ask questions, or if the lecturer stops to ask them.

The fourth difference of degree between academic and conversational listening is in the amount of implied meaning or indirect speech acts. In lectures the emphasis is assumed to be on the propositional meaning to be conveyed from lecturer to audience, while in interpersonal conversation illocutionary meaning is concentrated upon.
Concerning differences of kind, Flowerdew (loc. cit.) cites the listener's ability to concentrate and understand long stretches of talk without the opportunity of using facilitating activities such as interrupting the lecturer to make their own points or seek clarification. The result of this is that there are fewer opportunities for feedback, redundancy and explanations, all of which improve listening comprehension.

James (1977) and Chaudron et al (1994) (cited in Flowerdew, 1994: 11–12) perceive note-taking as another difference in kind. The L2 user at a lecture must be able to decode and understand verbal information to identify main points, he must decide when to record his notes, and he must be able to write quickly and clearly. All this must be done while he continues to absorb the ongoing stream of speech from the lecturer. B.S. Cowley supports this argument by contending that African mother-tongue university students often incorrectly write down exam 'clues and hints' provided by lecturers in spite of extremely high levels of interest and motivation and intense concentration (personal discussion, 1996).

The L2 lecture listener must also integrate incoming information with information obtained from other channels, e.g., handouts, manuals, textbooks, videos, visually displayed material on white-boards or overhead projector. The text on these media will use lexical items which differ at least to some extent to the vocabulary used by the lecturer, the use of flow-charts, bar-charts, etc, will also compound the L2 listeners' difficulties, as will the use of different accents. Many videos used in South African education and training are produced in the United States of America or Britain and are difficult for South African non-native English speakers to understand.

Accent is often pointed to as a factor which contributes to difficulties in non-native lecture comprehension. Research by Anderson-Hsieh and Koehler, 1988; Bilbow, 1989; Kennedy, 1978; Richards, 1983; Smith and Bisazza, 1982 and others (all cited in Flowerdew, 1994: 24) shows that the effect of accent of comprehension clearly supports "the commonsense view that unfamiliar accents cause difficulty in comprehension." (loc. cit.).

Besides having to deal with all the components of comprehension discussed above, the second language learner working with an ESP has also to handle the added complexities of ESP register, lexicon and grammatical structure (Flowerdew, 1994).

2.9.2 ESP Register and Comprehension

While there is some confusion about distinguishing a special register from a general register, ESP has a register in the sense it comprises particular selection and reduction of language items (Robinson, 1980: 16). Perren (undated) (cited in Robinson, 1980: 41)
18) believes that while there is no such thing as a general register, it remains useful to acknowledge a category of 'special-purpose' language varieties.

Zwicky and Zwicky (1982 : 213 - 218) identify three types of selection: (1) The selection may exclude certain features so that the variety can be described as a restricted form of language; (2) The selection may permit certain features so that the variety can be described as showing special freedom in its means of expression, or as having deviant features; (3) The selection may favour a group of certain forms over others in the variety in question, so that the variety can be described as showing a "statistical preference for certain modes of expression." (op. cit. : 214).

This makes it possible, for example, to state that a management development programme would have a register containing terminology appropriate to its own specialist domain dealing with commercial/industrial/organisational concepts and allied areas of concern. Examples of such terminology are 'critical success indicators', 'organisational re-engineering' and 'total quality management'.

2.9.3 ESP Lexicon and Comprehension
Recognition and comprehension of lexical items in ESP remain crucial to comprehension. Both Kittredge (1982) and Flowerdew (1994) say that few studies have been published on academic lexis, but both are convinced of the importance of an appropriate lexis for the L2 user. In discussing of the size and diversity of a sublanguage lexicon, Kittredge (op. cit. : 124) notes that in the sublanguage of cardiac glycoside (a particularly narrow subfield of pharmacology at New York University), more new words than were expected entered the sublanguage in a typical stretch of a new scientific article. Meteorology, a relatively stable technical area, also has to keep revising its sublanguage to allow the introduction of new lexical items. This is true of many scientific, technical, business and industrial areas where the vocabulary is constantly changing and growing due to ongoing research and development. For example, the acronym JPM (Joint Performance Management) which was so commonly known in Afrox has been shortened to PM (Performance Management). The writer has heard many employees who knew the meaning of JPM query the meaning of PM the first time they heard it.

Kelly's research (1991) (cited in Flowerdew, 1994 : 19) proves that even advanced L2 users' lexical errors are the main obstacles to listening comprehension. In discussing academic listening comprehension, McLaughlin (1987) (cited in Rost, 1994 : 93 - 127) comments on the manner in which problems in linguistic coding (bottom-up processing) distract cognitive resources away from the second-stage process (top-down processing) which listeners have to utilise in comprehension.
2.9.4 ESP Grammatical Structure and Comprehension

Kittredge (1982: 125) observes that sublanguages may have sentence structures which cannot be easily equated with those of standard English, and the structural inventories of sublanguages are difficult to compare with general English. When speaking of listening comprehension, Flowerdew (1994: 19) describes the syntax of academic lectures as similar to written texts because they are "relatively literate, planned artefacts". Comprehension thus becomes more difficult for the L2 listener because the lecture is detached or remote from the listener. The language is inauthentic to the listener and this detracts from his ability to contextualise incoming information and link it to existing knowledge.

Written texts show a high frequency of nominalisations, prepositions, specific conjuncts, agentless passives, low type/token ratio as opposed to spoken text which has a high frequency of 'that' clauses, subordinate cause clauses, subordinate conditional clauses, first person pronouns, second person pronouns, contractions, and the pronoun 'it', all of which facilitate comprehension for the L2 user.

Brown and Hirst (1983: 141), in talking about difficulties which L2 readers experience with an ESP text, cite an inability to distinguish rhetorical functions and how they may be linked; poorly written texts where the reader becomes involved in an "intolerable wrestle with words"; inappropriate texts in terms of knowledge of the subject, degree of experience, and so on; and the readers' attitude towards the text - he might simply have no interest in it, or might feel intellectually or culturally threatened by it, and so resist it.

2.10 Input Studies or 'Teacher Talk'

From the above it is abundantly clear that the way in which the lecturer delivers his information to non-native learners is critical to their ability to comprehend what they are listening to. Griffiths (cited in Flowerdew, 1994: 21), working with Omani students, found that an interactive style of lecturing which included the functions of repair, negotiation of meaning, confirmation checks, etc, resulted in better listener comprehension.

The use of rhetorical signalling cues (micro-markers such as 'well', 'so', 'now let's', and macro-markers such as '(T)oday we will discuss the effect of .....', 'When studying for your exams ...') to facilitate listening comprehension is still under investigation because of conflicting results. Chaudron and Richards (1986) (cited in Flowerdew (1994: 31) used comprehension questions and cloze tests to show that signalling cues enhanced comprehension. Dunkel and Davis (1994: 55 - 74), using written recall protocols found that subjects showed no significant differences in comprehension when the material was presented with and without such cues.
Chaudron (1988: 70 - 78), reporting on numerous investigations into lecturers talking to L2 students, states that slower, accentuated speech is likely to improve comprehension.

2.11 Reading Comprehension

The majority of the present views of second language reading have been strongly influenced by research on first language readers. A description of L1 reading which may be applied with equal validity to L2 reading is cited in Grabe (1993: 208): "A description of reading has to account for the notions that fluent reading is rapid, purposeful, interactive, comprehending, flexible and gradually developing."

Grabe continues by saying that first and second language readers should have at least six skills and knowledge areas (listed below). His observations are supported by other researchers, as shown:

A. Automatic recognition skills.

Automaticity occurs when the reader is unaware of the reading process because he is using little of his potential processing capacity. The L2 reader, particularly at the initial stage of L2 reading, will enjoy little automaticity.

Current views of this L2 reader problem state that the reader is word-bound because he is inefficient in bottom-up processing and simply does not recognise words rapidly and accurately. This is because the reader is concentrating on graphic forms, of which there are many for L2 readers (Grabe, 1993: 221).

Brown and Hirst (1983: 140) believe that slow reading occurs when a reader processes the information so hesitantly that he cannot hold sufficient detail in his short-term memory to enable him to decode the overall message of the text. They are of the opinion that this sometimes results from an inadequate knowledge of the 'signalling system', but more often is the result of reading habits learned at school where the relatively few texts are read with painstaking care and excessive slowness.

B. Vocabulary and structural knowledge.

An understanding of the lexical items and syntactic structures of the language are critical to reading comprehension. Grabe (op. cit.: 210) remarks that in first language reading researchers have calculated recognition vocabularies of fluent readers to vary from ten thousand words to one hundred thousand words. Grabe continues: "Vocabulary discussions in second language reading argue for 2 000 - 7 000 words." This is significant and indicates that such a low base L2 vocabulary will not permit adequate comprehension. The L2 reader is immediately at a disadvantage.
In discussing the vocabulary required for academic work, Grabe (op. cit. : 222) says that the L2 academic needs between 5 000 - 7 000 words for coursework. It is important to note that the core vocabulary argument that the 2 000 most frequent vocabulary items account for 80% of all words in texts (and which is useful for basic reading) is deficient for the needs of academically oriented L2 students (loc. cit.).

Devine (1987 : 75 - 87) found that the better a second language is known, the better the reading comprehension. The results of her investigation coincide with those of Clarke, 1980; Cziko, 1978, 1980; and Hudson, 1982 (all cited in Devine, 1987) that L2 users with better L2 proficiencies achieve higher comprehension levels in second language reading. Devine's findings accord with their belief that low language competence places a limit on comprehension and that a forced, "close adherence to textual features may also inhibit the reader's ability to activate appropriate higher order schemata." (Devine, op. cit. : 84).

First language interference also impedes reading comprehension. Grabe (1993 : 217) lists negative transfer effects caused by false or near cognates, (words having a common source or root), L1 syntactic knowledge, word order variation, relative clause formation and other complex structural differences between languages as factors which mislead the L2 reader.

**C. Formal discourse structure knowledge.**

If a reader has knowledge of how a text is organised then his chances of achieving comprehension are enhanced. Carrell (1984, cited in Grabe, op. cit. : 211) found that more specific and logical patterns of organisation, such as cause-effect, compare-contrast and problem-solution, improve recall in L2 readers compared to texts organised loosely around a collection of facts.

When beginning to read, the reader should have some knowledge of the type of text which he is going to have to interpret. For example, narrative texts "engage the processes that compute causal relations; descriptions engage the process that constructs the referential representations; and expositions engage the processes that compute logical and hierarchical relations among the elements of a text." (Just and Carpenter, 1987 : 26).

Wallace (1986 : 29) contends that L2 readers' knowledge of textual organisation improves comprehension. This is because the knowledge allows the reader to form expectations, which in turn allow predictions which are part of the comprehension process.
D. **Content/world background knowledge.**
This has already been discussed at some length. Grabe (1993: 216) in supporting and elaborating on the arguments of the researchers cited above, also mentions that adult second language users do have some advantage in this area. Older readers do have a better developed conceptual sense of the world, with more factual knowledge and they can make better logical inferences from the text than can children. Wallace (1986: 33) disagrees with this when talking about the *beginner adult reader* who has difficulty with text because he does not have enough knowledge of the world to bring to certain texts.

Carrell, Steffensen, Devine, and James (all cited in Carrell: 1987) stress the criticality of content and background knowledge.

E. **Synthesis and evaluation skills.**
These skills are crucial elements of reading as effective readers do not only aim to understand a text, they also evaluate text information and attempt to assimilate it without other sources of information and knowledge. Unless the L2 reader masters these skills his reading abilities will necessarily remain at a low level.

F. **Metacognitive knowledge and skills’ monitoring.**
Fluent readers become conscious that they must apply metacognitive skills to optimise their chances of understanding text. For example, they may use skimming, previewing of headings, pictures, summaries, note-taking or they may adjust the reading rate. These skills are even more useful to the L2 reader than the L1 reader as his bottom-up and top-down processing are going to be more complex than that of the native readers.

This chapter has provided detailed information and results of research on the linguistic aspects of listening and reading comprehension, but has only touched on the complex element of cultural interference in comprehension. The following chapter examines this phenomenon which plays a critical role in the communicative competencies of the diverse employee populations which characterise South African training situations. The evidence presented in both chapters comprises the first step in the process of triangulation which was applied to investigate the presence of inadequate comprehension levels in some MDA delegates.
CHAPTER THREE
THE EFFECTS OF CULTURAL INTERFERENCE ON COMPREHENSION

3.0 The Importance of Cultural Knowledge in a Business Training Programme

Retief's paper presented to the CSIR in 1983, Communication Problems Associated with Training of Black Workers in Industry, says that in the multi-cultural South African environment communication skills pay a vital role. She stresses that in training programmes the trainer must be conversant with the traditions and customers of his delegates.

Retief (op. cit. : 5) states that because there is a close relationship between language and culture, the cultural background of a training population must be taken into account. Developers and presenters of a programme must be cognisant of this link when researching and developing course content. When the content is prepared by persons of one culture, and presented to participants belonging to another culture, the margin for cultural interference is great.

Retief (loc. cit.) quotes Prosser (1969), Doob (1961) and Church (1963) who concur that a programme facilitator must understand the culture of course delegates. According to Cherry (1966) (cited in Retief, 1983 : 5) the full effect of words to a listener is reliant on the culture to which he belongs. If culture is ignored in training programmes, interference in communication can occur because a word is either unfamiliar or has different connotations for certain cultural groups so that ultimately the message will not be received as planned. Cole and Scribner (1974) (cited in Retief, 1983 : 6) state that problems of perception, conceptual processes, learning, memory and problem solving are culturally relevant, and along with Bruniquel and Magwaza (1974) (cited in Retief, 1983 : 7) emphasise the importance of cultural factors when training black workers.

Prosser (1969) (cited in Retief, 1983 : 8) claims that the most cultural of cultural characteristics are values and value orientations which are part of beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes, myths, thought patterning and behaviour. Prosser states:

"When one considers language, non-verbal codes, perceptions, attitudes, thought patterning and values, similarities and differences in each element make intercultural and cross-cultural communication increasingly more complex as one moves from component to component. ... Values and subjective ideas ... spread very slowly and painfully from one culture to the next."

The socio-economic background of programme delegates forms part of their cultural experience. Retief (op. cit. : 10) thinks that apart from influencing educational, health and nutritional aspects of the black worker's life, the implications of such a background should be considered further.
For example, delegates from a deprived socio-economic background usually have to travel great distances to work which results in fatigue which adversely affects concentration in training. Taxi violence and its traumatic impact on commuters also plays a debilitating role in delegates' ability to concentrate during their time in training centres (B.S. Cowley, personal discussion, 1996). The presence of these negative factors in delegates' lives cannot be ignored when developing and implementing training programmes.

Retief (1983: 17) includes white attitudes to aggression as a component of cultural interference in training programmes, for example, when other delegates use a loud volume of speech and voice tone. Whites do not usually regard loud speakers as acceptable in the training environment as loudness is associated with aggression, hostility or uncouthness. Black delegates, however, regard softly-spoken persons as dishonest because they do not want the listener to hear everything they are saying.

Retief, in discussing non-verbal communication, (op. cit. : 17 - 19) lists the following as paralinguistic aspects of cultural interference in communication which may occur in a training programme:

A. Facial expression and eye contact
Whites often find it problematic to communicate effectively with blacks because the latter keep their eyes downcast during the communication encounter. Some Black groups regard this as a sign of respect to their interlocutor, while whites find it difficult to judge the black delegate's reaction to the communication and perceive his refusal to make eye contact as a barrier to interaction.

B. Gestures
It is a sign of disrespect among blacks for anyone to take with the left hand or not to extend both hands in the act of receiving an object. It is also considered poor courtesy to give to others using the left hand. Pointing a finger at someone is associated among blacks with quarrelling, fighting, pointing out an enemy or even cursing; whites often point their fingers simply to underline a point.

C. Body posture
In some cultures, keeping one's hands in one's pockets or behind one's back is associated with dishonesty, unreliability or disrespect. Older black and white persons who are addressed by a younger person with hands in his pockets or behind his back may feel despised, while younger persons of both races may have different perceptions.
3.1 Culture and Comprehension
The complexity of achieving full comprehension lies in the fact that listening and reading involves not just linguistic but also cultural aspects. Cultural elements which are implicitly or explicitly stated in either oral or written presentations pose serious problems to the L2 user. Wallace (1986: 1) states that reading behaviour is bound up with a wide range of cultural, social, professional and personal roles. Each of these roles uses an ideolect, sociolect or another category of language, eg, ESP, to express the concepts, activities and philosophies which are part of the role.

Lono (1992: 84) believes that language and culture are inextricably intertwined and cannot be separated. He quotes Alexander (1969) as saying that a person's thoughts are oriented toward certain distinctions which are imposed upon him by the language which he speaks, although these orientations are often below the level of awareness. Lono also quotes Saville-Troike (1976) who believes that language is the expressive dimension of culture and the primary channel of its transfer. Lono firmly holds that non-native speakers (NNS) learning to use English should be overtly assisted to develop appropriate schemata for dealing with English and its unique sub-cultures.

Since the late 1970s a number of studies have researched the effect of cultural background knowledge upon the comprehension of texts. There is evidence that young children do not have highly articulated cultural schemata and a minimum of culture interference would arise when reading a text based on a second culture. Steffensen (1987: 43 - 44) asserts that reading a story about a birthday party in the US would be no more difficult for a child from another culture than reading a neutral text about the habits of the bald eagle.

However, it has been shown that older children and adults who have more established schemata experience considerable comprehension problems because of lack of necessary cultural background knowledge.

Steffensen (op. cit. : 43) states that it has been demonstrated that when a reader and a writer "share cultural assumptions and knowledge about social systems and rituals, there is a much higher level of interaction of the reader with the text than occurs when such assumptions and knowledge are not shared." Wallace (1986: 32) calls this a mismatch between the sorts of knowledge, expectation and purpose which the readers bring to a text and the kind of knowledge, expectations and purpose assumed by the writer. She goes on to say that "(T)his is likely to be the case where reader and writer come together from different cultural or sub-cultural groups."

Wallace (op. cit. : 40) observes that because writers often give their readers an inaccurate identity, it is necessary for a second-culture (C2) reader/listener to know
about the writer's/speaker's culture. She does not believe that it is necessary for the
C2 person to become assimilated into the first culture in terms of sharing the lifestyle
and ideology of the writer, but the person will have to be familiar with it to the extent of
having the cultural knowledge or resources to draw on to attain comprehension (op. cit.
: 38).

Steffensen (1987 : 48) reports that this is also true of listening comprehension where
the speaker and the listener should share some common cultural and social ground for
mutual understanding to occur.

In terms of cultural comprehension, Lono (1992 : 84) describes the schemata as being
hierarchically organised, with specific information at the bottom, and more general
information at the top.

Top-down processing occurs when the reader makes general predictions about the
information being received, (it may be seen as a conceptually driven process), and
helps listeners/readers to resolve ambiguities or to choose between alternative
possible interpretations of the input. Cultural interpretation takes places within the top-
down process.

Hamp-Lyons (1987 : 55), in commenting on Steffensen's research, states that it
appears that 'naive' readers of English use their native language top-down strategies to
impose sense on unfamiliar lexis before they use lower level strategies. Hamp-Lyons
also reports Lipson's (1983) findings which suggest that when there is a conflict
between the L2 reader's cultural background and the information in the text, the alien
cultural content is rejected by the reader which results in incomprehension.

Parry (1987 : 61 - 70), investigating Nigerian children reading in English, made very
similar findings. She states that L2 readers have lexico-grammatical problems, but also
that when the reader's social and political reality differs from that which they discover in
the text this leads to incomprehension. Even when words are explained and
understood there is not a transfer of meaning to the readers which is compatible with
their cultural background knowledge.

3.2 Cultural Background Knowledge
Writers and speakers make false assumptions about the cultural background of their
listeners/readers. A reader/listener must 'capture' the author's (or speaker's) world to
interpret it correctly. Eskey (1979) (cited in Lono, 1992 : 83) says that for readers to
understand, they must be able to access the writer's underlying assumptions about the
subject and the world because everything a person questions, values, believes in and
takes for granted varies from culture to culture.
Wallace (1986: 33) notes that minority cultural groups have problems drawing on their stock of background knowledge as they try to make sense of the content of texts in the L2. L2 readers lack not only linguistic competence to decode and predict the linguistic features of texts, they are also 'culturally incompetent' in that they are unable to interpret and predict certain kinds of phenomena, persons, events, institutions or behaviour described in texts.

Wallace also mentions ephemeral phenomena as a barrier to cultural comprehension and cites the example of the following line in a British newspaper: "Elsie quits the street.". The intended meaning of this was that a popular actress in the television soap opera Coronation Street had retired from the series. Wallace believes that this sort of cultural phenomenon could well be misunderstood by an L2 user. The writer of this paper will attest to that: she is a South African English speaker and lack of British cultural knowledge in the area of popular TV caused her to think that Elsie had decided to retire from a life of prostitution!

To comprehend effectively in cross-cultural encounters, C2 persons need to apply a knowledge not just of what things are, but of why people behave (verbally and physically) in certain ways, or respond in certain ways to the behaviour of others. Many of the so-called facts of everyday life are culture-specific. They are to do with social norms - the roles that people assume in different surroundings. "Access to this kind of culturally determined meaning is perhaps the most difficult for a learner from another culture." (Wallace, 1986: 35).

Therefore, not only does the L2 listener and reader have to overcome the linguistic barriers to language comprehension, he has also to surmount the barrier of cultural interference. Listening and reading in a non-native culture brings its own specific difficulties. The L2 user has to use a top-down processing strategy to connect C2 input to his non-existent or limited store of the C2, or else attempt to make meaning by linking C2 input to his native cultural knowledge which could be more misleading than useful.

3.3 The Schema Theory as it Applies to Cultural Interference
The schema theory propounds that information is processed in two ways which have to occur simultaneously for comprehension to take place.

Lono (op. cit. : 82) states that separate formal and content text schemata exist. The former refers to the various ways in which information is organised in different texts; ie, knowledge of the rhetorical patterns of organisation used in presenting information. Content schemata hold the L2 users' knowledge about a specific topic, for example, a job function. Thus, L2 users may fail to comprehend a text or spoken passage
because their content or formal schemata could not be activated, or because they did not exist.

L2 users may have difficulty understanding a verbal or written passage because it includes concepts and cultural aspects that are non-existent in their native language and culture. Lono (loc. cit.) thinks that even if the L2 user understands some of the dimensions of the concepts, successful comprehension will not occur.

Carrell (1984: 30), using Meyer's five basic kinds of expository organisation (collection; description; causation, problem/solution; comparison) investigated the effects of different types of organisation on L2 readers. She notes that:

"These five basic expository types are common in various contexts. Political essays are often of the comparison type - in particular the adversative sub-type. News articles are typically of the descriptive type ... Scientific texts are often the problem/solution type - first raising a problem and then presenting the solution. Experimental psychological research reports, ... follow a specific version of the problem/solution plan."

The current research has particular interest in the latter two organisational types.

Carrell points out that the formal schemata that correspond to what she terms highly structured classes of discourse (comparison, problem/solution and causation) will facilitate a reader's encoding, retention and retrieval of information. Lono (1992: 84) believes that identification of the rhetorical organisation of a text is critically important in the reading comprehension process.

Lono (loc. cit.) claims that four levels of cultural comprehension are required by L2 users to deal with culturally dense material: factual; inference; evaluation and application.

A. Factual

L2 users sometimes appear to understand written passages that carry much factual information because, when asked questions, they go back over the material and seem to recognise the information required. This, however, is merely a superficial type of comprehension and Lono (op. cit. : 85) states that even if L2 users provide correct answers to questions requiring literal information, it is no guarantee that they completely understand the reading passage. Lono explains this by stating that in this type of identification exercise no higher cognitive skills are brought into play. An L2 user who fully comprehends material will be able to elaborate facts into opinions, or develop them into conclusions.
B. Inference
The inference level of comprehension involves the L2 listener/reader inferring correct information from a spoken or written passage when it is not explicitly stated. Because authors/speakers presume that their target group shares at least sufficient cultural knowledge with them, they frequently imply information rather than specifically state it. Lono (loc. cit.) claims that L2 users cannot relate implied information to what they already know, or to what the producer of the information really means.

As an example, Lono describes Yorkey's (1977) findings of work done with Arabic speakers who have considerable difficulty in perceiving cause and effect relationships. Yorkey found that Arabic speakers put the emphasis on coordination rather than on subordination which causes them to under estimate the importance in English of the distinction between cause and effect, real and unreal conditions, and main ideas and supporting ideas. Thus, when reading or listening to English they cannot infer correctly, especially when information is implicit.

Accurate cultural inferences are even more difficult for L2 users to make when reading a passage about descriptions of body language, proxemics, etc. Lono (loc. cit.) states that unless these users are told what meaning various body languages carry, they will be unable to infer them correctly.

Kroes (undated) provides an example of body language which commonly causes communication breakdown in South Africa: a white person indicating by holding the palm of his hand downwards at a certain height to indicate to a black person that the latter's child is about one metre tall, will seriously insult his black interlocutor who interprets the gesture as meaning that his child shares some characteristics with animals, eg, a dog.

C. Evaluation
The third level of comprehension is that of evaluation. It presupposes the existence of rules or characteristics against which L2 users' ideas, actions or thoughts are measured. Knowledge of this cannot be taken for granted across cultures, especially when the L2 reader/listener is from a culture where much memorisation is done. This level of comprehension requires that the L2 listener/reader pays attention both to the form and the content of the message if a worthwhile evaluation is to result, and naturally both are barriers to successful communication within a context of cultural diversity. Lono (op. cit. : 86) believes that one of the reasons for this is that the L2 user might take for granted that he understands the concepts presented to him, and will not question the form of the rhetorical organisation in which the information is given to him.
D. Application

Lono's final level of cultural comprehension, application, means that the L2 user must put into practice what he has learned from the information received, eg, skills transfer which occurs during a business training programme will be considered successful only if the L2 delegate is able to apply the new knowledge and skills back on the job.

This is a complex level of comprehension, involving the L2 user in the recognition of valid applications of a person's ideas. He must understand that what is concluded about one group or situation may not necessarily be applicable to other groups or circumstances. For example, a delivery of goods which takes place to an urban customer in a highly industrialised environment, (where speed, systems and processes are the order of the day) may require different verbal and body behaviours to a delivery which is made to a small customer in the rural areas (where it is taken for granted that the delivery person will take some time to speak to the customer about non-business issues).

Lono's comprehension levels are related to the specific thinking processes of concrete thought, categorisation, deduction, induction and prediction.

Friedman and Rowls (1980: 148 - 154) claim that in dealing with concrete thinking, L2 users often need practice in retrieving certain information, eg when they are attempting to follow instructions or recalling a sequence of events. Categorising means that the L2 user classifies ideas and differentiates between fact and opinion, real and unreal, relevant and irrelevant, evaluating reading and integrating old information with new input.

Deductive reasoning must be used when the L2 user is required to identify supporting information and details, to infer details, to analyse conclusions, provide examples and illustrations and apply the information directed to him. Inductive reasoning is brought into play when the L2 user must summarise information, identify the main idea or theme in the body of information and must interpret the author's or speaker's purpose.

Finally, Friedman and Rowls add that the L2 user must utilise prediction to make hypotheses that they will have to prove or reject as they continue to intake data.

Friedman and Rowls (loc. cit.) believe that L2 users may not be familiar with the way information is organised in English and that if both content schemata and rhetorical information are not comprehensible to him, then he simply will not understand the information which he is trying to cognitively process and react to.
Communication is a dynamic process which is not static or passive. Meaning can be changed or distorted by cultural factors which are present in a training environment. What is considered a meaningful way of communicating in one culture may result only in incomprehension in another; polite ways of listening vary from culture to culture; behaviour that is appropriate in one culture may be judged as unsuitable in another and could lead to conflict which is a barrier to further communication. The element of cultural communication interference cannot be ignored in the formulation of a training programme for a heterogeneous group if the programme is to achieve its objectives.

Chapters Two and Three have examined the many barriers to listening and reading comprehension experienced by L2 users. The evidence of the comprehension difficulties which L2 and C2 persons experience presented in these two chapters will be compared to evidence of non-comprehension found in some MDA delegates to ascertain if the evidence is corroborative and mutually reinforcing, thus proving the presence of non-comprehension in L2-C2 MDA delegates to be indisputable.

Chapter Four focuses its attention specifically on the L2 users in the MDA programme, particularly the African mother-tongue speakers. It investigates how factors present in their educational and socio-economic background may compound the comprehension barriers discussed above. A description of MDA delegates is provided to give readers an understanding of the percentage of delegates affected by comprehension problems caused by low educational levels, socio-economic background and linguistic factors.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS OF THE MDA DELEGATES

4.0 A Brief Overview of the Educational and Socio-Economic Backgrounds of MDA Delegates

The purpose of this research is to investigate the reading and listening comprehension of the English second-language speakers on the MDA programme. However, the educational and socio-economic backgrounds of only the African mother-tongue delegates will be discussed at this point. This is because it is presumed that, in general terms, their history of inadequate education, compounded by other disruptive psychosocial and political elements, has a specific negative effect on their levels of English proficiency in adult life.

Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers and Asian delegates, who have different variables affecting their communicative competencies, will be discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

Appendix Two provides details of the MDA sample group’s gender, age, school and tertiary educational levels, first and other languages and their experience of early literacy in the home.

The factors present in the environment of black South Africans during their upbringing have been so well documented by various authors that it is unnecessary to repeat them all here. A summary of the history of the black educational system Africa will suffice to make readers cognisant of the relevance of that education to the performance of black MDA delegates.

4.1 The Failure of the Black Educational System and Resultant Literacy Levels

Statistics of illiterate persons in South Africa vary, but Hutton (1992 : 50) claims that in this country, given the complexities of contemporary language policy and continuing problems with the quality of education, even many people with more than eight years of formal education are unlikely to be able to read or write at a proficient level. She states that there are anything between 5 - 12 million black adults who are either illiterate or who have a frustratingly low level of literacy, and who are unable to participate fully in a society that is saturated with the written word.

Her belief is supported by findings which emerged from the observation sessions done during the MDA programme: African mother-tongue speakers with Standard X, or in some instances tertiary education, are not sufficiently proficient in English to cope adequately with the English used in the programme. A Standard X education received
through the erstwhile Department of Education and Training does not equate with a Standard X received in a so-called white school. Extensive research by Macdonald (1990) and Macdonald (with Burroughs, 1991) reveals that:

1. Black children's listening, speaking, reading and writing skills were poorly developed in both the first and second languages. Any further progress that the children made in school depended on these four inadequately developed skills.

2. The whole learning situation from Sub A to Standard II is too limited to prepare the children for the range of skills which they needed from Standard III onwards. Teachers and children (in black schools) needed to learn new ways of teaching and learning to widen the children's range of language experiences and skills.

Macdonald (loc. cit.) demonstrates that the foundation of learning of children in black schools affects the remainder of their education by adversely impacting on their further cognitive development and thinking skills.

Starfield (1993), in investigating the language skills of DET students entering the University of the Witwatersrand, found that their levels of general English, academic English and subject-specific English (English for Specific Purposes) were inadequate for first year tertiary education. Starfield (op. cit.: 3) shows language proficiency as comprising underlying contextual and cognitive dimensions. Any communicative activity can be situated along continua of (1) Cognitively undemanding; (2) Cognitively demanding; (3) Context embedded; (4) Context reduced.

![Contextual Support and Cognitive Involvement Continua](image)

**Figure Six.** Range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in communicative activities (Starfield 1993: 3).
Quadrant A skills are classified as basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), and Quadrant D skills characterise what is called CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency), where the task is cognitively demanding and context reduced. Persuading someone that your point of view is correct is an example of a quadrant B skill, while writing an academic essay would fall into D. Starfield believes that whilst BICS type skills can develop outside the classroom (depending on elements present in the home-social environment), CALP skills need a classroom environment to develop. Typical learning skills fall within Quadrant D.

Starfield reports the schooling situation in the DET as not being conducive to promoting CALP skills in either the first or the second language. She cites Macdonald's (Consolidated Main Report of the Threshold Project) (1990) findings and draws her conclusions as follows:

"Macdonald (1990) highlights the lack of cognitively demanding materials in the schoolchildren's L1. These are only available in the L2 (English) and are then too difficult. Furthermore, the L1 is not being developed out of schools other than in BICS. EL2 CALP proficiency is also inadequately developed. For example, teachers have difficulty in explaining content subject concepts because of poor language proficiency in L2." (Starfield, 1993: 3).

Cummins (1984) (cited in Starfield, op. cit. : 4) describes the interdependence (between the L1 and the L2) principle and says that "to the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly." In extrapolating this principle to the transfer of conceptual knowledge across languages, Starfield claims that a child who does not understand the meaning of a concept in L1, (a common phenomenon in poor L1 teaching in DET schools), has a difficult time acquiring it in L2.

These problems are reflected in the pass rates in the 1991 matriculation examinations in South Africa (including all the homelands except the Transkei) which showed a pass rate for blacks of 41% (as opposed to white - 96%) (Race Relations Survey, 1992/93).

It is important to note that not all education received by minority language groups is deficient simply because of difficulties inherent in teaching children in their second language. Cloud, Garcia, Stefanakis and Zanger (separate articles in Ambert, 1991) indicate that it is how such difficulties are handled which is important - knowledge of, and appropriate attention to, elements such as the psycho-educational, academic and cultural dynamics present in such an environment can bring about successful learning for minority, second-language pupils. It was the presence of hostile factors which further impeded the education of black children in South Africa.
4.2 Hostile Elements in the Black South African Education System


As recently as 1991/92 the per capita expenditure (including capital expenditure) showed overt discrimination:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>26:1</td>
<td>18:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>41:1</td>
<td>35:1</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>R4 448</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Not available for 1991/92 (R3 109 for 1990/91)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>R2 701</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>R1 248</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transkei</td>
<td>72.5:1</td>
<td>18:1 (sic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu</td>
<td>52.5:1</td>
<td>41:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazankulu</td>
<td>43.0:1</td>
<td>33:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangwane</td>
<td>40.3:1</td>
<td>35:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Tables One, Two and Three all show improvements over the ratios of previous years.
A high drop-out rate has also severely affected the educational levels of blacks in South Africa. Of every one hundred children who commenced school in 1969, the number who completed Matric by the end of 1978 was four (Wilson and Ramphele, 1989: 145).

According to these authors there are three reasons for the high drop-out rate which existed in black schools during the years of DET education:

(1) The cost of education from the family's point of view. Fees, uniforms and levies were high, especially for those living below the breadline; (2) As children became older the opportunity of earnings was lost while they were studying. Associated with this is a reason which arises from the necessity for many mothers to work. Without crèches or pre-schools, often the only person available to take care of small children was an older sibling who was taken out of school to help at home; (3) Places were simply not available for all children to enter school. For example, in the rural areas, Wilson and Ramphele (loc. cit.) report that the farm schools which existed were invariably for primary levels only.

Other conditions typical of those living in the poverty trap also impacted on the education of black children. The most fundamental problem of hunger, and its accompanying debilitating effects on body and brain, is cited by Wilson and Ramphele as another reason for high drop-out rates (1989: 145). They report that one-third of black children under the age of fourteen are malnourished and underweight for their age in South Africa.

Teacher training for black teachers in South Africa has also been inadequate.

Since 1983 the minimum requirement for professionally qualified teacher status has been a matriculation certificate and a minimum of a three-year teacher's diploma, or a degree course and teacher's diploma. Previously, black teachers could obtain teachers' qualifications with a Standard VI or a Standard VIII certificate, followed by a two or three-year diploma course at a college of education (Race Relations Survey, 1992/93: 610).

In 1991 teacher qualifications at black schools in South Africa (including all ten homelands) were as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionally qualified with:</th>
<th>Black</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below Standard VIII</td>
<td>15 033</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard VIII or IX</td>
<td>22 948</td>
<td>5 672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard X + 2 years teacher training</td>
<td>43 598</td>
<td>2 542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard X and diploma</td>
<td>87 778</td>
<td>17 369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree and diploma</td>
<td>12 165</td>
<td>5 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical qualification and diploma</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unqualified with:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Standard X</td>
<td>5 370</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard X</td>
<td>17 002</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1 141</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical qualification</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Scholar dissatisfaction with teacher behaviours, very often justified, caused further disruptions in schools (op. cit.: 620).

4.2.1 The Quality of Teaching in the DET System
The quality of teaching in black schools was generally low. Macdonald (1990: 78) highlights the work done by Kok in Natal in 1986 on problem-solving dyads comprising pre-school Zulu children and their teachers. Kok found the teachers to be highly authoritarian, not guiding pupils towards becoming independent problem-solvers in their own right. The teacher appeared as the "one who knows", that is, the teacher presented himself as the one who gave instruction to allow the learner to act. In her own research Macdonald found the same conditions in the black schools she investigated.

"By and large children are not expected to solve problems independently, and the teacher is strongly regarded as the 'one who knows'. In fact, so strongly is this belief held, that teachers show resistance to their pupils seeing them using books as source materials. Pupils and teachers would never 'consult' books together, as this would undermine the teacher's authority." (Macdonald, 1990: 80).

This attitude by teachers, when considered with the teachers' poor academic grounding and qualifications, caused the black education system to fall into greater disrepute.

Meadows (1993: 238 - 251) formulated a neo-Vygotskyan theory of cognitive development based on Vygotsky's principles of mediational strategies. This
Vygotskyan model is also described by Craig in Macdonald, (op. cit.: 86). Meadows provides a theory of cognitive development which rests on the notion of 'scaffolding'.

She claims this model of cognitive development provides an excellent paradigm for teaching/learning practices. Briefly explained, the model operates by the teacher providing almost all the cognition necessary for a task, but as the child becomes increasingly familiar with it the adult can leave more and more for the child to do, until at last he can undertake the entire task successfully. Repetition of this scaffolding of learning on related tasks extends the child's competence and eventually leaves him able to take on new tasks with minimal adult support, or alone.

This model could not be introduced into black schools for a number of reasons:

1. Many teachers were not academically qualified to adopt its theory and practice.

2. Many teachers might have been culturally resistant to its introduction and implementation if they perceived it as threatening their position of authority.

3. The model gives language a central role in the process of teaching, delegating to it the function of a "psychological tool par excellence" (Meadows, op. cit.: 243).

The language policy in black schools was complex and inadequate, and when linked to poor language teaching, it resulted in teachers and pupils having poor language skills.

4. The model was impossible to apply in black education where pupil:teacher ratios were so high.

4.2.2 Political and Socio-economic Elements which Affected DET Education

Years of disrupted education and extremely high levels of civil and criminal violence in black areas took their toll. B. S. Cowley (personal discussion, 1996) states that it can be assumed that these violent, often life-threatening encounters, led to the traumatisation of significantly large numbers of black pupils. Cowley says the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) lists a number of symptoms which result from such brutal encounters: nightmares, flashbacks, insomnia, intense emotions of terror and anger, all resulting in loss of concentration and the ability to take in and retain new information in a learning situation.

This conglomeration of symptoms when clustered together is called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and it has an extremely negative influence on pupils' ability to succeed academically. Cowley also quotes Terr's (1990) findings which demonstrate how high
levels of trauma-related anxiety in children result in loss of focused thought and concentration.

4.3 The Relationship Between the Home and the Development of the Child
Because this paper is a mini-dissertation it cannot accommodate a lengthy discussion of this subject. This brief examination of children's home environment and their cognitive development must, perforce, make some statements which could be seen as generalisations.

Turner (1985: 64) reports that it may be that parental style will affect a child's approach to learning, and that certain styles are more characteristic of certain social groups. Turner puts forward three arguments about children's development and their homes which have been tested and found to be generally supportable:

1. The behaviour that leads to societal, educational and economic poverty is socialised in early childhood.

2. The central quality involved in the effect of cultural deprivation is a lack of cognitive meaning in the mother-child communication system.

3. The growth of cognitive processes is fostered in family control systems which permit a wide range of alternatives of action and thought and that such growth is constricted by systems of control which offer pre-determined solutions and few alternatives for consideration and choice.

Turner provides evidence from several research studies that children from middle-class families are more likely to be competent problem-solvers than children from lower-class families where lack of education and financial stability, accompanied by severe constraints such as unemployment, lack of physical security and poor healthcare, use up much of already limited parental resources.

Meadows (1993: 304-309) claims that there has been evidence for at least the past century that cognition or, more specifically, educational achievement, is associated with family background. Children with more middle-class backgrounds or more educated parents do better throughout their educational careers, staying in education longer and having higher achievement at most stages. They also tend to do better on IQ tests. She concludes that the socio-economic status (SES) of the family is still "a fairly good predictor of children's academic achievement." (Meadows, op. cit. : 304).

It is the underlying factors of SES which could cause loss of cognitive development, for example:
1. **Poverty**: Wilson and Ramphele, (1989: 176) state that in South Africa in 1980, 50% of the population were estimated to be living below subsistence. For blacks the proportion was estimated to be nearly two-thirds, whilst of those living in the reserves 81% of the households were in dire poverty.

2. **Inadequate nutrition**: Wilson and Ramphele, (op. cit. : 145) report that no less than one-third of black children under fourteen are malnourished.

3. **Housing**: Wilson and Ramphele, (op. cit. : 125), using Soweto as an example of the housing shortage for black South Africans, quote an estimated shortage in 1982 of 35 000 houses, increasing by 4 000 per year, whilst over the previous seven years an average of 1 100 houses were built. Christie (1987) (cited in Wilson and Ramphele, loc. cit) claims an average of seventeen people living in every house in Soweto.


1. Parental intelligence.
3. (Extended) family size.
4. Number of siblings.
5. Noise level in home.
6. Housing.
7. Income.
8. Parental involvement with children.
9. Number of persons living in the home.
10. Opportunities for variety in appropriate, daily stimulation (toys, books, outdoor activities, etc).
11. Stimulation of academic behaviour.
12. Language stimulation.
14. Family literacy.

Although all the findings, with their respective qualifications and reservations, cannot be reported here, it may be generalised that children from lower SES homes do not achieve the same cognitive development as children from higher income families.
4.3.1 Family Literacy

In the socially representative sample of children whom Gordon Wells (1985) studied in his research on language development there were significant positive correlations between parents' and children's interest in literacy, particularly the frequency with which stories were read to the child during the pre-school years, and the children's progress in learning to read (cited in Meadows, 1993: 16).

Meadows continues: "Instruction by parents, parents' reading to children, and especially the child's engagement in being read to, are (the best) predictors of early reading." (Meadows, loc. cit.).

Explaining the differences in family literacy in white and black South African children (Macdonald with Burroughs, 1991: 39) tell of Mary, a six-year-old white child who possessed twenty or thirty books by the time she was two, and who was regularly read to by her father who encouraged her to participate where she could, and who was taken to the library by her mother. By the time she started school Mary had enjoyed looking at hundreds of books and it did not take her long to read. Macdonald then describes Mandisa, a six-year-old black child whose first book was a reader handed out to her when she started school. It took Mandisa some time to distinguish which was the front and which was the back of the book.

Meadows (1993: 18) states that the experience of being read to shows a high correlation with learning to read well. The entire exercise of seeing text, being read to, using written and spoken language, and discussion with more expert users leads to emergent literacy well before reading and writing are formally taught in school.

Weinberger (1995) says that in households where children are exposed to a variety of texts (shopping lists, books, newspapers, magazines, crosswords, letters, etc), they absorb information about reading and language in a natural context. They can be seen as activities which Meadows describes as engaging the children in the text, capturing their attention and resulting in the development of reading strategies over time. This sort of learning is stress-free because parents are able to grade material according to its suitability for their children.

Spreadbury (1995: 215) calls this "upping the ante", and says that in highly interactive dyads, many parents ask questions which demand a higher level of comprehension from their children, while simultaneously providing the necessary information (in the form of confirmations, tag questions, reassure type questions, etc). This is in line with Meadows' theory of scaffolding which provides an excellent model for cognitive development (Meadows, 1993).
Spreadbury (op. cit. : 216) says that some parents even focus their discussion at a deeper level on the ideology of the text, sometimes linking it to the child's everyday experience, contextualising the text and making it relevant to the child. Spreadbury believes that it is not only the activity of parental reading which positively impacts on children's reading, but the interaction between child and parent as a result of the reading which provides further intellectual stimulation and cognitive development.

It can readily be understood how children deprived of such reading and language experiences have weaker reading comprehension levels and how this affects their later cognitive development and educational advancement. They are disadvantaged in the classroom, especially if classes are large and teachers, even skilled teachers, are unable to devote the necessary additional time to them.

4.4 Description of the MDA Delegates

The use of the attached delegates' questionnaire (Appendix Three) was not a complete investigation into the socio-economic and educational background of the MDA delegates. Time did not permit such an investigation to take place and it was assumed that (at least the majority) of black delegates were from an environment in which most, if not all, of the negative factors described above were present. The writer is also aware that not all white MDA delegates were from a privileged background, but the scope of this paper did not include a detailed investigation into the background of these delegates.

4.4.1 Mother-Tongues of the MDA Delegates

A total of six hundred and ninety-two delegates attended the MDA programme during 1996. Due to time constraints, biographical data regarding gender and home language of all of them could not be collected, but such data was gathered for 431 delegates. Of this group, English mother-tongue speakers comprised 146 delegates, Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers comprised 159 delegates and African mother-tongue speakers comprised 113 delegates. The latter two groups combine to comprise the majority group who represented non-native English speakers. This group of 431 delegates can be presented graphically to show a percentage analysis of mother-tongue speakers.
Figure Seven. Group of 431 MDA delegates: Mother-tongue speakers.

If these figures were extended to apply to the entire 1996 MDA group (of 692), it could logically be inferred that the majority of the 1996 group were non-native English speakers who had (various) inadequate levels of reading and listening comprehension which adversely affected the outcomes of the programme. It should be remembered that the approximate training cost per delegate during 1996 was R550.00.

The ages of the African language delegates ranged from twenty-three to fifty-six years, revealing that their schooling took place over the past forty years, beginning in the period when various protest actions were initiated against apartheid and Bantu Education (Human Sciences Research Council Education Research Programme Number 20, 1990). The further restrictions which were placed on black education led to the chaos in education in 1976, followed by further academic losses in the 1980s and into the 1990s.

Another factor associated with the age of English second-language delegates is fossilization, which refers to the establishment by the second-language user of incorrect (and correct) forms of the L2. Many researchers agree that fossilization begins to occur after puberty and that, unless the L2 is explicitly taught after that age, little continued development of the L2 will take place (Malave and Duquette, 1991: 29).

The implication of this for the success of the MDA programme is that those delegates who have not been exposed to the explicit teaching of English since their departure from school would probably be disadvantaged by some degree of fossilization. In other words, they would find it difficult to understand the meaning of some of the English used in the MDA programme, even when the meaning was explained to them.
4.4.2 The Educational Levels of the MDA Delegates

The educational levels of the delegates vary widely, from Standard VI to university level. However, the quality of even the tertiary education of African mother-tongue speakers is questioned because, even though the delegates concerned graduated from university, their English proficiencies are unlikely to be as high as English speaking graduates who qualified at universities where their mother tongue was the major medium of teaching and learning.

Research by Leighton (1992) shows that students entering Vista University have English skills' levels of eight years below English mother-tongue speakers. There is no evidence to show that during their tertiary education these students improve their levels of English communication to that of their English first-language counterparts.

During a telephonic discussion with Mr A Home of Hough & Home, Johannesburg, (02 December 1996), he described the use of the ELSA (English Literacy in South Africa) measuring instrument, a standardised measuring instrument designed in conjunction with the Human Sciences Research Council. Use of ELSA on the reading levels of 691 students in Mpumalanga who had matriculated in 1995 (and who had already been accepted for teacher training) revealed they had the following reading levels:

- Reading level of Std VIII - X : 4 students.
- Reading level of Std VII : 10 students.
- Reading level of Std VI : 24 students.
- Reading level of Std V : 117 students.
- Reading level of Std IV : 228 students.
- Reading level of Std III : 218 students.
- Reading level of Std II : 82 students.
- Reading level of Std I : 8 students.

Home reports that Afro "transferees" (those transferring from the first language and culture environment to a second language and culture environment) have great difficulty in successfully making an effective transfer which allows them to be fully functional in the second environment.

Among other reasons, Home cites mother-tongue interference as a cause of communication failures. English, like many other European languages, is of Germanic/Latinate origin, and African languages have quite different origins which make for some significant dissimilarities between the languages. English, for example, has twenty-one vowel sounds, while black languages have only five. Black speakers of English attempt to accommodate all twenty-one English vowel sounds within the five
which they have available to them with, naturally, dismal results. The charts show the educational levels of the 100 MDA delegates in the sample group. ie, the group used in the observation sessions.

**Figure Eight. MDA sample group of one hundred delegates: Delegates who attended university.**

Note that the delegates who are shown as having attended university undertook degree and non-degree study courses.

**Figure Nine. MDA sample group of one hundred delegates: Delegates who attended technikon/college.**
4.5 Afrikaans and Asian MDA Delegates
For the purpose of this paper Afrikaans first-language speakers will be assumed to have received an education and enjoyed an upbringing which allowed them to participate in the MDA programme to an extent which is limited only by virtue of being L2 English speakers. Asian delegates received an education which is generally regarded as excellent and equal to so-called white education levels. All Asian delegates reported English to be their first language.

4.6 MDA Delegates : Biographical Information of Sample Group
The sample group of this research consisted of the following MDA delegates. For the purposes of this research it is irrelevant to report ethnic or race groups. Data appertaining to the sample group will be reported as follows:

- English speakers (being English mother-tongue speakers of any race) : Forty-one delegates.
- Afrikaans speakers (being Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers of any race) : Twenty-seven delegates.

The above table may be graphically represented as follows:
Figure Eleven. MDA sample group of one hundred delegates: Mother-tongue speakers.

These percentages may also be displayed as English mother-tongue speakers, and a combination of Afrikaans and African mother-tongue speakers to show the latter groups as a combined percentage of L2 users in the sample group. It is these latter groups who were proved (by the data provided from observation sessions and supported by information from the facilitators’ questionnaires) to be those with the lowest listening and reading comprehension levels. It is, therefore, clear that the majority of the delegates attending the MDA programme are failing to comprehend at least some of the content of the programme.

Figure Twelve. MDA sample group of one hundred delegates: L1 and L2 speakers.
The analyses of the MDA sample group's educational levels and mother-tongues forms a crucial part of this paper because it proves that a very significant percentage of the group is vulnerable to comprehension difficulties typically experienced by second language (L2) and second culture (C2) persons. The extent to which these difficulties adversely impact on their performance in the programme and limits their chances of gaining the maximum benefit from the course will be revealed in discussion regarding the results of the delegates' word test and analyses of their communication behaviours. The biographical data support the second phase of the triangulation process which is been used in the research to prove that the L2-C2 MDA delegates are unable to optimally benefit from the MDA programme due to various linguistic and educational constraints.

Having provided information on the MDA sample group the paper moves on to examine the MDA programme itself, discussing it within the context of current South African training and development philosophies and foci.
CHAPTER FIVE
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, WITH A FOCUS ON MDA

5.0 The Necessity for Business Training in South Africa
A number of forces internal and external to South Africa have radically altered the rules of the game in most major SA industries and businesses. Pressures such as advances in information technology, increased global competition and the problems caused by the deficient black education system have forced companies to re-evaluate the way they do business and plan for a strategic turnaround that will position them better for competition during the remainder of this century and into the next. Affirmative action, (as it is defined as part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme), also brings political and economic pressures to bear on private sector companies to identify and develop affirmative action candidates for managerial positions.

This has resulted in a shift in corporate training where the emphasis is now being placed on first line and senior management development. Training is being used to carry out specific business strategies and corporate objectives. McDonald (1987) sees an ideal corporate entity as acting in such a way that it produces a profit through a system of performance behaviours. If component performance behaviours are correctly chosen and trained they produce the intended impact on corporate objectives and profitability.

Training programmes need to accomplish changes which serve specific corporate goals and address organisational roadblocks to help managers and employees understand their roles in implementing competitive strategy. The training focus is on effecting changes in behaviours, attitudes, skills and knowledge.

Gherson and Moore (1987) describe this as modifying existing staff capabilities to support strategic change. They state that as a strategic lever training changes the ways in which people behave, it identifies opportunities and solves problems and is accomplished through systematic instruction. Such instruction should provide new perspectives and ideas, and define new actions and ways of behaving to bring about a "relatively permanent change in behaviour". Such change may be called learning (op. cit. : 5).

5.1 The Management Development in Afrox Training Programme
The Management Development in Afrox training programme is usually conducted centrally at the Afrox Training and Development Unit. When considered more cost-effective, the training is run at various work centres around South Africa.
The three-day MDA programme targets all supervisors in the company. The course is designed to effect changes in work habits and supervisory patterns through improving knowledge, supervisory and thinking skills and aligning attitudes with the strategic planning of executive management. The Training & Development Unit, who has ownership of the programme, devised the following criteria for an effective junior management development course:

1. Line management involvement.
2. Appropriate learning approach.
3. Effective measurement of the effects of the MDA.
4. Content relevance.
5. Alignment with the business.
6. Appropriate delivery of the course.
7. Follow-up and ongoing development of delegates.

Four management competencies considered essential for managers to be successful were identified and are the foci of attention in the programme: (1) Strategic thinking skills; (2) Business acumen; (3) People leadership; (4) Customer drive. (Job skills are not addressed on the MDA programme) (Afrox A., undated).

MDA may be regarded as an awareness programme which aims at giving delegates new knowledge or cognitive states. The goal is that delegates will 'know' certain things, not necessarily 'do' certain things. The goal of staff training is job effectiveness to ensure supervisors are equipped to respond productively to the demands of the business.

The methodology of the programme is based on action learning, case studies, workshops, discussions and an application project.

The process of the programme is shown in Appendix Four (loc. cit.). The objectives of the programme, and its outputs, are shown in Appendix Five (Afrox B., undated). They may be summarised as: (1) To establish shared meaning of the concepts of management and leadership as applied in practice in Afrox; (2) To provide a resource to develop supervisors and to cascade the values of the company to supervisors and their subordinates.

5.1.1 The MDA Programme and Affirmative Action
The controversy which surrounds affirmative action cannot be accommodated in this paper, but both sides of the debate have been well documented in South Africa and overseas (for example, Brimelow, 1993; Grimbeek, 1994; Innes, 1992; Kroes, 1996; Poni, 1994).
Afrox has for some time been engaged in an affirmative action programme and clearly perceives the need for the development of black supervisors. In line with Nyanhete and Kufakumesu (1994) the company sees empowerment, organisational structure, resources, communication and management development as critical elements of corporate strength.

Nyanhete and Kufakumesu (op. cit. : 10) maintain that black executive development begins with the identification of business strategy which can be linked to a plan for black advancement and that human resource departments have a significant opportunity to launch black management development. In the MDA programme the importance of Afrox's business strategy is embedded in the establishment of a shared meaning of management and leadership concepts as they are applied in the company. The strategic direction of Afrox is captured in its mission statement (to be the leading supplier of gases, welding and healthcare services in sub-Saharan Africa), its vision, (to be the most customer focused company) and its main goal (to provide long-term financial returns and growth that meets shareholder expectations) (Afrox, Management Development in Afrox Training & Development Programme, 1996).

To achieve the company's goals, line managers determine Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and Key Performance Areas (KPIs) for their subordinates which support the company's CSFs and KPIs. These issues are dealt with in the MDA programme on the first day of the course.

The training manual, which is primarily a take-away resource, but which is also utilised during the programme, consists of over three hundred pages of Afrox-generated material and eleven articles sourced from various journals and text-books.

It is apparent that the content of the MDA programme is presented in complex concepts and processes. To apply the concepts and principles of Afrox management to the situations provided in the three-day MDA programme, L2 delegates must be able to promptly, smoothly and continually internalise programme content by interpreting it according to the schema theory. The programme consists of sixteen complicated modules, (see Appendix Six for the course outline), which are dense in English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes. Barriers caused by reading and listening incomprehension prevent internalisation and lead to failure to realise the programme's objectives, specifically in terms of its affirmative action programme.

5.1.2 Action Learning
Action learning, which forms a significant methodology for the transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes in MDA, is described by McGill and Beaty as:
"a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of getting things done. Through action learning individuals learn with and from each other by working on real problems and reflecting their own experience. The process helps us to take an active stance towards life and helps to overcome the tendency to think, feel and be passive towards the pressures of life." (McGill and Beaty, 1992 : 17).

McGill and Beaty (op. cit. : 126) state that interpersonal skills are crucial to the success of action learning. They list interpersonal skills as:

**Basic Interpersonal Skills**

1. Effective use of interpersonal skills.
2. Listening.
3. Reflecting back.

**Additional Skills**

1. Management of emotion.
2. Giving and receiving feedback.
4. Specifying actions.

McGill and Beaty see the role of interpersonal skills in action learning essential in the following ways:

1. A metacognitive awareness of one's own psychological state.
2. A good listener picks up clues such as the use of a colleague's language, his non-verbal behaviours and how that relates to what he is saying.
3. Being in touch with what is happening between two people or in a group. In a set (group), a participant needs to listen to the interaction and understand what each person is saying and/or communicating. For example, through attentive listening one may become aware of another's strengths and weaknesses and utilise them accordingly.
4. Active listening also relates to non-verbal communication which can confirm or reinforce what is said, or it can confuse listeners.
5. Expressing needs, opinions, beliefs and feelings in honest and appropriate ways.
Clearly the central role of communication skills in action learning makes transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes reliant on proficient language and thinking skills.

Participants in the MDA programme must negotiate meaning in a manner which will facilitate learning in themselves and their fellow-delegates. The English comprehension capacities of delegates must allow them to understand written and spoken material and to participate in the programme in a way which will result in transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes back to the job. Skilful and effective production of the English language is required. In addition, extra-linguistic communication features must be comprehended and this aspect of comprehension draws attention to the danger of cultural interference in communication.

McGill and Beaty (op. cit. : 130 - 162) describe the way in which a message can be lost through faulty communication, (see Appendix Seven for this description), and they attest that delegates to an action learning based programme must have the ability to:

1. **Be with the facilitator**, both physically and psychologically.

2. Listen and observe actively to decode the verbal and the non-verbal messages presented by the facilitator and by others in the set.

3. **Reflect back in the form of summaries, checks, etc.**

4. Disclose information about themselves as part of building trust in relationships with colleagues in a training milieu.

5. Give and receive feedback in sets to arrive at the best collective conclusion/resolution which the set can generate.

6. **Extract relevant meaning from generalisations.**

7. **Specify actions in a set to ensure that the exercise under discussion is proceeding in a logical, positive manner.** An important part of action learning is that point when a participant has reviewed his progress on an issue and after consideration and reflection on where he is, has to decide upon the next step to take (in a problem solving exercise, a planning exercise, etc.).

These are not simple activities, but are actions which demand the simultaneous use of several higher-order thinking skills. Delegates must be simultaneously able to:
1. Apply a metacognitive process to consciously locate themselves in near psychological proximity to the facilitator and fellow-delegates.

2. Decode verbal and behavioural input.

3. Paraphrase input in the form of output.

4. Have the capacity to reveal information about themselves to persons who are, to all intents and purposes, strangers.

5. Resolve problems as part of a collective thinking exercise.

While not decrying action learning (McGill and Beaty, 1992, and Wills and Mahanyele, 1994 describe its many strengths and benefits), the writer does seriously question its suitability for MDA delegates who have difficulties with the language used as the medium of learning. As can be seen from the above, action learning, which is done largely in sets or groups, places a heavy emphasis on the production and interpretation of meaning. Communication skills are integral to the success of training programmes based on action learning. Dialogue forms a critical process in action learning and so production abilities must be high, as should interpretation competencies. Reading strategies must also be adequate as much information is presented in texts. The majority of the DET graduates on the MDA programme do not have the English communication skills which are required to facilitate action learning in the course. (See the results of the delegates' word test and analyses of their communicative competencies in Chapter Six).

Higher thinking skills are required for problem-solving and the delegates must possess a mental muscularity and flow of consciousness which permit complex linguistic interaction and the generation of solutions during problem-solving exercises. This is far too complex for those MDA delegates who have a deficient linguistic and education background.

5.2 The Facilitators of the MDA Programme

Three facilitators are used to present the MDA programme. Two are external facilitators and one is a person employed by the company. They are English mother-tongue speakers.

Appendix Twelve contains the facilitators' responses to various questions put to them regarding their facilitation of the programme, and the extent to which they perceive delegates' listening and reading comprehension levels impact on the success or failure of the programme.
McGill and Beaty see the facilitator's role in action learning training as having a dual character - initiating and supporting - and they depict it as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Stage</th>
<th>The Facilitator's Role</th>
<th>The Support Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>Describing</td>
<td>Observing/listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Exploring</td>
<td>Reflecting back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Offering ideas (but not prescriptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Questioning actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening/questioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring future actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking 'what if' questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specifying action points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure Thirteen. The role of the facilitator in an action learning based training programme. (McGill and Beaty, 1992 : 66).

The critical role of language in the facilitator's performance in action learning programmes is obvious; his ability to communicate information to all delegates is essential to the success of the training programme. It is essential that he is cognisant of the levels of delegates' comprehension and how to encode his message to delegates to ensure it is understandable.

5.2.1 The Facilitator and Media as Channels of Information
As well as facilitators, the MDA programme uses local texts (generated by Afrox training personnel), American texts and videos as mediums of training.

Clarke (1987 : 152 - 167) points out that conflicting results have come from research into the evaluation of different media used in training programmes. In most of the existing studies, newer training media such as television and micro-computers have been compared with human trainers. Meta-analyses indicate that television and computer training result in an approximate fifteen point advantage for electronic media over teachers on the average one hundred point training examination.

However, closer inspection of the above analyses have led to further findings that cautions against any quick decisions about increasing the use of media in training programmes. Clarke (op. cit. : 155) states that "(W)henever the same teacher or training design team develops both the mediated program and the presentation used by a trainer, there are no achievement differences between traditional and new training media."
Significant advantages for either the live trainer or an electronic medium are found primarily when each presentation is designed by different individuals or teams. It is suspected that the advantage may be due to different training methods built into training presentations by the different individuals or teams - rather than advantage due to some special characteristics of the media. In the case of the MDA programme, the role of the facilitator is all-important not only in presenting Afrox-generated information in a way which is comprehensible by all delegates, but also in acting as a 'mediator' between foreign texts and videos, where unfamiliar cultures, terminology and accents and speed of presentation could confound delegates' listening and reading understanding. It is important to note that many of the delegates have such a low base of education that their literacy levels would not allow them to keep up with their better educated colleagues.

In using the Vygotskyan paradigm of the mediator, Gee (1992) states that training facilitators should mediate delegates' understanding and integration of second culture learning so that no conflict and resultant learning and social impediments occur to the detriment of the programme or the delegates (cited in G. A. Cowley, 1995).

The importance of the MDA programme's link with Afrox’s affirmative action programme has been discussed in this chapter, along with discussion of the central roles of action learning and the programme’s facilitators.

Two of the measurements of the programme’s capacity to realise its objectives are (1) The extent to which action learning meets the needs of the delegates; (2) The ability of the facilitators to successfully transmit programme content to the delegates. In the light of previous discussion concerning L2-C2 persons' comprehension skills and the biographical description of the MDA sample group which shows a high percentage of L2-C2 delegates, these two components of measurement show that there is considerable failure in the programme’s ability to reach its objectives, specifically in terms of its goal to support the company’s affirmative action programme.

The complexity and variety of concepts used in the programme, the necessity for a linguistic mastery of the ESP/ EAP used to convey concepts, the high degree of problematic grammatical structures and high frequency of difficult lexical items and the use of formal and colloquial English are some of the elements which make the MDA in its present form inappropriate for many of its current delegates. The validity of this assessment is borne out by the data which resulted from the triangulated approach to the research used in the investigation.
CHAPTER SIX
METHODS AND AREAS OF INVESTIGATION:
➢ DELEGATES’ QUESTIONNAIRES;
➢ OBSERVATION SESSIONS;
➢ THE MDA MANUAL;
➢ FACILITATORS’ QUESTIONNAIRES

6.0 The Dual Rationale for the Investigation Into the Listening and Reading Comprehension Levels of MDA Delegates

This investigation into the listening and reading comprehension levels of MDA delegates has two objectives. It is submitted to satisfy rigorous academic requirements and to provide a paper to Afrox Limited which will prove useful in terms of making the MDA programme more effective from the points of view of:

1. Providing information which will be helpful in:
   ➢ The identification and selection of delegates to the MDA programme.
   ➢ The development of the material used in the programme.
   ➢ The enhancement of the facilitator-delegate and delegate-delegate interactions through increasing the comprehension levels of the English L2 delegates.

Such information could be applied to the establishment of a well-planned, rational language and literacy policy in Afrox. Such a policy would include wide consultation with external and internal bodies in order to implement language/literacy programmes which have been launched only after taking into consideration the relevant educational, political and business factors in the South African and global market.

Language and literacy training programmes are gaining more importance in the South African workplace where they are closely linked with issues such as:

➢ Private sector involvement in the RDP.
➢ Affirmative action and the democratisation of the South African workplace.
➢ Career pathing.
➢ Succession planning.
➢ Raising employees' educational and skills' levels.
➢ Productivity.
➢ Industrial relations.
➢ Trade Union consultation and participation.
➢ Levels of employee motivation.
➢ Issues of safety and workplace health.
For this reason this paper will have a broader application than one restricted to only one company. Private sector companies, parastatals, bodies and institutions concerned with adult education and training, and governmental and non-governmental organisations need to develop and share new knowledge to find the most effective ways of developing, selecting, implementing and measuring language/literacy programmes in the workplace.

6.1 The Evaluation of Educational and Training Programmes

Kroes and Walker (1988) believe that the purpose of educational evaluation should be to provide the relevant decision-makers with reliable information to allow them to correct or discontinue a programme, or to amend its approach, content, target group or administration.

Due to the large body of data which emerged from the evaluation of the language used in Afrox's MDA programme, this researcher will adapt the approach formulated by Cronbach and Shapiro (1983) (cited in Kroes, 1993). They identified three major foci of education evaluation:

1. **Decisions about individuals**: Identifying delegates' needs, basis for selection of target group, ongoing evaluation of delegate progress and the selection and monitoring of teachers.

2. **Course improvement**: In terms of materials.

3. **Administrative regulation**: General concern with the educational system in which the programme functions, the available facilities and the presence of administrative restrictions.

This paper focuses on identification of candidates and improvement of course materials.

The theoretical research and the practical evaluation of the language component of the MDA programme have allowed the researcher to make certain assessments and recommendations.

It is suggested that the recommendations might positively influence the relevant training and development staff in Afrox to include in future modifications of existing MDA materials, and in the development of new supervisory development programmes, practices which will result in improved delegate listening and reading comprehension levels. Findings emerging from this research will have application to other business
training programmes, technical training programmes which have a high number of African mother-tongue delegates.

The major field of investigation in this evaluation is the link between the delegates' listening and comprehension levels, their educational levels and their first languages.

6.2 The Approach used in the Evaluation of Delegates' Comprehension Levels: A Combined Quantitative and Qualitative Approach

As Kroes (1993: 5) rightly states, interaction in a classroom (or training environment) is not readily expressible in objective definitions. Kroes (op. cit.: 6) reminds his readers that human behaviours such as dialogue, reading acts and listening strategies cannot always be observed and reported in an objective manner. He is especially explicit in his warning of the Flanders' type of investigation which requires the observer to make immediate, subjective decisions on the interpretation of student/delegate and teacher/facilitator behaviours and to express outcomes quantitatively as reliable data.

During the seven observation sessions of eighty-eight MDA delegates participating in small group discussions a pre-prepared checklist to classify communication behaviours was used. An early phenomenon obvious in the sessions was the regular and recurring patterns of behaviour which emerged from specific language groups. It is axiomatic that Kroes (1993) is correct when he states that it is difficult to instantaneously and accurately classify human behaviours. However, although it must be acknowledged that it cannot be conclusively proven that various behaviours do denote various communicative weaknesses or strengths, it is equally obvious that some conclusions may be inferred from the very regular patterns of behaviours which were observed.

The researcher believes that her familiarity with the employee groups who attend the programme, (she has worked for Afrox for more than ten years), and with the programme content, (she has attended the MDA programme as a delegate and on several occasions as an observer), allowed her sufficient access to the delegates' behaviours to lend her comments reliability.

During the sessions one could not help noticing behavioural similarities displayed by various language groups. This occurred to such an extent that it can be stated that group patterns of behaviour emerged. For example, African mother-tongue speakers often failed to complete the reading of a provided text, they often (consciously or unconsciously) demonstrated body language which removed them from the hub of group discussions and they revealed lack of English reading and listening comprehension competencies by making inappropriate responses during group discussions; English speaking males were dominant in making suggestions, followed
by Afrikaans speaking males. Behaviours such as these were apparent with such regularity and similarity that they could be considered typical of Afrox groups functioning in the MDA training environment and are high suggestive that certain communicative characteristics and problems may be attributed to specific mother-tongue language groups.

There was no attempt to discover whether the patterns of communication behaviours which occurred in the groups were due to personality (behavioural) types. The researcher did not attempt to link communication difficulties and language groups from a psychological aspect. This paper does not deal with those possibilities.

That communication problems of specific kinds existed in specific language groups is, however, apparent and these are discussed from a linguistic standpoint.

6.3 The Methodology Utilised in the Research
To make the most effective analyses of the relevant raw data which were collected in the research, the researcher employed a combined quantitative and qualitative approach. This was done to investigate whether the qualitative data obtained during observation sessions and from the delegates' and facilitators' questionnaires, were supported by the quantitative data collected from the same sources and from the theoretical research.

The small number of subjects in this study did not allow for variable deviation analyses and this paper does not presume to generalise the conclusions drawn from this research to larger population groups. The test which was used as part of the MDA delegates' questionnaire is not a standard test, but one which was devised by the investigator for use in this investigation. The conclusions reached are the result of a triangulation process whereby information derived from theoretical research was compared with the qualitative and quantitative data which were realised from the empirical component of the study.

A substantial amount of data regarding delegates, facilitators and training material were procured from four sources:

1. Delegates' questionnaires.
2. Observation sessions.
3. The MDA manual.
4. Facilitators' questionnaires.

These sources will be discussed in turn, followed by a presentation of the findings pertaining to each source.
6.4 Source One : Delegates' Questionnaires

One hundred questionnaires were presented to delegates for completion. This number included twelve Healthcare Division delegates who attended a programme which the researcher was unable to attend. Thus the group who returned questionnaires is larger by twelve than the numbers reported in the observation sessions.

The questionnaires were presented to the delegates by the researcher, or when this was not possible, by the programme facilitator.

The questionnaire was introduced to the delegates by saying that their opinions of the language used in the MDA programme were required by Afrox for further development of the language component of the programme. No delegate commented on or questioned this statement.

It was stressed to delegates that identification of individuals was not the aim of the questionnaire, and they did not have to record their names on the forms. Since the questionnaire was completed during the MDA programmes, one hundred percent questionnaires were completed and returned for analyses.

This paper has already discussed some of the data pertaining to the sample group obtained through the delegates' questionnaire, ie, first languages, ages and levels of education.

This section will examine the data regarding family literacy and the results of the word/phrase test. The relationship between test results and language, and between test results and educational levels will be shown at the conclusion of this section.

6.4.1 Family Literacy

Delegates showed widely diverse responses regarding their exposure to childhood reading at home. To take into account family literacy which was meaningful in terms of quantity of exposure, only those delegates who reported being read to three or more times per week figure in the charts below.

The questionnaire ascertained only if and how often delegates had been read to by family members. No attempt was made to assess the quality of the family literacy for:

- The education levels of the readers.
- The mother-tongues of the readers.
- The English proficiency levels of English second-language readers.
- The language of the texts.
The nature, diversity and quantity of the reading materials used, eg, were library books used, or only those books which belonged to the family. All reading materials would have to be questioned regarding:

- Availability.
- Variety.
- Appropriateness.
- Access to a knowledgeable person (eg librarian) who could guide the family in the suitability of pre-school reading materials.
- Availability of time per reading session.
- Environmental factors such as physical comfort, eg, sufficient lighting and heat in the home, noise in and outside the home, etc.

To take these factors into account in a completely accurate and holistically meaningful way, intimate knowledge of the delegates' living conditions as children is required. Such knowledge is not available.

However, it is believed that if the information regarding the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the African mother-tongue delegates (contained in Chapter Four of this paper) is applied in a general way to the demographic information regarding delegates' first language, age, place and level of education some logical conclusions could be inferred without prejudice to any group.

6.4.2 The Results of the Investigation into Family Literacy

- Sixteen English speakers out of forty-one reported that they had been read to three times or more as children.
- Eleven Afrikaans speakers out of twenty-seven reported that they had been read to three times or more as children.
- Eight African speakers out of thirty-two reported that they had been read to three times or more as children.

Reflected in percentages, the frequency of family literacy in the MDA sample group is shown as follows: (The researcher cannot explain why the English speakers reported higher family literacy rates than Afrikaans speakers. The percentages merely show trends which exist in the Afrox MDA population).
Figure Fourteen. MDA sample group of one hundred delegates: Family literacy.

The implication of these figures is that English L2 users received the least exposure to the benefits derived from family literacy. Of particular concern is the group of African mother-tongue speakers whose reading experiences at school are also known to be lacking. The results of their reading experiences at home and at school make it evident that the reading problems that L2 readers have are present in the MDA L2 group.

6.4.3 The Word and Phrase Test

To assess MDA delegates' self-assessment of their English competencies as compared to their actual competencies a brief word and phrase test was compiled and located at the end of the delegates' questionnaire.

Delegates were verbally requested to complete the test by explaining the meaning of the selected phrases and words within the Afrox context. This request was also printed at the commencement of the test on the questionnaire. Delegates were given as much time as they desired to complete the test.

The test was conducted on the afternoon of the final day of the programme. This ensured that the list of test words had been dealt with during the programme (before the test).

Discussion with the three MDA facilitators revealed that they agreed that the selected words/phrases were key concepts which they emphasised significantly during the programme and on which they spent considerable time. All facilitators stated that they had spent some time explaining the meaning of the terms.

6.4.3.1 The Rationale for the Selection of the Phrases and Words

The words and phrases were selected from the MDA training manual because:
1. They comprise key concepts of the MDA programme, and contain within them some of the major philosophies and values which inform the management practices of Afrox. As such it is imperative that delegates fully comprehend these words and phrases within the context of the MDA programme so that they can internalise them and apply them back on the job in their functional and supervisory capacities.

2. It is essential that delegates understand the meaning of these concepts because comprehension of other concepts presented later in the programme depends on this initial understanding.

   It is axiomatic that key concepts which drive a company interrelate and interact - there is an inevitable interdependence between them. For example, an MDA delegate must leave the programme with an understanding of the concept of the role of technology leadership as it relates to the concept of the drive to meet and exceed customer expectations.

A further example of a selected text is:

"Long term financial returns that meet shareholder expectations."

This is articulated by the programme facilitator and the manual to be the main goal of the company. But if delegates fail to understand the goal, they will fail to understand how the identified Critical Success Factors (CSFs - another phrase which appears in the test) relate to, and contribute towards, the realisation of the company's major goal.

These elements (company goal, CSFs, etc) form part of the Management Competencies in Afrox (see Appendix Nine). This diagram reflects the processes and aggregate skills, knowledge and attitudes in which the management and leadership practices of the company are grounded.

6.4.3.2 The Marking System Devised for the Tests
The researcher devised a system of marking which would accommodate the responses to the test. The system comprised four possible marks which were allocated according to the following criteria:

1. Nil marks: For no response or an answer which was completely incorrect.
2. One mark: For a response which indicated a superficial understanding.
3. Two marks: For a response which indicated some understanding but which did not necessarily fall within the Afrox context.
4. **Three marks:** For a response which indicated complete comprehension of the word/phrase within the Afrox context.

The possible maximum was fifteen marks.

### 6.4.3.3 Delegates' Self-assessment of their Knowledge of English

Question 11 on the questionnaire asked delegates how often they found the English used in the MDA programme difficult to understand; question 12 queried such difficulties in other Afrox training programmes which the delegates had previously attended; question 13 asked delegates to state their language of preference for the MDA programme.

Of the one hundred delegates in the sample group, only two indicated that they often had problems understanding the English used in the MDA programme and in programmes previously attended. Fourteen delegates acknowledged that they "sometimes" had comprehension problems. The remaining eighty-four delegates stated that they had no problem at all. Ninety-six delegates stated that they would prefer English to remain the chosen medium for the programme.

### 6.4.4 The Results of the Tests

The results of the tests were contradictory to the delegates' assessment of their English skills. The results are shown below in two major groups. Firstly, average result per delegate according to education level, that is, delegates who:

- Attended university.
- Attended colleges and/or technikons.
- Did not receive education beyond senior secondary school.
- Did not receive education beyond junior secondary school.

Secondly, the results are shown according to average result per delegate according to first language, that is, English (including Asian) mother-tongue speakers, Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers and African mother-tongue speakers.

#### 6.4.4.1 Results per Educational Level

The results showed that delegates who:

- Attended university received an average of 6.39 marks
- Attended colleges and/or technikons received an average of 5.97 marks.
- Did not receive education beyond senior secondary school achieved an average of 4.69 marks.
Did not receive education beyond junior secondary school got an average of nil marks. Because it is self-evident that these delegates are not linguistically appropriate for the programme their results will not be included in the statistical analyses below.

6.4.4.2 Results per First Language

> English mother-tongues speakers achieved an average of 6.95 marks.
> Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers achieved an average of 5.55 marks.
> African mother-tongue speakers achieved an average of 4.09 marks.

According to these results, the average marks achieved by the delegates indicate that they failed to understand more than fifty percent of the key concepts presented in the test.

Clearly delegates' self-assessment of their English skills is generally out of line with reality. It is difficult to know why this is the case. Possibly some delegates believe that they really do understand a great deal more than they in fact do. If this is the case, delegates may be unconsciously taking away with them from the programme misunderstandings which they will attempt to apply back on the job. There is also a possibility that some delegates may have felt threatened, (in spite of the guaranteed anonymity), by an admission that their English is inadequate for company training programmes.

6.4.4.3 Analyses of the Relationship between: Test Results and Language, and Test Results and Educational Level

Since the limited number of subjects in this study does not allow for variable deviation analyses, data emerging from test results will be presented in matrix form which provides readers with an overview of the relationship between test results and language, and test results and levels of education. These matrices form part of the triangulation process which reveals that information presented in the theoretical research is supported by the findings of the practical investigation conducted.

A complete set of each delegate’s test results, shown according to language and to educational level is attached as Appendix Thirteen.
Matrix One. Percentage of delegates' test marks according to mother-tongue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Marks</th>
<th>English Mother-tongue</th>
<th>Afrikaans Mother-tongue</th>
<th>African Mother-tongue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41 = 100%</td>
<td>27 = 100%</td>
<td>32 = 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 15 Marks</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 12 Marks</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 9 Marks</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6 Marks</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 3 Marks</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Matrix Two. Percentage of delegates' test marks according to educational level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Marks</th>
<th>University 33 = 100%</th>
<th>Technikon/College 39 = 100%</th>
<th>Senior Secondary 26 = 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 - 15 Marks</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 12 Marks</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 9 Marks</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6 Marks</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 3 Marks</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Matrix One

It can be seen from the distributions on this matrix that the majority of the mother-tongue English speakers achieved a pass mark of 7 and above, and majority of the Afrikaans and African speakers did not. Regarding the results of Afrikaans speakers, the test marks 7 - 9, 4 - 6 and 0 - 3 reveal that they achieved a more even spread of marks, reflecting their educational background and English proficiencies.

African mother-tongue speakers on the other hand show high differences in their mark spread, with the large majority falling in the two lowest mark groups.

Discussion of Matrix Two

This matrix also shows the positive relationship between test results and educational levels. The distributions reveal that delegates who attended technikons or colleges achieved a relatively even spread of marks as opposed to those who did not go beyond senior secondary school. 84% of the latter group fell into the 4 - 6 and 0 - 3 marks indicating that low educational levels negatively affect second language proficiencies in a significant manner.
(Readers may be interested to know that the one secondary senior candidate who appears in the 13 - 15 bracket is an English speaker).

It is quite obvious from the above that these marks corroborate the results of the observation sessions and questionnaires and strongly agree with the results of research discussed in the theoretical chapter of the paper. The triangulation process shows that there is no doubt that second language MDA delegates are disadvantaged by primarily their respective first languages and, on a secondary level, by low educational levels. When assessing the results of English native speakers' and the university attendees, the matrices indicate that English mother-tongue speakers achieved slightly higher results than did those delegates who had attended university.

6.5 Source Two : Observation Sessions
The observation sessions were all conducted by the researcher. She was introduced to programme delegates by the programme facilitator as someone who was interested in the language component of the programme. The use of a tape recorder was granted by the delegates. However, due to high noise levels in the recording environment the tape recordings were of inferior quality and could not be used. Twenty minutes was spent with each group. Complete anonymity was promised regarding the delegates' performance and actions during observation sessions. At no time did any delegate request further information on the researcher's presence in the programme or register any objection.

The observer moved unobtrusively from group to group during the sessions, and as far as could be ascertained, her presence had no negative effects on any delegate. She was welcomed by each group but after that her presence was ignored. On no occasion was her assistance requested in group discussions, nor was her opinion invited. She was careful to appear to pay no particular attention to any one delegate or group of delegates.

An initial observation session was used as a pilot project experiment to formulate the checklist used to assess delegates' communication behaviours. The checklist is attached as Appendix Ten.

Seven observation sessions of the problem-solving exercise known as The Case of the Unhealthy Hospital were conducted. The sessions involved eighty-eight delegates (The text used in this case study is attached as Appendix Eleven).

During this exercise delegates were divided by the facilitator into groups (of three to five persons). They were allowed one hour in which to read the text and to generate resolutions to the problems posed in the text through small group discussion. Group-
selected spokespersons then presented their respective group's suggested resolutions to the delegate group as a whole. Finally, the programme facilitator commented on the strengths and weakness of each group's suggested resolutions.

The communication behaviours selected for observation and analyses were classified into three categories:

- **Category A**: Successful Communicative Acts
- **Categories B and C**: Failed Communicative Acts

### 6.5.1 Category A: Successful Communicative Acts

These acts were achieved by:

(a) Giving information (to generate resolutions).
(b) Seeking information (to clarify issues and facilitate the eventual generation of resolutions).
(c) Initiating a proposal/suggestion.
(d) Disagreeing with a proposal and clarification of reasons for the disagreement.
(e) Giving support (to another delegate's proposed resolution).
(f) Seeking support (to strengthen one's own proposed resolution and win support for it).

These communicative acts were assessed to be successful because they directed the group's discussion towards the objective of the dialogue: the generation of resolutions through collective reflection and discourse, in a logical and positive manner.

Communicative acts such as *disagreement* and *seeking information* were perceived to be positive because they kept the group focused on the critical issues in the text: the identification of the hospital's problems, the separation of problems and their prioritisation, the interrelatedness of the problems, and the most feasible and practicable solutions to the problems with a view to ensuring the long term success of the hospital.

**Qualitative Discussion of Category A Behaviours**

**Examples of Category A Behaviours**

(1) *Initiating a proposal/suggestion:*
"I think that we should start off by concentrating on identifying the problems faced by the new hospital CEO. Only when that's done can we move on to solving the problems."

(2) Disagreement:

"I disagree with you. I believe that the issue here is not the recruitment of additional staff, but the training and development of existing staff."

It was noted that African mother-tongue speakers quite often repeated the last utterance of English speakers, preceded by the word "yes'. For example, "Yes, the issue here is training of existing staff." These behaviours were not classified as examples of giving support, because they appeared to be more a simple repetition of an utterance rather than verbal support. The delegates who repeated utterances in such a way were generally very quiet and seldom initiated an utterance which could be described as "truly their own utterance".

A problem which came out of Category A behaviours was the presence in a group of particularly strong English language communicators alongside particularly poor English communicators. Those individuals fluent in English set up "closed dialogues" (consisting of quick, fluent speech, complex lexical items, high use of passive forms, frequent use of embedded clauses, etc) which were very difficult for the poor communicators to break into. It cannot be assumed that these delegates had nothing to contribute to the discussion. It could have been that their inadequate English skills inhibited their performance in discussions.

The complex English which was used by some delegates may also have caused miscomprehension in some non-English speakers which hindered their ability to keep up with the group in higher thinking skills (in this case, problem-solving). See the discussion under the example "Inappropriate verbal response due to lack of comprehension" in Category B Behaviours, below.

It has to be remembered that those delegates with superior English reading skills and strategies were able to produce more Category A behaviours because they had a better grasp of the text. Their ability to abstract more meaning from the text immediately gave them an advantage over those delegates whose reading skills were poor and who thus had 1. not completed reading the information contained in the text, and 2. had not understood all the content which they had read.

The observation checklists revealed that the individuals belonging to the various language groups made the following average number of Category A utterances:
Each English L1 delegate made an average of 17.4 Category A utterances. Each Afrikaans L1 delegate made an average of 10.07 Category A utterances. Each African L1 delegate made an average of 5.72 Category A utterances.

Represented in a percentage form, the behaviours of the language groups are reflected as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDA Sample Group : Category A Behaviours : Successful Communication : %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English L1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure Fifteen MDA sample group of eighty-eight delegates : Category A type behaviours : Successful communication.

(The gender differences in the average number of utterances in the Category A behaviours are as follows:

- White English males: 20.6
- White Afrikaans males: 8.61
- Black males: 6.37
- Asian English males: 18.25
- White English females: 15.0
- White Afrikaans females: 13.0
- Black females: 4.0
- Asian English females: 18.0

With the exception of the Afrikaans mother-tongue group, these findings are in line with research reported by G.A. Cowley (1994) which shows that males occupy the dominant position in mixed-gender dialogues).

6.5.2 Category B : Failures in Communication

The failures were due to -

(a) Inability to take part adequately in group discussion due to inadequate reading skills.
(b) Incorrect identification and definition of problem due to inadequate reading skills.
(c) Inappropriate verbal response due to lack of reading/listening comprehension.
(d) Inability to convey intended meaning due to lack of communicative competence or first language interference.
These communicative acts were assessed to be failures which resulted in the confounding of the resolution-generation exercise. These acts hindered the delegates in their efforts to generate resolutions through the joint use of a mutually understood text and the discussion flowing from the text. This category of behaviours confused communication and forced discussions to simply clarify semantics which slowed down communication and the production of useful dialogue. Last but not least, these behaviours resulted in the inadequacies of some delegates' communication skills to be demonstrated to the rest of the group - with negative psychological impact on the delegate concerned.

Qualitative Discussion of Category B Behaviours

Examples of Category B Behaviours

1. Inability to take part properly in group discussion due to inadequate reading skills:

African mother-tongue speakers were often unable to complete the reading component of the exercise. (Some delegates failed to finish the text by about half a page, while others still had one and a half pages to read when the group discussions began). Not once during any observation session did such a delegate acknowledge that he had not completed the article nor request additional time to in which to read it. This resulted in these delegates being unable to contribute to the group discussion in any meaningful way.

In one small-group discussion, an African mother-tongue speaker mistook the short author biography for part of the textual narrative. He attempted to introduce the biography for discussion to solve the problems posed in the text.

Another problem which arose during the reading session was the lack of adequate writing skills. At the conclusion of the silent reading period the groups elected a scribe to note down the resolutions put forward by the group. When an African mother-tongue speaker was elected to this position, he often found it difficult to write quickly enough to meet the needs of his group. Orthographic, syntactic and semantic gaps in his English competencies caused delays in the group discussion and additional time had to be allowed for the scribe to get the required notes down on paper with the assistance of fellow delegates.

Although this does not imply that these delegates were in any way discourteous to the scribe, it is possible that the scribes in question found this exercise to be trying and embarrassing. It cannot be forgotten that some of the delegates nominated to attend the MDA programme have been identified as affirmative action candidates, an area
which is politically sensitive and which has caused some controversial discussion in the South African workplace.

(2) *Inappropriate verbal response due to lack of comprehension.*

An occurrence which was frequently observed in the sessions was an African mother-tongue speaker incorrectly mooting a particular part of the text for discussion only to be told by fellow-delegates that part of the text, and its problems, had already been discussed and resolved.

The observation checklists revealed that the individuals belonging to the various language groups made the following average number of Category B utterances:

- English L1 delegates made nil Category B utterances.
- Each Afrikaans L1 delegate made an average of 0.11 Category B utterances.
- Each African L1 delegate made an average of 2.50 Category B utterances.

Represented in a percentage form, the behaviours of the language groups are reflected as follows:

![Figure Sixteen. MDA sample group of eighty-eight delegates : Category B type behaviours : Failed communication.](image)

### 6.5.3 Category C : Failures in Communication

The failures were due to -

(a) Cultural interference caused by body language perceived by some delegates to be negative.

(b) Cultural interference through use of allusions, references, "in-language" inappropriate to a heterogeneous group.
Verbal cutting across another delegate's verbal production.
Code-switching/mixing and/or first language interference causing a communication barrier to one or more delegates in the group.

These communicative acts were assessed to be failures because they impeded the group in their search for productive discussion and resolutions. The cultural elements resulted in delegates displaying such behaviours to be "cut out of" the group or to cause others to be cut out. These types of negative actions wasted time which could have been more productively put to use by the group.

Qualitative Discussion of Category C Behaviours

Examples of Category C Behaviours

(1) Cultural interference caused by body language which was perceived by some delegates to be negative.

African mother-tongue speakers were inclined to turn their chairs slightly away from their groups, or use eye contact that, if assessed from a Western European position, would have been perceived as inappropriate. These delegates also spoke very quietly, a barrier to communication in the group which was sometimes exacerbated by strong first language accents. It is difficult to know if these behaviours were purely the result of culturally embedded social habits, or the result of inadequate English production and reception skills.

(2) Code-switching/mixing:

It was also observed that when Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers switched from English to Afrikaans (even if only briefly) no response was given to them by African mother-tongue speakers. This could have been caused by failure to understand the Afrikaans used.

Afrikaans and African L1 users presented some difficulties to their co-delegates because of heavy accents. Conversely, so did some English L1 users who spoke with a variety of markedly British accents. The observation checklists revealed that the individuals belonging to the various language groups made the following average number of Category C utterances:

- Each English L1 delegate made an average of 0.18 Category C utterances.
- Each Afrikaans L1 delegate made an average of 0.66 Category C utterances.
- Each African L1 delegate made an average of 1.18 Category C utterances.
Represented in a percentage form, the behaviours of the language groups are reflected as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDA Sample Group: Category C</th>
<th>Behaviours: Failed Communication: %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English L1 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African L1 58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afrikaans L1 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure Seventeen. MDA sample group of eighty-eight delegates: Category C type behaviours: Failed communication.

6.5.4 Observation of MDA Facilitators

During her observation of the problem-solving exercises, the researcher had limited opportunity to observe the communicative behaviours of the facilitators during the report-back sessions of the various discussion groups.

Generally these behaviours were of a good standard: facilitators showed excellent interpersonal skills in demonstrating a friendly, open approach to the delegates, they were encouraging and supportive of all delegates and this, combined with a positive and accepting manner, instilled a sense of self-confidence in delegates.

As regards the language employed by the facilitators, the following comments may be made:

Because the facilitators are well-educated, articulate persons, their levels of speech were often above the levels of the L2-C2 delegates. It was apparent that the facilitators were unaware that the syntactic structures and lexical items which they used were not always appropriate for all the delegates. For example, lengthy sentences comprising one or more adverbial/adjectival clauses, and containing phrases such as "evaluation of the delivery of this agreement" and "directional data system", were deemed to be inaccessible to many MDA delegates. The meaning of (key concept) words such as "alignment" and "leadership" also eluded many delegates for the entire three days duration of their attendance.
Much of the English spoken by the facilitators, which would be considered mundane by them, was of an idiomatic nature. Sentences such as "I have a quiet interest ...." and "I prefer to avoid the obvious ...." are not meaningful to English L2 users who unsuccessfully attempt to extract meaning from them by applying a literal translation.

Colloquial speech and slang (eg, "there are too many chiefs here"; "chill out"; references to film actors) also presented problems as these utterances were not understood by all cultural groups and caused some delegates to be "left out of the joke".

Facilitators did provide explanations and check understanding at times, but because so much material had to be covered in the three days, little time was available for such explanations. One facilitator was inclined to speak very fast; this person was not agreeable to having a stretch of speech recorded for purposes of analysis and so no real data can be provided.

6.6 Source Three : The MDA Manual
The training manual, which is primarily a take-away resource, but which is also often utilised during the programme, consists of over three hundred pages of Afrox-generated material and eleven articles sourced from various journals and text-books.

6.6.1 Barriers to Reading Comprehension
The examples taken from the manual are typical of the English used in the manual. Each example, which is followed by its respective Gunning Fog Index, shows some of the texts which make high use of complex lexical items and syntactic structures. A Gunning Fog Index of 12 is appropriate for Standard X and above.

Example One

Definition of Customer Drive

The desire and ability to add value by continuously striving for and achieving internal and external customer satisfaction, to attain competitive advantage and meet business objectives.
(Afrox, 1996 : 116)

Although this example lacks the one hundred word minimum for a true Gunning Fog Index it remains valid because: (1) If expanded to one hundred words it would yield a Gunning Fog Index of 27.3; (2) It is typical of the type of definition found in the MDA manual. It is inaccessible to most English L2 delegates.
Example Two

How is Performance Managed in Afrox

The performance management system, known as JPM in Afrox, is a tool to help you manage your staff so that you can deliver the outputs expected of you. You and your staff are responsible together. JPM is a joint responsibility.

JPM is a formal documented system to record the agreed outputs and performance standards and the evaluation of the delivery of this agreement. The system is described in the toolkit.

JPM is also an informal style of people management. The day-to-day management of your staff will be more effective if you practise the philosophy of joint performance management. This philosophy underlies the performance management system, and includes the people management values of Afrox.

JPM is a non-negotiable CSF for all managers and supervisors.

(Afrox, 1996: 183)

This passage has a Gunning Fog Index of 15.2.

Admittedly these units of text are quoted without the supporting context which appears in the manual, but it should be kept in mind that such context is as complex as the units shown. The first example has an entire page dedicated to it, rather in the style commonly used in overhead transparencies. The benefit to the reader in doing this might be to focus his attention on only one important concept and/or definition at a time. His chances of successfully reading, interpreting and storing important information might be increased if only one main point appears on a page.

This format is common to the manual. More than fifty percent of the pages show text which is in a large font, displayed in a balanced layout. These features facilitate reading and interpretation as the reader is not required to cope with a page filled with small, dense print containing a great deal of information, detail, facts, figures and opinions. However, the difficulties of complex vocabulary and syntactic structure, explained above, remain.

The organisation of the manual, utilising specific and logical patterns of organisation such as cause-effect and compare-contrast, would assist comprehension and recall compared to texts organised loosely around a collection of facts, randomly displayed.
There is a vast amount of English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes in the manual. Terms such as Trait approaches; Attitudinal approach; Laissez-Faire Style and Contingency approach are typical of a sub-language which is focuses on leadership theories, and access to the meaning of these phrases is extremely difficult for many MDA delegates. It is problematic for them to move through the various sections of the manual and to take in information, interpret it via the information held in their schemata and store the new information in appropriate schemata to retrieve it when called on to do so. It is probable that some delegates would find it extremely trying to link the content of the manual with their world/background knowledge. Fatigue would be a common problem for the English L2 user dealing with the manual during training or when using the manual independently as a source of reference after the completion of the programme.

The articles in the MDA manual are from various sources such as Fortune and the Harvard Business Review. These articles employ an extremely sophisticated level of English, in which specialist terminology abounds. The articles were not written with the English L2 user in mind as they offer scant assistance in the way of headings, short paragraphs, short sentences and simple vocabularies. The articles are also lengthy, generally about eight pages.

The article used in the problem-solving case study The Case of the Unhealthy Hospital, revealed a Gunning Fog Index of 12.2.

A Gunning Fog Index on the article Seeing the Future First (Hamel, 1994) showed an Index of over 16.

The manual also contains several complex diagrams which must be understood in conjunction with various units of textual structure if accurate, holistic interpretations are to be achieved. Overhead slides, videos and wall-charts also present information via other media; information which must all be integrated by the delegates.

Some of the graphics show excellent use of flow diagrams which facilitate understanding of accompanying text.

The manual is perceived as a good take-away resource because it is very comprehensive, much of it is well laid out and organised.

The texts generated by Afrox make good use of:

➢ Leaving much white space on a page to break up the density of the text.
➢ Using short topic or sub-topic words or phrases.
Putting boxes around text portions of special importance.

- Using bullets.
- Using various type faces and sizes to differentiate units of information.
- Using matrices, tables, etc, to highlight the attributes of one concept, show sequential steps in a procedure, and so on.

The manual serves as a good reference for English first language speakers and above average English second language speakers. However, from the point of view of intelligibility to some English second-language users its value is doubtful. The vast amount of information in the book presents problems for the English L2 user from the point of view of knowing what to absorb and what to discard. Because he is unable to understand all the content it is difficult for him to make decisions about what is important or unimportant in the absence of the facilitator.

6.7 Source Four: Facilitators' Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were developed for the facilitators. The first questionnaire was completed by two MDA facilitators who have conducted the programme several times during 1996. A third MDA facilitator questionnaire was completed by the new incumbent in the position of Training & Development Manager, Management Development. This person has excellent experience and credentials in South African business as a human resources development specialist in the field of management development. When he completed the questionnaire he had conducted only a part of one MDA programme. His input was requested on the agreement that he draw on his very limited experience of the Afrox MDA programme, and his extensive involvement in other management development programmes in his previous work experience. The inputs of this manager are shown in the responses as MDA Facilitator Three.

The second questionnaire (amended specifically for his use) was completed by the Training & Development Manager, Technical who is responsible for much of the technical training across the company. His input was invited because he works directly with many English second-language delegates.

Appendix Eight is the facilitators' questionnaire and Appendix Twelve contains the transcription of their responses.

The questionnaire was developed with the objective of getting from the facilitators an overall picture of the delegates' comprehension levels. Questions, therefore, focused on discovering those areas of the programme which caused the most reading and listening comprehension problems. For example: Which kinds of English is most problematic for the delegates? Is their background knowledge of MDA concepts adequate for the course and manual content?
Generally, the facilitators' responses showed that:

1. They strongly believe that African speakers, followed by speakers of Afrikaans, have significant difficulties comprehending the material presented in the MDA programme and in technical programmes.

2. Asked to cite examples of failures in comprehension, the facilitators provided examples such as (1) Delegates unable to follow the manual; (2) Delegates misreading case study assignments; (3) Delegates unable to participate in spontaneous classroom discussion; (4) Delegates unable to understand much of the vocabulary. This implies that delegates are unable to competently carry out whole sections of the programme, not merely one or two discrete tasks. Poor English skills and low educational levels were identified by the facilitators as the reasons for failures in communication.

3. English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes were named as causing comprehension problems. One facilitator stated that "any word that is not common" will cause problems. Again, poor English skills and low educational levels were identified as reasons for failures in communication.

4. Two facilitators perceived English L2 delegates as having insufficient background knowledge of MDA or other terminology when they attended training courses. One facilitator was of the opinion that because all delegates received the same pre-course reading, (for MDA), their understanding would be common to the training group and adequate. This is an erroneous assumption because L2-C2 readers cannot understand all the language used in the pre-reading.

5. All facilitators identified comprehension problems with MDA concepts.

6. All agreed that the content of the manual is too high for some delegates. One facilitator added that delegates need to be highly fluent and competent in English to get maximum output from the course.

7. Two facilitators' thought the quantity and quality of explanations in training manuals to be unsuitable or insufficient. One facilitator believed the MDA manual to provide enough explanations.

8. The MDA facilitators generally provide a few minutes per session in explaining concepts. The Technical Manager stated that considerable verbal and graphic explanations were required in technical courses.
9. As regards checking delegates' understanding, one facilitator responded that he waits for delegates to signal lack of comprehension, two facilitators check routinely and the fourth checks those issues which have previously caused problems.

10. When asked how facilitators should check understanding, one facilitator believed that constant checking is necessary, one believed that an open and supportive atmosphere would encourage delegates to feel free to ask questions. One advised that dialogue and question/answer sessions at the end of sessions was useful, and one advised that pre-tests should be conducted to test delegates' comprehension before programme attendance.

11. Facilitators indicated that few English L2 users volunteer that they have comprehension difficulties during programmes.

12. American, British and South African videos are used in training programmes. Afrikaans and African delegates experienced difficulties understanding terminology and rapid speech used on the videos. One facilitator felt that more South African videos should be used. The Technical Manager espoused the view that English, Afrikaans, Zulu or Sotho videos should be used where appropriate.

13. Two MDA facilitators have not been exposed to cross-cultural training. The third MDA facilitator and the Technical Manager have had some exposure.

6.8 The Results and Conclusions of the Research: Conclusive Evidence of Inadequate Comprehension Levels in MDA Delegates

The evidence drawn from the three sources in the triangulation process may be depicted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Theoretical Research Component</th>
<th>The Delegates' and Facilitators' Questionnaires</th>
<th>The Observation Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This component demonstrates how limited processing capacities, cultural interference and deficient educational and socio-economic backgrounds are severe causes of incomprehension in L2 and C2 delegates.</td>
<td>There is a majority percentage of L2-C2 delegates in the MDA programme, many of whom have an inadequate level of education and a poor socio-economic background. The results of the word test and the comments of the programme facilitators prove that these delegates are failing to understand the programme content to the extent that it negatively impacts on the realisation of the programme's objectives.</td>
<td>Analyses of communicative competencies and behaviours reveal highest levels of communicative incompetence in L2-C2 group of delegates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This may be graphically represented as follows:
L2 users:
1. Have a limited processing capacity.
2. Experience cultural interference.
3. Comprehension levels are exacerbated by poor educational levels and poor socio-economic backgrounds.

MDA population with:
1. A high percentage of L2 users.
2. A high percentage of delegates with inferior educational levels.
3. A high percentage of delegates with poor economic backgrounds.

Observation Sessions:
Population group as described.

The research proves that a heterogeneous MDA population with linguistic, cultural, educational and socio-economic barriers to adequate listening and reading comprehension cannot sufficiently understand programme content to optimally benefit from their attendance at the programme.

The theoretical component describes research which has proven that:
Delegates' and Facilitators' questionnaires reveal an:

The adverse impact of the above factors are proven through the:
1. Low test results.
2. Negative comments by facilitators regarding the reading and writing comprehension levels of the delegates.

The adverse impact of the above factors are proven through the:
1. Inadequate L2 and C2 communicative competencies demonstrated in verbal interactions which were caused by inadequate reading and listening comprehension levels.

The inadequate listening and reading comprehension levels of the L2-C2 delegates lead to:

A PARTIAL FAILURE TO REALISE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MDA PROGRAMME

Figure Eighteen Graphic representation of process of triangulation: Corroborative evidence of inadequate reading and listening comprehension levels of L2-C2 MDA delegates.
The results of the matrices show that mother-tongue is the greatest determinant of delegates' comprehension levels, followed by their standard of education.

The following chapter will summarise the findings of this research, not only those found in the training environment itself, but in the theoretical research. On the basis of these findings recommendations will be made which will add value to the Management Development in Afrox programme.
CHAPTER SEVEN
THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE COMPREHENSION OF MDA DELEGATES

7.0 The findings of this research, summarised below, are drawn from the areas of theoretical and the empirical research. The numbers shown in brackets after each finding refer to that section of the paper containing the discussion from which the finding was extracted.

7.1 The Findings of the Research

7.1.1 The most important and conspicuous finding of the research is that mother-tongue is the primary determinant of an MDA delegate’s level of comprehension of the verbal interaction and written material which comprises the programme. The research provides overwhelming evidence that those delegates who are not English first language speakers have the lowest comprehension levels. This group may be separated into two sub-groups, Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers and African mother-tongue speakers, the former group having significantly higher levels of comprehension than the latter.

Fifty-nine percent of the MDA sample group (one hundred delegates) used in this research were found to be English L2 users. The larger group of delegates (431 persons) showed an English L2 percentage of 60%. It is assumed that a majority percentage of English L2 users will be found in the entire MDA population (4.4; 4.5).

The word/phrase test used in the research revealed that English mother-tongue speakers achieved the highest marks, followed by secondly, Afrikaans speakers and thirdly, African speakers (6.4.3 - 6.4.3.3).

The secondary determinant of comprehension is education. The group with the highest levels of education demonstrated the highest comprehension levels. From an educational point of view delegates who had attended university achieved the highest marks, followed by those who had attended technikon/college. Delegates who had not proceeded beyond senior secondary school were placed third in this aspect of the test (6.4.3 - 6.4.3.3). (It could be noted that the information received via the delegates' questionnaires was not verified and therefore its validity might be open to question to some extent).
The observation sessions revealed that English native speakers were most successful in small group communicative competence, followed by secondly, Afrikaans speakers and thirdly, African language speakers (6.5).

The facilitators' questionnaire revealed that comprehension failures are common in some Afrikaans and many African mother-tongue speakers. Facilitators agree that comprehension barriers are the result of low English proficiencies and low educational levels. (6.7)

7.1.2 There is a set of complex factors present in the MDA programme which must be carefully considered when researching the language component of the programme. Any linguistic intervention to remedy the comprehension barriers which exist in the programme cannot be successfully planned and effectively implemented unless the inherent psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors in the situation are taken into account (2.0). Successful communication occurs only when all the psycho-sociolinguistic and experiential elements are appropriate to the communication encounter/situation (2.1; 2.2; 2.4).

7.1.3 The African mother-tongue delegates on the MDA programme are graduates of the former DET system of education. This inferior system did not equip pupils to be fully functional in the (Western-model) business world which is dominated by written and spoken English and a wide diversity of sophisticated scientific, technological and business concepts (4.1 - 4.2). Even those African mother-tongue speakers who have attended university experience difficulty in producing and comprehending the English which is used in the business world (4.4). These delegates had other negative factors present in their youth which militated against their educational and psycho-social formation (4.2 - 4.3.1).

7.1.4 The methodology of the programme is based on action learning which is heavily dependent on high level communication skills which do not fall within the communicative competencies of most of the non-English speaking delegates (5.1; 5.1.2).

7.1.5 South African companies are being increasingly challenged by the need to meet the demands of growing global competitiveness while simultaneously being forced to employ a workforce which was educated by a deficient education system. To solve some of these problems, corporate training is focusing on first line and senior management training to give these employees new knowledge, skills and attitudes (5.0; 5.1). However, the content of the MDA programme is contained in complex concepts and processes. The MDA
manual is an extremely lengthy resource, which contains linguistic devices which both help and hinder the comprehension of delegates (6.6). When developing training materials for L2 delegates, programme developers must be aware of the following facts.

7.1.6 Bottom-up and top-down processing must occur in reading and listening for successful comprehension to take place (Bottom-up processing 2.3 - 2.11; top-down processing 2.6 E; 2.7; 2.8; 2.11D; 2.4; 2.6; 3.0 - 3.3).

7.1.7 Because listening comprehension takes place in real-time, the L2 user must interpret intake rapidly. It remains in the listener's working memory only momentarily and results in decoding problems (2.5.1).

7.1.8 The memory of L2 users is not as efficient as L1 users due to the additional cognitive processing which is incurred by the necessary interpretation process (2.5.2.1; 2.5.2.2; 2.5.2.3). He has many other barriers to deal with such as colloquial speech and lack of redundancy (2.5.2.5), and phonemic interference and paralinguistics (2.6).

7.1.9 Prediction, which is a core interpretation skill, is problematic for the L2 listener (2.7), as are backward and forward inferencing (2.8).

7.1.10 English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes present particular reading and listening problems for the L2 user because of the complexity, variety, obscurity and inaccessibility of lexical items, terminology and grammatical structures (2.9 - 2.9.4). The manner in which lecturers handle ESP and EAP is critical to the learners' ability to comprehend such input (2.10; 5.2).

7.1.11 The six reading skills and knowledge areas which have been identified as critical to competent readers are not adequately presented by most L2 readers (2.11).

7.1.12 Linguists believe that language is the expressive dimension of culture and the primary channel of its transfer. As such it is an area which is particularly sensitive to cultural interference in cross-cultural communication encounters (3.0). L2 users are not only lacking in linguistic competence to decode and predict the linguistic features of texts, they are also 'culturally incompetent' (3.1). The L2 delegate will misunderstand a verbal or written passage because it includes concepts and cultural aspects which are non-existent in his native language and/or culture (3.3; 4.1).
7.2 The Recommendations of the Research

The recommendations based on the findings of this paper are courteously made in the hope that they will contribute to the overall effectiveness of the programme and facilitate the achievement of its objectives.

Discussion regarding the identification and selection of delegates to training programmes, and specifically the MDA programme, in no way means to imply ethnic considerations or racial prejudice. The suggested selection of delegates simply takes cognisance of the differences in the (1) Formal education; (2) Informal education; (3) The English communicative competencies which exist in South Africa because of, inter alia, historical separatist policies. These are the realities which training and development personnel must take into account when developing and implementing training programmes.

There is no point in devising a language learning programme which will benefit only those Afrox employees who attend MDA programmes. To improve competencies, learning potential and productivity levels in the company, a holistic language policy must be developed for the entire company.

Section A provides a backdrop to the recommendations by briefly describing the current situation in Afrox regarding literacy/language learning. Flowing from Section A, Section B provides recommendations which are made with the MDA programme specifically in mind.

SECTION A
A BACKDROP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

7.2.1 Afrox is presently formulating a policy document regarding the implementation of an adult basic education and training (ABET) programmes which focuses on literacy and numeracy training for lower level employees. To motivate the implementation of ABET in the company to executive management the owners of the initiative (the Training & Development Unit) must prove a causative link between improved literacy levels and higher profitability and potential earnings.

It is suggested that the Training Unit does this via two major avenues.

Demonstrate to executive management that:
1. Improved communicative competencies do result in improved profits in a number of areas, e.g., customer service, safety, quality, productivity and cost effective performance on the job, other training and development programmes, effective participation in meetings and forums, career pathing, succession planning and intra-company promotion. There are ways to show this link but such a discussion cannot be accommodated here.

2. An effective ABET programme which is conducted with the required consultative processes with all the stakeholders will strengthen the company's relationship with the government (and trade unions), and increase its position of power when tendering for State contracts. The company could consider becoming an acknowledged partner with the government in the RDP process through the implementation of a literacy/language policy which is seen as a conscious effort to uplift the black workforce. Afrox is involved in the Tekprep programme whereby the children of employees receive education and training in areas such as maths, science and lifeskills. The company could consider linking its language/literacy policy to its Tekprep activities to rationalise and strengthen its role in the RDP.

It is realised that these are not simple tasks. To commence the process it is suggested that Afrox invite a linguistic expert to the company to make a presentation to relevant training and development staff and management. The person would need to be experienced and knowledgeable in current academic/theoretical approaches to language and literacy teaching in this country, and should have wide experience in the implementation of suitable programmes into the South African workplace. He must be familiar with current trends in the South African training/working environment. For example, the policies and operations of the National Qualifications Framework, the current thinking of the government regarding workplace ABET, affirmative action, the urgent need for South African companies to increase productivity and competiveness and the complexities of developing a literacy and language policy for a heterogeneous group of employees.

The company should consider the formulation of a company-wide language and literacy policy which takes into account various levels of employees, not only the lower levels. For example, the functional communicative competencies of affirmative action candidates should be taken into account when the identification of such candidates is made to ensure that the necessary language training programmes are in place for their benefit. It is
pointless to identify such an affirmative action candidate and send him on a three-day MDA programme where he might well fail to understand fifty percent of the programme content.

Excellent research and consequent planning which is effected before the implementation of a literacy/language policy will pay handsome dividends later in the form of monies invested wisely and choice of correct delegates, facilitators, materials, methodologies, etc.

It would be appropriate for the linguistic expert to introduce Afrox to other companies where effective language and literacy learning programmes have been implemented with successful results.

**Examples of the issues which must be examined are:**

1. A study of costs and benefits.

2. Consultation with managers, facilitators and learners in existing Afrox literacy classes to identify the strengths and weaknesses of these groups. Deployment of internal and/or external facilitators. Selection, training and reward for programme facilitators.

3. Planning for:
   - Staffing the business.
   - The growth and development of the business.
   - The growth and development of human resources.
   - Replacement and restaffing.
   - Levelling off and disengagement (projects, locations, etc).
   - The link between learning and grading, affirmative action, etc.

4. The operation of ABET and language programmes to show Afrox as an active role-player in Reconstruction and Development Programme.

5. Methodologies, eg, an eclectic approach of communicative language teaching balanced with structural components.
   - Communicative competence objectives are formulated in communicative terms. L2 ability is specified as **skill** rather than **knowledge**, and the learner must learn how to **mean**.
   - An outcomes-based approach should be considered with its link to the RDP and the National Qualifications Framework. An outcomes based curriculum concentrates on what the language learner needs.
to do in the workplace and the communicative competencies he requires to do it. It emphasises how learning is utilised and it describes the results of the learning process.

➢ Use of external, commercial packages or use of internal, customised programme design.

6. Core tutorials and specific, job-related tutorials.

7. The development of:
   ➢ A team inventory.
   ➢ A technical study.

8. Present skills' assessments; aim to build on existing skills.

9. How programmes will be implemented, eg, formal classes and/or alternatives.

10. Entry points/levels and the correct identification of learners as regards their mother-tongues, cultural groups and educational levels.

11. Time frames of programmes. Ensure all stakeholders have a realistic understanding of time required for successful literacy and language learning.

12. Paid education and training leave and time sacrificed by employer and employees for lessons.

13. Constraints in workplace learning, eg, productivity pressure.

14. Barriers to skills' transfer, eg, learners failure to perceive possible benefits of the learning.

15. Evaluation, feedback and progress reports.

16. Course and programme evaluation.

7.2.2 Bridging programmes cannot on their own compensate for a disadvantaged background and education. Bridging education needs to be part of a multifaceted programme which includes other components such as career planning. This paper cannot accommodate a comprehensive discussion of bridging programmes but they should be considered, particularly as a means
for dealing with English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes.

The following elements, among others, could be considered:

- The curriculum could include theoretical inputs, application and integration of theory with practice and the development of academic and personal skills.
- Delegates could be given glossaries of relevant company terminology as it applies to their work function, e.g., the technical terminology required by a plant supervisor or a charge sister.
- Interactive language skills training could form the largest component of the programme. Delegates would learn how to communicate assertively, questioning techniques or handling conflict.
- Understanding cultural diversity in the workplace and training arena. Culturally diverse programmes are a reflection of the real working-world. Culturally diverse delegate groups can enrich the learning experience for all participants.
- Modules which include the overt teaching of learning skills such as speed reading, could also include introductions to problem-solving and decision-making. Language learning would then occur as a covert factor in the module.
- Bridging programmes can be interspersed with time spent in the work environment. This allows quicker internalisation of learning as the benefits of the learning would be made clear to the delegate and he is afforded the opportunity to practise new skills.

7.2.3 An exercise to modify to appropriate levels all existing training materials (where the need to modify exists) could be undertaken to ensure that maximum comprehension is achieved in these programmes and they deliver their desired outputs.

7.2.4 Facilitators' verbal input, the contents of the manual and other materials such as wall charts and videos would have to be modified to make the programme suitable for lower level delegates.
SECTION B
RECOMMENDATIONS AIMED SPECIFICALLY AT THE MDA PROGRAMME

7.2.5 Most importantly, the identification of delegates for attendance to management development programmes must take the mother-tongues, educational and socio-economic backgrounds of the delegates into account.

When considering the comprehension levels of nominees, mother-tongue should be remembered to be the primary determinant in this area, followed by education levels.

However, by no means should such identification processes investigate the backgrounds of only black nominees. There are white delegates on the MDA programme who have inadequate English communication skills which hinder their learning and development.

7.2.6 While existing psychometric assessments used by Afrox measure potential, it is important to ascertain what levels of language skills management development candidates have now. Candidates must possess the array of linguistic skills (including cognitive academic language proficiencies) necessary to allow them to benefit fully from the MDA programme. Pre-programme assessments should include questions about levels and places of education, as well as questions to ascertain the nominees' first languages and current level of English competencies.

7.2.7 Consideration could be given to the inclusion of an appropriate language/numeracy test in pre-course assessments. Investigation into a suitable instrument could be undertaken.

7.2.8 MDA programme developers and facilitators should be:

➢ Consulted regarding the linguistic and educational difficulties which exist in the programme as they have a unique insight in the situation. Their input should form part of any exercise to improve the communication which occurs in the programme.

➢ Given a clear understanding of how second-language speakers negotiate meaning and understanding and why they have comprehension difficulties. Facilitators and developers, with appropriate assistance from a linguistic specialist, will then be able redefine and reformulate their written and verbal programme material.
Facilitators also need to discuss with training and development staff which sections of the programme are not covered in the three days. Reduction of the programme may be to its benefit.

Exposed to cross-cultural training (for facilitators) for cultural and language issues. This issue is an important part of the integration process of black managers into corporate life and should be linked to the company's affirmative action policy.

7.2.9 Programme developers and facilitators must:

Analyse the delegate group by considering their:

- Language group.
- Educational level.
- Actual intelligence levels.
- Cultural backgrounds.
- Knowledge and skills.
- Positions in the company.
- Size of group.
- Income.
- Status in community.
- Ages.

Analyse the programme content by considering the following:

- Will the message be listened to or be read by the delegates?
- What do the delegates already know about the concepts and principles of MDA?
- What is their attitude towards training programmes in Afrox?
- What is their attitude to issues such as management development, affirmative action?
- Under what conditions do the delegates work?
- What will the delegates' objectives be when they receive the message of MDA? Will they return to the workplace motivated and with the necessary skills and knowledge?

Analyse the occasion by considering:

- The facilities.
The context of the programme within the company's training and development strategic plans.

The time allowed.

The facilitators should analyse their own situation by considering:

- Their knowledge (of management development in South Africa in general, and in Afrox in particular).
- Their feelings and attitudes about the programme and its contents.
- Their purpose (their role in helping to realise the programme's objectives).

7.2.10 When a good understanding of the gap between management development delegates' actual English levels and required levels has been ascertained, language programmes can be developed and implemented which would give MDA nominees the necessary language skills before they attend the MDA programme.

7.2.11 Immediate changes should be made to the programme regarding written and verbal input. Programme developers and facilitators, once they have a thorough understanding of why L2 delegates are experiencing comprehension difficulties must be assisted, by a language specialist, to adjust the levels of their verbal input and interaction. When the programme developers and facilitators have answered the above they will be able to apply the process shown in Figure 19: The Clarification of a Facilitators' Goals and Methods when Planning an Approach to an MDA Programme (Appendix 14).

7.2.12 The manual could be improved by using some of the following guidelines. (Many publications on business writing and speaking are available, eg, Adler, Elmhorst (1996), Fielding (1993) - only a few guidelines are presented here due to space constraints).

- Pay attention to motivating delegates by pointing out advantages to them of understanding manual content.
- Break large amounts of information into "chunks", label each chunk by naming it, and ensure that the names of all the chunks are presented first, followed by a breakdown of each chunk in sequence.
- State objectives overtly, (in behavioural terms), in terms of the skills the delegates will gain.
- Use illustrations combined with captions or explanations to aid comprehension.
Consider the use of cartoons to add humour and relevance to the MDA text.

- Link information being taught to what delegates already know.
- Use explanations which use already known concepts and vocabulary as building blocks.
- Use at least two examples of each concept or idea to show the variety of forms the concept can take.
- Consider the application of fundamental literary theory such as Structuralism to assist delegates to handle the narratives in the manual. For example, The Case of the Unhealthy Hospital.

7.2.13 Figure 19 (Appendix Fourteen) shows the clarification of programme developers' and facilitators goals and methods which must be considered prior to commencement of development. Figure Twenty (Appendix Fifteen) reflects the components which must be taken into account when considering the correct level and register of language to use in an MDA programme.

7.2.14 Retain the present action learning methodology. Amendments to the language component of the programme will facilitate the utilisation of this methodology.

7.3 Conclusion

This paper investigated the listening and reading comprehension levels of delegates to the Management Development in Afrox training programme. The comprehension levels of second language and second culture delegates were found to be deficient to the extent that the desired outcomes of the programme were adversely impacted upon. The comprehension inadequacies were proved to be primarily in English second language delegates. Where the inadequacies were present, low educational levels and poor socio-economic backgrounds exacerbated linguistic barriers to comprehension. Having a mother-tongue other than English is the major barrier to listening and reading incomprehension in MDA delegates, followed by poor educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

The investigation also found that there is a set of complex factors present in the MDA programme which must be carefully considered when planning any interventions regarding the improvement of comprehension levels. Based on the findings of the research, various recommendations were made to improve comprehension levels and enhance the programme's chances of fulfilling its potential.
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RHYTHM IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:
THE ROLE OF STRESSED AND UNSTRESSED SYLLABLES

Brown (1990 : 44 - 45) describes the rhythmic beat of English as consisting of stressed syllables, punctuated by unstressed syllables which are compressed as much as possible to allow the next stressed syllable to come on the regular beat. Brown illustrates this in the following example in which each stressed syllable is underlined:

The electricity board stated that they would be obliged to consider the reintroduction of power cuts.

This sentence was read by a radio news reader in the manner shown above. The news reader spoke with "received pronunciation", widely accepted as a standard form of English. The sentence clearly indicates that stressed syllables are not divided by an equal number of unstressed syllables. This can be shown by representing the stressed syllables by capital As, and the unstressed syllables by small as:

aaaAaaAaaaaAaaAaaAaaaAAaaAAaaAaA

which shows a fairly strong Aaa pattern. This, according to Brown, is the "dominant foot" set up by the individual speaker.

When there is a sequence of two stressed syllables, of AA as in board sta(ted), the first of the A syllables will be stretched in time, not, so that it takes up as much time as Ass, but still, longer than it would have been if it had been immediately followed by an unstressed syllable. The sequence of six a syllables are then 'squashed' closely together in time so that they become what Brown calls "an acoustic blur".

From the above it can be seen why English second language listeners must become au fait with the rhythm of the target language if they are to be able to differentiate sounds occurring in rhythm in such a way as to be able to extract the intended meaning.
## APPENDIX TWO: RESPONSES TO DELEGATES' QUESTIONNAIRES: 11 APRIL 1996

**PLEASE NOTE THAT DELEGATES' RESPONSES HAVE BEEN TRANSCRIBED ALMOST VERBATIM IN ORDER TO INDICATE SOME NOTION OF THEIR WRITING COMPETENCIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QST</th>
<th>DEL 1</th>
<th>DEL 2</th>
<th>DEL 3</th>
<th>DEL 4</th>
<th>DEL 5</th>
<th>DEL 6</th>
<th>DEL 7</th>
<th>DEL 8</th>
<th>DEL 9</th>
<th>DEL 10</th>
<th>DEL 11</th>
<th>DEL 12</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>Higher Tech</td>
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<td>Benoni</td>
<td>HELPEKAAAR</td>
<td>Braamfontein</td>
<td>Gen Hertzog</td>
<td>Hoër Witbank</td>
<td>Etafthwa High</td>
<td>Wattville</td>
<td>Liverpool Sec Benoni</td>
<td>Orlando W High</td>
<td>Soweto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Highest Std</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
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<td>5. Tertiary</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>6. Institution</td>
<td>Potch Uni Vaal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wits Uni</td>
<td>Jhb Tech</td>
<td>Pta &amp; Potch</td>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>Damelin</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Damelin</td>
<td>University of the North</td>
<td>University</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>BSc MBA</td>
<td>Sales &amp; Marketing Management</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>BA Curr</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Reg Nursing Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Mother Tongue</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Tswana</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Sotho/Zulu</td>
<td>Tswana</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 2nd/3rd Language</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>English</td>
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<td>10. 1st Family Literacy</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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<td>10. 2. Frequency</td>
<td>Every night</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Weekly basis</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>When there was</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. MDA English Diff</td>
<td>Never at all</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>No problem</td>
<td>Easy to understand</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>difficult</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>+2 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Other English Diff</td>
<td>Never. Always</td>
<td>Yes, some programme s</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y, on one programme</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. MDA Language Preference</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Any language that I can understand</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Why</td>
<td>Reads, writes in English 80% of the time</td>
<td>It was well explained and presented</td>
<td>Better to understand</td>
<td>A universal language</td>
<td>It is understood in most business environments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Spoken by most delegates</td>
<td>Its been good</td>
<td>It is the language I best understand</td>
<td>Official business language SA</td>
<td>You feel free to use own lang</td>
<td>My environment work in is Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

137
| QST                | DEL 1                  | DEL 2                  | DEL 3                  | DEL 4                  | DEL 5                  | DEL 6                  | DEL 7                  | DEL 8                  | DEL 9                  | DEL 10                 | DEL 11                 | DEL 12                 | DEL 13                 | DEL 14                 |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Gender          | M                      | M                      | M                      | M                      | M                      | M                      | M                      | M                      | M                      | M                      | M                      | M                      | F                      |
| 2. Age             | No response            | 30.10.96 (sec)         | 51                     | 51                     | 50                     | 47                     | 35                     | 32                     | 31                     | 29                     | 27                     | 26                     | 23                     | 50                     |
| 4. Highest Std     | 10                     | 10                     | NTC III                | Cambridge "O" Levels   | 10                     | Matric                 | 6                      | 10                     | NTS II                 | Metric                 | Exemption              | 10                     | 10                     | Metric                 | 8                      |
| 5. Tertiary        | Y                      | Y                      | N                      | N                      | Y                      | N                      | No response            | N                      | As above               | Y                      | N                      | Y                      | Y                      | Y                      | Nursing Training |
| 6. Institution     | Potch University       | RAU                    | -                      | -                      | Transport              | -                      | No response            | -                      | Engineering            | -                      | University Tech        | -                      | University Tech        | Tech College Pretoria |
| 7. Course          | B Comm Transport       | Economic               | -                      | -                      | Transport              | -                      | No response            | -                      | English                | -                      | Nat Dip-Corp Data      | B Comm Hons            | Chemical Engineering   | General Nursing |
| 8. Mother Tongue   | Afrikaans              | Zulu                   | Afrikaans              | Afrikaans              | English                | Afrikaans              | N Sotho                | Venda                  | English                | Afrikaans              | English                | Afrikaans              | English                | Afrikaans              |
| 9. 2nd/3rd Language| English                | Sotho                  | English                | Afrikaans              | English and Afrikaans  | English                | Afrikaans              | English                | Afrikaans              | English                | Afrikaans              | English                | Afrikaans              |
| 10. 1st/2nd Family| Y                      | N                      | Y                      | Y                      | Y                      | No response            | No response            | Y                      | No response            | Y                      | N                      | Y                      | Y                      | Y                      | |
| 11. Frequency      | Once a night           | -                      | Weekly                 | Weekly                 | Every night f          | 2nd night              | No response            | 2 times/wkly           | No                     | 2/wkly                 | N/A                    | Every 2 wks             | Daily                  | Nightly                |
| 12. MDA Diff       | N                      | N                      | N                      | Not at all             | N                      | N                      | Not at all             | N                      | N                      | No, not at all         | N                      | Not at all             | No, well explained     | No, well done          |
| 13. MDA Diff       | N                      | N                      | English                | N                      | N                      | N                      | Not at all             | N                      | Heavy sentences/      | N                      | N                      | No, not at all         | Not at all             | No, well done          |
| 14. Why            | The most understood    | -                      | Everybody understands | The most easy to        | Everybody understands  | The most easy to        | The most easy to        | The most easy to        | Most easy to           | Understand             | Understand             | Understand             | The best               | Understand             |
|                    | language               |                        | language               | understand            | language               | understand            | understand            | language               | language              | understand            | language              | language              | Home language          | Home language          |

**RESPONSES TO DELEGATES' QUESTIONNAIRES : 24 APRIL 1998**
### RESPONSES TO DELEGATES' QUESTIONNAIRES: 09 MAY 1986

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<td>Daily story telling values &amp; norms</td>
<td>Lot was said to me about culture etc</td>
<td>Stories by G/parents</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>Once weekly</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Once monthly</td>
<td>Every evening</td>
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<td>Most understood it</td>
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<td>Die Burger Roodepoort</td>
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<td>Shallcross High Natal</td>
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<td>Damelin</td>
<td>Wits Tech</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Production Management</td>
<td>Londonderry Tech College</td>
<td>Nursing College</td>
<td>Tech OFS</td>
<td>HF Verwoerd Nursing College &amp; Baragwanath</td>
<td>UNISA</td>
<td>University of Natal Damelin</td>
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<td>Project management</td>
<td>Business Management</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Pro management</td>
<td>City &amp; Guilds Tech (T2)</td>
<td>General Nursing &amp; Midwifery</td>
<td>Food Service Management</td>
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<td>B Juris (incomplete)</td>
<td>B Curr Dip in HR</td>
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<td>A lot</td>
<td>Probably once a week</td>
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<td>Not often</td>
<td>Easy to get along with</td>
<td>Hardly ever</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
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<td>Lot of times - because I'm Afrikaans</td>
<td>Hardly</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
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<td>As it is my home language</td>
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**Note:** The table represents responses to a questionnaire about language preferences and proficiency. The data includes details such as gender, age, school attended, language proficiency, and frequency of use. The responses are categorized under questions such as highest, second, third, fourth, and fifth languages, and include specific details about home language, work language, and other languages spoken. The table also includes notes on frequency of use (once a week, once a month, rarely, never), and additional comments (e.g., "Parents did not read to me.", "Once a week or less.", "Once a module.").
APPENDIX THREE

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT IN AFROX TRAINING PROGRAMME: 1996

DELEGATES' QUESTIONNAIRE

Date:................. Facilitator:............... Venue:............... 

1. Gender

2. Date of Birth

3. What is the name of the last High School / Secondary School which you attended? Also provide the area.

4. What was the highest standard that you passed at school?

5. Did you attend any tertiary educational institution?

6. If yes, please state which institution, for example, Technikon SA, Unisa.

7. What course did you study at the institution?

8. What language do you speak most of the time at home:

9. What is/are your second and third languages?

10. Reading at home

10.1. Did your parents, or grandparents, or older brothers or sisters read to you when you were a child?

10.2. If yes, how often did they read to you?

   Please give some idea of how often by stating, for example, every day, once a week, once a month, hardly ever, etc.
11. How often do you find the English used in this MDA programme difficult to understand? 
   Please give some idea of how often by stating, for example, hardly ever, once a module, etc.

12. If you have been to other Afrox training programmes, have you found the English difficult to understand at times? 
   Please give some idea of how often by stating, for example, hardly ever, two or three times a day, or, the English used is too difficult altogether.

13. If you could choose, which language would you like the MDA programme to be in?

14. Why?

15. Please write down what you think these words and phrases mean within the context of MDA, that is, what you understand these words and phrases to mean when used in connection with MDA:
   ➢ Competency
   ➢ Alignment
   ➢ Technology leadership
   ➢ Long term financial returns that meet shareholder expectations
   ➢ Critical Success Factor

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Your assistance is valued.
APPENDIX FOUR

PROCESS OF THE FORMAL MDA COURSE

The process of the formal MDA course is as follows:

1. Pre-course assessments.

2. Pre-course readings.

3. ➢ Formal MDA programme.
   ➢ Generic Management Competencies.
   ➢ Personal Career Planning Counselling Interview.
   ➢ Business Project/Case Studies.

4. Personal Development Plan.

5. Application Project (each individual is required to do a project specific to their jobs in which they can apply the skills learned).

6. Assessment of competence by the line manager.

The formal MDA course has been based on the Management Competencies Model (see Appendix Nine).
APPENDIX FIVE

OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS OF THE MDA PROGRAMME

From a Company Perspective:
Establish a shared meaning of the concepts of management and leadership as applied in practice in Afrox by:
➢ Defining the standards of management in Afrox.
➢ Communicating the values and the standards of management to all managers and supervisors in Afrox.
➢ Developing the competency of managers and supervisors to meet the requirements of the company.
➢ To provide a reflection of how the Managing Director wants to run the company.

From a Line Manager Perspective:
➢ Provide a resource and a framework for facilitating the development of subordinates (managers and supervisors).
➢ Be a reference for planning the developmental activities for subordinates.
➢ Be a measure for determining the relative competence of subordinates.

From a Delegate's Perspective:
➢ Inform managers of what the company values are in running the business.
➢ Provide a resource to aid personal competency development.
➢ Be an efficient and effective process for optimising competency development.
➢ Be a positive developmental experience.
➢ Give certification.
APPENDIX SIX

JUNIOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT IN AFROX (MDA) COURSE OUTLINE

MDA Programme Content

Day 1: Objectives of the MDA Process
- Introduction.
- Competency Model and Definitions.
- Johari's Window.
- Strategic Direction of Afrox
- Operational Strategy of Afrox
- The Role of the Supervisor - In-Basket Exercise, (not compulsory).
- Problem Solving Competency.
- Learning Diary.

Day 2: People Leadership/Management
- Management styles.
- Motivation.
- Performance management in Afrox.
- Managing teams.
- Managing diversity.
- Interpersonal Skills.
- Basic communication skills.
- Managing anger.
- Learning Diary.

Day 3: Customer Focus Competency
- Case Study.
- Personal Development Plan.
- Application Project.
- Course Evaluation.
APPENDIX SEVEN

LOSING THE MESSAGE IN AN ACTION LEARNING BASED TRAINING PROGRAMME

➢ A has a feeling or an idea he wishes to express.

➢ A finds words which may or may not accurately reflect his idea.

➢ A transmits his message.

➢ B receives physical sounds and visual signals and decodes them.

➢ B relates the message to his own feelings and ideas (schemata), may make judgements, create arguments, perhaps while A is still speaking, and may miss part of the message.

➢ At this point B may decode incorrectly, for all sorts of reasons.
  ➢ Lack of understanding.
  ➢ Parts of the message are lost.
  ➢ Confusion caused by conflict between verbal and non-verbal information.
  ➢ Having a negative or positive “fix”.

➢ By the word “fix” is meant the tendency for selective listening - hearing only what we want to hear. We often evaluate the speaker as he is speaking, eg, when a training facilitator who believes in a Western style of management attempts to persuade a delegate who believes in African style management to supervise his subordinates according to the Western style.

(Based on McGill and Beaty, 1992).
MDA FACILITATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Please respond to as many questions as you can. It is hoped that this questionnaire will prove helpful to programme facilitators and delegates.

1. Are you of the opinion that some delegates fail to understand sections of the MDA programme because of low levels of English proficiency?

2. Rate two language groups who have comprehension problems because of lack of English skills. Rate the group who has the most problems, followed by the group who has the next greatest number of problems, eg, African mother-tongue speakers, followed by Coloured Afrikaans speakers.

3. Do delegates who are not mother-tongue speakers of English have more difficulty in reading, or in listening comprehension?

4. Give two examples of failures in comprehension. For example, failure to carry out tasks in a problem solving exercise, lack of interaction with other delegates, inappropriate responses, verbal or physical. Home reports that Afro "transferees" (those transferring from the first language and culture environment to a second language and culture environment) have great difficulty in successfully making an effective transfer which allows them to be fully functional in the second environment. You may include barriers to communication caused by cultural differences if you so wish.

5. Which part/s of the programme appear to cause the most difficulties from a language point of view? For example, explanations of what is required from delegates in the problem solving exercise.

6. What kinds of English seem to cause the most difficulties, eg, the Afrox terminology - terms such as Critical Success Factors; English for Specific Purposes - words such as technological leadership?

7. Do you think that speakers of languages other than English have sufficient background knowledge and understanding of MDA terminology when they come to MDA? Motivate your answer.
8. Do you think that speakers of languages other than English have sufficient background knowledge and understanding of MDA concepts when they come to MDA? Motivate your answer.

9. What is your opinion of the language level in the manual, in both the Afrox generated documents, and the documents gleaned from other sources, eg, The Case of the Unhealthy Hospital?

10. Why do you believe that the MDA manual does/does not provide enough explanations of terminology and concepts to allow delegates to derive adequate meaning from the manual to make it a useful “take-away” resource for delegates to refer to on their own after the course? In other words, comment on the use of contextualisation in the MDA manual? (Please keep in mind that on some courses not every module is covered during the three-day programme and delegates take away sections in the manual which they have not been guided through by the Facilitator)

11. How much explanation about language and concepts do you find it necessary to provide:

11.1 Verbally?

11.2 Graphically?

12. Do you check delegates' understanding routinely, or do you wait to be prompted to do so by a delegate's signalling of lack of comprehension?

13. How in the programme should facilitators check delegates' understanding?

14. Do any delegates acknowledge that they have difficulties in following all the English in the course? And if so, to which language group/s do these delegates belong? (It is sufficient to stipulate English, Afrikaans or "black language").

15. Have you received any specialised training in cross-cultural training, or do you have previous experience of it? If so, please describe.

16. What is your opinion of the videos used in the programme from a language and cultural point of view?
16.1 Is the language in the videos too fast for ANY delegates? (If so, please specify which group/s experience difficulties in this regard).

16.2 Are American or British videos used? (Please specify American or British)

16.3 Are any South African videos used, specifically those which show heterogeneous groups in the workplace?

16.4 If South African videos are used, do they portray stereotyped characters in various roles, e.g., a white male manager and a female and/or black subordinate?

16.5 Any other comments on various media used in MDA - for example, videos, wall charts, overhead transparencies, etc. For example, how would you like to see them changed to make it easier for non-English speaking delegates to understand them?

17. Any other observations which you might like to add:

*Your assistance in the completion of this questionnaire is valued a great deal. Thank you for the time and the thought which you have so generously given.*
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMPLETION BY TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER TECHNICAL TRAINING

Please respond to as many questions as you can. It is hoped that this questionnaire will prove helpful to programme facilitators and delegates.

1. Are you of the opinion that some delegates fail to understand sections of technical training programme because of low levels of English proficiency?

2. Rate two language groups who have comprehension problems because of lack of English skills. Rate the group who has the most problems, followed by the group who has the next greatest number of problems, eg, African mother-tongue speakers, followed by Afrikaans speakers.

3. Do delegates who are not mother-tongue speakers of English have more difficulty in reading, or in listening comprehension?

4. Give two examples of failures in comprehension. For example, failure to carry out tasks in a problem solving exercise, lack of interaction with other delegates, inappropriate responses, verbal or physical. Home reports that Afro "transferees" (those transferring from the first language and culture environment to a second language and culture environment) have great difficulty in successfully making an effective transfer which allows them to be fully functional in the second environment. You may include barriers to communication caused by cultural differences if you so wish.

5. Which part/s of the programme appear to cause the most difficulties from a language point of view? For example, explanations of what is required from delegates in the problem solving exercise.

6. What kinds of English seem to cause the most difficulties, eg, the Afrox terminology - terms such as Critical Success Factors; English for Specific Purposes - words such as technological leadership?

7. Do you think that speakers of languages other than English have sufficient background knowledge and understanding of technical terminology when they come to technical training programmes? Motivate your answer.
8. Do you think that speakers of languages other than English have sufficient background knowledge and understanding of technical concepts when they come to technical training programmes? Motivate your answer.

9. What is your opinion of the language level in the technical training manuals?

10. Do you believe that technical training manuals do/do not provide enough explanations of terminology and concepts to allow delegates to derive adequate meaning from the manual to make them a useful "take-away" resource for delegates to refer to on their own after the course?

11. How much explanation about language and concepts do you find it necessary to provide during training programmes:

11.1 Verbally?

11.2 Graphically?

12. Do you check delegates' understanding routinely, or do you wait to be prompted to do so by a delegate's signalling of lack of comprehension?

13. How in the programme should facilitators check delegates' understanding?

14. Do any delegates acknowledge that they have difficulties in following all the English in the course? And if so, to which language group/s do these delegates belong? (It is sufficient to stipulate English, Afrikaans or "African language").

15. Have you received any specialised training in cross-cultural training, or do you have previous experience of it? If so, please describe.
16. What is your opinion of the videos used in the programme from a language and cultural point of view?

16.1 Is the language in the videos too fast for ANY delegates? (If so, please specify which group/s experience difficulties in this regard).

16.2 Are American or British videos used? (Please specify American or British)

16.3 Are any South African videos used, specifically those which show heterogeneous groups in the workplace?

16.4 If South African videos are used, do they portray stereotyped characters in various roles, eg, a white male manager and a female and/or black subordinate?

16.5 Any other comments on various media used in your training programmes - for example, videos, wall charts, overhead transparencies, etc. For example, how would you like to see them changed to make it easier for non-English speaking delegates to understand them?

17. Any other observations which you might like to add:

Your assistance in the completion of this questionnaire is valued a great deal. Thank you for the time and the thought which you have so generously given.
The process of the formal MDA course is based on this model.
(See Appendix Four)
### APPENDIX TEN

**MDA PROGRAMME: RESULTS OF OBSERVATION SESSION (DATE) (VENUE) GROUP CONSISTING OF (DESCRIPTION OF DELEGATES PER LANGUAGE GROUP) TIME TWENTY MINUTES**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEHAVIOUR</th>
<th>WEM</th>
<th>WEF</th>
<th>WAM</th>
<th>WAF</th>
<th>BM</th>
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<td>2. Seeking information</td>
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<td>3. Giving support</td>
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<td>5. Initiating a suggestion/proposal</td>
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<td>6. Disagreeing with a suggestion/proposal</td>
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<td>CATEGORY B</td>
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<td>7. Inability to properly take part in discussion due to lack of reading comprehension</td>
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<td>8. Inability to convey intended meaning due to lack of communicative competence or L1 interference</td>
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<td>9. Inappropriate verbal response due to lack of reading/listening comprehension</td>
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<td>10. Incorrect identification and/or definition of problem due to lack of reading/listening comprehension</td>
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<td>11. Body language indicating reluctance to fully participate in group discussion</td>
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<td>12. Cultural interference</td>
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<td>13. Verbal cutting across another's speech</td>
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<td>14. Use of code-switching/mixing</td>
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<td>15. General Comments</td>
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**Checklist showing race and gender was devised because it was initially thought that there might be some difference in comprehension levels of Asian and white delegates, and because the research wished to give some attention to the matter of differences in verbal dominance between the genders.**
APPENDIX ELEVEN

THE CASE OF THE UNHEALTHY HOSPITAL

The text used in the problem-solving modules of the MDA programme.
Rising costs; stagnant revenues; hostile competition; internal dissension. The CEO's task: balance short-term cuts with long-term vision.

The Case of the Unhealthy Hospital

by Anthony R. Kovner

Bruce Reid, Blake Memorial Hospital's new CEO, rubbed his eyes and looked again at the 1992 budget worksheet. The more he played with the figures, the more pessimistic he became. Blake Memorial's financial health was not good; it suffered from rising costs, static revenue, and declining quality of care. When the board hired Reid six months ago, the mandate had been clear: improve the quality of care and set the financial house in order.

Reid had less than a week to finalize his $70 million budget for approval by the hospital's board. As he considered his choices, one issue, the future of six off-site clinics, commanded special attention. Reid's predecessor had set up the clinics five years earlier to provide primary health care to residents of Marksville's poorer neighborhoods; they were generally considered a model of community-based care. But while providing a valuable service for the city's poor, the clinics also diverted funds away from Blake Memorial's in-house services, many of which were underfunded.

As he worked on the budget, Reid's thoughts drifted back to his first visit to the Lorris housing project in early March, just two weeks into his tenure as CEO.

The clinic was not much to look at. A small graffiti-covered sign in the courtyard pointed the way to the basement entrance of an aging six-story apartment building. Reid pulled open the heavy metal door and entered the small waiting room. Two of the seven chairs were occupied. In one, a pregnant teenage girl listened to a Walkman and tapped her foot. In the other, a man in his mid-thirties sat with his eyes closed, resting his head against the wall.

Reid had come alone and unannounced. He wanted to see the clinic without the fanfare of an official visit and to meet Dr. Renée Dawson, who had been the clinic's family practitioner since 1986.

The meeting had to be brief, Dawson apologized, because the nurse had not yet arrived and she had patients to see. As they marched down to her office, she filled Reid in on the waiting patients: the girl was 14 years old, in for a routine prenatal checkup, and the man, a crack addict recently diagnosed as HIV positive, was in for a follow-up visit and blood tests.

Anthony R. Kovner is professor of health policy and management at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University. He is the author of numerous books and articles on health care management, including Really Managing: The Work of Effective CEOs in Large Health Organizations (American College of Health Care Administrators, 1988).
On his hurried tour, Reid noted the dilapidated condition of the cramped facility. The paint was peeling everywhere, and in one examining room, he had to step around a bucket strategically placed to catch a drip from a leaking overhead pipe. After 15 years as a university hospital administrator, Reid felt unprepared for this kind of medicine.

The conditions were appalling, he told Dawson, and were contrary to the image of the high-quality medical care he wanted Blake Memorial to project. When he asked her how she put up with it, Dawson just stared at him. “What are my options?” she finally asked.

Reid looked again at the clinic figures from last year: collectively they cost $1.1 million to operate, at a loss of $256,000. What Blake needed, Reid told himself, were fewer services that sapped resources and more revenue-generating services, or at least services that would make the hospital more competitive. The clinics were most definitely a drain.

Of course, there was a surfeit of “competitive” projects in search of funding. Blake needed to expand its neonatal ward; the chief of surgery wanted another operating theater; the chief of radiology was demanding an MRI unit; the business office wanted to upgrade its computer system; and the emergency department desperately needed another full-time physician. And that was just scratching the surface.

Without some of these investments, Blake's ability to attract paying patients and top-grade doctors would deteriorate. As it was, the hospital’s location on the poorer, east side of Marksville was a strike against it. Blake had a high percentage of Medicaid patients, but the payments were never sufficient to cover costs. The result was an ever-rising annual operating loss.

Reid was constantly reminded of the hospital's uncompetitive position by his chief of surgery, Dr. Winston Lee. “If Blake wants more paying patients—and, for that matter, good department chiefs—it at least has to keep up with St. Barnabas,” Lee had warned Reid a few days ago.

Lee complained that St. Barnabas, the only other acute-care hospital in Marksville, had both superior facilities and better technology. Its financial condition was better than Blake’s, in part because it was located on the west side of the city, in a more affluent neighborhood. St. Barnabas had also been more savvy in its business ventures: it owned a 50% share in an MRI unit operated by a private medical practice. The unit was reportedly generating revenue, and St. Barnabas had plans for other such investments, Lee had said.

While Reid agreed that Blake needed more high-technology services, he was also concerned about duplication of service; the population of the greater Marksville area, including suburban and rural residents, was about 700,000. But when he questioned Richard Tuttle, St. Barnabas's CEO, about the possibility of joint ventures, he received a very cold response. “Competition is the only way to survive,” Tuttle had said.

Tuttle’s actions were consistent with his words. Two months ago, St. Barnabas allegedly had offered financial incentives to some of Marksville’s physicians in exchange for patient referrals. While the rumor had never been substantiated, it had left a bad taste in Reid's mouth.

Reid knew he could either borrow or cut costs. But the hospital’s ability to borrow was limited due to an already high debt burden. His only real alternative, therefore, was to cut costs.

Reid dug out the list of possible cuts from the pile of papers on his desk. At the top of the page was the heading “internal cuts,” and halfway down was the heading “external cuts.” Each item had a dollar value next to it representing the estimated annual savings.

Reid reasoned that the internal cuts would help Blake become a
CASE STUDY

By Russel H. Richardson

As written, they are hypothetical, and the names used are fictitious.

HBR's cases are derived from the experiences of real companies and real people. As written, they are hypothetical, and the names used are fictitious.

employee. But Reid recognized that cutting personnel could affect Blake's quality of care. As it was, patient perception of Blake's quality had been slipping during the last few years, according to the monthly public relations office survey. And quality was an issue that the board was particularly sensitive to these days. Eliminating the clinics, on the other hand, would not compromise Blake's internal operations.

Everyone knew the clinics would never generate a profit for Blake. In fact, the annual loss was expected to continue to climb. Part of the reason was rising costs, but another factor was the city of Marksville's ballooning budget deficit. The city contributed $100,000 to the program and provided the space in the housing projects free of charge. But Reid had heard from two city councilmen that funding would likely be cut in 1992. Less city money and a higher net loss for the clinic program would only add to the strain on Blake's internal services.

Reid had to weigh this strain against the political consequence of closing the clinics. He was well aware of the possible ramifications from his regular dealings with Clara Bryant, the recently appointed commissioner of Marksville's health services. Bryant repeatedly argued that the clinics were an essential service for Marksville's low-income residents.

\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
**Internal Cuts** \\
Cut 2% nursing staff: $340,000 \\
Cut 2% support and ancillary staff: $290,000 \\
Cut maximum 3% from business office staff: $50,000 \\
Freeze all wages and salaries at 1991 level: $1.5 million \\
Eliminate weekly in-house clinics: $100,000 \\
\hline
**External Cuts** \\
Eliminate all off-site clinics: $256,000 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

"You know how the mayor feels about the clinics," Bryant had said at a recent breakfast meeting. "He was a strong supporter when they first opened. He fought hard in City Hall to get Blake Memorial the funding. Closing the clinics would be a personal blow to him."

Reid understood the significance of Bryant's veiled threat. If he closed the clinics, he would lose an ally in the mayor's office, which could jeopardize Blake's access to city funds in the future—or have even worse consequences. Reid had heard through the City Hall rumor mill that Bryant had privately threatened to refer Blake to Marksville's chief counsel for a tax status review if he closed the clinics. He took this seriously; he knew of a handful of hospitals facing similar actions from their local governments.

When Reid tried to explain to Bryant that closing the clinics would improve Blake's financial condition, which, in turn, would lead to better quality of care for all patients, her response had been unsympathetic: "You don't measure the community's health on an income statement."

Bryant was not the only clinic supporter Reid had to reckon with. Dr. Susan Russell, Blake's director of clinics, was equally vocal about the responsibility of the hospital to the community. In a recent senior staff meeting, Reid sat stunned while Dr. Winston Lee, Blake's high-tech champion, exchanged barbs with Russell.

Lee had argued that the off-site clinics competed against the weekly in-house clinics that Blake offered under- and uninsured patients. He proposed closing the off-site clinics.

The four in-house clinics—surgery, pediatrics, gynecology, and internal medicine—cost Blake $200,000 a year in physician fees alone, Lee said. And because Medicaid was not adequately covering the costs of these services, the hospital lost about $100,000 a year from the in-house clinics. What's more, in-house clinic visits were down 10% so far this year. A choice had to be made, Lee concluded, and the reasonable choice was to eliminate the off-site clinics and bolster services within the hospital's four walls. "Instead of clinics, we should have a shuttle bus from the projects to the hospital," he proposed.

Russell's reaction had been almost violent. "Most of the clinics' patients wouldn't come to the hospital even if there was a bus running every five minutes," she snapped back. "I'm talking about pregnant teenage girls who need someone in their community they recognize and trust, not some nameless doctor in a big unfamiliar hospital."

Russell's ideas about what a hospital should be were radical, Reid thought. But, he had to admit, they did have a certain logic. She espoused an entirely new way of delivering health care that involved the mobilization of many of Blake's services.

"A hospital is not a building, it's a service. The hospital should be where the service is most needed," Dr. Russell argued.
ING back on them. Russell spoke of creating a network of neighborhood-based preventive health care centers for all of East Marksville's communities, including both the low-income housing projects and the pockets of middle-income neighborhoods. Besides improving health care, the network would act as an inpatient referral system for hospital services.

Lee had rolled his eyes at the suggestion. But Reid had not been so quick to dismiss Russell's ideas. If a clinic network could tap the paying public and generate more inpatient business, it might be worth looking into, he thought. And, besides, St. Barnabas wasn't doing anything like this.

At the end of the staff meeting, Reid asked Russell to give him some data on the performance of the clinics. He requested numbers of inpatient referrals, birth-weight data, and the number of patients seen per month by type of visit - routine, substance abuse, prenatal, pediatric, violence-related injury, HIV.

Russell's report had arrived the previous day, and Reid was flipping through the results. He had hoped it would provide some answers; instead, it only raised more questions.

The number of prenatal visits had been declining for 16 months. This was significant because prenatal care accounted for over 60% of the clinics' business. But other types of visits were holding steady. In fact, substance abusers had been coming in record numbers since the clinics began participating in the mayor's needle exchange program three months ago.

Russell placed the blame for the prenatal decline squarely on the city. "Two years ago, Marksville cut funding for prenatal outreach and advocacy programs to low-income communities. Without supplementary outreach, pregnant women are less inclined to visit the clinics," she wrote.

The birth-weight data were inconclusive. There was no difference between birth weights for clinic patients and birth weights for nonclinic patients from similar backgrounds. In fact, average birth weights in 1989 were actually lower among clinic patients. Russell had concluded that the clinic program was too new to produce meaningful improvements.

On the positive side, inpatient referrals from the clinics had risen in the last few years, but Russell's comments about the reasons for the rise were speculative at best. HIV-related illnesses and violence-related injuries were a large part of the increase but so were early detection of ailments such as cataracts and cancer. Reid made a note to ask for a follow-up study on this.

He put the report down and stared out his window. Blake had a responsibility to serve the uninsured. But it also had a responsibility to remain viable and self-sustaining. Which was the stronger force? It came down to finding the best way to provide high-quality care to the community and saving the hospital from financial difficulties. The consequences of his decision ranged from another year of status quo management to totally redefining the role of the hospital in the community. He had less than a week to decide.
APPENDIX TWELVE
RESPONSES TO THE MDA FACILITATORS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION 1
Are you of the opinion that some delegates fail to understand sections of the MDA programme because of low levels of English proficiency?

All facilitators All responded in the affirmative.

QUESTION 2
Rate two language groups who have comprehension problems because of lack of English skills. Rate the group who has the most problems, followed by the group who has the next greatest number of problems, eg, African mother-tongue speakers, followed by coloured Afrikaans speakers.

All facilitators African mother-tongue speakers, followed by Afrikaans speakers.

QUESTION 3
Do delegates who are not mother-tongue speakers of English have more difficulty in reading, or in listening comprehension?

All facilitators This question was poorly worded. Facilitators replied "Yes" or "Sometimes".

QUESTION 4
Give two examples of failures in comprehension. For example, failure to carry out tasks in a problem solving exercise, lack of interaction with other delegates, inappropriate responses, verbal or physical. Horne reports that Afro "transferees" (those transferring from the first language and cultural environment to a second language and cultural environment) have great difficulty in successfully making an effective transfer which allows them to be fully functional in the second environment. You may include barriers to communication caused by cultural interference if you so wish.

MDA Facilitator One Failure to complete personal assessments and case studies.

MDA Facilitator Two Following the manual and completing questionnaires.
MDA Facilitator Three
Unable to participate in spontaneous training room discussion and misreading of case study assignments.

**QUESTION 5**
Which part/s of the programme appear to cause the most difficulties from a language point of view? For example, explanations of what is required from delegates in problem-solving exercises.

MDA Facilitator One
Case studies and personal assessments.

MDA Facilitator Two
Vocabulary, "new English words, eg, "assertiveness".

MDA Facilitator Three
-

**QUESTION 6**
What kinds of English seem to cause the most difficulties, eg, the Afrox terminology - terms such as *Critical Success Factors*, or English for Specific Purposes - words such as *technological leadership*?

MDA Facilitator One
Both are difficult.

MDA Facilitator Two
English for Specific Purposes.

MDA Facilitator Three
Using complex terminology in a general sense. Any word that is not common.

**QUESTION 7**
Do you think that speakers of languages other than English have sufficient background knowledge and understanding of *MDA terminology* when they come to MDA? Motivate your answer.

MDA Facilitator One
Yes, they have a problem understanding the terms "competencies", leadership management" etc.

MDA Facilitator Two
Some, depends on exposure to other Afrox programmes and processes, and educational levels.
MDA Facilitator Three  All delegates are given the same pre-course information. Their background understanding is sufficient.

**QUESTION 8**
Do you think that speakers of languages other than English have sufficient background knowledge and understanding of **MDA concepts** when they come to MDA. Motivate your answer.

MDA Facilitator One  They definitely have more difficulty in understanding the MDA concepts such as "theories of motivation", "stages in team development".

MDA Facilitator Two  As for Question 7.

MDA Facilitator Three  Ignorance of concepts may relate to whether they have attended other management courses.

**QUESTION 9**
What is your opinion of the language level in the manual, in both the Afrox-generated documents and documents gleaned from other sources, eg, The Case of the Unhealthy Hospital?

MDA Facilitator One  Delegates need to be highly fluent and competent in English to be able to get maximum output from the course.

MDA Facilitator Two  The level is fine for +- 80% of the delegates. Too high for the rest.

MDA Facilitator Three  Slides are easy to comprehend. Case study readings require a high order understanding.
QUESTION 10
Why do you believe that the MDA manual does/does not provide enough explanations of terminology and concepts to allow delegates to derive adequate meaning from the manual to make it a useful "take-away" resource for delegates to refer to on their own after the course? In other words, comment on the use of contextualisation in the MDA manual. (Please keep in mind that on some courses not every module is covered during the three-day programme and delegates take away sections in the manual which they have not been guided through by the facilitator).

MDA Facilitator One
It is taken for granted that supervisors, charge sisters, etc, are aware of the basics in terminology. The focus on the programme is to extend their understanding of management principles.

MDA Facilitator Two
I believe that the manual provides adequate explanations provided the delegates apply themselves.

MDA Facilitator Three
The design philosophy of the manual does not allow enough explanations of terminology and concepts.

QUESTION 11
How much explanation about language and concepts do you find it necessary to provide

11.1 Verbally?

MDA Facilitator One 80%

MDA Facilitator Two A few minutes per session.

MDA Facilitator Three -

11.2 Graphically?

MDA Facilitator One 20%

MDA Facilitator Two A few minutes per session.
QUESTION 12
Do you check delegates' understanding routinely, or do you wait to be prompted to do so by a delegate's signalling of lack of comprehension?

MDA Facilitator One
Wait for delegate to signal lack of understanding.

MDA Facilitator Two
I check when discussing issues that have proved difficult in previous programmes.

MDA Facilitator Three
Check routinely.

QUESTION 13
How in the programme should facilitators check delegates' understanding?

MDA Facilitator One
Constant checking that delegates understand via questions/asking delegates to explain to each other.

MDA Facilitator Two
Create an open and supportive atmosphere where delegates feel free to ask questions.

MDA Facilitator Three
Dialogue and questions/answers at the end of sessions.

QUESTION 14
Do any delegates acknowledge that they have difficulties in following all the English in the course? And if so, to which language group/s do these delegates belong? (It is sufficient to stipulate English, Afrikaans or African mother-tongue).

MDA Facilitator One
African language group.

MDA Facilitator Two
Some do, not all.

MDA Facilitator Three
No.
QUESTION 15
Have you received any specialised training in cross-cultural training, or have you any previous experience of it? If so, please describe.

MDA Facilitator One  No.
MDA Facilitator Two  No.
MDA Facilitator Three  Have some cross-cultural experience.

QUESTION 16
What is your opinion of the videos used in the programme from a language and cultural point of view?

16.1  Is the language in the videos too fast for ANY delegates? (If so, please specify which group/s experience difficulties in this regard).

MDA Facilitator One  No.
MDA Facilitator Two  Some - terminology - African mother-tongue speakers.
MDA Facilitator Three  -

16.2  Are American or British videos used (Please specify American or British).

MDA Facilitator One  Both.
MDA Facilitator Two  American.
MDA Facilitator Three  -

16.3  Are any South African videos used, specifically those which show heterogeneous groups in the workplace?

MDA Facilitator One  Yes.
MDA Facilitator Two  No.
MDA Facilitator Three  -
16.4 If South African videos are used, do they portray stereotyped characters in various roles, eg, a white male manager and a female and/or black subordinate?

MDA Facilitator One
No, roles are mixed.

MDA Facilitator Two
-

MDA Facilitator Three
-

16.5 Any other comments on various media used in MDA - for example, videos, wall charts, overhead transparencies, etc. How would you like to see them changed to make it easier for non-English speakers to understand them?

MDA Facilitator One
-

MDA Facilitator Two
Use more South African videos.

MDA Facilitator Three
-

QUESTION 17

Any other observations which you might like to add?

MDA Facilitator One
-

MDA Facilitator Two
-

MDA Facilitator Three
-
RESPONSES TO TECHNICAL TRAINING MANAGER’S QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTION 1
Are you of the opinion that some delegates fail to understand sections of technical training programmes because of low levels of English proficiency?

Technical Training Manager Yes.

QUESTION 2
Rate the two language groups who have comprehension problems because of lack of English skills. Rate the group who has the most problems, followed by the group who has the next greatest number of problems, eg, African mother-tongue speakers, followed by coloured Afrikaans speakers.

Technical Training Manager African mother-tongue speakers, followed by Afrikaans speakers.

QUESTION 3
Do delegates who are not mother-tongue speakers of English have more difficulty in reading, or in listening comprehension?

Technical Training Manager This question was poorly worded. The respondent replied "in most cases".

QUESTION 4
Give two examples of failures in comprehension. For example, failure to carry out tasks in a problem solving exercise, lack of interaction with other delegates, inappropriate responses, verbal or physical. Horne reports that Afro "transferees" (those transferring from the first language and cultural environment to a second language and cultural environment) have great difficulty in successfully making an effective transfer which allows them to be fully functional in the second environment. You may include barriers to communication caused by cultural interference if you so wish.

Technical Training Manager Lack of adequate English skills and low educational levels cause a variety of communication problems in technical training courses.
QUESTION 5
Which parts of the technical programmes appear to cause the most difficulties from a language point of view? For example, explanations of what is required from delegates in problem-solving exercises.

Technical Training Manager Much of the technical terminology and levels of English used in the programmes.

QUESTION 6
What kinds of terminology seems to cause the most difficulties, eg, technological leadership?

Technical Training Manager As in Question 5.

QUESTION 7
Do you think that speakers of languages other than English have sufficient background knowledge and understanding of technical terminology when they come to technical training programmes? Motivate your answer.

Technical Training Manager Depends on educational levels.

QUESTION 8
Do you think that speakers of languages other than English have sufficient background knowledge and understanding of technical concepts when they come to technical training programmes? Motivate your answer.

Technical Training Manager Depends on educational levels.

QUESTION 9
What is your opinion of the language levels in the technical training manuals?

Technical Training Manager Often too high for the educational levels of the delegates.

QUESTION 10
Do you believe that the technical training manuals do/do not provide enough explanations of terminology and concepts to allow delegates to derive adequate meaning from the manuals and make them useful "take-away" resources for delegates to refer to on their own after training courses?
The manuals generally do not provide explanations of terminology.

QUESTION 11
How much explanation about language and concepts do you find it necessary to provide?

11.1 Verbally?
Technical Training Manager Considerable.

11.2 Graphically?
Technical Training Manager Considerable.

QUESTION 12
Do you check delegates' understanding routinely, or do you wait to be prompted to do so by a delegate signalling a lack of comprehension?

Technical Training Manager Do both.

QUESTION 13
How in the programme should facilitators check delegates' understanding?

Technical Training Manager Have a pre-test.

QUESTION 14
Do any delegates acknowledge that they have difficulties in following all the English in technical training courses? And if so, to which language group/s do these delegates belong? (It is sufficient to stipulate English, Afrikaans or African mother-tongue speakers).

Technical Training Manager African and Afrikaans speakers.

QUESTION 15
Have you received any specialised training in cross-cultural training, or do you have any previous experience of it? If so, please stipulate.

Technical Training Manager Through previous contact with African and Afrikaans speakers.
QUESTION 16
What is your opinion of the videos used in technical training programmes from language and cultural point of view?

16.1 Is the language in the videos too fast for ANY delegates? (If so, please specify which group/s experience difficulties in this regard).

Technical Training Manager  Too fast for African and Afrikaans speakers.

16.2 Are American or British videos used? (Please specify which)

Technical Training Manager  Both.

16.3 Are any South African videos used, specifically those which show heterogeneous groups in the workplace?

Technical Training Manager  A few.

16.4 If South African videos are used, do they portray stereotyped characters in various roles, eg, a white male manager and a female and/or black subordinate?

Technical Training Manager  Often.

16.5 Any other comments on various media used in technical training programmes - for example, videos, wall charts, overhead transparencies, etc. How would you like to see them changed to make it easier for non-English delegates to understand them?

Technical Training Manager  Apart from English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Sotho videos should be used.

QUESTION 17
Any other observations which you might like to add?

Technical Training Manager  For delegates whose English skills are poor, the facilitation should be slower than usual.
APPENDIX THIRTEEN

MDA DELEGATES' TEST RESULTS PER LANGUAGE GROUP

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APPENDIX FOURTEEN

FIGURE NINETEEN. CLARIFICATION OF PROGRAMME DEVELOPERS’ AND FACILITATORS’ GOALS AND METHODS BEFORE COMMENCEMENT OF PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT
APPENDIX FIFTEEN

PURPOSE
of the training programme

TECHNIQUES
Choosing the best techniques
to achieve high listening and
reading comprehension

TARGET GROUP
Heterogeneous

group of supervisors

REGISTER
Choosing the
right level of
formality

MANAGEMENT
DEVELOPMENT/
IMPLEMENTATION
(See Appendix 14)

PLANNING PROGRAMME

ENGGLISH FOR SPECIFIC
ACADEMIC PURPOSES

ACHIEVING
COHERENCE
in the verbal
production
and in the text

VOCABULARY
Choosing the right
words

FIGURE 20. COMPONENTS FOR CONSIDERATION WHEN SELECTING THE
CORRECT LANGUAGE LEVEL AND REGISTER FOR AN MDA
PROGRAMME