

**A SURVEY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF LECTURERS AND
ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS
REGARDING ESL STUDENTS' LANGUAGE-RELATED PROBLEMS AT
TECHNIKON NATAL.**

DISSERTATION

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GRAHAM FRANCIS JOHNSTON

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ABSTRACT

The shortage of manpower in South Africa with technological skills is a widespread problem. Technikon students are under extreme pressure to develop these skills in the student population. Admission statistics at Technikon Natal show a marked increase in ESL students enrolling in a wide variety of national diploma courses. The inadequate education received by the majority of ESL students in South Africa has not prepared them for the demands of tertiary education. As English is the medium of instruction at Technikon Natal, underdeveloped language skills tend to hinder the students' progress. Technikon Natal is currently considering an Educational Development Strategy designed to assist students.

In order for a response to perceived language-related problems to be meaningful, a survey of such issues was considered a practical starting point to establish that these issues were in fact problematic.

The survey was intended to probe certain perceptions held by students and staff regarding attitudes, which might have been preconceived. It also provided clarification that some of these perceptions are inaccurate, and in some cases, incorrect. In addition to this, it established that there is considerable support among students and staff for departmentally-integrated support programmes.

In terms of Technikon Natal's present position on an ESL educational development continuum, the findings indicate that much benefit could be derived from the research carried out in other tertiary institutions with regard to academic support programmes.

Areas in which there was a considerable disparity of views held were identified and commented upon.

In conclusion, it was felt that attention should be focussed on the following: recognition of the need for an integrated ESL programme; departmental reinforcement of academic skills; decentralisation of the ASP programme.

The survey concludes with a brief comment on current developments in response to ESL needs at Technikon Natal.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	-	Academic Development Centre A centre which offers assistance to students in a variety of areas and from which help with academic problems is obtained.
ASP	-	Academic Support Programme Programme designed to assist students in coping with the academic demands of their courses. Functions vary but are not necessarily restricted to academic issues.
AS	-	Academic Support
BICS	-	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills Acronym coined by Cummins (1984) to describe the type of language skill used by an individual in a linguistically context-embedded situation rich in linguistic cues.
CALL	-	Computer Assisted Language Learning (Centre) Process whereby language skills are taught and practised by the individual learner through reading programmes and other language-related software, on a computer network system.
CALP	-	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Acronym coined by Cummins (1984) to describe the type of language skill required in a linguistically context-reduced situation in which the contextual and cognitive dimensions are reduced.
DET	-	Department of Education and Training The education department which deals with the education of people designated Black by the South African government.
EAP	-	English for Academic Purposes
EDRC	-	Educational Development Research Committee A working committee at Technikon Natal which was convened, on the Rector's instruction, to investigate the implementation of an Educational Development Programme at Technikon Natal.
ESL	-	English Second Language
E1L	-	English First Language
E2L	-	English Second Language
ESP	-	English for Specific Purposes A pragmatic response to a developing situation in which the reasons that learners have for learning English are made amenable

to more systematic description so that relevant and more effective materials can be prepared for teachers to use ESP is allied to a growing awareness of the importance of the relationship between language and other areas of the learners' curriculum and/or activities.
(Mackay, R. and Mountford, A. 1978)

JMB	-	Joint Matriculation Board
L1	-	First Language
L2	-	Second Language
NSC	-	Natal Senior Certificate
SD	-	Service Department Term used at Technikon Natal to describe a department which does not register its own students for a diploma, but which services other departments which register students for subject courses leading towards the attainment of national diplomas.
WISPE	-	Wits Integrated Study Programme for Engineering An integrated support programme designed to integrate academic support with mainstream university credit courses.

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PREFACE

The research surveys described in this dissertation were carried out through the Department of Education at Rhodes University, on the campus of Technikon Natal. The initial student survey was carried out in conjunction with the English Second Language Unit at Technikon Natal. The follow-up conducted during the second student questionnaire was carried out with the assistance of staff members whose groups, according to statistics provided by the Technikon's Department of Computer Services, contained the largest numbers of registered ESL students.

The research took place from February to September 1991, under the supervision of Ms S.Murray of the Department of Education at Rhodes University. The research represents original work by the author and has not been submitted in any form to another university. Where use was made of the work of others, it has been duly acknowledged in the text.

CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXT OF THE SURVEY

1.0 Introduction

This survey is an attempt to identify some of the perceptions of language-related problems held by English Second Language (ESL) students and by lecturers who work with these students on both of the two campuses of Technikon Natal. The purpose of such a survey is to identify, if possible, areas in which difficulties are perceived, and more importantly, areas in which language-related difficulties are not perceived in the same way by the staff and students. The assumption made here is that a better understanding of language-related areas of difficulty would contribute towards a reduction of those problems, or at least an increased awareness of them on the part of the staff who are responsible for teaching these students. Lecturers in the ESL Unit have indicated that such an identification of issues perceived by staff and students as 'problem areas' would be helpful and would also serve to confirm that their efforts are appropriate.

In order to place an analysis of the perceptions of lecturers and ESL students regarding ESL students' language problems at Technikon Natal into a framework, it is useful to view the issue from three different perspectives. The first is that of the students who, for whatever reason, are experiencing language problems and are attempting to counter their difficulties by attending an ESL course offered by the ESL Unit situated on both campuses. These students are accommodated by the lecturers in the ESL Unit, and the programme that is offered is designed to be of some remedial assistance to the students in relation to the diplomas for which they are enrolled. The second perspective is

that of the staff in the ESL Unit, which operates within the larger framework of Academic Support Programmes (ASP). The third position is the wider South African perspective on ESL in ASP. This is explored through a review of some of the literature relating to issues mentioned in the first and second sections (1.1 and 1.2). This review is contained separately in chapter two.

1.1 The student perspective

1.1.1 Resistance to the ESL programme

One of the most striking problems with regard to ASP is a peculiar paradox which seems to be a national rather than a local issue. It is that the courses introduced by ASP, in whatever form they take, although enjoying popularity amongst specific groups of students, often appear to be viewed in a disparaging light by the majority of ESL students. In short, ASP appears to be viewed with a great deal of suspicion by the people whom it is designed to assist. This suspicion is detrimental to its effectiveness. A further problem which retards the effective development of Academic Support is that it is still hampered by a general lack of substantial funding and in some cases, recognition of its importance.

The resistance towards ASP, and subsequent lack of support from ESL students for the programmes offered (Agar/Mashishi 1986; Agar 1988; Agar 1990a; Fielding 1990; Hunter 1986; Mehl 1988; Tema 1988), is also the case at Technikon Natal. This raises the question of why the ASP is regarded with suspicion by students, in the sense that they do not unquestioningly accept it, when it is allegedly designed to help those students with language and other problems.

Tema (1988) has stated that students who have been assessed by an educational institution as needing ASP are more likely to accept this once

the student has also carried out his own personal assessment. In other words indications at the beginning of the year about a student's problems should not pass as the final word on the student's worth (Tema 1988).

In the light of this, it seems that students' perceptions of their problems are likely to change over time. The significance of this is that provided an ASP which serves the needs of the students is available, and it does not function in a 'gatekeeping' capacity, students will probably utilise it when they perceive, in their own time, that it serves a beneficial function. Closely linked to the issue of resistance to ASP is the question of attendance.

1.1.2 Attendance

Issues which have contributed to the difficulties experienced by the Unit include low attendance figures in relation to the numbers of ESL students registered. During 1988, out of 755 students registered as speaking a language 'other than English as their first/home language', fewer than 100 attended the ESL programme on a regular basis. According to ESL lecturers, those who did attend classes were erratic or inconsistent in their attendance.

Attendance figures

Year	No. of ESL students	No. attending ESL programme
1988	755	<100
1989	821	<80
1990	887	<30
1991	1187	<150

(Enrolment Statistics Brochure: Department of Computer Services, Technikon Natal, 1988-1991.)

The figures above indicate that the ESL Unit does not have strong support. There are a number of possible reasons for this. ESL lecturers felt (confirmed in personal communication) that benefits have been slow to manifest, if at all, and the overall achievement of success in terms of improved pass rates of the ESL students who have participated in the programme offered at Technikon Natal, has been limited at best.

Whether students would accept ESL programmes if they were compulsory is debatable. There are arguments both for and against it. In the light of recent research (Starfield 1990; Rutherford/Kotecha 1989; Tema 1988; Agar/Murray in press 1992b), students do not appear to object in principle to the fact that ESL programmes be made compulsory, but feel that the content of such programmes is seldom related to the courses for which they are enrolled. The problems encountered by Technikon Natal in this regard appear to be similar to those experienced during the early development of ASP at the University of the Witwatersrand where a study of staff and student perceptions of institutional responses to disadvantage reported that :

Compulsion was dropped largely because of student resistance to it. Investigations revealed that part of this resistance was related to the content of these ASP courses rather than compulsion per se. [and further] Resistance to compulsion has been and still is linked to racial interpretations of courses which are compulsory for some and not for others. (Agar / Murray :in press 1992b)

It may be argued that students do not attend ESL courses because attendance of these courses does not seem to improve pass rates (although Schochet:1989,below, states the opposite). The courses are therefore seen as being of little value to them, and attendance drops.

On the other hand, ASP courses which have been offered as part of an integrated programme such as the 'Wits Integrated Study Programme for Engineering' (WISPE) at the University of the Witwatersrand, have included compulsory tutorials and monitored attendance. The reported results showed that:

there was a significant improvement in WISPE students' chances from the 40-50 range: their overall pass rate was 67% compared to 37% from the same range of all students.

(Kotecha / Rutherford : 1989)

In further support of the attendance of an ASP, Schochet (1989) has reported that:

research has indicated a strong correlation between pass rates and attendance of academic support in numerous studies.

However the success of the students involved in the WISPE programme is probably less attributable to attendance *per se* than it is to the integrated, and therefore more relevant nature of the programme offered. The central issue is not compulsory attendance, but the relevance of the programme offered, because it is this which seems to determine the attendance.

1.2 The staff perspective

Outline

The perspective of the staff is viewed through a very brief historical outline of the ESL Unit's objectives and background since its inception. The triangular nature of the ESL issue at Technikon Natal is explained, as is the current focus of the programme. Lastly, some of the positive and negative issues relating to its development are discussed.

1.2.1 Historical outline of the ESL Unit's objectives/background

The ESL Unit at Technikon Natal has assumed different roles during the six years that it has been in existence. It began as a 'Bridging English Centre' which focussed primarily on the upgrading of English reading and writing skills. It then expanded into an 'Academic Support Centre' in concept (although it retained the designation of 'Bridging English') to incorporate assistance in the area of social and cultural integration, with less focus on providing language tuition exclusively. However, with limited funding available, and a staff complement restricted to a single person servicing two campuses, this system did not have the desired impact either.

During 1990 the Unit was expanded to create a base for students on each of the two campuses which currently exist at Technikon Natal, pending its complete relocation from the city campus to the Berea campus. The Unit still experiences many of the original difficulties which Academic Support Centres appear to have to cope with, from funding and awareness of its existence on campus, to the allocation of tuition periods on the timetable, and lack of staff involvement or departmental commitment.

1.2.2 Focus of the ESL programme

A number of students (approximately 140, ESL Unit Annual Report:1991) utilising the services offered by the ASP at Technikon Natal are ESL students, the majority of whom are black. Most of these students have been subjected to an inadequate educational system which has granted them a qualification which enables them to gain entry to a tertiary institution but which they frequently find has not equipped them with the necessary

skills to succeed at this level (Agar 1987; Agar 1989; Tema 1988). In the absence of course integrated programmes supported by subject-specific departmental supervision, the only assistance available is an ESL programme which focusses attention on academic skills and language development. It is anticipated by staff in the ESL Unit (confirmed in personal communication) that improved language skills will, in the long term, help the students to become more independent and self-sufficient. While the ESL service is offered with good intentions, it is the opinion of the researcher that the existing ESL programme will be no better supported than its predecessors. Research has shown that unless the programme offered is of a subject-specific nature, it is not likely to be widely supported (Starfield : 1990; Agar / Murray 1992b in press). Without departmental involvement in tutoring, the ESL Unit cannot effectively provide the students with the relevant expertise they require. This emphasises the need for ESL/departmental integration and support which includes subject-specific tuition if the students are to benefit from an ESL programme.

1.2.3 The triangular nature of the ESL problem at Technikon Natal

Discussions with various ESL lecturers since 1987, when the first attempt to establish a 'Bridging English Programme' was made, have reflected similar frustrations time and again. References to issues which appear to create a stumbling block in the establishment of an effective system appear to be recurrent. A few of these frustrations according to the staff interviewed, include:

- the need for time-slots to be allocated by departments to enable students to attend the programme
- the possible need for the programme to be linked to credit-bearing courses
- the lack of formal recognition of the need to make attendance of the ESL programme conditionally compulsory
- the need for substantially more support from senior

management at Technikon Natal

- the need for departmental involvement in programmes offered
- the need for more manpower and funding

The problem is triangular in nature, with the institution's administrative/academic management, the ESL Unit, and the students forming the three sides of the triangle.

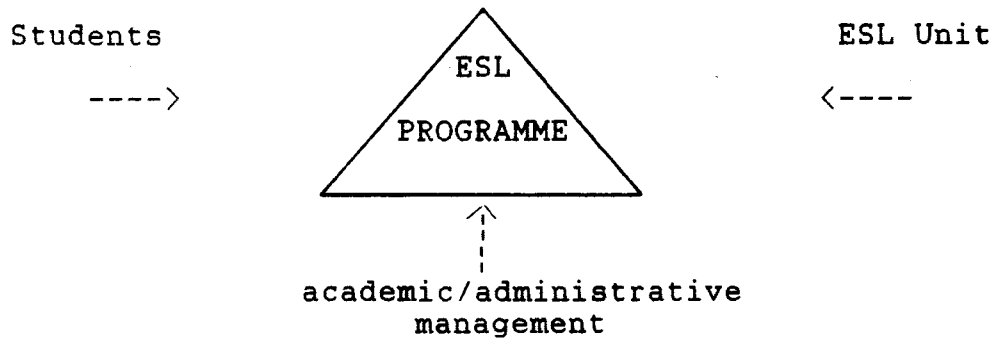


Fig. 1

This framework is used to illustrate diagrammatically the relationship between the ESL programme and the factors which affect it, ie. student-related matters (section 1.1.1 and 1.1.2), ESL Unit-related matters (sections 1.2.4), and academic and administrative-related matters (section 1.2.5).

1.2.4 The ESL Unit

Lack of student support for reasons already cited presents a major problem. A second issue is the lack of staff. Even with relatively low attendance figures, staff are hard-pressed to cope with the variety of subject-specific needs of students over such a wide spectrum of the courses offered. Added to this is the administrative liaison with 44 departments. Thirdly, the development of a suitable ESL programme requires considerable testing of material and research, all of which are extremely time-consuming. In response to the need for an effective programme which could be used on a departmentally-integrated basis, as well as in a more broadly-based educational development programme, an

Educational Development Research Committee (EDRC) was established on the instruction of the Rector in 1991 to make recommendations and put forward proposals for future developments in this area.

According to ESL lecturers interviewed at Technikon Natal, an increasing awareness among the staff of the difficulties ESL students face has led to a substantial increase in departmental contact, and the services offered by the ESL Unit appear to be gaining more support than in the past. In a sense, the former lack of recognition and isolation is being replaced by a slowly developing recognition on a departmental level, of the benefits that the ESL Unit might be able to offer students. As the ESL Unit at Technikon Natal is the centre from which any language-orientated ASP is carried out, in this respect it provides one of the functions of an Educational Development Centre. The ESL Unit at Technikon Natal is however only one of the services in the so-called "Academic Support Programme". Up to this point, reference has been made to the 'ASP at Technikon Natal'. In part, this is for want of a collective term applicable to services outside the formal instructional offerings. In fact, no formal co-ordinated structure exists, through which a specific ASP is carried out. What exists are a number of extra-curricula services which, as a whole, have the makings of an ASP. The ESL Unit offers one such service.

1.2.5 Academic/administrative management

Problems experienced in this area relate mainly to difficulties in integrating the ESL programme into the academic timetable. This difficulty is compounded on a practical level by lack of departmental support, and exacerbated by complex and lengthy

bureaucratic processes required to consider and/or approve any proposed alterations. Even if the ESL programme, as it currently exists, were entirely endorsed by all departments and its integration into the timetable established, the lack of accreditation and subject-specific tuition would probably still negatively affect its effective development.

Senior academic management has a positive attitude towards the existence of the ESL Unit, as is evident in the Rector's formation of the EDRC. In addition to this, the expansion of the staff complement and the establishment of ESL facilities on both campuses are both positive moves. Funding has improved, and a recent donation from a petroleum company has led to the establishment of a Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) centre. Yet, while these developments have improved the ESL Unit's infrastructure and standing within the Technikon, there appears to be no significant change in the 'modus operandi'. ESL lecturers have suggested (in personal communication, July 1991) that this will probably not be forthcoming until the academic and administrative management respond to the proposals in the EDRC document (EDRC document:Forum, June 1991).

In summary, it is clear now that the function of the ESL Unit and its importance as a service are beginning to be more widely recognised as management's responses reflect changing attitudes beyond the confines of this Technikon.

1.2.6 Changing attitudes towards ESL at Technikon Natal

During the last five years, some universities and technikons have considerably increased their interest in, and support for, ASP. The well-attended Intermediate Tertiary Conference held during

December 1989 at the University of Natal was indicative of the concern felt by a fairly wide range of educational institutions in South Africa. This increased interest and support is possibly borne out of a developing recognition of what Mehl (1988) referred to as the 'historical moment' in South African education. What was meant by this was the point at which the combined influences of social pressure and a political realization together created an educational 'turning point' which highlighted the inescapable need to review the direction of national education in South Africa. In the light of developments now taking place at Technikon Natal, it appears that the academic management in this institution has recognised this need and is responding to it.

1.2.7 The impact on staff perceptions of student attitudes to the existing ESL programme

Judging by their non-attendance, the attitude of many of the students towards the ESL programme appears to be negative. Apart from the issues already mentioned which contribute towards this apparently negative outlook, time constraints related to distance from place of residence, as well as already full timetables possibly also negatively affect perceptions. It seems that reasons for their non-attendance are related more to the students' perceptions of the worth of the programme (Kotecha/Rutherford:1989) and the lack of subject-specific assistance than to a lack of motivation. The effect of the students' attitudes reflected in their poor attendance of the ESL programme is that it reduces it to a frustrating exercise for the staff who run it, and in some instances to a futile exercise for the students attending it.

There might well be other issues which one could add to the 'triangle', but these form the crux of the problem. Technikon Natal is not the only institution to have experienced the sorts of difficulties described ; the problems might be specifically different, but the general trends appear to be similar at other tertiary institutions (Agar:1986,1987,1990a; Agar/Murray:1990; Tema :1987; Agar/Mashishi:1986; de V Booyesen:1989).

1.3 The place of technikons in the context of this research

Current socio-political changes effected by the South African government have accelerated the degree of racial integration in tertiary institutions. The need for growth within technikons to accommodate the anticipated increase in student numbers has been estimated as roughly four times that of the universities (Booyesen 1989). Technikon Natal has endorsed this movement towards racial integration, and the projected effects of this include an increase in the numbers of ESL students. It has been estimated that 80% of the anticipated growth in numbers will be drawn from the Black community (du Preez 1990).

In addition to du Preez's statement above, the figures reported in the Educational Renewal Strategy 'Discussion Document' published by the Department of National Education , bear out the need for urgency in addressing the needs of the increasing numbers of ESL students at this Technikon.

During the first five years since 1986, technikon student numbers have increased by an annual average of 17% while the corresponding rate for universities has been an annual average growth rate of 5%. Apart from the financial implications of these growth rates, which have resulted in a sustained decline in the funding levels of the subsidy formulas for universities and technikons, it is noteworthy that at present we have seven university students to every two technikon students (Educational Renewal Strategy: 1991).

Preliminary interviews carried out with lecturers in the ESL Unit at Technikon Natal revealed that, in their opinion, the language needs of ESL students at Technikon Natal are not being adequately met, and that the anticipated significant increase in numbers of ESL students might well exacerbate the problems and difficulties already being experienced.

1.4 Overview

The introduction of academic support programmes in tertiary academic institutions has in the past been resisted by students to a certain extent. This resistance is gradually being replaced by support from students in some institutions. The development of the ESL programme at Technikon Natal and some of the difficulties encountered have been outlined in the context within which it is administered. Observations with regard to this development have been made from the points of view of both the students and the staff who administer the programme. Selected references have been made to some of the documented research on students' perceptions of ESL programmes (not necessarily at this Technikon), and are included to provide a possible point of reference against which results from the research carried out in this study might be evaluated.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE SURVEY

2.0 Outline

This chapter will expand on some of the issues introduced in chapter one with reference to current ESL literature. In chapter one, some of the issues which relate to the student and staff perceptions were commented on in terms of how they comprise part of the situation which pertains specifically to Technikon Natal. The issues mentioned in chapter one may be seen to relate to current theoretical ESL issues within ASPs as a whole. The issues referred to in this chapter are discussed under the following headings:

- 2.1 Some general observations.
- 2.2 Perceptions upon entry to the educational institution.
 - 2.2.1 BICS versus CALP.
- 2.3 The perceived relevance of what is offered by the ASP.
 - 2.3.1 Issues considered relevant by ESL staff.
 - 2.3.2 Staff reinforcement of language skills.
- 2.4 The general deficiency model.
 - 2.4.1 Staff sensitisation.
 - 2.4.2 The notion of 'acceptable levels' of English.
- 2.5 Overview.

Preview

The premise on which much of this chapter is based is that 'conflicting perceptions of the language problems experienced by ESL students reduce the effectiveness of responses to these problems' (Tema:1988). This is viewed from the students' perceptions upon entry to the educational institution (2.2) and the confusion caused by disparate perceptions of language ability. The conflict is partly explained through reference to Cummins' (1984) theory relating to basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (2.2.1), which is important in terms of the perceived relevance of what is offered by the ASP (2.3). The ESL

staff's view of what is perceived as relevant is included (2.3.1) as well as the need for reinforcement of some of the skills referred to (2.3.2). The assumption that students lack certain skills, whether they are academic or language-related, raises the question of the general deficiency model (2.4), which in itself embodies a number of preconceived ideas. These are briefly addressed in the need for staff sensitisation (2.4.1) and what is or is not an 'acceptable level' of English (2.4.2). The chapter is concluded with an overview in 2.5.

2.1 Some general observations

Before considering the research carried out here with regard to an analysis of perceptions, a brief reference to some of the perceptions held by staff and students in other tertiary educational institutions helps to put into perspective the difficulties Technikon Natal faces in this regard.

As mentioned in the preview above, Tema (1988) has suggested that the conflicting perceptions of the language problems experienced by ESL students reduce the effectiveness of responses to these problems. The conflict arises out of the dual nature of the pedagogic process : the problems perceived by those being taught are not necessarily the same as those perceived by the teacher. An analysis of perceptions is therefore a necessary starting point for research into the ESL student's language problems.

From the viewpoint of the educational environment in which students perceive themselves and the function that ASP provides on campus, there are three areas that might account for some of the views held by students with regard to ASP and language-related issues.

2.2 Perceptions upon entry to the educational institution

In the first instance, Tema (1988) maintains that students who are selected for a support programme feel alienated at the start by the very system that has been set up to help them. As a result of a diagnostic language and/or academic skills assessment on entry to the institution, they are identified as "weak students". The result is a feeling of victimization by those who claim to be there to help them.

One has to consider the structural and political factors which have determined the education these students have received, and the fact that the students who gain entry to tertiary education quite rightly perceive themselves to be competent. This perception is, however, based on their experience of a segregated educational system which was set up specifically to disadvantage them.

It is understandable therefore that a degree of confusion arises from the fact that students who, in the face of great vicissitudes and a disadvantaged educational background, have attained a standard that gains them admission to the university or technikon, are told on entry that they are weak and will need extra tuition to increase their chances of completing their chosen courses. Yet often, for the reason stated above, they do not perceive themselves as being weak students, nor as being in need of any extra tuition. However it is questionable whether students, especially those starting their first year, are in a position to determine their own needs accurately. Added to this is their lack of experience in the new educational institution and their perceptions of their own capabilities. It is probably not surprising that students who feel competent on an interpersonal

verbal level do not regard themselves as being in need of any assistance, yet students in many cases experience difficulties on the level of written discourse. Agar (1990b) notes that 'there is often confusion between competence in language and knowledge of academic skills and processes.'

2.2.1 BICS versus CALP

The concepts of BICS and CALP are part of a theory (Cummins and Swain:1986) which offers insight into the different linguistic requirements (which may be verbal or written) related to situations which range from being cognitively undemanding and context-embedded, to those which are cognitively demanding and context-reduced.

It is important that reference here to the relevance of BICS and CALP is located specifically in terms of some of the current perceptions of practitioners in EAP in South Africa (Murray and Johanson:1990; Starfield:1990) who have referred to Cummins and Swain (1986).

To some extent, this theory offers insight into the question of the apparently different levels of competence between verbal articulation and written discourse of some ESL students. It should be clear, however, that a lack of CALP skills on a level of written discourse, does not imply that the person necessarily lacks these skills on a verbal level. This might be illustrated in the case of a student being asked to present a short lecture explaining a particular concept which she might do without difficulty. The same student might, however, have difficulty in producing a written version of the same lecture.

The model put forward by Cummins and Swain (1986) partly explains why students who appear to be verbally competent in a context-

embedded environment encounter difficulty expressing themselves in written English in a context-reduced environment.

Its importance here is that it must to an extent affect the relevance of what is offered to students in an ESL programme.

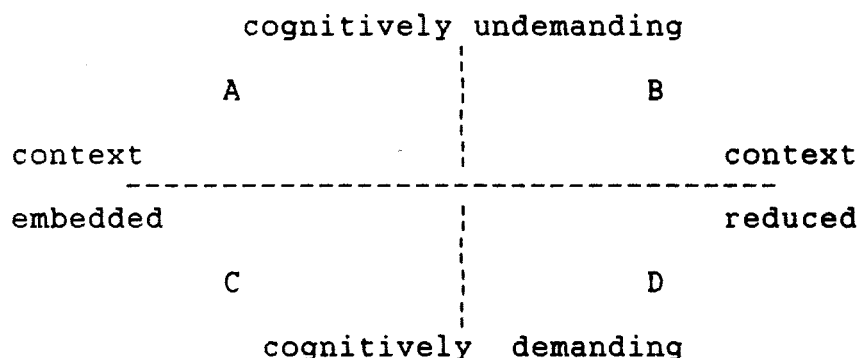


Fig.1
Range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement in communicative activities.
(Cummins and Swain:1986)

A factor which probably contributes to the level of development of CALP skills and the difficulty experienced by ESL students in the South African context is that:

the linguistic culture of Black schools in South Africa [is] essentially oral: there is a lot of speaking and listening but very little reading and writing. This is the case with all languages used in the schools. In fact, students seem to get even less practice in reading and writing in their mother tongue than they do in English.

(Murray:1990)

It seems that the issue here is that ESL students from DET schools are not developing the necessary language skills, even in their mother tongue, which complicates matters further. If the L1 is not being developed to serve academic purposes at school, and even less so out of school, then EL2 CALP is also more than likely going to be inadequately developed (Starfield:1991). The implication of this is that any attempt at teaching students language-related skills is going to be severely hampered if they

do not have these skills in their mother tongue, and furthermore their linguistic competence in English is not well developed. The sort of difficulty ESL lecturers have to contend with is illustrated below.

At college level we would expect our students to have a working knowledge of what one could call high school first language skills - skills such as summarizing, comparing and contrasting, extracting themes from texts. There are a growing number of students who cannot perform these skills. Some students say they have never practised these skills in their first language classes. This compounds the problem for the ESL lecturer. The students are working in a second language (for some a foreign language) and they're also dealing with an unfamiliar skill (e.g. summarizing).

(Higgs:1990)

The view that the DET has not encouraged the students' development of cognitive skills is echoed by MacDonald (1990) who found that there was a lack of cognitively demanding material in the pupils' L1. The inference here is that it is the system and possibly the material too that are generally deficient, not the student.

The view that the students have inherent cognitive ability (Slonimsky /Turton:1985) is supported to a certain extent by Widdowson (1979). In order not to confuse matters, it should be clear that the views expressed above, while different in specific aspects, both support the belief that the student has intrinsic ability. The students Widdowson refers to, however, have already acquired a considerable level of academic proficiency, and he does not question their ability, but believes that the student already has an intrinsic understanding of how 'scientific communication' (Widdowson's term) is carried out (although not necessarily in English). In his view, all that is required by

the language teacher is to extend the range of the student's communicative ability by making him aware of an alternative way of expressing his 'knowledge of science' (Widdowson:1979), which he/she already has. Slonimsky and Turton (1985) believe that the students they refer to have inherent cognitive ability, which through an inadequate education system has not been developed. While Widdowson's view might be applicable in a scientific rather than linguistic context, the view that students have an intrinsic underlying ability/proficiency is supported. A possible flaw in the application of this view, if located in perceptions relating to South African students, is that Widdowson's argument is more applicable where students have received an adequate education that has provided them with sufficient CALP skills (Cummins: 1984). This presents problems in the South African context, where

it would appear that the schooling situation in the DET is not conducive to promoting CALP skills either in L1 or L2 (English).

(Starfield : 1991)

It is perhaps worth noting that not everyone accepts the view that EAP courses should focus exclusively on the development of CALP. Some practitioners (Ngwenya/Hossfeld:1991) feel that more attention should be paid to basic language skills, including grammar.

2.3 The perceived relevance of what is offered by the ASP

In chapter one, the poor support the ESL programme receives was largely attributed to the students' perceptions of the relevance of the content of the programme in that it was not sufficiently related to their mainstream courses. Tema (1988) notes a similar finding, where she states that students who take part in academic support programmes,

find that usually the programmes bear only a

remote relationship to what they have come to university for. The benefits that they derive from the programme are diffuse and not directly measurable in terms of their main academic courses (Tema 1988).

This tendency endorses the students' suspicions about their being victimised or prematurely evaluated after which

the support programme then becomes entangled in the general discriminatory ethos which prevails in the society at large. The student sees the programme as just one more means whereby the powers that be pass unfair judgement on him and deny him equality with other students... this feeling is buttressed by the fact that the division of students who are regarded as candidates for academic support usually coincides with existing racial divisions (Tema 1988).

While this might have been the case in 1988, there does seem to be a changing perception on the part of students at some universities, for example the University of the Witwatersrand, where students and tutors are reporting positive reactions (Kotecha/Rutherford:1989) to programmes such as the Wits Integrated Study Programme for Engineering (WISPE), in which students involved have achieved a substantially higher pass rate (see 1.1.2) than before its inception (Kotecha/ Rutherford: 1989). Further recognition of the value of the ASP at the University of the Witwatersrand may be gleaned from the fact that increasing numbers of English first language (E1L) students now attend the programme. Similar findings regarding attitudinal change towards the SPEN Unit at UNIBO are reported in the evaluation of the Unit.

Interviews with students indicated quite clearly that students' attitudes to SPEN do change over time. Students view the course more positively towards the end of their first year than they do at the beginning of that year, and, students beyond their first year say that while they were doing the course they did not realise its value as much as they do in their second or third year of study.
(Agar:1990b)

2.3.1 Issues considered relevant by ESL staff

In a study carried out by Agar (1987) on the needs of underprepared students at the University of Witwatersrand, seven major issues were identified based on the number of staff references made to them in their responses to his survey. In order of priority, they were as follows:

1. **The need for academic skills** - eg. study skills, note-taking and making, exam techniques and preparation, essay writing, problem solving, time management, use of the library and other resources, analysing, synthesising and interpreting.
2. **The need for language skills** - eg. both written and spoken communication in the English language, reading ability and comprehension ability.
3. **The need for a different approach to learning** - eg. an independent critical approach rather than dependent rote-learning / memorization.
4. **The need for better knowledge of subject matter.**
5. **Material needs** - eg. finance for pocket money, accommodation, fees, book resources and transport.
6. **Psychological needs** - eg. self-esteem, motivation, confidence.
7. **The need for a reduction in workload.**

(Agar:1987)

2.3.2 Staff reinforcement of language skills

Students' perceptions of their own language problems are not necessarily apparent to them immediately. As mentioned in 2.2, ESL students, not unreasonably, consider themselves competent on their admission to a tertiary institution. In many cases, only after they have experienced difficulty in meeting a required standard of English (see section 2.4.2) do they perceive their need for assistance.

Directly related to the student's decision that he/she might need assistance is the extent to which these skills are reinforced by lecturers in the mainstream programme. Students' resistance to ASP would probably be reduced sooner rather than later if they perceived the relevance of the skills taught to them. Unless lecturers demand these skills particularly during the student's first year of study, it is less likely that the student will perceive the need for them. One of the points made in the evaluation of the SPEN programme at UNIBO was that:

resistance would be lessened if students became aware of their needs early in their first year. This could be done through a more subject specific approach in SPEN and if what was taught in SPEN was reinforced more regularly, and more systematically by other departments.

(Agar:1990b)

In addition to the question of reinforcement is the issue of transferability. The degree to which the transfer of language skills to mainstream subjects is likely to occur must be related to the extent to which these subjects, and the lecturers teaching them, require the student to use these skills. It follows that the effectiveness and relevance of what is taught in the ESL programme is largely dependent on the level of demand for and reinforcement of these skills in mainstream courses.

In terms of the goals of this research, identification of perceived language-related difficulties experienced by ESL students could contribute towards an increased awareness of them among lecturing staff. Any increase in awareness is a positive development and would contribute towards the process of responding to the students' problems in an appropriate way.

A further issue related to the goals of this research is the debate about whether ASP should or should not be more subject-

specific. With the current development of 'a working educational model for educationally disadvantaged students at Technikon Natal' (ESL Unit Annual Report:1991), the relevance of student and staff perceptions with regard to what are perceived as language-related problems, should be considered. In the wider South African context, it appears that student attitudes and the question of the degree of transferability of skills with regard to weak students are two central issues that should be considered.

National experience and research however indicates a growing preference for subject-specific courses, but most of the courses in this context are courses which attempt to blend the teaching and learning of both language and academic skills and processes. General courses are questioned largely on the grounds of the transferability of content skills and processes. That is, it is questionable whether the content skills and processes learnt in a general course are transferable to other courses in the curriculum. In the South African context student attitudes to general courses are also a strong consideration in the general-subject-specific debate (Agar 1990b).

In addition to the issues relating to subject-specificness is the question of whether academic support programmes offered are designed to teach academic skills or language skills. While one or another area might take precedence in various courses or for individuals, the two are essentially inseparable. Agar (1990b) illustrates this as follows:

...a common academic skill is the ability to **compare or contrast**. The basic part of this skill relates to understanding the words and using the correct grammar and sentence construction which are part of what is necessary to be able to compare and contrast.

The way in which this affects a student's perception of his/her problem might be demonstrated as follows: a student who is asked

to compare a list of words eg. synonyms, might be able to perform the function without difficulty because he/she is able to 'come to grips with the pure language of comparison' (Agar:1990b). The same student might, however, experience difficulty if asked to compare conflicting arguments regarding a particular viewpoint. The reason for this might be that the student finds it more difficult to apply the conceptual skill of comparison, ie. 'to compare things which are in fact comparable' (Agar:1990b). Hence the student's perceptions of their ability to compare may not reflect their ability in the context of academic use.

2.4 The general deficiency model

The focus of the general deficiency model is predominantly on what students do not have rather than what they do have. It endorses a process of providing the student with academic and cognitive skills which it assumes the student does not already possess.

The reason for including reference to the deficiency model, is that in terms of this research, if perceptions held by staff regarding language-related problems have been based on preconceived views related to deficiencies in ESL students' language, evidence in the findings will partially indicate the extent to which this view is inaccurate. Further reason for including reference to some of the issues surrounding the 'general deficiency model', is that it is from the basis of a 'deprivationist' model (Starfield:1990a) that the ESL programme at the this Technikon is carried out.

As already stated, there is evidence which suggests that DET education has in fact not provided pupils with sufficient

language and learning skills (Starfield:1991; MacDonald;1990). If this is the case, then through no fault of their own, it is not unfair to say that these students are viewed in terms of a deficiency model.

While the term 'deficiency' has perjorative connotations, specific skills which the students lack need not evoke this negative image. For example, students might lack a particular CALP skill (Cummins:1984) such as scanning, or the ability to evaluate an argument. This is not the same as referring to a 'general deficiency' which might imply broader social and educational deprivation.

Tema (1988) cites ASP 'as a function of the general deficiency model'.

Some writers came to locate the cause of the African students' underachievement in the nature of their cultural background. They believed that the non-technological nature of the traditional African culture does not provide the conceptual framework for effective learning in science. Horrell (1968) for example had this to say with regard to the black child's ability to learn science :

As compared with white children, African children have handicaps to overcome which result from their poorer cultural backgrounds and environmental experience.
(Horrell, M. 1968 :Bantu Education, Cape Town: Cape and Transvaal printers.)

Tema's reference here to Horrell's work serves to illustrate the point she makes, that some people ascribe a student's underachievement to his/her cultural background - which in this case presumes an African cultural background to be deficient.

Underlying her comment is the suggestion that 'imprecise, unclear, inaccurate and even prejudiced evidence' often appears to be the basis upon which academic support programmes were developed. If this is the case, it is little wonder that the students participating in ESL programmes view them negatively. In effect a vicious circle is initiated in that students who have language problems and a negative perception of the ESL programme, might not perceive the ESL Unit as providing an acceptable solution. Meanwhile the problem does not disappear and the possibility that staff might perceive the 'disadvantaged' student as being uninterested increases. It seems that under these circumstances, identification of the perceptions held by both staff and students regarding language-related problems could be both positive and relevant to future developments in the ESL Unit.

Tema herself has questioned the use of terms such as "poor background" and "deprived or disadvantaged background" as being

convenient enough to convey our notions yet they hide within them a number of undefined assumptions. What is it that is poor about our students' backgrounds? What is it that they have been deprived of? What did they learn from those backgrounds? Answers to these questions call for research into the **real** nature of our students' backgrounds in order that our remedial and support programmes can be meaningful (Tema 1988).

The description of ESL students studying in predominantly white educational institutions relates to the difficulty experienced by educators in these institutions in trying to understand the problems these students experience, where issues of an educational, psychological, sociological and political nature combine to a point where conceptually different areas blend. The result is that descriptions of students studying in the above

environment often appear to become ideologically loaded.

Moll (1987) has pointed out that the deficit model includes a number of concepts such as: 'disadvantaged student' or 'so-called disadvantaged student'; 'handicapped student'; 'student who suffers from a developmental deficit'; 'culturally deprived student'; 'underprepared student'. He makes the point that, at best, these terms are euphemisms for educationally oppressed black students.

The issue of concern here is that the terminology reflects a view that ESL students automatically have a conceptual and cognitive deficit. This sort of thinking is probably borne out of the belief that because the DET has failed to provide students with basic essential learning skills, these and related cognitive skills are lacking and hence one should work from the deficit model and try to provide students with the missing abilities.

Slonimsky and Turton (1985) counter this view:

Our view is not a deficit model. We believe that students generally do have essential cognitive skills and don't need to be 'given' them. In our view the DET has effectively trained students not to use these skills in an academic setting by its emphasis on rote learning and uncritical regurgitation, which are components of surface processing. Deep processing has not been encouraged in DET schools and has probably been discouraged. As a result, the cognitive skills involved are not often used in school work.

(Slonimsky / Turton : 1985)

This suggests that these students have the inherent ability to cope as well as any other student within the system, and that the general deficiency model is fundamentally a flawed one. The conclusion one might draw from this is that all students have the necessary skills, but not all students have had these skills developed.

In conclusion to issues relating to the deficit model, Tema identifies what she considers needs to be done, but acknowledges that there is no easy solution.

The most important challenge to ASP's seems to be the ability to show students their weaknesses without appearing to be pulling the carpet from under their feet, ie. to get them to acknowledge their weaknesses with their egos intact (Tema 1988).

In terms of an overall response to the general deficiency model and its relevance to this research, it is important not to lose sight of the feelings of individuals. Negative perceptions borne out of educationally elitist viewpoints, such as the general deficiency model, can only negatively affect the self-esteem of a student. A mutual awareness of perceptions regarding the existing language-related problems is a constructive starting point in the reduction of those difficulties and 'conflicting perceptions of language problems [which reduce] the effectiveness of responses to them' (Tema:1988).

2.4.1 Staff sensitisation

The lack of reinforcement of language skills mentioned already in section 2.3.1 and again in 5.3 is fairly prevalent. Correcting this imbalance is no small task, and one of the recommendations in the SPEN evaluation is extremely relevant here.

One of the fundamental stumbling blocks in SPEN's effectiveness is the apparent lack of reinforcement of academic and language skills in other disciplines. Part of this lack of reinforcement may lie in pure lack of awareness, and part in a lack of knowledge and confidence in how to reinforce such skills. Whichever the case, it is essential that staff in general become more familiar with the content of SPEN.

(Agar:1990b)

The level of awareness of the content, or even of the existence of the ESL programme, seems in many cases to determine the degree to which the staff support it, but motivation for support of an ESL programme is probably also related to what the individual lecturer is prepared to accept as an 'acceptable level' of English. It is important that staff awareness is increased with regard to language-related problems ESL students experience, and closely related to this is the debate on what is or is not an 'acceptable level' of English. As can be seen from the findings in section 4.3.4 (q5 and q9), students and staff had quite different perceptions of the abilities involved in terms of verbal and written expression. The notion of acceptable levels of expression is a relevant one and should be considered, especially in view of the expressed perceptions recorded in this research.

2.4.2 The notion of 'acceptable levels' of English

The definition of an acceptable level of English is fraught with emotional and political undertones in the South African context. Identifying or recognising linguistic differences between E1L and E2L students and suggesting that there are distinctions between them has been referred to as 'linguistic racialism' (Gardiner: 1990), because in the South African context, 'E1L' is synonymous with white students, and 'ESL' with black students. The argument that this is politically divisive is supported by Young (1988) and he further suggests that:

everybody should learn English as English, allowing it, in the process, to become a rich, natural South African English which tolerates all the spoken varieties used by 30 million inhabitants.

(Young: 1988)

While this is an attractive ideal, it does not address the question of written English. Although Young has stated that there

should be 'one agreed written standard of English to maintain **maximum intelligibility**', the concept is not defined. Peirce (1991) points out that it is impossible to define **maximum intelligibility** without reference to a given audience. She suggests that:

if this audience is an international audience, then standard English might be considered maximally intelligible; if the audience is the broad spectrum of English speakers in South Africa, the multiple forms of English might be considered intelligible in written form.

(Peirce: 1991)

Another issue directly related to what 'acceptable levels' of English are, is the 'gatekeeping role' that matriculation examinations, and especially those in English, play in the control of access to jobs, universities, and colleges (Peirce:1990b). The fact of the matter is that

Unless policy dictates otherwise, university admission officers tend to favour students who have good command of standard English over those with limited command.

(Peirce:1991)

The admission policy at Technikon Natal varies from department to department, but subject to the stipulated institutional and departmental criteria being met, the issue of language competence with regard to ESL students remains at the discretion of the head of department, who may or may not require the student to write a language proficiency assessment which is administered by the ESL Unit.

2.5 Overview

In this chapter, selected issues which are considered relevant to this research with regard to language-related perceptions within this Technikon, have been considered in the light of some of the current literature on them. These include factors which might influence the students' perceptions on their entry to the

Technikon, from the initial language proficiency assessment to why they do not see the need for attendance of a programme which does not appear to have any relevance to the courses for which they are enrolled. The matter of competent levels of verbal E2L communicative skills and that of less competence in E2L written discourse is seen as an influencing factor with regard to student perceptions of 'remedial' ESL courses. As this is the current standpoint from which ESL assistance is offered at Technikon Natal, it follows that the general deficiency model is endorsed which in turn probably influences students' perceptions of the assistance available. Issues such as lack of staff reinforcement of what is offered, the need to create more awareness of the ESL function and the notion of 'acceptable levels' of English, are all considered matters which affect perceptions of language-related problems and are commented on here with regard to the effect they might have on the situation at Technikon Natal.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOD

3.0 Introduction

One of the main goals of this research is to contribute towards the improvement of English Second Language programmes at Technikon Natal. It is hoped that this might be done by revealing the perceptions held by the lecturers and students with regard to language-related problems which students experience.

The interpretive basis of the research

The selection of a single suitable method of collecting and analysing data created a dilemma. It had been decided that numeric data could be quantified and measured relatively easily, but it was felt that this method of arithmetical quantification of statistics did not take into account the 'human' aspect of what was being surveyed, ie. perceptions of language-related issues. In order to resolve this problem, it was decided to utilise the applicable aspects of two different paradigms of interpretation of data.

The nomothetic paradigm

The nomothetic model, in which 'data can be measured or quantified and from which causal deductions can be made' (Ochsner: 1979), was partially applicable. The responses could be quantified, and certain deductions could be made on the basis of this measurement, so from this point of view the process was in keeping with the underlying tenet of nomothetic science. However, the exclusive nature of a nomothetic method of research and interpretation (Ochsner :1979) was not entirely

satisfactory for two reasons. Firstly, it was felt that it was not always feasible to try to quantify numerically something such as perceptions because of their partly intangible nature. It was felt that when dealing with **perceptions**, this method of analysis (nomothetic interpretation) seemed to be too absolute and exclusive. In addition to this, Ochsner also includes nomothetic research as a sub-section of what he terms 'experimental' research. Since this was not experimental in the causal sense of the word, there was a need to view the quantified results from an alternative point of view.

It was decided that as a nomothetic basis would be used to quantify as far as might be reasonable, the responses to the questions as percentages, the interpretation of these results, while being based on numeric values (percentages), would be seen very much in the 'human' context in which they occurred. In other words, data would be scientifically measured, but its interpretation would allow latitude for human nature.

The hermeneutic paradigm

It was felt that the application of hermeneutic interpretive principles (Odman in Keeves: 1988) would be appropriate to this research because while the response to questions asked might be easily quantified numerically, there would still be the need to take into account the less directly observable factors which possibly affect responses, such as emotion, prejudice, pride and so on. Ochsner (1979) makes the point that:

Because material facts "clearly" pertain to a physical world, research reports can be standardised. In other words, a single format will serve as a window through which an empirical reality is described. But in hermeneutic studies the data has meaning imbued by its form: the window fogs up. And because hermeneutic facts are not directly observed, we must teleologically deduce them.

The basis of the selection of subsequent questions in the follow-up questionnaires (cf 3.3.1; 4.3) was the numeric frequencies of responses (Brown: 1988) from the initial data. These frequencies influenced the selection of questions in the subsequent student and staff surveys, the assumption being that higher frequencies indicated greater concern of the respondents (McBeath et al:1981). On these grounds the research may be said to be partly dependent on nomothetic principles. While this explains the means used to derive the material used in the subsequent research, the interpretive basis is explained in terms of the following context, where Ochsner (1979) called for a

means to alternate between two kinds of research; one for objective, physical data and one for subjective, unobservable facts.' Hermeneutic science (literally, "the art of interpretation") does not have a single form, and implies that no single method of inquiry applies to all events, [and] human events must be interpreted teleologically, that is, according to their final ends.

3.1 Outline of research procedure and structure

The research was conducted in two major phases. During the first phase two separate pilot questionnaires were compiled: the student questionnaire and the staff questionnaire. The data was analysed and issues which elicited a response of more than 50% from the sample group provided the basis for the selection of questions for further examination in the follow-up questionnaires compiled for both staff and students. In the follow-up questionnaires, the selection of questions was based on areas of common concern to both staff and students, as indicated in responses to the pilot questionnaires. The questions asked in the follow-up questionnaire were essentially the same for both students and staff but were phrased differently for each

group. The purpose of this was to allow a comparison to be made of the same issues when viewed from each group's standpoint.

Examples: (from the student follow-up questionnaire : appendix G)

12. Do you think difficulties you experience with language could be more easily solved if they were attended to by someone from the department offering that subject ?

(from the staff follow-up questionnaire : appendix H)

12. Do you think ESL students' subject-specific language-related problems could be partially solved if more help were available to them on a departmental level ?
-

3.1.1 Collection of the data: survey questionnaires

The research carried out was essentially survey research (Johnson:1992). The survey, as a means of educational research, was considered a suitable method because it appeared to fulfil the purpose of the researcher's requirements, which was to establish the extent of a variety of perceptions held by the groups surveyed. Data-gathering techniques included the use of those already mentioned: structured questionnaires, self-completion questionnaires (some of which were supervised and others which were not), as well as semi-structured interviews (Cohen and Manion: 1985).

In addition to this, the selection of surveys as a method of research was favoured as

they can be very useful for providing a broad view of issues [and further] they can be particularly useful for capturing the essence of trends and are useful for planning. (Johnson:1992)

The structure of the initial questionnaire was based on formats which had been used before in research of a similar nature (Wilson:1984 ; Agar;1986) and which had been found to be suitable in the South African context. The research referred to here relates to studies in which assessments of students'

problems have been carried out on a number of different levels. Wilson (1984) explored what he referred to as 'adjustment problems' of undergraduate students at the University of Zambia. Agar (1986) has conducted interviews focussing on student perceptions of problems they faced at the University of the Witwatersrand. On the basis of these two previous studies, both of which incorporated the use of questionnaires supported by student interviews, a pilot questionnaire utilising a similar format was designed to focus more specifically on issues which related to the perceptions of ESL students and staff, of L2 problems (see Appendix B).

As with a questionnaire compiled at the University of the Witwatersrand by Agar and Mashishi (1986) which pertained to perceptions of ASP, each question included a combination of fixed and open response formats (McBeath et al:1981). The fixed response format utilised a general rating scale which included a qualitative factor, ie a 'scaled response' (Cohen and Manion:1985) indicating the severity of the problem posed. Because the purpose of the questionnaire was to attempt to measure attitudes based on individuals' responses to a series of statements, a 'scaling technique' (Anderson in Keeves: 1988) was considered appropriate. This format, using a semantic-differential (McBeath et al: 1981), was suitable because:

'these scales permit students to express the intensity of their opinions, attitudes and interests'.
(McBeath et al:1981)

In addition to this, a reason for the choice selected was requested in the form of an open response. A further 'fill-in response' item (Cohen and Manion: 1985) added to this format was the request for recommended solutions from the students themselves. An example appears below.

	A	B	C	D
	... a serious problem for me.	..a problem for me	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.
1a. Expressing myself correctly when I write English is..	A	B	C	D
1b. because ...				
1c. It would help me if...				

The questions were restricted to what were considered language-specific issues rather than the more general issues (such as emotional, logistic or material support) which relate to ASP on a wider scale. The sample group was restricted to students who were currently participating regularly in the ESL programme. At the time this constituted a sample group of sixty seven students.

In order to provide a basis for the descriptive commentary in the analysis of the data, numeric measurements of the responses to each of the questionnaires were made. This provided a degree of measurement, or 'frequency' (Brown:1988) of the extent to which the students or the staff surveyed responded in relation to the questions asked. Brown defines frequency as:

just this commonsense idea. It indicates how many people did the same thing or performed a certain task in the same way. (Brown:1988)

While comparisons were made in some cases, there was no attempt to make any correlations in the statistical sense of the word. The technique of using frequencies was considered useful in the following light:

frequencies are useful because they can be used to collapse, or summarize information about scores

received by a group.

(Brown:1988)

Because the research was descriptive, and based on surveys, it follows that analysis of the results would fall into the category of 'descriptive analyses' (Johnson:1992). The results of this sort of survey were reported in frequencies (ie. the actual number responding in a certain way) and percentages. These 'descriptive statistics' are merely 'numbers that summarize the data' (Johnson:1992).

3.1.2 Sample population

'Specification of the population' (Cohen and Manion:1985) to which the enquiry was directed required that selective criteria be the basis for determining the sample groups.

Because there were two different categories of sample populations, ie. the staff and the students, this aspect of the surveys was determined using 'stratified sampling' (Cohen and Manion:1985) as a criterion. With regard to the first staff sample group, statistics were obtained from the Computer Services Department at Technikon Natal, and where possible, staff were selected from departments in which the greatest number of ESL students were registered. This provided the researcher with a common factor in the staff sample which might be seen in this respect as a 'homogeneous group' (Cohen and Manion: 1985), in that they were all lecturers with experience of teaching ESL students. Similarly, with regard to the students, only first year ESL student groups were selected as, according to lecturers in the ESL Unit, most of the students attending the ESL programme came from this group. Finally, access to students in this group was easier as the majority of ESL students are in their first year of study.

The second (follow-up) survey was also directed at the same two separate groups (staff who lectured to ESL students and ESL students themselves), but in this survey the population was extended.

3.2 Design of the pilot questionnaires

The purpose of this questionnaire was to facilitate the design of a follow-up questionnaire. It was hoped that the initial selection of questions would provide a sufficient range from which areas of concern would become apparent. This would enable a selection of questions to be made for the follow-up questionnaire.

3.2.1 The student pilot questionnaire

3.2.1.1 Compilation of questions

The source of the basis for the design of the student pilot questionnaire was discussed earlier in 3.1.1 as was the motivation supporting the selection of a descriptive survey and questionnaires as instruments for this research. The compilation of the actual questions is part of the methodology and is therefore discussed here.

As the questionnaire was a self-completion one, it was important that its design should 'minimize potential errors from respondents' (Cohen and Manion: 1985). In an effort to do this, leading questions, 'highbrow' questions and complex questions were avoided. As stated (3.3.1), each question comprised three sections (a scaled response and two open-ended responses requesting a reason and a possible solution), the reason for this being that more information than a simple response on a scaled basis was required. As discussed in the criticism of the

design (3.4.1), this format proved to be too complex and was a mistake.

In the design of the questionnaire, matters such as its appearance, the clarity of the wording and simplicity of the design were considered. As it turned out, it appears these factors were misjudged. Instructions were issued at the beginning of the questionnaire, and repeated at the top of each page.

In order to present the results as objectively as possible, 'triangulation' (Cohen and Manion : 1985) was applied in the data gathering. The data in its raw form has been retained and preserved in order to enable the researcher and outsiders to cross-check findings. In addition to this, a further check included inviting the opinions of lecturers at the Technikon who were neither included nor interviewed in the sample groups surveyed. In effect this meant "putting up his interpretive account to 'insiders' to see whether it occasions the 'shock of recognition'" (Jenkins, D., 1976 in Gale, F. 1989). It was also felt that triangulation of results would increase the validity of the findings.

The questions asked were phrased as simply and unambiguously as possible, bearing in mind the possible misinterpretation that could arise. Richterich and Chancerel (1980) cite an enquiry into language use in an Austrian mini-census programme carried out in 1974, and were at pains to mention that:

One lesson that had to be learnt from the mini-census was, however, that the questions asked in such a framework must be few and utterly transparent.
(Richterich and Chancerel : 1980)

3.2.1.2 Distribution of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was anonymous and was administered through the

ESL Unit with the assistance of ESL lecturers who were able to answer any language queries. Participation was entirely voluntary. Students were permitted to take the questionnaires away with them if they wished to answer them in their own time, or they could respond during time set aside to do so.

Problems with this questionnaire and difficulties experienced by the students are commented on respectively in the section under 'Structure and language' (3.3.3), 'Criticisms of research methods' (3.4) and in the analysis of the data (chapter 4).

3.2.2 The staff pilot questionnaire

3.2.2.1 Selection of staff sample group

A relatively small number of staff (20) were selected for the pilot survey. Staff were selected mainly on the basis of those whose courses contained large numbers of ESL students. This selection was based on figures from the statistics brochure published by the Computer Services Department (see Table 2 for distribution and ranking of departments). Lecturers were selected from 13 departments which included 7 out of 12 departments in which 63.2% (542) of the total number of ESL students were enrolled. Other reasons for their selection included their availability and willingness, and the contact and experience these lecturers had had in teaching classes with ESL students. This was considered valuable as their responses would be based upon their experience. In addition to asking selected academic staff members to complete a preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix C), the content of the questionnaire and reasons for the request were clarified with each participant.

3.2.2.2 Selection of questions

All questions asked in the pilot staff survey were related to perceptions of language issues, and responses revealed the perceptions held by those questioned. The main purpose of the questionnaire however was to gather sufficient information from which the composite follow-up questionnaire could be compiled. Some questions not specifically about language were included in the questionnaire, in order to gauge perceptions of broader issues which are language-related. For example, some of the questions (e.g. 7-11) related to the staff's awareness of the function of the ESL Unit, and the extent to which they were involved or interested in becoming involved in an intervention programme. These questions are justified because lack of departmental involvement has been one of the major problems in establishing support for an effective ESL Unit at this Technikon. Hence staff responses to these questions were seen as important indicators of the extent to which they perceived themselves becoming directly involved in dealing with language-related issues.

3.2.2.3 Structure of the questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions, 2 of which were selective responses and the remainder open-ended, fill-in type questions. The reason for selecting mainly open-ended questions was to avoid 'directing' responses in any way or into a particular category. Where selective responses have been required, the questions were such that no other responses would have been possible anyway and the questions themselves were therefore not 'directive'. The purpose was simply to establish a positive or negative condition from which conclusions could be

drawn.

3.2.2.4 Distribution of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed personally, and each respondent was given the opportunity to question its content or ask for clarification on a particular item. The purpose of the questionnaire was clarified, and individuals were assured that their identity would be treated confidentially.

3.3 Design of the follow-up questionnaires

The purpose of the follow-up questionnaires was to sharpen the focus on the issues being scrutinised and to validate the suppositions through an extension of the sample base.

An analysis of the data from both pilot questionnaires indicated that there were responses which tended to be more frequent than others. Using the information from the pilot surveys, a follow-up questionnaire was compiled to produce data that could be quantitatively analysed. The questions asked in the follow-up questionnaire were the same for both students and staff. The only difference was the way in which they were phrased.

3.3.1 Selection of questions

The selection of questions was based on the responses from the two separate initial questionnaires which reflected percentages that indicated a high response to the question asked. In short, high frequency responses were the basis of subsequent questions. It was found that the 19 questions posed in the original student questionnaire could be loosely grouped into five areas of concern, on the basis of the number of responses to that question. Although these groupings might have been anticipated during the

compilation of the student pilot questionnaire, the frequencies of the responses and the degree to which concern was expressed about each of the areas surveyed, confirmed independently that they existed. The responses in which students confirmed that a 'problem' or some difficulty was perceived to exist, are indicated in the table below.

TABLE 4 - GROUPING OF STUDENT RESPONSES TO PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

Percentages of student responses to perceived problem areas.	%

Writing essays or doing assignments.	76
Understanding the English used in textbooks or articles.	76
Understanding what is said in class.	75
Expressing myself correctly when speaking English.	72

Taking effective notes during lectures.	68
Reading through material quickly or scanning for information	68
The amount of academic work I have to get through.	68

Understanding what is required of me when I do an assignment.	56
Understanding the content of the notes I am given.	56
Expressing myself correctly when I write English.	54

Discussing academic issues with fellow students	48
Verbally taking part in tutorials.	36
The amount of interaction between staff and students.	32

The level of English used by lecturers.	20
Attending extra English classes on campus.	20
Following the instructions given during lectures.	18
English as the medium of instruction.	16
Finding out where to get help in English.	16
The lecturer's attitude towards me.	12

The questions included in the second questionnaire were by and large drawn from the responses above 48%. The reason for the inclusion of a question relating to the level of English used by lecturers was the similarity in the nature of the question to that of the first question in the original questionnaire, ie. 'Understanding what is said in class...'. In the original questionnaire, 75% of respondents acknowledged that they did experience a problem of some sort in this regard, but when the question was posed slightly differently a little further on in

the same questionnaire ('The level of English used by the lecturer is a problem for me...'), 80 % maintained that the level of English used was NOT a problem for them. It was hoped therefore, that the inclusion of the question in the second questionnaire (again in two different forms) would indicate whether any greater clarity emerged in the responses to the subsequent questionnaire.

Another issue which emerged from the initial questionnaire issued to the staff and which was followed up in the second questionnaire, was the degree to which the ESL Unit at Technikon Natal would be able to contend with the problems ESL students experienced across the curriculum (without departmental involvement). Of the staff respondents, 73.8% felt that the ESL Unit could not cope on its own with the problems students encountered. A number of students indicated in response to question 20 of the initial questionnaire (an open-ended response question), that they would find subject-specific assistance helpful, and for this reason, questions 12 and 13 of the second questionnaire were included to ascertain how widespread this feeling was.

3.3.2 Extension of the sample group

The sample groups were substantially extended. The staff sample was extended from 20 to 45 and the student sample was extended from 67 to 255. The reason for this extension was that once certain issues had been identified among students and staff in the pilot questionnaire, they could then be put to a larger sample population to see if they still held true. Another reason for the decision to extend the student sample group to approximately four times that of the original group, was to include the opinions of

ESL students not necessarily involved in the Technikon's ESL programme. It was decided to extend the staff sample group to include as many lecturers as possible who lectured or had lectured ESL students and not to survey only those who were currently lecturing to the bulk of first year ESL students.

Prior to the circulation of the second questionnaire directed at the student sample, it was submitted to each of the two lecturers in the ESL Unit for their comments on its content and wording. The opinions of both lecturers were taken into account in its final compilation.

3.3.3 Structure and language

The length of the student pilot questionnaire, which included 115 responses, proved to be excessive. The complicated structure of the questions requiring selective, graded and open-ended responses also caused delays, and might have been a reason for the relatively low response rate (37.3%). The staff pilot questionnaire, which consisted of 12 open-ended questions, was not considered by the researcher to be too long, but there were suggestions from some staff members that it had been too time-consuming and that a simplified format would have been preferable. The extension of the sample group necessitated a simplification of the structure and a reduction in the number of questions.

3.3.4 Resistance to questionnaires

An additional factor which could not be ignored in the compilation of the follow-up questionnaire and which influenced the structure thereof, was the emergence of noticeable resistance to answering questionnaires. Probable reasons for this resistance are given below.

A directive from the Rector of Technikon Natal to put forward a proposal for the implementation of an Educational Development Programme capable of assisting students across the curriculum, resulted in an integrated effort involving staff from Staff Development, the Counselling and Careers Unit and the ESL Unit. A questionnaire was formulated which attempted to identify certain areas of difficulty experienced by ESL students. The circulation of this questionnaire, while independent of the study being carried out and reported on here, appeared to create a certain amount of resistance among the students surveyed. The reason for their resistance soon became apparent.

The original questionnaire designed for the pilot survey of this study, based on Wilson (1984) and Agar (1986), was taken into consideration by Staff Development in the compilation of their questionnaire. In the questionnaire compiled, similar material to that used in this study's original questionnaire was included. While it possibly created the effect of this survey being repetitive, it served to reaffirm that questions asked were probably appropriate to the circumstances which prevail. A copy of the questionnaire compiled is attached in the appendix (see appendix D).

The circulation of this language-related questionnaire on campus created a degree of resistance among both staff and students in responding to subsequent questionnaires. In an attempt to minimise the effects of this resistance, the follow-up questionnaire was designed in such a way as to reduce the number of questions asked and to make the response-style much simpler. No open-ended questions were asked and respondents were simply required to give a 'yes' or 'no' response to the questions which

were selected and included on the basis of the issues already mentioned.

The simplified structure of the follow-up questionnaire using the type of question which requires only the selection of a preferred answer produces a limited response in terms of the data it yields, but it was considered appropriate for a number of reasons.

- * a fairly substantial amount of data had already been elicited from the sample groups in each of the respective pilot questionnaires.
- * the responses from the staff pilot questionnaire supported the concerns held by students, and these responses had been fairly elaborate.
- * with the data-base established, it was felt that the follow-up questionnaires did not need to be more elaborate to elicit more information, but instead they should be simpler to confirm the responses from the pilot surveys.
- * administration of the survey to an extended sample group was made more manageable.
- * one of the purposes of the follow-up questionnaires was to provide data which could be numerically quantified for comparison.

3.3.5 Distribution of the follow-up questionnaires

3.3.5.1 Staff

Once again, the questionnaires were distributed personally to each staff member, and where possible, collected personally. This procedure encouraged staff concerned to respond soon after the distribution of the questionnaires. The effectiveness of this was reflected in a 93.3% response from the staff. Confidentiality was guaranteed as before, although the format of the questionnaire effectively did this as lecturers were not required to identify themselves. However all questionnaires were identifiable by the researcher as they were numbered so as to enable him to request

respondents who had not completed them, to do so.

3.3.5.2 Students

Distribution of the follow-up questionnaire amongst students was done on a non-specific basis. Students were approached after lectures or in the library, the refectory, in recreational areas, in corridors and wherever else they were available, and requested to complete the questionnaire. In addition to this, questionnaires were given to lecturers with large numbers of ESL students in their groups, and they were requested to allow five minutes of the period during which the students could fill in their responses and return them to the lecturer. Questionnaires were also numbered to enable a record to be kept of which groups had returned the questionnaires and which had not. Of the 255 questionnaires distributed, 103 were returned (a percentage of 40.4%).

Students were always asked to complete the questionnaire on a voluntary basis. A considerable degree of resistance was experienced from ESL students studying Journalism, many of whom refused outright to complete the student questionnaire. While these students 'en masse' refused to be drawn on the reasons for their refusal, individuals indicated that they were not prepared to do anything from which 'other people' might benefit. Other students felt that in spite of having furnished responses to questionnaires previously, 'nothing had been achieved', and subsequently refused to co-operate any further. Further comment on this is made in 4.3.3.

3.3.6 Analysis of the data

An analysis of the data was carried out on a comparative basis utilizing the results from both sources, viz. the student and staff responses to the follow-up questionnaires. On the basis of a

quantitative analysis of the responses expressed as percentages, observations were made and recorded in the form of a question-by-question commentary. A more comprehensive analysis of this data can be found under the relevant section (4.3.4).

The method of analysis was the same for the data obtained from each of the follow-up questionnaires. Once the questionnaires had been recovered from each of the sample groups, the raw data was categorised into its relevant group, ie. staff or student responses, and the number of positive and negative responses to each question was recorded (appendix H and appendix I).

3.3.6.1 Categorization of the responses

Categorization of the responses was based on a simple analysis of the frequencies (Brown:1988) of positive and negative responses to the questions asked. As suggested by Johnson (1992), it is an accepted method in survey research to analyse data 'primarily by calculating frequencies and by comparing these among groups' (Johnson:1992).

This simple comparison yielded three distinct categories of responses in which the results were 'opposite', 'split' or 'agreed'. These terms are explained below.

Compilation of results

Staff responses (appendix H) and student responses (appendix I) were compared on the basis of the number of negative responses to the questions asked (appendix J), and conversely, on the number of positive responses to the same questions (appendix K). This data (ie. the negative and the positive responses) was then set out in a comparison table (appendix L) which illustrates the

number of `opposite`, `split` and `agreed` responses.

This comparison table (appendix L) provides an overview of issues which were all considered language-related areas of concern in both groups, and presents an overall summary of the issues in the three different categories as defined below.

Definition of categories

- * `Opposite`: issues which were perceived from opposite points of view, ie. which might have been perceived positively by students and negatively by staff, or vice versa, were recorded.
- * `Split` : issues which were perceived from completely different points of view, in which students or staff indicated both positive and negative feelings, the result being that no single clear feeling was demonstrated.
- * `Agreed`: issues which were perceived by both staff and students in the same light (irrespective of whether the views held were positive or negative).

Note: A chi-squared analysis of the compared results is attached in Table 6.

3.4 Criticism of research methods

A number of problems which might have been avoided, became apparent in the processing of the data. With hindsight, the following might have been improved upon:

3.4.1 The student pilot questionnaire (appendix B)

- * The level of language used in the compilation of the student pilot questionnaire (appendix B) presented difficulties for the students in spite of the presence of an ESL lecturer to answer questions. It is possible that the idea of asking

for help might have been regarded by the student as demeaning, or at least indicative of his or her inability to understand the instructions.

- * The structure of the questionnaire was far too complex. Each question required a scaled response and then two fill-in responses. In retrospect, it seems that the researcher assumed that students were more familiar with form-filling skills than in fact they were. Difficulty with this possibly contributed to the low response rate (37%). It became apparent that the type of questionnaire most likely to return a higher response rate would be a simple option type which used simple English and required only a tick in the relevant space. This was the format used in the follow-up questionnaire.

- * The length of the questionnaire was excessive. In total, 115 responses were required, and this proved to be far too much to ask in most cases. The disadvantage of a questionnaire of this length was that many of the questions were not answered, and hence the degree of the survey's worth was probably reduced. It is possible that the extent of the unanswered responses resulted in a degree of 'nonresponse bias' (Johnson:1992), but this was not measurable. As Johnson (1992) explains, 'nonresponse can be a major source of error if those who do not respond differ in important ways from those who do'.

- * Question 14 (Would attending extra English classes on campus be a problem for you?) was probably not a valid one in the circumstances, the reason being that students in the survey group were all attending the ESL programme offered

anyway, and the response could therefore be seen only as an endorsement, at best.

3.4.2 The staff pilot questionnaire (appendix C)

- * Although the number of staff who complained was small, criticism was voiced regarding the format of the staff pilot questionnaire (appendix C). Those who complained said that they resented having to write out their responses and that a selective format would have been preferable. This type of response was, however, considered by the researcher too restrictive, hence the preference for a fill-in format. In its defence, the majority of respondents were thorough.

3.4.3 Timing of the distribution of pilot questionnaires

- * The distribution of the initial student pilot questionnaire (appendix B) was badly timed. Questionnaires were distributed five weeks before the end of the second semester. During this time student attendance had already started to decline as the semester examinations began two weeks later. It was felt that had the distribution taken place earlier in the term, there would probably have been a higher return rate than the 37% achieved.
- * The timing of the distribution of the staff pilot questionnaire was unfortunate. As stated earlier (3.3.4), there was a certain amount of resistance to the staff pilot questionnaire (appendix C) because of the prior circulation of a similar questionnaire issued by Staff Development a few days prior to the distribution of the questionnaire used by the researcher. Because of the similarity of the two

questionnaires, staff understandably appeared to be slightly resistant to the questionnaire used here. In spite of this resistance, staff were co-operative and a 93.3% return rate was achieved.

3.4.4 The staff follow-up questionnaire (appendix F)

The compilation of the questionnaire was based on five groupings of responses in which more than half the group perceived the surveyed issue as a problem. Only responses above 48% were taken into account. It might be argued that the groupings which became apparent could have been anticipated. The responses however, confirmed the existence of the perceptions and the relative extent of the concern, which could not have been predicted.

3.4.4.1 Structure of the staff follow-up questionnaire

Although no verbal complaints were received, many staff appeared dissatisfied with the restrictive nature of the structure of the follow-up questionnaire. This was apparent from a number of staff who indicated on their returns that they did not feel they were able to respond to the questions asked in such an absolute way, viz., "Yes" or "No". Many felt there should have been a third option column in which some latitude in the responses could have been allowed. Suggestions included a column headed "Sometimes", "Maybe", or "Other". With hindsight, it seemed a reasonable suggestion, and in order not to be exclusive, alternative suggestions were taken into account in the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

4.0 Introduction

The student pilot questionnaire (appendix B)

This chapter will deal with how the data was analysed, the research, and the findings which it produced. The numeric analysis of the data from the student pilot questionnaire is presented in the form of an appendix (appendix E). Findings related to this questionnaire are included in this chapter in the form of a commentary on the results of each question. This method of analysis was chosen because the pilot questionnaire was essentially methodological, and had as its purpose the generation of responses which would lead, through modification, to a follow-up questionnaire.

The staff pilot questionnaire (appendix C)

The analysis of the data from the staff pilot questionnaire, in the form of a question-by-question commentary, is included in this chapter rather than as an appendix. The reason for this is that the questions in this questionnaire were generally open-ended and consequently produced a fairly wide range of responses. These responses have as far as possible been retained in their original form so as not to alter or detract from the individual character of each one. Brief comments on each question have been made about the staff responses as these were influential in the selection of questions in the follow-up questionnaire.

The follow-up questionnaires (appendices F and G)

The numeric analysis of the data from the second half of the research which consisted of the student and staff follow-up questionnaires is presented in five appendices (appendices H,I,J,K and L). Analysis of the data is contained in a brief commentary on the responses to each of the questions.

Appendix H contains an analysis table of the staff responses and a question-by-question numerical breakdown of each one.

Appendix I contains an analysis table of the student responses and a question-by-question breakdown of each response.

Appendix J contains an analysis table of comparative negative student/staff responses as well as a question-by-question breakdown .

Appendix K contains an analysis table of comparative positive student/ staff responses and a question-by-question breakdown.

Appendix L contains an analysis of the comparison of the results from each of the individual questions asked.

Observations

Certain observations are made, relating to the administration of the surveys on issues of a logistic nature.

4.1 The student pilot questionnaire

4.1.1 The response rate

The first issue that requires comment is the low response rate to the questionnaire (25/67 or 37.3%). This was a disappointing figure, and it is attributed largely to the time of distribution of the questionnaires, ie.five weeks before the end of the first

semester, and only two weeks before the semester examinations began. In spite of the fact that not all students were involved in semester examinations, the general pre-examination fall-off in student attendance appeared to be an influential factor in the small number of questionnaires returned.

4.1.2 Observations relating to the structure and language

The structure of the questions in the questionnaire was another possible cause of the poor response rate. In spite of having taken this into account in the compilation of the questions, the difficulty students had in completing the questions indicated that the researcher had overestimated the respondents' familiarity with this sort of exercise. It became apparent that the questionnaire was too long, and in some respects too complicated to follow from a structural point of view. There were 19 questions divided into 3 parts.

The first part was a scaled response which required making a selection from one of four categories. This was followed by two subsequent open-ended fill-in questions making a sub-total of 114 responses excluding the additional last response (question 20), which was also open-ended but less structured than the previous two sub-sections, and which brought the total to 115 responses. Many students required over one hour to complete the questionnaire, but few complained about the level of language used in the actual questions.

The fact that English is a first language for the designer of the questionnaires and that they were presented to students for whom it is a second language, may have had an effect on their interpretation of the questions. In order to minimize any misinterpretation of questions, an issue which might be

considered in future research in which survey questionnaires are used to collect data from ESL students, would be the presentation of the questions in the mother tongue of the student. Furthermore, the option of answering the questions in the student's mother tongue should also be considered.

4.1.3 Method of analysis

The data was broken down into an analysis of each of the questions in their sub-sections which were :

- A.....a serious problem for me
- B.....a problem for me
- C.....a slight problem for me
- D.....NOT a problem for me

These were analysed in terms of the frequency of each response to the question, and shown as a percentage. The same process was applied in 1b in terms of the frequency of predominant reasons given for the selection of a response in 1a. Finally, in 1c, the solutions suggested were shown as a percentage in terms of their predominance of frequency. Once again, the significance of this data was the way in which the responses to the questions affected the compilation of the follow-up questionnaire. The actual analysis of the data is not included here, but is attached separately in appendix E.

4.1.4 Some general observations relating to the student pilot questionnaire

Particularly striking was the frequency of responses which indicated that the respondent did not perceive himself or herself as having a problem in a specific field, or if so, that it was only a slight one. An example of this can be seen in the responses to the questions relating to 'expression' (q5 and q6).

Students' perceptions were that they did not experience much of a problem in this area, yet the level of expression/grammar used in the response was considered by the researcher to indicate that a problem existed. (A condensed summary of the responses to the student pilot questionnaire appears below; the full record of each response appears in appendix E.)

STUDENT PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE - RESPONSE SUMMARY

	<u>Degree of seriousness (%)</u>			
	<u>serious</u>	<u>problem</u>	<u>slight</u>	<u>not</u>
1. Understanding what is said in class	0	10	70	20
2. Taking effective notes during lectures	16	32	20	32
3. Understanding the content of the notes	0	12	44	44
4. The amount of academic work I have	8	24	36	32
5. Expressing myself (in written English)	12	4	48	36
6. Expressing myself (in spoken English)	4	20	48	28
7. Reading material quickly or scanning	8	24	36	32
8. Understanding the English in textbooks	0	16	60	24
9. Verbally taking part in tutorials	16	4	16	64
10. The level of English used by lecturers	4	0	16	80
11. Interaction between staff/ students	16	0	16	68
12. Writing essays or doing assignments	4	36	36	24
13. Understanding what is required of me when I do an assignment	4	16	36	44
14. Attending extra English classes	0	0	20	80
15. Following instructions during lectures	0	8	20	72
16. Discussing academic issues with fellow students	12	12	24	52
17. English as the medium of instruction	0	0	16	84
18. Finding where to get help in English	0	12	4	84
19. The lecturer's attitude towards me	0	0	12	88
20. (This was an open-ended question.)	-	-	-	-

Student responses were sometimes ingenuous with regard to the types of solutions suggested (see appendix E, section 'c' of each question). The simplicity of the responses in this category, in some cases, forces one to consider these suggestions as possible (if not obvious) solutions to the problems faced. For example, a typical response to question 12 (see appendix B, page 7), "Writing essays or doing assignments is...A...B...C...or D", to which a student might respond 'A' (ie 'is a serious problem for me'), has stated under 12c (the suggested solution), 'It would help me if... I had more practice writing assignments'.

On the face of it, 'more practice' might seem the natural solution; it is not an unreasonable suggestion, provided the 'practice' were supervised appropriately.

Perhaps it was unreasonable to request solutions from students as this implies that they already understand fully the nature of their problems, but the inclusion of the section in the questionnaire was deliberate so as not to exclude sources of possibly useful input. At worst, interested parties can at least note what students consider helpful even if nothing very new was stated.

Other apparently contradictory and inconsistent statements made were responses which claimed, for example, that 'the level of English used in lectures (question 10a) was 'NOT a problem for me' yet the same student in response to question 1a ('Understanding what is said in class'), maintained that this was a problem. However, one must consider the possibility here that the student understood the language but not the concept being discussed during the lecture. The same student also claimed that writing assignments was 'NOT a problem' for him which might be

the case, but which seemed unlikely in the light of his other responses. Once again, the issue arose of students who claimed not to have language problems, yet their written responses appeared to indicate the existence of those problems.

During the process of data reduction, a pattern which became apparent was that students who had responded in the 'D' category (...is NOT a problem for me) tended not to respond to any other sub-sections of the question. This might be understandable in that perceiving themselves not to have a problem in any given area, no further response was necessary.

Students seemed loath to concede that they **did** have problems, and where they admitted to them, the degree of severity often appeared to be played down. This observation is based on the level of expression, vocabulary, depth of understanding of the question, the generally low standard of grammar and the level of fluency used by the respondents in their responses.

4.1.5 Commentary on the questions

Question 1

Understanding what is said in class

The majority of students (70%) expressed a problem here. The major reasons cited included a lack of understanding of the terminology used (32%), the pace of delivery being too fast (20%), and the volume of material being too great (16%). The solutions suggested were varied, but most indicated the need for extra tuition in reading and writing skills, time to revise, and clearer explanations of the terminology/vocabulary used in lectures.

Question 2

Taking effective notes during lectures

68% of those surveyed expressed that they had a problem in this area to a greater or lesser extent. Reasons for this perception included an inability to write quickly enough (20%), an inability to listen and write simultaneously (20%), the pace of delivery being too fast (20%), and an inability to translate as they listened (12%). Suggested solutions were varied, but the bulk of responses indicated that a slower pace of delivery was desirable, as well as time to listen being allowed before having to write (note-taking skills).

Question 3

Understanding the content of the notes I am given

56% of the respondents stated that this was a problem for them, while 44% claimed it was not. Of those who found this to be a problem, 46% attributed it to language difficulties with the vocabulary and terminology in the handouts received. 40% of the students did not respond to this question.

An even higher percentage (52%) of students did not suggest any solution, but of those who did, the most common request was for more explicit handouts. An interesting suggestion was the request for a 'preliminary explanation' of the content of the lecture, which is an idea that might be developed.

Question 4

The amount of academic work I have to get through

Again, a very high percentage (68%) stated that this was a problem for them, but with the exception of 12% of respondents, students did not perceive language as being one of the reasons for the problem. Instead, reasons were more of a logistic

nature (e.g. volume of work), and one of the major difficulties encountered was the amount of travelling time each student had to contend with. This finding supports research carried out at the University of the Witwatersrand in which certain issues were identified as being problem areas for ESL students (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.1).

While a small percentage (24%) suggested the obvious solution of living closer to the Technikon, the majority (68%) chose not to respond to the section asking for solutions.

Question 5

Expressing myself correctly when I write English

64% of students agreed that they had a problem expressing themselves. Only 8% of those who responded put this problem down to a lack of confidence, while 80% attributed the problem to their perception of language-related issues such as vocabulary (40%), lack of practice speaking English (20%) and difficulties with grammar and structure (20%).

Of the 56% who responded with solutions, the majority favoured increased exposure through practice with EL1 speakers, and through increased integration in an EL1 environment with greater access to the English media, both aural and printed. It is interesting to note that students perceived that their written expression would improve almost as much with increased exposure to verbal EL1 interaction, as with increased written practice.

A fairly high percentage (44%) did not respond to this section.

Question 6

Expressing myself correctly when I speak English

The majority of students (72%) perceived this as a problem,

although most of those (48%) for whom it was a problem, did not see it as a serious one. Lack of practice in speaking English with E1L speakers and difficulty with vocabulary and expression, combined with a fear of embarrassing themselves, accounted for 92% of the reasons given.

As with the solutions suggested to the previous question, the majority of the respondents perceived that more practice in speaking English with E1L speakers would improve their confidence and reduce the problem.

Question 7

Reading through material quickly or scanning text for information

Two thirds (68%) of those surveyed felt they had a problem with this. Of those who responded, the reasons related to language issues without exception. Not being able to understand the content because of the terminology/vocabulary used or because they were slow readers, were cited as reasons.

Once again the need for more exposure to E1L speakers was perceived as a solution. Among the solutions was the suggestion that E2L speakers be paired with an E1L study-mate (mentor) for the duration of a course. Subject-specific assistance was also suggested as a solution. The need to improve reading skills was also seen as a means of reducing difficulties.

Question 8

Understanding the English used in text books and articles

76% of the students surveyed considered this a problem, although not one of them considered it a **serious** problem. Once again, the majority (60%) stated that terminology was the cause of their

problem. A smaller number (20%) felt that the problem lay in the fact that they were unable to check their understanding of matters under discussion, and saw the solution to this in a thorough explanation of terms before the lecture. The same percentage of students felt they needed referencing skills, and again the idea of an ELL study-mate was suggested by 16% of the respondents.

The same percentage of those who did not perceive themselves as having a problem in this area (24%) did not have any suggestions to make either.

Question 9

Taking part in tutorials

Responses here were surprising in the light of question 6, in which 72% perceived themselves as having a language problem when it came to expressing themselves correctly when they spoke English. Here only 36% perceived verbal interaction in a tutorial as a problem.

It is possible that students did not perceive verbal interaction as a problem because it is not one in itself. The difficulty might lie in the degree of accuracy required in this form of interaction, and the differences in what are perceived as levels of acceptable English. More simply, it is possible to interact verbally quite easily, particularly if standard English is not regarded as the yardstick. Another possibility is that the lecturer does not require much interaction during the tutorial, and hence a lack of verbal interaction is not perceived as a problem.

The majority of students clearly did not see this as a problem, and those who did, attributed it largely to cultural differences

(12%) which included lecturers not understanding the questions asked by ESL students (4%), being ignored during tutorials (4%) and intolerance on the part of the tutor (4%).

Approximately half the students (48%) did not suggest any solutions to this question, but those who did called for more practice in speaking English with an ELL speaker, counselling to develop self-confidence to enable them to speak louder (12%), more tolerance from peers and more interaction with the staff (4%).

Question 10

The level of English used by lecturers

When students considered this question from an overall point of view, without looking at specific issues as mentioned in previous questions, the majority (80%) did not consider the level of English used by lecturers a problem for them. Of the 20% who did consider it a problem, the reasons were generally the pace of delivery, detail of the content and terminology used. 84% did not consider solutions necessary.

Question 11

The amount of interaction between staff and students.

The majority of students (68%) did not see this as a problem area, and only 16% considered it a serious problem. While 44% of the surveyed group did not respond, those who did seemed to be generally satisfied with the amount of interaction they had with staff members. Most found the staff friendly and approachable, while those who felt they did not have enough contact attributed it to their own shyness or embarrassment in speaking English because they felt they were not sufficiently fluent. Those who felt contact was insufficient also felt that more understanding

on the part of the staff with regard to their problems (unspecified) would be helpful. The majority (60%) did not make any suggestions at all.

Question 12

Writing essays or doing assignments

Essay writing was perceived by the majority of students (76%) to be a problem area. Most attributed the difficulty they had to being unable to structure their work, and this was compounded by having insufficient information or understanding of the topic. Lack of referencing skills was also seen by some (20%) as a problem. Solutions were fairly predictable in that there was a perceived need for study skills such as referencing, structuring of assignments and essays, extension of vocabulary, and more interaction with the lecturers. Only a very small percentage (16%) did not complete this section.

Question 13

Understanding what is required of me when I do an assignment

Only 56% of the students surveyed considered this a problem, and those who did, generally perceived it as being a fairly mild one. The majority (68%) of those who saw it as a problem attributed the cause of the problem to having insufficient information about the topic to begin with. A much smaller percentage (20%) saw the problem as being the result of inadequate writing skills. Most felt that the problem could be solved by being given more pre-assignment information, as well as the structure of what was required in the assignment. More than half of the respondents (52%) did not offer any solutions.

Question 14

Attending extra English classes on campus

The response here was overwhelmingly in favour of attending extra classes in English. 80% of the respondents said they did not have a problem with this, but this was probably not a valid question in the circumstances. The survey group were all attending the ESL programme offered and subsequently the response can only be seen as an endorsement of the service. (A similar response was recorded in the follow-up questionnaire [see appendix I, q.10] in which the extended sample group, not all of whom were involved in the ESL programme, responded 84.5% in favour of attending extra classes in English.) This second result therefore validated the initial response. Only 12% of students suggested that there would be timetable clashes, or that their workload was too heavy, and the majority (76%) did not complete this section as they were in favour of the idea.

Question 15

Following the instructions given during lectures

The majority of students (72%) claimed not to have a problem following instructions during lectures. The 28% who experienced problems felt that lecturers did not take ESL students into account when delivering information as the terminology was not clear and the instructions were given too quickly for them to clarify what was being asked. There were few suggestions as to how this could be avoided, apart from slowing down the pace of delivery and simplifying the instructions. The majority (80%) did not attempt to offer solutions.

Question 16

Discussing academic issues with fellow students

The responses to this question were evenly distributed. 52% said it was not a problem for them while the rest saw it as a relatively minor issue. Of those who responded, the difficulty was seen as the result of a lack of fluency, having insufficient subject knowledge, insufficient interaction with and exposure to ELL, or simply, cultural differences. Solutions included more interaction with ELL speakers, improved expression and self-confidence, and more patience from ELL speakers during interaction.

Question 17

English as the medium of instruction

The response here was very clear. 84% saw no problem with English being the medium of instruction, and only 16% saw it as being a 'slight problem'. These students felt this because of the difficulty they had in understanding English fluently or because of their inability to express themselves. They felt this could be alleviated by having more informal interaction with and exposure to ELL speakers. It is also possible that the high response could be attributed to the apparent preference of most black students for English as a medium of instruction. As a result of the positive response to this question, the remainder of the question was not completed.

Question 18

Finding out where to get help in English

Once again, there was little negative response to this question; those who had had a problem indicated that more information could be given at registration as to where extra English assistance could be obtained. The majority of respondents did not complete

this section as they did not perceive the matter as being a problem.

Question 19

The lecturer's attitude towards me

Only 12% perceived this as a 'slight problem'. Of those who did, the reasons included discrimination and the 'maintenance of standards' as the cause. 80% of respondents said that lecturers were friendly, explained clearly when questions were asked, and did not discriminate against them. Those who perceived a problem attributed it to their lack of fluency in English.

Question 20

If there is any other issue (or more than one issue) which you consider to be a problem, please comment in the space below.

Note

Approximately 40% of the students responded to this question, and on the whole, statements were a reiteration of previous opinions. A selection of paraphrased responses is included for illustrative purposes.

- My answers should be considered in the light of my being an ESL student.
- The questions should be simplified.
- Racial bias should not play a part in my assessment.
- The volume of work makes studying very difficult.
- Superior attitudes of other students make me reticent in my responses to questions asked.
- EDP (Electronic Data Processing) is a problem. I do not know where to find extra books for learning and for reference.
- I am afraid to go to the lecturer to ask questions because I am very shy and have difficulty understanding him/her.
- I need more time during exams because I cannot write fast and as a result I seldom complete the paper.

4.1.6 Conclusions regarding the student pilot questionnaire

There were a wide range of responses which sometimes appeared to be contradictory. A typical example of this is that the majority of students do not perceive themselves as having a problem with English as the medium of instruction (84%), or with the level of English used by lecturers (80%). In spite of this, many say that they do have problems understanding what is said during lectures (80%), expressing themselves verbally (72%), in writing (64%), or understanding the notes they are given (66%). The reasons for this apparent contradiction are not clear, but they raise the question of the perceptions held by both E1L speakers and E2L speakers of what acceptable levels of English are. Agar (1990b) and Tema (1988) have both drawn attention to the fact that many students do not perceive themselves as having a language problem, but as Agar (1990b) has pointed out, 'there is often confusion between competence in language and knowledge of academic skills and processes'. The suggestion here is that it is possible that students who have gained access to the Technikon because of their academic record might equate their knowledge or academic ability with their English language ability.

As mentioned earlier (2.4.2), E1L speakers might well have to reconsider their perceptions of what level of E2L English is acceptable. Research at the University of Natal (Bradbury; Damerell; Jackson; Searle:1990) has shown that grammatical accuracy is not a factor affecting whether a student achieves a high or low mark; subject lecturers are more concerned with the content and organisation of students' essays than they are with the linguistic accuracy of the work. In other words, the emphasis is on academic writing skills rather than linguistic accuracy.

4.2 The staff pilot questionnaire

4.2.1 Method of analysis

The analysis of the data in this section shows each question asked in the staff pilot questionnaire, and the responses of individual staff members in each of the departments surveyed. The departments have been ranked according to the distribution of ESL students in each one. 'SD' indicates that the department concerned is a 'service department'. This means it does not register its own students, but services departments which do. It is therefore not ranked as are the other departments, all of which offer their own instructional programmes.

4.2.2 Influence of the student pilot questionnaire on the selection of questions in the staff pilot questionnaire

The student pilot questionnaire produced responses which could be quantified in terms of frequency. These responses (Table 4) highlighted issues which influenced the sorts of questions asked in the staff pilot questionnaire. For example, students indicated from the predetermined categories the need for certain skills (eg. essay writing, note-taking) or expressed a lack of understanding of the level of English used by lecturers, and the language used in notes handed out by lecturers. Issues such as these were seen as being directly linked to language-related perceptions. By surveying staff perceptions of the language skills which they considered students needed, or ascertaining whether they had considered the above-mentioned language issues in the presentation/delivery of their lectures, it was hoped that specific areas of common concern to both students and staff would be found.

4.2.3 Observations relating to staff responses

The response rate from the staff was extremely high in that 18 out of 20 staff members returned the questionnaire. The range of responses was wide and because the questions required open-ended responses, they were difficult to quantify. An analysis of the paraphrased responses to each question was considered the most expedient method to use without losing the individual character of the responses altogether. In addition to this, each set of responses was followed by a section of comment in which various observations have been made. It is hoped that during the process of reducing the data, the distilled summaries are as true to the original texts as possible.

4.2.4 Analysis of and commentary on the data

This questionnaire was initially intended to produce two results. The first purpose was to survey the perceptions of the staff selected on the issues which dominated the responses from the student pilot questionnaire (table 4). The responses from the students tended to be quite specific in terms of what they saw as their problems, and to a lesser extent, what they saw as the solutions. Staff were not questioned as directly. The questions asked were more general and less directive, but each question had the underlying purpose of trying to ascertain whether the issues perceived as language-related problems by the students were perceived in a similar light by the staff. Prior to the commentary on each question is an explanation of the motivation for the question.

Question 1

In your opinion, what percentage of ESL students in your department are underprepared for Technikon studies?
Please suggest a percentage and what you consider to be the main reason for this underpreparedness.

<u>RANK</u>	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>MAIN REASONS</u>
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	100	Poor quality of primary and secondary education.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	75	Weak expression and/or difficulty understanding technical language / very poor secondary education.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	80	Rote learning and/or lack of analytical skills and language structure. Lack of confidence and weak oral skills.
SD	LAW	60	Secondary school language difficulties. Lack of problem-solving skills
2	EDUCATION	95	Reading and comprehension skills Poor vocabulary and weak sentence structure Inadequate library skills Inability to argue issues academically (assignments) Embarrassed to contribute orally in tutorials
2	EDUCATION	90	Pace of ELL discourse and unfamiliarity with the adult teaching model
2	EDUCATION	20	Lack of use of English in home environment, and lack of hearing it (exposure). Poor quality of teaching in black schools.
3	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	60	Lack of exposure to spoken English.
4	ACCOUNTING	80	Poor secondary education Lack of facilities in home environment.
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	-	nil return.
8.5	MARKETING	85	Lack of fluency in English vocabulary relating to commercial concepts.

10	JOURNALISM	66	School system (black).
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	80	Cultural background.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	50	Cultural background. Poor matriculation standard.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	20	Non-English culture. Language background.
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	90	Insufficient exposure to spoken English at school.
19	FINE ART	90	Language proficiency handicap.
27	DENTAL SERVICES	100	School system.
31	MICROBIOLOGY	40	Poor language/maths skills.

Motivation: This question was asked to ascertain to what extent staff perceived this problem to exist in their groups, and what they considered were the causes. It was hoped that responses would indicate whether the underlying causes were seen to be language-related or not.

Comment

One of the most striking issues in response to this question was the range of percentages (100% - 20%) of perceived underpreparedness. The relevance of this observation might be that it underlines how subjective these responses are, and reinforces the need to be able to interpret these responses hermeneutically as discussed in the introduction to chapter 3.

It appears that the predominant factor (55%) cited as a reason for the underpreparedness of ESL students at the Technikon, is the inadequate educational system to which most, if not all, of the students concerned have been subjected. It also appears that ESL students have been equated with black students. Educational methods (eg. rote learning) and lack of critical independent

thinking skills in an unfamiliar predominantly white educational tertiary institution are generally seen to be the product of the inadequate black education system as well as the socio-economic and culturally different backgrounds of the majority of these students. An inability to analyse critically and structure material, as well as the fact that the students are socially and materially at a disadvantage, is also considered relevant (see chapter 2, section 2.4).

Question 2

Do you consider it a function of the Technikon to respond to ESL students who appear to be underprepared for Technikon studies ? Please give reasons for your response.

<u>RANK</u>	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>		<u>MAIN REASONS</u>
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	YES	Poor quality of education. Moral obligation - the Technikon has the best resources and a suitable infrastructure to respond.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	YES	Because they have been admitted in spite of unequal senior school certificates.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	YES	If the Technikon registers ESL students, it is morally obliged to set up infrastructures to help them.
SD	LAW	NO	It should be a secondary school function. Technikons provide vocational training.
2	EDUCATION	YES	Students need English skills to understand the vocation.
2	EDUCATION	YES	It is economically, morally and educationally sound to provide a bridging course.
2	EDUCATION	YES	To prevent an overall drop in standards.
3	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	YES	As an educational facility we must create the facilities to help bridge the gap.

4	ACCOUNTING	YES	If the Technikon registers these students it has a responsibility to help them with their studies.
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	-	nil return.
8.5	MARKETING	NO	Technikon develops skills from matric level onwards; a grasp of English is essential to allow this.
10	JOURNALISM	YES	School system is abysmal. ESP in journalism requires support in language training. Other tertiary institutions are doing it.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	YES	No other institutions will prepare Technikon students for the Technikon.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	YES	It is definitely a Technikon responsibility, but not at a departmental level.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	NO	Because the Technikon caters for a specific individual and therefore excludes thousands for a variety of reasons, not only language.
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	NO	Not seen as a function of the Technikon, but would be useful to have if space could be timetabled in.
19	FINE ART	YES	Technikon can't divorce itself from the community it serves. It must address deficits in students who would otherwise be successful.
27	DENTAL SERVICES	YES	To improve the pass rate and the chances of success for ESL students.
31	MICROBIOLOGY	YES	An entrance exam which includes a language component should be considered.

Motivation: This question was asked to ascertain whether staff perceived the problem as being essentially a language issue, and if so, to ascertain how willing they were to become involved in trying to rectify it.

Comment

There are clearly two schools of thought regarding the perceived function of the Technikon. The majority of responses overwhelmingly support the notion of providing academic support and an infrastructure which would serve the language needs of ESL students. Generally there is a strong feeling amongst academic staff that the Technikon has a moral obligation to render adequate assistance to students who need it, especially if they are going to be selected using as one of the criteria, the matriculation certificate issued by the DET, which is generally perceived to be an inaccurate reflection of the ability of the individual. Staff who responded appeared to be aware of the complexities of the situation and often more than one response was given, many of which were interrelated. Those who did not perceive ESL assistance to be a function of the Technikon appeared to do so for logistical and practical reasons.

Question 3

How should the Technikon respond to students who are underprepared ?

RANK DEPARTMENT

RESPONSE

SD ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

Offer a bridging year staffed by lecturers whose subjects these students intend to take.
Offer classes in study skills, not in abstract but linked to difficulties associated with these students in these subjects.
For those already at the Technikon, "peer help" pairing with mother tongue students.

SD ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

They should be compelled to take an upgrading course.
We should critically examine our expectations or perceptions of

`English competence`.

- SD ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION In the area of academic skills
- subject tutors should be available to provide assistance when necessary.
In the area of life skills
- we should provide study skills, assignment and examination techniques with the emphasis being on analytical skills.
- SD LAW Assistance should be provided through a separate, extensive and time-tabled bridging programme.
- 2 EDUCATION A pre-course in English skills. Increased length of the course which should include practical communication in their fields of study.
- 2 EDUCATION Foundation courses including 1 or 2 first year diploma courses plus upgrading courses in coping skills for that diploma. There should also be an extension of the completion time.
- 2 EDUCATION The provision of a bridging course of approximately 1 year plus ongoing assistance.
- 3 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT The provision of a pre-entry bridging course.
- 4 ACCOUNTING A post-matriculation preparation course covering all aspects of the student's prospective curriculum.
- 8.5 DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT nil return.
- 8.5 MARKETING The development of an annual course in communication skills, reading, writing, comprehension, presentation and debating skills.
- 10 JOURNALISM Test to establish what the problems are. Put students on `crash` programmes to remedy short-term problems that can be solved.
Make training compulsory until a minimum mark has been achieved. Assist with extra-curricula problems such as residence, fees and facilities.

12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Provide a first year pre-registration preparation and orientation course.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Provide a first year pre-registration preparation course through the ESL Unit.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	The Technikon should not respond.
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	Provide a pre-registration programme with follow-up during the first year on a voluntary basis.
19	FINE ART	Provide an academic support programme commensurate with student needs and resources available.
27	DENTAL SERVICES	Current services being offered appear to be adequate.
31	MICROBIOLOGY	Provide extra tuition in tutorials in subject-specific areas, as well as skills in report writing, basic grammar, comprehension and reading.

Motivation: By asking staff what strategies they thought would assist ESL students, it was hoped there would be some indication as to whether they saw language as being the main cause of the problem.

Comment

The vast majority (94.4%) of academic staff who responded were in favour of either a bridging course being provided, or a pre-registration course of a reasonably extensive period being completed before entry into the formal programme. Of those who supported the concept, opinion was generally in favour of the course being a pre-condition to registration, or if students were already registered, then compulsory attendance at least was recommended. Only one respondent saw the responsibility of upgrading students as that of individual departments and few respondents took cognizance of the effect extra-curricular

problems posed for students, some of which have been mentioned in section 2.3.1.

Question 4

In your opinion, what should be the role of the English Second Language (ESL) Unit in responding to the needs of these students?

<u>RANK</u>	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>SUGGESTED ROLE</u>
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Diagnosing problems. Helping where possible and referring students to other skilled staff where necessary.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Developing confidence in their use of English. Forget about teaching grammar.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Providing small groups of individual tuition in all areas of English study.
SD	LAW	Encouraging good study habits as well as improving language skills.
2	EDUCATION	Planning and executing a course of approximately 2 years in practical communication as well as a short (2-3 week) pre-course skills course.
2	EDUCATION	Provide a foundation course including introductory courses in some subjects of chosen diplomas. In addition to this, ongoing support should be provided throughout the diploma.
2	EDUCATION	Adopt a multidisciplinary approach with a subject-specific emphasis. Specialised teachers to teach reading skills, learning skills, note-taking skills, assignment technique, library training, liaison and interaction skills for coping with lectures.
3	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	Determine needs and develop a programme to satisfy the needs.

4	ACCOUNTING	Preparation and administration of a post-matric course to prepare ESL students for all subjects - not just English.
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	nil return.
8.5	MARKETING	Provide an annual course developing the full spectrum of communication skills.
10	JOURNALISM	Provide training in English in both language skills and cognitive skills. Provide counselling, and support for disadvantaged students with regard to residence, fees, home facilities. Deal with immediately "curable" problems in the short-term then upgrade language ability and cognitive skills in the long-term.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Teach them the normal use of English. Teach them how to use a library rather than an appreciation of reading and using dictionaries and a thesaurus.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Co-ordinate and assist as it is not only English that is a problem.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	The Technikon should not respond.
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	Construct a pre-registration programme to be run during December. Assistance should be given to <u>lecturers</u> who encounter students with ESL problems.
19	FINE ART	The primary role should be to improve language proficiency.
27	DENTAL SERVICES	Current support and course appear to be very good. Could be enhanced by: * communication courses * assertiveness training
31	MICROBIOLOGY	Run courses in report writing, grammar, comprehension and reading skills.

Motivation: This was asked in order to ascertain whether departmental needs were perceived as being language-related or not.

Comment

The single most common response to this question indicated that the majority of staff were in favour of some sort of pre-course registration and orientation programme in which students would be familiarised with some of the subjects of their chosen course. In addition to this, training in study skills and life skills was also strongly favoured. This indicates that lecturers surveyed perceived language needs as part of more general needs. The range of responses again shows, quite considerably, the variety of opinions that exist with regard to student needs. Some departments appear to have considered the way in which the difficulties of students have manifested themselves in a much wider sense than purely on the academic level. Solutions to the problems displayed are seen in addressing the needs of students on a more far-reaching basis, viz. attention to socio-economic obstacles and treatment of the cause rather than the symptom. Few of the staff who responded regarded the response to these needs as an issue that should be dealt with on a departmental level.

Question 5

What specific skills do you think ESL students lack in your subject area ?

RANK DEPARTMENT

SPECIFIC SKILLS

SD ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

Don't understand passages or essay topics, or subtleties of the language because they lack the cultural background (or any literate background). They take longer to write because they are at a disadvantage when writing under pressure.

SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	They cannot write simply.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Inability to analyse information or interpret question ; then to write simply, clearly, and expressively. Clumsy language structures, poor vocabulary, and incorrect register. Inability to communicate with the lecturer.
SD	LAW	Language skills, comprehension skills, and application skills are weak.
2	EDUCATION	Inability to read and understand the question and to be able to speak with understanding of the context. Inability to speak audibly. Need for reading, listening and answering skills.
2	EDUCATION	Competence to deal with flow and pace of ELL within an adult learning situation.
2	EDUCATION	Reading, comprehension, oral skills, paraphrasing, test or examination preparation skills and critical analysis skills.
3	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	Expression, vocabulary, sentence formation, language construction and grammar skills.
4	ACCOUNTING	Need for understanding of abstract numerical concepts. Don't understand what is required of them in a question. Expression in English is weak.
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	nil return.
8.5	MARKETING	Comprehension skills. Inadequate in assignment/test skills. viz., expression, summarizing, logical structuring and representation of argument.
10	JOURNALISM	Proofreading skills, and the ability to self-correct and edit own errors. Referential skills, interviewing skills and training in correct pronunciation.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Overcoming an inherent fear of technical machinery. Technical

and cultural background appears to account for a fear of computers.

12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Lack of familiarity with basic principles and concepts of 'normal first world living and its standards'.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Read, write, speak and understand English.
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	Sentence construction, spelling and verbal expression.
19	FINE ART	Communication and conceptual skills.
27	DENTAL SERVICES	Communication skills and an ability to express themselves more assertively.
31	MICROBIOLOGY	Report writing skills, reading skills, and a wider vocabulary.

Motivation This was asked as a follow-up to question 4 to establish whether the specific skills perceived as lacking were language-related or not.

Comment

Very little in the way of 'new' issues was apparent in response to this question. The most common response appears to be the need for comprehension skills and the ability to express oneself more fluently (see sections 2.3.1 and 2.4.2). In some cases, the responses related more to subject-specific and vocationally-orientated skills than to language-related needs. The overall perception seems to be that students lack specific language skills in the various subject areas.

Question 6

In your opinion, what should be done to rectify the specific skills ESL students lack?

RANK DEPARTMENT

RESPONSE

SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Coaching in language with reference to specific actual
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problems. Set a suitable level of reading because of lack of literary background. Make test and examination questions more explicit. Have more oral practice in anticipated occupational interaction situations eg. arguing, discussing, explaining, comparing. Have ongoing (at least for the first term) conferencing with the lecturer of subject or with a writing coach. Have an orientation programme for ESL students. Give extra time in examinations for ESL students but limit the length of answer.

- SD ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION Encourage the use of simple English.
- SD ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION Form small tutorial groups in each area / year of study. Appoint subject diploma tutors. Timetable in tutorial periods for ESL students. Presentation of an extra credit and /or a certificate as incentive. Assist with 'in-service' training in commerce and industry during long vacations. Allow opportunity to complete first year of diploma over a two-year extended period.
- SD LAW Extensive comprehension work and oral practice including exposure to the terminology of the various disciplines.
- 2 EDUCATION Self-tuition, organised and/or structured tuition, pre-course correspondence material, and a mentoring system.
- 2 EDUCATION A foundation course as well as a restructuring of secondary school teaching approach in S.A.
- 2 EDUCATION More independent reading with written and oral report back. Students should work in small groups which are made up of E1L and E2L speakers, and not exclusively ESL students.
- 3 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT Develop a bridging programme based on needs - skills will develop over a period of time.

4	ACCOUNTING	Develop a bridging course in all subject areas.
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	nil return.
8.5	MARKETING	Provide a course to improve communication skills. Develop planning ability as well as test and examination techniques.
10	JOURNALISM	Make attendance of the course compulsory if students fail a test. Motivate students with incentives. Make passing of ESL tests a requirement for D.P. status.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Provide a one year pre-course orientation and acculturation programme.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Co-ordinate and assist students based on aptitude and skills tests.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Don't register them.
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	Refer the problem to ESL or English specialists.
19	FINE ART	Provide help with language and communication coaching as well as some form of acculturation.
27	DENTAL SERVICES	Expand the course considerably by introducing a preparatory year.
31	MICROBIOLOGY	Provide a bridging course and extra tuition.

Motivation: This question was asked in order to show the extent to which the need for language-related skills was perceived as part of a larger problem.

Comment

This question produced an extraordinarily wide range of responses, from concerned and structured suggestions to indifference. In many cases the nature of the responses was general and not specifically language-related. Few were concerned with how the specific lack of skills should be rectified, beyond endorsing a foundation year programme. This might be explained by

the fact that the individuals concerned do not see themselves as language specialists and preferred to leave the prescription of strategies to those whom they considered better qualified. As stated, the idea of a pre-course or foundation programme was a popular response. The notion of compulsory attendance of an ESL programme is an interesting one, but the logistics involved in timetabling and the possible reaction from students perceiving themselves as being singled out for special treatment, might generate more problems than solutions.

Question 7

In your opinion , do you think Academic Support services and English Second Language services should be separate or integrated ? Please elaborate.

<u>RANK</u>	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>MAIN REASONS</u>
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Integrated - expertise and resources could be pooled.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Integrated - but with the English Department.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Separate - ASP should deal with life skills and personal problems such as fees, residence accommodation etc. ESL should be an Academic Department with full accreditation.
SD	LAW	Separate - because the focus is different.
2	EDUCATION	Separate - they should however have equal status. English should be taught by those specifically trained in English tuition.
2	EDUCATION	Integrated - into a foundation course.
2	EDUCATION	Integrated - a multidisciplinary approach with centralised help is preferable.
3	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	Separate - because of specific needs, they have different functions and different objectives.

4	ACCOUNTING	Integrated - communication skills are not needed for all subject areas eg. accounting or economics.
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	nil return.
8.5	MARKETING	Separate - different skills are being taught. Each faces different problems.
10	JOURNALISM	No comment - don't know the implications of integration or separation.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Either - but should co-ordinate work so as not to overlap.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Integrated - they should co-ordinate and assist each other as language is not the only problem.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Integrated - one service body which deals with the students is easier to administer.
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	Either - it should not make any difference to the services offered.
19	FINE ART	Integrated - the ESL service is a part of AS services.
27	DENTAL SERVICES	Integrated - English is only part of the problem. AS services are vital.
31	MICROBIOLOGY	Integrated - for administrative purposes and to minimise support staff.

Motivation: It was hoped this question would indicate the extent to which staff perceived the sort of help the students require as being specifically language-related or of a more general nature.

Comment

On the whole, the majority (55.5%) of staff who responded were in favour of an integrated ASP/ESL body; the next highest response (27.7%) reflected that staff were in favour of separate services

being maintained. A small percentage (11.1%) thought that it would not make any difference either way and only one respondent had no comment. What was particularly striking about some of the responses was that there was, in many cases, a sense of uncertainty as to what the difference between the two services was. Some people who favoured integration appeared to respond purely on an administrative basis, whilst those who were in favour of maintaining separate services appeared to feel that there were distinctly different services being offered and that the objectives of each were different. There was a certain amount of confusion between ASP and ESL and what each unit was responsible for.

Question 8

Are you or your department involved in an intervention programme for ESL students ?

Staff members were requested to respond to one of the following:

- Yes - personally and formally.....[]
- Yes - personally and informally...[]
- Yes - my department.....[]
- No -[]

<u>RANK</u>	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>RESPONSE</u>
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Yes - personally and informally
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	No
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Yes - personally and formally
SD	LAW	No
2	EDUCATION	Yes - personally and informally
2	EDUCATION	No
2	EDUCATION	Yes - personally and informally
3	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	No
4	ACCOUNTING	Yes - my department
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	nil return
8.5	MARKETING	No
10	JOURNALISM	Yes - my department

12	COMPUTER STUDIES	No
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	No
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	No
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	No
19	FINE ART	Yes - personally and formally
27	DENTAL SERVICES	Yes - personally and formally
31	MICROBIOLOGY	Yes - personally and informally

Motivation: Since the programme offered by the ESL Unit is specifically language-related, this question would provide an indication of the extent to which lecturers and/or their departments perceived the difficulties students experienced as being based on language-related issues.

Comment

There is not a great deal that can be said about responses which are based on a simple selection of predetermined categories except that the results serve to illustrate on a numeric basis the degree to which departments or individual staff are involved in an intervention programme. Exactly half (50%) of those who responded are involved personally in an intervention programme, on a formal or an informal basis (22.2% - informally, 16.6% - formally, 11.1% - departmentally). The remaining 50% are not involved in any form of ESL intervention programme at all. One observation that came to light was that there seemed to be a relationship between the degree of involvement of departments/staff and positive suggestions or possible solutions offered. On the basis of previous responses to questions, respondents who appeared to be indifferent or uninformed, tended also not to be involved in any form of intervention programme.

Question 9

Would you and/or your department be interested in being involved in an intervention programme for ESL students ?

Again, staff were requested to respond to one of the following:

Yes - already involved.....[]
Yes - conditionally.....[]
No -[]

<u>RANK</u>	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>RESPONSE</u>
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Yes - conditionally
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Yes - conditionally
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Yes - already involved
SD	LAW	Yes - conditionally
2	EDUCATION	Yes - conditionally
2	EDUCATION	Yes - conditionally
2	EDUCATION	Yes - already involved
3	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	No
4	ACCOUNTING	Yes - already involved
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	nil return
8.5	MARKETING	No
10	JOURNALISM	Yes - conditionally
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Yes - conditionally
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Yes - conditionally
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	No
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	Yes - conditionally
19	FINE ART	Yes - already involved
27	DENTAL SERVICES	Yes - already involved
31	MICROBIOLOGY	Yes - conditionally

Motivation: As a follow-up to the previous question, this would indicate the extent to which staff would be interested in becoming involved on a departmental or individual level in a

language intervention programme. The level of response would also show the extent of staff support for this sort of intervention.

Comment

83.3% of all respondents were in favour of being involved in an intervention programme. On a simple numeric level, this indicates that 33.3% of staff who were surveyed, and who are willing to become conditionally involved in a programme are in fact not currently involved in one. In the absence of extrapolated statistics, it probably holds true that there are academic staff at Technikon Natal who are willing to contribute to a programme, but whose skills and help have not yet been utilised. Those who were not interested in being involved in a programme appeared to feel pressurised about other commitments in terms of their workload. However, even those who were interested on a conditional basis, generally mentioned as a prerequisite that their involvement should not make any further demands upon their already heavy workloads. This would imply then, that staff involvement would be possible only if credit were given for time allocated, or if additional staff were appointed to assist with the existing workloads.

Question 10

If you are conditionally interested, please give reasons for conditional involvement.

RANK DEPARTMENT

MAIN REASONS

SD ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Already involved in ESL research. Anticipate an increase in numbers. English Department staff with applied linguistics backgrounds should be involved.
SD ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Nature of involvement and specific aims need to be spelled out.

SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Not applicable/already involved.
SD	LAW	Workload is already heavy. Our department would need more staff.
2	EDUCATION	Students are training to be teachers therefore they need the skills.
2	EDUCATION	Unless it is part of a foundation course I am not convinced it will be effective.
2	EDUCATION	Not applicable/already involved.
3	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	Not interested.
4	ACCOUNTING	Not applicable/already involved.
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	nil return.
8.5	MARKETING	Not interested.
10	JOURNALISM	Not if it adds to my time or other commitments.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Time.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Time and workload.
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	Not interested.
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	Allocation of time. Already have a heavy workload.
19	FINE ART	Not applicable/already involved.
27	DENTAL SERVICES	Not applicable/already involved.
31	MICROBIOLOGY	Workload.

Motivation: By ascertaining the perceived reasons for 'conditional involvement', it was hoped that stumbling blocks to the establishment of a language-related programme at a departmental level could be identified. Since the lack of staff involvement in a language programme on a departmental level has been one of the central issues identified in the past by ESL

lecturers in the ESL Unit, it was felt the response would indicate some of the reasons why staff were unwilling to become involved.

Comment

While a high percentage (83.3%) indicated previously that they would be interested in being involved in some sort of intervention programme, the response to this question was not as enthusiastic.

Only 27.7% of respondents regarded the question relating to their involvement as being 'not applicable - already involved', and a further two respondents (11.2%) considered the possibility of being involved in a positive light, in spite of the high percentage that previously appeared to be interested. In addition to this, another two respondents (11.2%) remained unconvinced about the effectiveness of such involvement. While 33.3% were anxious about the implications of an added workload, only 16.6% of the respondents were flatly 'not interested'. The concern expressed by staff members with regard to existing workloads is a factor which has to be recognised as a real stumbling block to the development of any programme. Without lecturing staff being involved in programmes on a departmental level at which the subject-specific expertise can be tapped, it is doubtful that leaving the problem solely in the hands of the ESL Unit is going to produce the desired results. This doubt was supported in the results of the staff follow-up questionnaire (appendix H) in which 83.3% of the surveyed staff believed departmental and subject-specific assistance was necessary (q12), and 73.3% expressed the belief that the ESL Unit could not deal with the problem on its own (q13).

Question 11

If you are not interested, please give reasons for non-involvement.

<u>RANK</u>	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>MAIN REASONS</u>
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	N/A - interested (conditionally)
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	N/A - interested (conditionally)
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	N/A - interested (and involved)
SD	LAW	N/A - interested (conditionally)
2	EDUCATION	N/A - interested (conditionally)
2	EDUCATION	N/A - interested (conditionally)
2	EDUCATION	N/A - interested (and involved)
3	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	nil response to this question
4	ACCOUNTING	N/A - interested (and involved)
8.5	DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	nil return.
8.5	MARKETING	Don't have the relevant skills to address the problem.
10	JOURNALISM	N/A - interested (and involved)
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	N/A - interested (conditionally)
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	N/A - interested (conditionally)
12	COMPUTER STUDIES	If the student cannot master English, there is little hope he/she will master the subject area, which is the concern of our department.
14	FOOD AND NUTRITION	N/A - interested (conditionally)
19	FINE ART	N/A - interested (and involved)
27	DENTAL SERVICES	N/A - interested (and involved)
31	MICROBIOLOGY	N/A - interested (conditionally)

Motivation: While the previous question surveyed the reasons of those who were interested in being involved on a conditional basis, this question specifically asks for reasons why staff who

are not interested feel this way. The question was included to survey the opinions of those who were categorically 'not interested'.

Comment

Once again, a high percentage (88.2%) of the respondents showed an interest in being involved in an intervention programme. Of the remaining group (11.7%) who were not interested, only one respondent felt this on the basis that he/she lacked the necessary skills to address the problem.

Question 12

What are your views on the selection of students to this Technikon ?

<u>RANK</u>	<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>VIEW HELD</u>
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Some kind of screening should be in force to ensure students will cope with the level of work. It is immoral to take students' money when it is clear that they will not pass.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	I have no particular view.
SD	ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION	Select on ability to complete the course of study. Academic personality and background should be considered.
SD	LAW	It should be more rigorous. There should be an objective test based on literacy and numeracy.
SD	EDUCATION	Not applicable. Our students are selected via the University of Natal. Matric results are the only criteria considered. Some fluency / proficiency test in English would probably reduce our intake drastically.
2	EDUCATION	There is too much systematized assessment and too little full-scale evaluation based on results from students' previous achievements against their

background and local conditions, as well as assessment of their proficiency in relevant diploma based coping skills, and their personalities.

- 2 EDUCATION There are no departmental selection criteria - anyone is accepted. It is immoral to turn away students who have been disadvantaged by inadequate schooling.
- 3 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT It is presently in a shambles.
- 4 ACCOUNTING Selection should be based on academic criteria only, but ESL students should first complete a 'post-matric' bridging course to prepare them for diploma courses.
- 8.5 DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT nil return.
- 8.5 MARKETING Selection should be based on academic achievement at school. Students need a minimum level of success in all school subjects but a higher level of success in career-related subjects.
- 10 JOURNALISM Selection should be based purely on an academic merit test. Final selection should be based on interviews scored objectively as matriculation results are irrelevant. Departmental autonomy must be recognised and catered for.
- 12 COMPUTER STUDIES Select a percentage of top ESL students from schools, then help them through a preparation course.
- 12 COMPUTER STUDIES nil response to this question.
- 12 COMPUTER STUDIES nil response to this question. (The term 'selection' was seen as 'too vague to answer'.)
- 14 FOOD AND NUTRITION Cannot comment on the selection of students to the Technikon in general.
- 19 FINE ART Selection should be based on the school-leaving qualification. Thereafter the individual departments should be free to specify additional admission

criteria commensurate with skills and aptitudes necessary for their subject area.

27 DENTAL SERVICES

This department selected ESL students for the first time in 1990. Selection was involved, intensive and experimental. It appears to have been successful. If the ESL students are to be given a chance in the 'white' institutions, the selection programme used by the Department of Dental Services in November/December 1990 will have to be implemented if success is to be achieved. Politics is surely involved.

31 MICROBIOLOGY

Departmental entrance levels and requirements should be set.

Motivation: It was decided to include this question as it was open-ended and would possibly reflect opinions which related to specific needs, which might include language selection criteria, in the respective departments.

Comment

Selection criteria vary considerably from department to department, and consequently staff are bound to hold quite diverse opinions as well. It appears that the variety of views is based on the differing opinions of the value of the academic qualifications obtained at secondary school. Staff have stated openly that selection should be on academic merit, but have added that where the student selected is an ESL student, additional criteria should apply in the form of some sort of objective assessment and conditional involvement in extra tuition that might be offered. While this view has obvious drawbacks with regard to student self-perceptions and academic 'discrimination' (Tema : 1988), the nature of the responses indicates that the intention is not to retard the individual's chance of successfully completing his/her chosen course of study.

4.2.5 Conclusions regarding the staff pilot questionnaire

While the questionnaire underscored many of the issues raised by the student survey, it also went beyond what was anticipated in terms of responses. The questions asked were aimed at obtaining information relating to perceptions of language-related issues. The responses provided data in this respect, but also embraced wider issues which were not specifically the focus of this research. A more restrictive wording of the questions might have produced more focus in the responses, and with hindsight, would have improved the quality of the questionnaire. In spite of this, the responses were retained as far as possible in their original form so as not to compromise their authenticity. The overall effect of this questionnaire was to provide support for the issues raised in the student questionnaire, and in this regard the response was satisfactory. In turn, the response also influenced the selection of questions for the follow-up questionnaire.

4.3 The follow-up questionnaires

4.3.1 Introduction

A combination of the responses to both the pilot questionnaires formed the basis of the selection of questions for the subsequent questionnaires. The selection was modified so that both groups could respond to the same question. The purpose in asking the questions in this manner was to enable a comparison to be made of how each group considered the issue being surveyed. The data from these responses could then be quantified and presented in a comparative analysis (see 3.3.6 and 3.3.6.1). It was hoped that

by extending the size of the sample groups, the responses from the first surveys would be further reinforced.

4.3.2 The response rates

The response rate to the follow-up questionnaires was consistent in terms of the sample populations: 42/45 (or 93.3%) of surveyed staff (12.4% of total staff) and 103/255 (or 40.4%) of surveyed students (11.6% of total ESL student enrolment). Although these response rates were not very different from those in the first questionnaires (staff 94.7% and students 37.3%), the extension of the sample populations used for the second questionnaires confirmed that the response to the initial student questionnaire was probably not as low as had been thought. On the positive side though, with regard to the initial (pilot) student questionnaire, responses from those who had voluntarily been actively involved in the programme were regarded as valid because of the students' continual awareness of and focus on the language problems they were trying to rectify. It was felt that on the basis of their 'experienced' responses and the frequency of those responses, the questions selected for the second questionnaire were appropriate.

4.3.3 Observations relating to the follow-up questionnaires

The most obvious similarity between the administration of the follow-up questionnaires and the initial pilot questionnaires was the similar response rate. The expanded sample group did not affect the response rate, which remained fairly consistent. This might be attributed to the reduced number of questions in the survey and the simplified structure, which made the exercise short and relatively simple. In most cases, the questionnaire was

completed and returned immediately. This resulted in a very high return rate (93.3%).

Some staff members commented that no provision had been made for a category of 'unsure' responses. Omission of this option was deliberate as, by forcing the issue, respondents would render a more focussed reflection of perceptions. The staff pilot questionnaire had produced responses which went beyond the immediate focus of this research, and because these had been taken into consideration during the compilation of the follow-up questionnaire, a request for a restricted response was considered justified. In spite of this, some staff respondents insisted on including responses of 'unsure', and these were subsequently taken into account in the analysis of the data. Contrary to this, not a single student indicated a similar need for an 'unsure' category. It is likely however, that this was because they lacked the confidence to challenge the researcher.

As mentioned earlier (3.3.5.2), there was a degree of resistance from journalism students who refused 'en masse' to respond to the follow-up questionnaire. While resistance to filling in research questionnaires is common, it is interesting that this particular group of students did not respond. These students are generally selected for the journalism course because among other attributes, they are articulate and politically aware. Had they co-operated, a more critical response might have been recorded. The inference that some of the responses rendered on a basis of 'trying to please' the researcher might have produced skewed results, reinforces the danger of relying entirely on statistics and underlines need for the alternative hermeneutic interpretive paradigm discussed at the beginning of chapter 3 (3.0).

4.3.4 Analysis of and commentary on the data

1. Are students given sufficient information about what is required from them when assignments are requested/set ?

The majority (88.1%) of staff members clearly felt that they did give sufficient information and detail to students when setting assignments. The student response from those who felt the same way (59.2%) reflected a difference of 28.9% between staff and students on this issue, and although student feelings were split (59.2%+ to 40.8%-) over this issue, the percentage of students who felt sufficient information was given to them with regard to the setting of assignments, was substantially lower than that of the staff.

2. Does the level of English in textbooks used in courses present a problem for ESL students ?

The issue of whether the language in textbooks used in courses was understood or not reflected very different perceptions. The majority of the staff (78.6%) felt that ESL students did not understand the level of the language used. An almost equal percentage (76.7%) of ESL students maintained that they did understand the English used in textbooks. This suggests that there is a considerable difference between the perceptions of both staff and students with regard to this issue. This seems to be reinforced in the following response to question three.

3. Is the level of English used in handouts issued to students understood by ESL students ?

The question posed here produced a split response from the staff (54.7%+ to 40.5%-) whose opinions were fairly mixed on this issue. The students on the other hand, returned an overwhelming percentage (83.5%) who maintained that they did not have

difficulties with the notes handed out by lecturers. The difference reflected here as a numeric percentage appears to indicate quite a different point of view held by each of the two groups. In the light of the responses to the previous question (q2.) as well as this one, an issue which arises here is the extent to which students' perceptions are or are not taken into account in the compilation of textbooks and material such as notes/handouts for their use. The disparity in the responses is difficult to explain and suggests that this might well be a fruitful area for further research, which if based on empirical evidence, might contribute towards a better understanding of this difference.

4. Do ESL students understand clearly the language used during lectures ?

Responses to this question were fairly clear-cut and diametrically opposed. Staff perceptions were such that 73.8% felt ESL students did not clearly understand the language used in lectures, while 64.1% of students maintained that they did. The concern of this research is to identify the nature of the perceptions held by each of the groups, and the responses indicate clearly that these are opposing. It would be premature to make an unsubstantiated statement regarding "correctness" as there is no evidence which suggests that the perceptions of the lecturers are any more "correct" than those of the students. However, the question arises as to whether students are willing to admit to language-related difficulties or not, and whether they have in fact differentiated between these issues and academic-related problems. While staff might suspect that students do not follow their language clearly, this has not been proved. It is also possible that the staff response is borne out

of a 'deficit model' view of students (see 2.4).

5. Do ESL students express themselves clearly when they speak English ?

This question produced a split response on the part of the students (44.7%+ to 55.3%-), with the higher percentage reflecting that students felt they did not express themselves clearly when they spoke. The staff response showed that the majority of them (76.2%) felt students did not express themselves clearly on a verbal level. These results also seemed to indicate the underlying concern which a fair percentage (55.3%) of students felt about their verbal ability.

6. Do ESL students have any difficulty taking notes during lectures ?

Another split response (48.5%+ to 51.5%-) on the part of the students was apparent here. As the percentage (83.3%) indicates, staff seemed to be fairly sure that ESL students had difficulty taking notes in lectures. It is quite interesting to compare the figure in the original questionnaire (68%), of those who felt they had a notetaking problem, with the return from the second questionnaire, in which 48.5% of students who responded claimed that they had problems with notetaking in lectures. All those who responded to the first questionnaire were students who were involved in the Technikon's ESL programme, and who were, in a sense, possibly more aware of their language-related problems. Those who responded in the second questionnaire included a wider range of ESL students and the general trend seemed to indicate that note-taking difficulties were perceived as less of a problem than was originally thought the case.

7. Do ESL students have difficulty scanning for information from textbooks and/or notes ?

Again, student and staff responses were opposed on this issue. The majority of staff (90.5%) who responded believed students did have difficulty scanning for information. The student response which maintained that this was not a problem for them (67%) appears to reflect a completely different point of view. One should consider though how lecturers would know whether students can scan effectively. The high percentage (90.5%) of surveyed staff who held the perception that students had difficulty scanning for information, reflects that it is probably a commonly-held perception of the students on the part of the staff. Part of the reason for this discrepancy might be related to qualitative issues, e.g. what is perceived as effective scanning? It may also be that lecturers simply have a general and undifferentiated perception that students cannot cope linguistically. If this is the case, then this may reflect some of the prejudices referred to by Tema (1988), mentioned in chapter 2 section 2.4.

8. Is the volume of academic work students are required to cover excessive ?

Staff response (90.5%) to this question returned an emphatic denial that ESL students were expected to cover an excessive volume of work. Student response was split (54.4%+ to 45.6%-) over this question, with the slightly higher percentage believing that they were required to cover an excessive amount of work. The difference between those students whose perceptions were in line with those of the staff, ie. those who felt that the amount of work was not excessive (45.6%), and the staff response (90.5%), reflects a substantial difference in perceptions.

9. Do ESL students express themselves clearly when they write English ?

The second question relating to 'expression' produced virtually the same response (73.8%) from the staff as question 5. While the student response to question 5 was split as regards their perceptions of whether they express themselves clearly on a verbal basis (44.7% + to 55.3% -), there was evidence of much more confidence among the student respondents in their ability to express themselves more clearly in writing (66.0%) than in speaking. This response was one of the five issues in which staff and students seemed to have opposing perceptions.

10. Would ESL students agree to attend an extra course in English if it were recommended that they did so ?

Responses to this question were clear-cut. A fairly high percentage of staff (64.3%) and an even higher percentage of students (84.5%) believed that students would be prepared to attend an extra course if this were recommended. Unfortunately, many students who are referred to the ESL Unit by lecturers for extra tuition, attend on an erratic basis and often drop out as a result of timetable clashes, travelling time difficulties or other personal matters which appear to make the attendance of classes difficult. On the basis of the responses to the question, there seems to be a lot of support for the idea, and perhaps if this were accommodated by the administrative structures within Technikon Natal, some real benefit might be derived from the systems which are already in place.

11. Would ESL students object if attendance of an extra course in English were made compulsory ?

While staff response to the issue of making the attendance of extra tuition compulsory was split (45.2%+ to 52.4%-), indicating

considerable doubt, the student response was remarkably positive (66.0%). Once again, there is clearly support for the implementation of regular ESL classes from the students concerned and it is an issue which should not be ignored by the administrative powers whose recognition of this support could make a significant difference to existing circumstances.

12. Would ESL students' subject-specific language-related problems be partially solved if more help were available to them on a departmental level ?

Staff have clearly shown their support (83.3%) for such assistance, as was reflected in the initial staff questionnaire (see appendix C, question 9, which happens to be exactly the same percentage as reflected here in the extended staff sample group), although most had reservations about the additional workloads it would imply. It seemed that unless this were addressed, support from the staff for departmentally-based assistance would be substantially less. The effects of placing additional workloads on the students would also be a factor which would have to be considered very carefully.

13. Can the English Second Language Unit provide all the help that is needed to alleviate the difficulties these particular students experience ?

The response to this question produced considerably opposing perceptions. The student response (79.6%) indicated that the ESL Unit would be able to provide all the help necessary for them to reduce or solve their language-related problems; the staff response (73.8%) showed that they did not believe this was possible.

The student responses seem contradictory in the light of their responses to question 12, i.e. that departmental help would reduce

subject-specific problems', in which 78.6% felt departmental help would solve or reduce their problems. The ESL Unit on its own was therefore not seen as being the only source of assistance.

It has been suggested that the reason for this might be the fact that the students have not differentiated between language-related and academic problems (Agar:1990b). While this might be the case, one should take into account that there is a considerable overlap between these areas and that it is difficult to define either one of them. It is therefore possibly not surprising that students do not make this distinction.

14. Has the high school education ESL students have received prepared them adequately for the academic demands of the Technikon ?

The staff's negative response to this question was almost unanimous (97.6%). Student response on the other hand, was split (50.5% + to 49.5%-).

15. Would ESL students object to the extension of their studies by a period of one year, to include a course designed to improve their chances of successfully completing the National Diploma ?

Response to this question was mixed. Both student and staff responses were split almost down the middle : staff (50.0%+ to 40.5%-) and students (49.5%+ to 50.5%-). All that can be drawn from this is that there were as many positive feelings as negative ones in both groups with regard to the extension of studies to include an English language course. This sort of response is probably not surprising, because while many students would be happy to have the extra tuition aimed at improving their chances of success, there are financial obligations which have to

be considered. The 9.5% difference reflected in the staff perceptions was because respondents stated they could not respond in a clear-cut way to this question because of the larger issues students would have to contend with regarding the extension of courses.

4.3.5 Overall summary of the data

To facilitate an overview of the data, the overall results of the comparison of the final surveys is included with an explanation of each of the categories, in appendix L.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

The goal of this research was to identify through surveys, some of the perceptions of language-related issues of selected ESL students and staff at Technikon Natal. Motivation for this derived from the belief that issues which might be construed as 'problem areas' are not necessarily perceived in the same light by each of these groups. It was felt by the researcher, and supported by lecturers in the ESL Unit at this Technikon, that the identification of perceptions of issues which concerned both these groups would help to develop meaningful responses to them. This does not imply however that staff involved in the teaching of these groups are unaware of the problems, but that by quantifying the responses and analysing these perceptions and the differences between them, it would be easier to support claims that certain strategies (e.g. the increasing need for departmental involvement on a subject-specific basis.) are in fact viable and would be supported.

It was also hoped that a comparative survey (appendix L) would indicate the differences in the perceptions between students and staff. Should there have been a general perception that staff and students perceive language-related problems in the same way, these results have shown that in many of the areas surveyed this is not the case. In addition to this, the chi-squared analysis of the results (see table 6) also reflected that there was no systematic relationship between the student and staff responses.

Of the fifteen questions in the follow-up surveys, one third of them reflected opposing perceptions regarding the same issue (q2,4,7,9,and 13). In addition to this, the difference of opinions between these groups was more than 50% (see appendix L), which indicates the extent to which differences in these perceptions exist.

Of the remaining questions, seven produced 'split' responses (q1, 3,5,6,8,11 and 14), which again indicated the extent to which there was diversity of opinion regarding perceptions of those issues. Consensus of opinion was reflected on only two issues (q10 and 12), and the remaining issue (q15) was completely undecided, with both groups expressing opinions equally for and against the issue in question (the extension of studies to include an English language course).

What can be concluded from this is that there is a substantial discrepancy between the perceptions of staff and students, of the surveyed language-related issues at Technikon Natal.

One conclusion which is both striking, and possibly a cause for concern, is that where some opposing perceptions are indicated (questions 2,4,7,9,), there is an apparent trend towards denial or non-recognition of difficulty. However, without a further independent measure of students' problems, or successes in passing courses, it is not possible to say anything definite in this regard. It should also be noted that the view that students do not recognise their language problems does not necessarily represent the complete picture. Another possibility is that the belief that students deny language-related difficulties, is the result of an unjustified deficit view (see chapter 2, section 2.4) which the lecturers might have of the students. It is also

possible that the students' responses have their origins in the perceptions students have of their own academic abilities (Tema:1988; Agar:1989). A further possible explanation is that students do not want to have to ask for help. This train of thought is supported in similar findings, reported in an evaluation of student perceptions conducted at UNIBO and at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Acknowledging the need for support also means that students have to accept the fact of their being disadvantaged by the education system. For many students this is a very uncomfortable admission to make. (Agar / Murray :1992b in press)

It is therefore possible to conclude that this is not a problem limited to Technikon Natal (Tema 1988; Agar 1989; Agar/Murray,1992b in press).

5.1 Areas in which perceptions differed the most

Before examining the areas in which perceptions differed the most in this research, it must be remembered that the demands made upon ESL students are often educationally unfamiliar to them.

We make demands that students have not been schooled in and have probably not felt the need for either at school or in their communities. This applies to students generally, but it hits the Black student harder since she has to acquire and master the skills demanded by academic study in a language which is not her own. (Webb:1986)

Questions 2,4,7,9 and 13 produced opposing responses which differed by more than 50% . The issues were as follows:

- q.2 Understanding textbook English is a problem for ESL students.
- q.4 ESL students understand the English used in lectures.
- q.7 ESL students have difficulty scanning for information.
- q.9 ESL students express themselves clearly in written English.
- q.13 The ESL Unit can supply all the help that is needed.

Since these issues were the only ones which produced completely opposing responses, they perhaps deserve closer scrutiny.

5.1.1 Understanding textbook English is a problem for ESL students

Staff : 78.6% (Yes) Students : 76.7% (No)

In an attempt to explain this discrepancy, there are a number of reasons which might be considered. As stated above and in 2.4 and 2.4.1, it is possible that lecturing staff have a deficiency view of ESL students' English language ability. It is also possible that this perception is based on the level of English produced in assignments which have been based on textbook references. Part of the problem in trying to interpret the above response is the question of whether the individual lecturer has focussed his/her attention on form or meaning in the student's written work. Research at the University of Natal (Bradbury; Damerell; Jackson and Searle:1990) has shown that grammatical accuracy is not a factor affecting whether a student achieves a high or low mark. In another study (Weir:1984 in Murray:1990) which investigated the way in which lecturers assessed students' written work, the following order emerged when lecturers were asked to rank 'criteria for the assessment of written work, in order of importance':

1. the subject content;
2. clarity of expression;
3. arrangement and development of written work;
4. appropriateness of vocabulary;
5. tidiness;
6. grammatical accuracy.

Similarly, in research on lecturers' evaluation of written assignments at the University of Bophuthatswana in 1987, 'subject content' was also ranked as the most important criterion (Murray:1990).

It is possible to conclude from the above that some lecturers, even if they have a deficiency view of ESL students, are sympathetic to the difficulties ESL students encounter and do not penalise them any further.

Students, on the other hand, claimed the English in textbooks did not pose a problem for them. Reasons for this response might be based on the student's perception of his/her own ability, which for reasons cited in section 2.2 (Perceptions upon entry to the educational institution), might be perfectly adequate in his/her eyes. Another factor one might consider is pride. Having achieved the required entry standard, it might be difficult for the student to acknowledge what might be perceived as an inadequacy because it is an 'uncomfortable admission to make' (Murray/Agar:1992b in press).

The level of understanding must also be considered. Students might well believe that they do understand adequately the English which is used, but the extent to which the language is actually understood, on a level acceptable to the lecturer, could account for the differences in the above responses. It is possible that people can think they have understood something even when they have not. Another issue which might be considered is that being confronted by the fact that they have not understood what has been read is probably not a common situation for many students as many have not had the benefit of such close educational scrutiny during their secondary education. It is interesting to note that if one compares this to the response to question 3 (Is the level of English used in handouts a problem for ESL students?), this also produced a very high 'No' response (83.5%). Staff responses were, however, not as clearcut with regard to this question (54.7% Yes and 40.5% No) as they were with regard to the previous one.

5.1.2 ESL students understand the English used in lectures

Staff: 73.8% (No) Students: 64.1% (Yes)

Once again, in the absence of some means to measure these responses independently, it is possible only to speculate as to the reasons for them. The question which arises here, is why staff have responded in this way. Such a high response indicates that some signal or message from the students and/or their work is creating this perception among the staff. To some extent, possible reasons for this are reported in the responses to the preliminary questionnaire distributed among the staff (appendix C) in responses to questions one (the extent of underpreparedness and the reason for it) and question five (which specific skills are lacking in your subject area?) in section 4.2.4, questions 1 and 5. This is an area however, which could certainly benefit from further research supported by empirically-based findings.

Many of the reasons suggested above might be applied with regard to understanding the English used in lectures. One interesting issue is that even if spoken (conversational) English is rich in contextual cues, in a lecture situation this might not be the case. The concepts being discussed might well be context-embedded, and the students' understanding thereof would relate directly to the individual's command of the language in terms of the level of his/her CALP skills. Another possible explanation not yet taken into account here, might be that the students do understand the level of English used during lectures, and that the staff perception (deficiency model) is inaccurate.

5.1.3 ESL students have difficulty scanning for information

Staff: 90.5% (Yes) Students: 67.0% (No)

It is interesting that of all areas surveyed, the two greatest differences in perceptions were found in the field of reading (see 5.1.1 and 5.1.3). Random interviews with staff regarding

their reasons for perceiving ESL students as having difficulty scanning for information produced a number of responses. They felt that ESL students lacked practice in reading English, and tended to read on a word-by-word basis, translating as they read. It was felt that this piecemeal style of reading interfered with a holistic understanding of passages of information and led to reduced comprehension levels. It was felt that a lack of reading and writing practice in the medium led to a lack of familiarity with it, which lecturers believed made it more difficult for students to read faster. Since the only place most black students would have had previous experience in reading and writing in English would have been in the school environment, this appears to be in keeping with the observation that the 'linguistic culture of black schools in South Africa is essentially oral' (Murray:1990). It should be borne in mind though that this observation reflects a perception, and since no empirical evidence regarding this specifically is available, no causal relationship is suggested.

Some lecturers felt that the volume of work that was required to be read obviously had to be scanned, yet test results often showed that information given in notes appeared to have been missed completely. One point made was that lack of scanning skills was not specifically an ESL problem but a common one among E1L students as well. It is possible that since the questionnaire did not survey both E1L and E2L students in this regard, the results reflected here might seem biased.

Students did not generally see scanning as a problem and appeared to be quite confident in their ability to cope with it. During interviews with some ESL students though, quite a few were

not sure what the term meant, and it is possible that this affected the responses as well. When asked if they scanned writing in their own language, quite a few students said they did not. Lack of practice in these skills and little or no experience of them at school was a common response. This appears to tie in with the reports (Starfield:1991; Higgs:1990; MacDonald:1990;) that CALP skills are not taught in DET schools, as commented on in section 2.2.1.

5.1.4 ESL students express themselves clearly in written English

Staff: 73.8% (No) Students: 66.0% (Yes)

One of the arguments regarding the differences in perception of this matter is defining what is considered 'clear'. In section 2.4.2 the notion of 'acceptable levels' of English was referred to, and it is not a clearly defined issue. Once again, there is a need to recognise that existing notions of 'acceptable levels' of English, in what have largely been white-dominated EIL educational institutions, are in some respects exclusive and perhaps ought to be revised.

Research carried out at the University of Bophuthatswana in 1987, in which lecturers were asked to identify common problems which students seem to experience when writing for academic purposes, resulted in the following list, in order of importance:

1. lack of academic rigour (ie. inaccurate, subjective, vague);
2. not adopting a critical approach to the subject matter;
3. inability to express themselves clearly;
4. lack of originality. (Murray:1990)

Similar research at the University of Lancaster in 1984, which investigated lecturers' reactions to the writing of overseas students, resulted in the following list:

1. inadequate command of the subject matter;
2. failure to adopt a critical and independent approach and attitude to the material;

3. failure to structure information and arguments coherently;
4. failure to answer the question;
5. improper use of source materials (ie. plagiarism);
6. verbosity;
7. failure to produce final polished versions.

(Allwright, J. in Murray:1990)

Some research has shown that ESL students tend to overestimate their writing ability. At the University of Manchester, this was apparent where

there was a general inability on the part of the students to write academic English, write short reports, write concisely and write quickly. He also found that 'students at the lower end of the writing scale grossly over-estimated their language ability, especially in writing.' (Jordan :1977 in Murray:1990)

In addition to this, it seems that students often perceive their writing ability as being better than their spoken ability. The results of this research are in keeping with this as is indicated below.

In this research, the tendencies to underestimate their spoken ability (see question 5, appendix L, 55.3% felt inadequate) and to overestimate their written ability (66% felt competent), appear to be a similar response to that observed at the University of Bophuthatswana where

it has been found that students generally tend to underestimate their ability in speaking and over-estimate their ability in writing.

(Murray:1990)

5.1.5 The ESL Unit can provide all the help that is needed

Staff: 73.8 (No) Students: 79.6 (Yes)

The opposing responses to this question were not unexpected. Reasons why staff responded as they did can probably be attributed to a general awareness in educational circles that the language needs of ESL students cannot possibly be met by an

unintegrated ESL programme. Surprisingly, 26.2% of staff surveyed believed the ESL Unit could supply all the help needed. The student response on the other hand, might be attributed to the fact that many of those who were surveyed had participated or were participating in the ESL programme and appeared to be quite positive about what it could offer or had offered them. This response belies the attendance figures (see 1.1.2) of those attending the ESL course on a regular basis. Whether the response was borne out of naivety or goodwill is difficult to say, but it does not appear to be consistent with the issues discussed earlier (3.3.5.2 and 4.3.3) regarding the desire to 'say the right thing' as well as in chapter one with regard to resistance to ASP (1.1.1) and attendance of the ESL programme (1.1.2).

The difference in perceptions reflected in the results from this survey have implications for the further development of ESL programmes at Technikon Natal. The comment which follows is based on the researcher's perception of issues which appeared to be predominant in terms of the responses to the surveys. These needs were frequently mentioned during informal interviews with lecturing staff.

5.2 Recognition of the need for an integrated programme

Of all the issues surveyed in the follow-up questionnaires, only two (questions 10 and 12) showed a consensus of perceptions. In the light of this, the ESL programme currently in use might benefit from considering the differences in perceptions reflected in the remaining issues surveyed. The act of translating these differing perceptions into concrete responses would probably be a complicated and difficult process, but where issues such as the need for departmental involvement have been

indicated so strongly, the results of research carried out in other ESL programmes, such as the WISPE programme at the University of the Witwatersrand, should be seriously considered.

Research carried out at the University of the Witwatersrand in the Wits Integrated Study Programme for Engineering (WISPE) which began in April/May 1987, has shown that a programme which is designed to integrate academic support with mainstream university credit courses, produces a noticeable improvement in the pass rates of students enrolled in the course (Kotecha/Rutherford:1989). The success of this programme is attributable at least in part, to the commitment of the staff in the Department of Engineering and their willingness to co-operate with the Academic Support Programme (Kotecha/Rutherford:1989), the compulsory attendance of the students, and the nature of the course itself in being subject-specific and hence, relevant to mainstream courses. Without elaborating in detail on the content and nature of WISPE, the characteristics of the programme can be summarised as follows:

- it is an integrated programme
- it has a lengthened degree structure
- retention beyond first year is addressed
- there is early identification of "at risk" students
- it has a steady group of learners (i.e. they stay on the programme for three years.)
- support and preparation is integrated at every stage
- structured and holistic provision of academic support
- voluntary enrolment, compulsory attendance
- the programme works with students and staff: mutual adjustment (Kotecha/Rutherford : 1989)

To ignore the success of this sort of programme, which might quite feasibly be adapted to the needs of Technikon Natal, would be unfortunate.

5.3 Departmental reinforcement of academic skills

In response to the questions asked in the pilot survey of staff

perceptions, it was clear that the majority of staff perceived their ESL students as being distinctly in need of academic reading and writing skills. Abstraction, synthesis, evaluation and recreation (Murray:1990) are integral to and subsumed in these functions, yet few staff stated that they demanded these skills from their students, especially during their first year.

In spite of the lack of the academic skills necessary to succeed at a tertiary level, and the fact that the ESL programme currently offered at this Technikon is based on the teaching of discrete skills perceived as being required for success at this level (such as note-taking, critical reading, evaluation and development of an argument), many lecturers admitted during interviews after completing the follow-up questionnaires, that they did not demand these skills from their own students, nor did they substantially penalise those who lacked them (see 5.1.1 above). In addition, they perceived the mastery of these skills as being beyond their teaching responsibility which they regard as being largely restricted to their individual area of (subject) expertise.

In the light of research regarding the acquisition and/or use of CALP skills (Starfield: 1990,1991; Murray: 1990; Higgs: 1990; MacDonald: 1990), lecturing staff at Technikon Natal should not assume (if they do) that their students have already acquired them. In view of the inferior standard of education to which many of these students have been subjected, staff should not assume their students have developed a competent level of academic writing skills, which relate to those already mentioned, ie. organization of text into paragraphs, identification of a main idea, evaluative skills, note-taking skills, skimming skills, etc. Part of the reason for this is that these skills

have not been promoted among these students in either their mother tongue or in English (Starfield:1991; Higgs:1990; MacDonald:1990).

The reasons why the abovementioned skills are not specifically demanded by lecturing staff are not clear, but from the students' point of view, difficulty in these areas must compound the language problems experienced.

The lack of demand for, or insistence upon, these skills only serves to reinforce the students' perception that they are coping adequately with the course for which they are registered. Ignorance of their own need for academic support, often means that the realisation of the need for assistance is perceived when it is too late in the year to do anything about it.

In section 2.4.1, the matter of staff sensitisation was raised briefly. Issues surveyed in the staff questionnaires (appendices C and F) indicated some of the attitudes held. Many of these were constructive and positive in their response to the language-related problems ESL students experience, while others were not. One of the responses to the question of whether the ESL Unit alone was capable of solving the language problems ESL students experience (appendix H/question 13), indicated that the majority (73.8%) of those surveyed felt it could not. The majority of the group surveyed indicated an awareness of and sensitivity to ESL language problems, as all are involved in teaching ESL students. The question which arises is the extent to which the remainder, those who responded negatively, are aware of or sympathetic to students experiencing language problems. Informal interviews with staff reflected only a vague awareness of the function of the ESL Unit, and even less knowledge of the programme's content. Some

staff held the view that students with English language difficulties should be sent to the ESL Unit in the belief that language difficulties were not their concern.

As mentioned in 2.4.1, it would be desirable to raise staff awareness of language-related problems, but it is difficult to say exactly what they are without some means of measuring them.

With regard to Technikon Natal, the range of awareness of ESL students' language-related problems is largely an unknown quantity. Some of the responses in the survey carried out in this research (appendix C) reflect a level of awareness, but this does not necessarily reflect the perceptions of the entire staff. The issues mentioned in section 2.4.2 (The notion of 'acceptable levels' of English) are, however, extremely relevant to Technikon Natal.

In summary, what is needed is much greater recognition from mainstream academic staff of the need to support their own diploma programmes through integrated ESL programmes, ensuring a much greater degree of subject-specific content. Given that there is currently very little departmental assistance offered in terms of subject-specific tutoring, at the very least, reinforcement from academic staff of the skills taught in the ESL programme would add to the students' recognition of its value and help to reduce resistance to it. It should be noted, however, that a programme which is not subject-specific in its content might well be perceived by the students as being of little relevance to them, and support would subsequently dwindle.

5.4 Decentralisation of the ASP programme

Many of the issues reported on here are not unique to Technikon

Natal. Quantifying them and drawing conclusions from these comparisons serves the purpose of making a case for emphasising a particular point, but in the end one has to ask what, if anything, has been learned from such a survey.

The concept of ESL teaching is relatively new to Technikon Natal. There is now an urgent need to implement an appropriate ESL programme. Fortunately, the urgency of the matter is now recognised and is receiving attention. However, in view of the delayed response of the past in accommodating on an academic level, the increase in numbers of ESL students, it would be short-sighted to ignore previous research in the effort to establish which model or approach is most viable in coping with the problems the Technikon now faces.

This research has focussed on the lecturers' and students' perceptions of students' language problems. As a starting point, it has indicated support in varying degrees for some matters: extra tuition in English; compulsory courses in English; integrated departmentally-based programmes. In short, the surveyed perceptions of both students and lecturing staff have shown that there is support which can be drawn on to develop and implement an appropriate ESL programme. The actual implementation of such a programme would need a suitable structure. A brief description of the phases of development of an ESL programme which might well be adapted to the needs of Technikon Natal, is outlined below.

Starfield (1990), referring to the Academic Support Programme at the University of the Witwatersrand, has identified and described three phases of development. She points out that:

the three phases should not be interpreted as having occurred in linear sequence, but rather as

conceptual periods informed by varying understandings of student learning problems, appropriate andragogical and methodological responses, and the broader university context.

In short, the three phases are defined by their different characteristics. In order to place Technikon Natal's situation in context, a very brief outline of the three phases is included.

Phase One

The first phase was an ASP which offered courses which were skills-based, not directly related to the areas students were studying; they were discrete and decontextualised. Courses were voluntary, supplementary, concurrent with the first year of study and not credit-bearing. One of the major problems with this sort of course was that the students were not transferring skills acquired in the course to their credit courses (see chapter 2, section 2.3.2) because what was being taught was too decontextualised. The theoretical basis and the underlying pedagogical implementation of this model was considered 'deprivationist'. The identified traits have specific relevance for Technikon Natal (see chapter 2, sections 2.3 and 2.4). In her summary of the model Starfield (1990) states:

There is a core of staff based in a central unit who offer decontextualised skills support; a few departments have subject specialists who run ASP tutorials; support is primarily concurrent, voluntary, supplementary and non-credit. These courses tend to lack face-validity and students are often unable to transfer skills to subject areas. Finally, the setting up of a separate unit to 'compensate for' the students' lacks, runs the risk of peripheralising the institution's response to these students.

For all practical purposes, the ESL programme at this Technikon now functions at this stage of development.

Phase Two

Phase 2, as outlined by Starfield (1990), is characterised by:

'a gradual shift away from Phase 1 type tutorial support towards a model in which skills-based

support becomes more integrated with the subject support the student is receiving and with the student's curriculum as a whole.'

It also involves what Starfield refers to as 'staff sensitisation', which she says does not mean less work for ASP staff but rather a different sort of involvement for departments 'on their own'. She stresses that:

Phase 2 is not a homogenous approach to a clearly identified problem but should rather be seen as a number of differing responses to a problem which is in the process of being understood and where constant interaction between the ASP, students and lecturers in the departments is part of the clarification process.

Of particular relevance here to Technikon Natal, is that until fairly recently, the numbers of ESL students have been fairly low. This is not the case any longer. The 'clinic' model (Schochet and Cloete :1986) which has been used ,and which is still used, does not suffice at present, nor will it in the future. There has to be a move away from the teaching of discrete, decontextualised skills towards a much more integrated approach if the ESL programme is to have any measure of success. The central implication of this is that departments have to be more involved in the English teaching programmes of their own students. While this would be a more satisfactory approach, it is not the prevalent one and might still be regarded as idealistic.

Phase Three

The third phase of ASP, as outlined by Starfield (1990), consists of a 'consultancy' model

in which the central ASP will shrink or remain static, while subject support provided either by the central ASP or by the departments themselves will expand. It will continue to fulfill a consultancy/advisory role and to train tutors (its own and others) in learning skills. We may see more integrated programmes, along the lines of WISPE, either run jointly with the ASP or solely by departments. The central ASP's training and consultancy function will increase. [and further] Phase three will involve major structural

and curricular reform, with faculties taking greater responsibility for support provision.

5.5 Language proficiency and academic achievement

It has been suggested here that the ESL Unit needs to move away from teaching academic skills in a decontextualised isolated programme, as is the current situation at Technikon Natal, and that it should adopt a more subject-specific integrated approach. The majority of ESL students entering this Technikon are drawn from DET schools, and in order to justify the suggestion that the ESL programme move away from its current pedagogical standpoint, the work of Cummins (1984) might serve to illustrate why there is a need to move towards contextualised teaching. This has largely been accounted for in chapter 2, section 2.2.1, and will not be repeated here. Suffice to say that Cummins' model has been used in the past (Murray 1990; Starfield 1990a and b) to explain the relationship between educational disadvantage, and the cognitive and linguistic consequences of this in the South African context. The difference between verbal interactional situations, in which the individual appears to cope adequately with the reception and transmission of language, and written discourse, in which the student has difficulty with the expression of ideas, is explained to some extent by the model.

The model has significance for many DET students entering predominantly white tertiary institutions, and as pointed out:

Those successful black students who pass standard 10 and are admitted to university are still disadvantaged by their schooling. They bring with them to university inappropriate learning strategies rooted in the rote learning practice of their schools (Moll and Slonimsky, 1989; de Villiers, 1990). A rote-learning context invokes surface processing of learning material whereas universities demand deep processing, that is a more profound level of personal, cognitive and metacognitive engagement (Marton and Saljo, 1976;

Biggs,1985; Entwistle,1987).

(in Agar and Murray:1992b)

Starfield (1990) also, with reference to Cummins'(1984) model, outlines the implications of the underlying direction which ASP should consider where she states:

In pedagogical terms, the message is that we may need to teach CALP skills more explicitly to DET students as most available information indicates that these skills are not being taught in DET schools either in the L1 or the L2. The question then for ASPs is how to teach the skills - separate skills courses or an integrated approach? [and further] It should be clear that teaching language skills in the context within which they will be used will assist both with reducing the disembodied nature of the language and with reducing the cognitive demands of the task. This approach is felt to be potentially more powerful than the discrete skills approach in which students still need to make the transfer to the specific subject areas. (Starfield:1990)

5.6 Current developments in response to ESL needs at Technikon Natal

It is encouraging to note that in spite of the current status of the ESL programme at Technikon Natal, which in Starfield's terms (1990) is still very much in phase one, i.e. teaching discrete skills in decontextualised circumstances, there has been a positive response by the academic management in the commissioning of an Educational Development Strategy. The Educational Development Research Committee (EDRC) has submitted its recommendations in a report which is currently under discussion.

The EDRC has endorsed the view of Hunter (1990) that:

the needs of the new student demography cannot be met by ASP's alone. The proportion of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds will continue to rise, and must be accepted as the responsibility of the mainstream academic structure. (EDRC Document,1991)

The EDRC has also addressed the issue of whether an ASP should be trying to 'bridge the gap' or 'close the gap'. With reference to this issue, they have re-emphasised the fact that:

If ASP's are to be of any lasting benefit to the students they need to be fully integrated into mainstream academic courses as part of the normal ongoing programme.[and further] Departments will thus have to accept responsibility for teaching all their students regardless of their educational backgrounds, and in many circumstances they may be called upon to take a fresh look at their curricula and possible developments in this area.
(EDRC Document,1991)

Having considered the available literature, and after having visited various academic support units at other tertiary institutions, the EDRC concluded that 'bridging the gap' was not an adequate response to ESL students' needs. It was decided that in selecting an appropriate strategy which would be realistic and viable, it would have to

provide suitable and adequate academic support, while at the same time impose as few extra constraints as possible upon the technician. It was therefore decided to opt for an integrated, departmentally-based model, which will provide optimum benefit to the students and staff, since it will offer a flexible approach to each department's needs, and will make use of the expertise required for a successful education development strategy.
(EDRC Document,1991)

5.7 Conclusion

The goal of this research was to survey the perceptions of students and staff with regard to areas which were considered problematic and language-related. The results of these surveys produced evidence that there are indeed differences in perceptions between these groups. Quantifying these differences in perceptions illustrated the extent to which they exist. Before any educational development strategy is initiated, the perceptions of the students for whom it is being designed and those of the staff who will be required to become involved in it, must surely be regarded as relevant and essential for its success. The perceptions of the issues surveyed were recorded and quantified, and where possible, suggestions based on similar

research were used to illustrate possible responses which could be considered.

Comments made in sections 5.2 to 5.5 are expressed in the light of the support reflected in the follow-up surveys, and are suggestions based on the experience of other similar educational institutions.

In the end, it is in the classroom where the interaction between lecturer and student takes place, and it must be from there that responses to the situation specific to those students should be devised. Each situation has its own peculiar characteristics and part of the lecturer's responsibility is to be aware of the perceptions and diversity of each group which gives it its uniqueness. It is appropriate to conclude with a comment made by Allwright in which he quotes Gaies:

Perhaps the most important point to end with is that what unites classroom centred researchers is precisely their concern for what happens in classrooms, their conviction that (to borrow a phrase from Steven Gaies' personal communication) "the classroom is the crucible" and thus the first place to look if we really want to understand how to help our learners learn more effectively.
(Allwright : 1983)

APPENDICES

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following questionnaire.
You are not required to give your name.

1. Please indicate which department you are registered with.
For example : Electronic Engineering, Marketing etc.,
.....
2. Do you live in residence ?...(Please tick)..... yes / no .
3. Are you financed by a bursary ?.....yes / no .
4. Are you financed privately ?.....yes / no .
5. What language do you speak at home ?.....
6. What was your first year of registration at Technikon Natal?
.....(e.g. 1988).
7. What is your current year of study ? 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th
8. What was your matric symbol ? A / B / C / D / E / F
9. Type of matric obtained ? (Please tick one)
D.E.T. (Department of Education and Training.).....
N.S.C. (Natal Senior Certificate)
J.M.B. (Joint Matriculation Board)
Indian Affairs
Coloured Affairs
Other
10. Year of matriculation
11. Age.....

QUESTIONNAIRE ON POSSIBLE LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY
STUDENTS AT TECHNIKON NATAL.

There are 20 questions in this questionnaire.
Please try to answer all the questions during this period.

INSTRUCTIONS

Each question has THREE PARTS. (Except question number 20.)

The FIRST PART (a) asks you to tick the appropriate box, A or B or C or D next to the incomplete problem statement.

- A stands for... a serious problem for me (e.g. it is a problem you experience most of the time or in most of your courses)
- B stands for.... a problem for me (e.g. it is a problem you experience most of the time or in one or two courses)
- C stands for.... a slight problem for me (e.g. it is a problem you experience occassionally or now and then in one of your courses.)
- D stands for.... NOT a problem for me (e.g. it has never been a problem for you, or it is a problem which you have managed to overcome.

Explanations of A, B, C, and D are indicated at the top of each page of the questionnaire as well.

The SECOND PART (b) asks you to give a reason or reasons why you have selected A or B or C or D in response to the problem statement.

The THIRD PART (c) asks you to suggest what you think might help you overcome the problem.

Please answer all questions even if they are not applicable - if they are not applicable then tick box D - not a problem for me.

EXAMPLES:

- 1a. Understanding lecture content is... A B C D
- 1b. because...
- 1c. It would help me if...

The last question (question 20) asks you to add any other comments you have concerning language-related problems you are experiencing at Technikon Natal which are not covered in this questionnaire.

Thank you for your co-operation.

	A	B	C	D
	... a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.

1a. Understanding what
is said in class
is...

A

B

C

D

1b. because ...

1c. It would help me
if...

2a. Taking effective
notes during
lectures is ...

A

B

C

D

2b. because ...

2c. It would help me
if...

	A	B	C	D
	...a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.

3a. Understanding the
content of notes
I am given is ...

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

3b. because ...

3c. It would help me
if...

4a. The amount of
academic work I
have to get
through is...

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

4b. because...

4c. It would help me
if...

	A	B	C	D
	...a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.

5a. Expressing myself
correctly when I
write English is..

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

5b. because...

5c. It would help me
if...

6a. Expressing myself
correctly when I
speak English is..

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

6b. because...

6c. It would help me
if...

	A	B	C	D
	...a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.

7a. Reading through
material quickly
or scanning text
for information
is ...

A

B

C

D

7b. because...

7c. It would help me
if...

8a. Understanding the
English used in
text books and
articles is...

A

B

C

D

8b. because...

8c. It would help me
if...

	A	B	C	D
	...a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.

9a. Verbally taking
part in
tutorials is...

A

B

C

D

9b. because...

9c. It would help me
if...

10a. The level of
English used by
lecturers is...

A

B

C

D

10b. because...

10c. It would help me
if...

	A	B	C	D
	...a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.
11a. The amount of interaction between staff and students is..	A	B	C	D
11b. because...				

11c. It would help me
if....

	A	B	C	D
12a. Writing essays or doing assignments is	A	B	C	D
12b. because...				

12c. It would help me
if...

	A	B	C	D
	...a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.

13a. Understanding
what is required
of me when I do
an assignment is

A

B

C

D

13b. because...

13c. It would help me
if...

14a. Attending extra
English classes
on campus is...

A

B

C

D

14b. because...

14c. It would help me
if...

	A	B	C	D
	...a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a severe problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.

15a. Following the instructions given during lectures is...

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

15b. because...

15c. It would help me if...

16a. Discussing academic issues with fellow students is...

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

16b. because...

16c. It would help me if...

	A	B	C	D
	...a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.

17a. English as the
medium of
instruction is..

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

17b. because...

17c. It would help me
if...

18a. Finding out
where to get
help in English
is...

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

18b. because...

18c. It would help me
if...

	A	B	C	D
	...a serious problem for me.	...a problem for me.	...a slight problem for me.	...NOT a problem for me.

19a. The lecturer's
attitude towards
me is...

A

B

C

D

19b. because...

19c. It would help me
if...

20. If there is any other issue (or more than one issue) which you consider to be a problem , please comment in the space below.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION .

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

**STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) STUDENTS'
LANGUAGE-RELATED PROBLEMS.**

PLEASE NOTE

- This questionnaire is being carried out for research purposes only.
- You will not be identified or quoted in a personal capacity.
- Please answer as fully as possible in the space provided.
- Please return this questionnaire on completion to :

Mrs Ann Thomas
Department of English and Communication
City Campus.

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

G.F. JOHNSTON

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

Q1. In your opinion, what percentage of ESL students in your department are underprepared for technikon studies ? Please suggest a percentage and what you consider to be the main reason for this underpreparedness.

Q2. Do you consider it a function of the technikon to respond to ESL students who appear to be underprepared for technikon studies ? Please give reasons for your response.

Q3. How do you think the technikon should respond to ESL students who appear to be underprepared for technikon studies ?

Q4. In your opinion, what should be the role of the English Second Language (ESL) unit in responding to the needs of these students ?

Q5. What specific skills do you think ESL students lack in your subject area ?

Q6. In your opinion what should be done to rectify the specific skills ESL students lack ?

Q7. In your opinion, do you think Academic Support services and English Second Language services should be separate or integrated ? Please elaborate.

Q8. Are you or your department involved in an intervention programme for ESL students ?
Please tick one of the following :

Yes - personally and formally.....[]
Yes - personally and informally.....[]
Yes - my department.....[]
No -[]

Q9. Would you and/or your department be interested in being involved in an intervention programme for ESL students ?
Please tick one of the following :

Yes - already involved.....[]
Yes - conditionally.....[]
No -[]

Q10. If you are conditionally interested, please give reasons for conditional involvement.

Q11. If you are not interested, please give reasons for non-involvement.

Q12. What are your views on the selection of students to this technikon ?

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

TECHNIKON NATAL



☒ 953 Durban 4000
 ☎ Nattechnikon
 ☎ 6-20187
 ☎ City Campus/Stadskampus
 (031) 3017823/9 or 3017848/9
 ☎ Berea Campus/Kampus
 (031) 2252111
 Fax No. (031) 223405

5 June 1991

Dear Students

We would like to help you cope more effectively with your studies, and make your courses more rewarding. However, to do this we need your help.

Please answer this questionnaire.

You do not need to give your name. For most of the questions you need only to circle the appropriate box.

e.g. : Are you married? YES
 NO

If you are asked for a written response please write clearly - we are interested in what you have to say!

1. How old are you? years

2. What is your mother-tongue (home language)?
.....

3. Are you financially responsible for anyone other than yourself (eg: parents/brothers/sisters/own child/children)?
YES 1
NO 2

4. Where did you grow up?
on a farm 1
in a town/city 2

5(a) Do you have a matric (Std 10) qualification?
YES 1
NO 2

(b) If your answer is YES, in which year did you matriculate?
19

If your answer is NO, move on to Question No: 6

6. What was your aggregate matric symbol?

A	B	C	D	E	F	Mature Age Exemption	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

If you have circled "Mature Age Exemption" - move on to Question No: 10

7. Type of matric obtained.
(Please circle only one)

Natal/Transvaal/OFS/Cape Senior Certificate 1
National Senior Certificate (D.E.T.) 2
J.M.B. (Joint Matriculation Board) 3
Indian Affairs 4
Coloured Affairs 5
Other 6
Don't Know 7

8. Do you think that your Standard 10 symbols reflect your academic ability?
(Circle one of the following)

They are an accurate reflection of my ability 1
I think I have better ability 2
I think I have poorer ability 3

9. How did you complete your Standard 10?
(Circle one of the following)

- By correspondence
- Government School
- Private School
- College eg: Damelin, Cambridge etc.
- Other (please specify eg: farm school etc)
-

10. With which department at the Technikon are you registered? eg: Marketing, Electronic Engineering

.....

11(a) What is your current year of registration?

- 1st year
- 2nd year
- 3rd year
- 4th year

(b) What was your first year of registration at Technikon Natal?

19

12. What job do you hope to do when you have completed your course? eg: marketing manager, dental nurse, legal secretary etc.

.....

13. Since completing your Standard 10 and before coming to Technikon Natal, have you ever:

- Failed a year YES NO
 - Dropped out during the course of a year for academic reasons
 - Changed courses
 - Dropped out of a year for financial reasons
 - Dropped out of a year for personal reasons
 - None of the above
- (You may circle more than one)

14. What was the main source of the funds you used to pay for your course this year?

- Parents or other relatives
- Personal savings
- Bursary or scholarship
- Company sponsorship
- Bank loan
- Other source (please specify)
-

15. Are you worried about your ability to finance the rest of your Technikon course?

- No - (I am confident that I will have sufficient funds). 1
- A little worried - (but I will probably have sufficient funds). 2
- Very worried - (not sure if I will have enough to complete my course). 3

16. Do you have a part-time job to help you pay academic and/or living expenses? YES NO

- 1
- 2

17. Where do you live for most of the time during the term, while you are attending lectures?:

- A technikon residence 1
- With parents 2
- With relatives 3
- Private boarding house/hostel 4
- Sharing a house/flat with other students 5
- Other - (please specify) 6
- 6

18. Are you satisfied with your accommodation? YES NO

- 1
- 2

19. Where do you study during term? (You may circle more than one response).

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|----------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| Own accommodation | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Friend's accommodation | | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Technikon library | | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Refectory | | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Empty lecture rooms | | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Grassed areas | | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 |
| Other - (please specify) | | | | |
| | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

20. What is the total time spent travelling to and from Technikon each day?

21(a) Do you find mixing/interacting with students of different races a problem? YES NO

- 1
- 2

(b) If your answer is YES please give the major reason

.....
.....
.....

22(a) Do you find it difficult to approach lecturers for help? YES 1
NO 2

(b) If your answer is YES please give the major reason :

.....
.....
..... 1

23. Do you know where to get help for:
a) personal problems? YES 1
NO 2
b) health problems? YES 1
NO 2
c) academic problems? YES 1
NO 2

24. Is the work load (assignments, essays, tests etc) more or less than you had expected?
MORE 1
LESS 2
AS EXPECTED 3

25. Do you have enough time to cope with this workload? YES 1
NO 2

If your answer to Question No: 25 is NO, please answer Question No: 26

If your answer to Question No: 26 is YES, please move on to Question No: 27 ₂₅

26. I do not have enough time to do all my work (essays, assignments, revision for tests etc) because
.....
..... 1

27. Do you think that your high school education adequately prepared you for the academic demands of the Technikon?

YES 1
NO 2

28. Are you able to express yourself adequately in English?

YES 1
NO 2

29. Do you find it difficult to take notes during lectures?

YES 1
NO 2

If your answer to Question No: 29 is YES, please answer Question No: 30.

If your answer to Question No: 29 is NO, please move on to Question No: 31.

30. I find it difficult to take notes because:
(You may circle more than one response)

I cannot write fast enough	YES	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	NO	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
I cannot hear what is being said		<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
I do not know how to take notes		<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Many of the words are unfamiliar to me		<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
I try to write down every word		<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
The lecturers speak too quickly		<input type="checkbox"/> 1		<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Other - (please specify)				

.....
.....
.....

31. Is understanding the information in lectures a problem for you?

YES 1
NO 2

If your answer to Question No: 31 is YES, please answer Question No: 32.

If your answer to Question No: 31 is NO, please move to Question No: 33.

32. Understanding the information given to me in lectures is a problem because:
(You may circle more than one response)

The lecturers speak too quickly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Many of the words are unfamiliar to me	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

I do not understand the content 3
Other - (please specify)

.....
.....
.....

4

33. Is understanding the information in tutorials a problem for you? YES 1
NO 2

If your answer to Question No: 33 is YES, please answer Question No: 34

If your answer to Question No: 33 is NO, please move to Question No: 35

34. Understanding information given to me in tutorials is difficult because:
(You may circle more than one response)

The tutors speak too quickly 1
I do not understand the content 2
I do not understand what the other students say/mean 3
The words are unfamiliar to me 4
Other - (please specify)

.....
.....
.....

5

35. Do you find it easier to learn in a tutorial or a lecture? TUTORIAL 1
LECTURE 2

36. Are you aware that the English Second Language Unit offers free language improvement classes? YES 1
NO 2

37. If you have attended any of these English language classes, have you found them helpful? YES 1
NO 2
NOT APPLICABLE 3

38(a) If it would improve your chances of completing your diploma would you be prepared to spend an extra year studying at the Technikon?
(such a programme would possibly spread the first year over two years and include academic work and support programmes such as language improvement, study skills, extra tutorials etc).

YES 1
NO 2

(b) If your response is NO, please give a reason for your answer.

I would not be prepared to spend an extra year studying because :

.....
.....
.....
..... 1

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM STUDENT PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

The data has been broken down into an analysis of each of the questions in their sub-sections viz., 1a

- A.....a serious problem for me
 B.....a problem for me
 C.....a slight problem for me
 D.....NOT a problem for me

in terms of the frequency of each response to the question, and shown as a percentage. The same process is applied in 1b in terms of the frequency of predominant reasons given for the selection of a response in 1a. Finally, in 1c, the solutions suggested are shown as a percentage in terms of their predominance of frequency.

Question 1.**a. Understanding what is said in class is...**

- A.....a serious problem for me0 %
 B.....a problem for me10%
 C.....a slight problem for me70%
 D.....NOT a problem for me20%

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------------------------|-----|
| Reasons given included | - | Terminology not understood | 32% |
| | - | Pace of delivery too fast | 20% |
| | - | Volume of material too great | 16% |
| | - | Lack of knowledge in subject | 12% |
| | - | Accent /pronunciation | 12% |
| | - | Afraid to ask questions | 8% |

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----|
| c. Suggested solutions | - | Extra tuition/skills needed | 24% |
| | - | More time to revise | 16% |
| | - | Full explanation of terms | 16% |
| | - | Simplified vocabulary | 12% |
| | - | Change in lecturer attitude | 8% |
| | - | Slower pace of delivery | 4% |
| | - | Section not completed | 20% |

Question 2.

a. Taking effective notes during lectures is...

A.....a serious problem for me16%
B.....a problem for me32%
C.....a slight problem for me20%
D.....NOT a problem for me32%

b.Reasons given included - Can't write fast enough 20%
- Can't listen and write 20%
- Pace of delivery too fast 20%
- Translate as I listen 12%
- Don't understand terms used 4%
- Volume of material too great 4%
- Process is unfamiliar 4%
- Section not completed 16%

c. Suggested solutions - Slower pace of delivery 28%
- Time to listen then to write 20%
- More explanation in handouts 12%
- Increase writing speed 4%
- Improve note-taking skills 4%
- OHP left on longer 4%
- More repetition by lecturer 4%
- Patience from other students 4%
- Section not completed 20%

Question 3.

a. Understanding the content of the notes I am given is...

A.....a serious problem for me 0%
B.....a problem for me12%
C.....a slight problem for me44%
D.....NOT a problem for me44%

b.Reasons given included - Vocabulary/terminology 32%
- Problems with handouts 16%
- Volume of work 8%
- Lecturer does not explain 4%
- Section not completed 40%

c.Suggested solutions - More explicit handouts 20%
- Preliminary explanation 12%
- Simplify terms/vocabulary 8%
- Same-day revision 4%
- Staff should be more polite 4%
- Section not completed 52%

Question 4.

The amount of academic work I have to get through is..

A.....a serious problem for me 8%
B.....a problem for me24%
C.....a slight problem for me36%
D.....NOT a problem for me32%

b.Reasons given included - Volume of work 36%
- Travelling time 32%
- Understanding questions 12%
- Other commitments 8%
- Lack of notes 4%
- Unfamiliar environment 4%
- Section not completed 20%

c.Suggested solutions - Live closer to Technikon 24%
- Help with non-academic issues 8%
- Section not completed 68%

Question 5.

Expressing myself correctly when I write English is..

A.....a serious problem for me12%
B.....a problem for me 4%
C.....a slight problem for me48%
D.....NOT a problem for me36%

b.Reasons given included - Vocabulary-related problems 40%
- Lack of English practice 20%
- Grammar/structure problems 20%
- Lack of confidence 8%
- Section not completed 12%

c.Suggested solutions - Help with expression 20%
- Exposure through practice
with an EIL speaker 20%
- Environmental exposure
through English media/print 16%
- Section not completed 44%

Question 6.

Expressing myself correctly when I speak English is..

- A.....a serious problem for me 4%
- B.....a problem for me20%
- C.....a slight problem for me48%
- D.....NOT a problem for me28%

- b.Reasons included
 - Lack of practice/vocabulary 44%
 - Difficulty with expression 28%
 - Fear of embarrassment 20%
 - Section not completed 8%

- c.Suggested solutions
 - More exposure speaking English with ELL speakers 56%
 - Improved self-confidence 12%
 - Section not completed 32%

Question 7.

Reading through material quickly or scanning text for information is...

- A.....a serious problem for me 8%
- B.....a problem for me24%
- C.....a slight problem for me36%
- D.....NOT a problem for me32%

- b.Reasons given included
 - Do not understand content because of terminology 40%
 - Being a slow reader 24%
 - Lack the vocabulary 12%
 - Section not completed 24%

- c.Suggested solutions
 - Need more exposure and opportunity to speak English 32%
 - Subject-specific assistance 12%
 - Need reading skills 8%
 - Need an ELL study-mate (mentor) 8%

Question 8.

Understanding the English used in text books and articles is...

A.....a serious problem for me 0%
B.....a problem for me16%
C.....a slight problem for me60%
D.....NOT a problem for me24%

b.Reasons given included - Terminology 60%
- Cannot check own understanding 20%
- Section not completed 20%

c.Suggested solutions - Thorough explanation of terms 40%
- Need for referencing skills 20%
- Need for ELL study-mate 16%
- Section not completed 24%

Question 9.

Verbally taking part in tutorials is...

A.....a serious problem for me16%
B.....a problem for me 4%
C.....a slight problem for me16%
D.....NOT a problem for me64%

b.Reasons given included - Lack of confidence 16%
- Difficulty with expression 16%
- Cultural differences 12%
- Tutors' intolerance 4%
- Being ignored in tutorials 4%
- Lecturer does not understand
the questions asked by us 4%
- Section not completed 44%

c.Suggested solutions - Practice speaking English
with an ELL speaker. 16%
- Counselling 12%
- Develop self-confidence so
as to speak louder 12%
- More tolerance from peers 4%
- Staff request more interaction 4%
from us
- Work with a supervisor(mentor) 4%
- Section not completed 48%

Question 10.

The level of English used by lecturers is...

A.....a serious problem for me 4%
B.....a problem for me 0%
C.....a slight problem for me16%
D.....NOT a problem for me80%

b.Reasons included - Pace of delivery 8%
- Detail of content 8%
- Terminology 8%
- Different registers used 4%
- Section not completed 72%

c.Suggested solutions - Clear explanation of terms 12%
- Slower pace of delivery 4%
- Section not completed 84%

Question 11.

The amount of interaction between staff and students is...

A.....a serious problem for me16%
B.....a problem for me 0%
C.....a slight problem for me16%
D.....NOT a problem for me68%

b. Reasons included - Lecturers are friendly
approachable and helpful 20%
- Shyness/embarrassment 16%
- Lack sufficient fluency 12%
- Staff do not understand
difficulties experienced 4%
- We are never consulted 4%
- Section not completed 44%

c.Suggested solutions - More understanding from
staff about our problems 20%
- Development of self-confidence 16%
- More patience from staff 4%
- Section not completed 60%

Question 12.

Writing essays or doing assignments is ...

- A.....a serious problem for me 4%
- B.....a problem for me36%
- C.....a slight problem for me36%
- D.....NOT a problem for me24%

- b.Reasons given included - Difficulties with structure 40%
- Need more information in order to understand the question 32%
- Need referencing skills 20%
- Section not completed 8%

- c.Suggested solutions - Help with referencing skills 24%
- More explanation should be given 20%
- Help with structuring skills 16%
- Practice in writing assignments 12%
- More interaction with lecturer 8%
- More exposure to English vocab. 4%
- Section not completed 16%

Question 13.

Understanding what is required of me when I do an assignment is...

- A.....a serious problem for me 4%
- B.....a problem for me16%
- C.....a slight problem for me36%
- D.....NOT a problem for me44%

- b.Reasons given included - Do not understand the question because of insufficient information given about it. 68%
- Lack academic writing skills 20%
- Section not completed 12%

- c.Suggested solutions - Pre-assignment structure should be explained 32%
- More information on the assignment requirements should be given 12%
- Simplify the questions asked 4%
- Section not completed 52%

Question 14.

Attending extra English classes on campus is...

A.....a serious problem for me 0%
B.....a problem for me 0%
C.....a slight problem for me20%
D.....NOT a problem for me80%

b.Reasons given included - Timetable clashes 12%
- Workload too heavy 12%
- Section not completed 76%

c.Suggested solutions - Regular attendance be made possible 12%
- More oral work rather than written work required 12%
- Section not completed 76%

Question 15.

Following the instructions given during lectures is...

A.....a serious problem for me 0%
B.....a problem for me 8%
C.....a slight problem for me20%
D.....NOT a problem for me72%

b.Reasons given included - Lecturers do not take ESL students into account 24%
- Terminology is difficult 16%
- Have to get clarification from others 16%
- Instructions given too quickly 12%
- Section not completed 32%

c.Suggested solutions - Slow down pace of delivery 16%
- Simplify instructions 4%
- Section not completed 80%

Question 16.

Discussing academic issues with fellow students is...

- A.....a serious problem for me12%
- B.....a problem for me12%
- C.....a slight problem for me24%
- D.....NOT a problem for me52%

- b.Reasons given included
 - Difficulty with expression and fluency 28%
 - Lack of subject knowledge 12%
 - No EIL speaker to talk to 12%
 - Cultural differences 12%
 - Section not completed 36%
- c.Suggested solutions
 - Practice speaking English with EIL speakers 32%
 - Improved expression and self-confidence 12%
 - More patience from EIL speakers 4%
 - Section not completed 52%

Question 17.

English as the medium of instruction is...

- A.....a serious problem for me 0%
- B.....a problem for me 0%
- C.....a slight problem for me16%
- D.....NOT a problem for me84%

- b.Reasons given included
 - Lack fluency and understanding 12%
 - Cannot express self 4%
 - Section not completed 84%
- c.Suggested solutions
 - More exposure to informal English interaction 12%
 - Section not completed 88%

Question 18.

Finding out where to get help in English is...

A.....a serious problem for me 0%
B.....a problem for me12%
C.....a slight problem for me 4%
D.....NOT a problem for me84%

b.Reasons given included - Don't know where to go 16%
- Section not completed 84%

c.Suggested solutions - More information should be 4%
- given during registration 96%
- Section not completed

Question 19.

The lecturer's attitude towards me is...

A.....a serious problem for me 0%
B.....a problem for me 0%
C.....a slight problem for me12%
D.....NOT a problem for me88%

b.Reasons given included - Discrimination 8%
- Standards were expected to 12%
be maintained
- Lecturers were approachable, 80%
friendly, explained clearly
when asked questions, and did
not discriminate 0%
- Section not completed

c.Suggested solutions - Increased fluency in English 4%
- Section not completed 96%

Question 20.

If there is any other issue (or more than one issue) which you consider to be a problem, please comment in the space below.

Note

Approximately only 40% of the students responded to this question, and on the whole statements were more often than not a reiteration of previous opinions. A selection of paraphrased responses is included for illustrative purposes.

- My answers should be considered in the light of my being an ESL student.
- The questions should be simplified.
- Racial bias should not play a part in my assessment.
- The volume of work makes studying very difficult.
- Superior attitudes of other students makes me reticent in my responses to questions asked.
- EDP (Electronic Data Processing) is a problem, I do not know where to find extra books for learning and for reference.
- I am afraid to go to the lecturer to ask questions because I am very shy and have difficulty understanding him/her.
- I need more time during exams because I cannot write fast and as a result I seldom complete the paper.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE - STAFF

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

TECHNIKON NATAL

LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE - STAFF

Please enter the name of your department.....

Please note : The questions asked in this questionnaire relate only to English Second Language (ESL) students.

Please answer the following questions, by placing a tick (/) under either YES or NO in the column.

Please return this questionnaire to :

Department of English and Communication ,
Room 134, City Campus.

or

English Second Language Unit, Room 124, City Campus.

or

English Second Language Unit, 49 Mansfield Road, Berea Campus.

THANK YOU.

Yes No

-
1. Do you feel you have given students sufficient information about what is required from them when requesting/setting an assignment ?
 2. Do you think the level of English in textbooks used in your course presents a problem for ESL students ?
 3. Do you think the level of English used in handouts issued to your students is understood by ESL students ?
 4. Do you think ESL students understand clearly the language you use during lectures ?
 5. Do you think ESL students express themselves clearly when they speak English ?
 6. Do you think ESL students have any difficulty taking notes during lectures ?
 7. Do you think ESL students have difficulty scanning information from textbooks and/or notes ?
 8. Do you think the volume of academic work students are required to cover is excessive ?

Yes No

9. Do you think ESL students express themselves clearly when they write English ?
10. Do you think ESL students would agree to attend an extra course in English if you recommended that they did so ?
11. Do you think ESL students would object if attendance of an extra course in English were made compulsory ?
12. Do you think ESL students' subject-specific language related problems could be partially solved if more help were available to them on a departmental level ?
13. Do you think the English Second Language Unit can provide all the help that is needed to alleviate the difficulties these particular students experience. ?
14. Do you think the high school education ESL students have received has prepared them adequately for the academic demands of the Technikon ?
15. Do you think ESL students would object to the extension of their studies by a period of one year, to include a course designed to improve their chances of successfully completing the National Diploma ?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION.

G.F. JOHNSTON
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE - STUDENTSDEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION. TECHNIKON NATALLANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE - STUDENTS

DIPLOMA FOR WHICH YOU ARE REGISTERED.....

Please answer the following questions by placing a tick (/) under either YES or NO in the column.

Please return this questionnaire to :

Department of English and Communication ,
Room 134, City Campus.

or

English Second Language Unit, Room 124, City Campus.

or

English Second Language Unit 49 Mansfield Road. (next door to the
Counselling and Careers Unit on the Berea Campus).

THANK YOU.

Yes No

-
1. Do you feel enough information is given to you when you are asked to do an assignment ?
 2. Do you have any problems with the level of English in the textbooks prescribed /recommended in your courses ?
 3. Do you have the same difficulties with notes handed out by lecturers ?
 4. Do you always understand the language used by the lecturer during lectures ?
 5. Do you feel you express yourself clearly when you speak English ?
 6. Do you have any difficulty taking notes during lectures ?
 7. Do you have any difficulty extracting information from textbooks and/or notes ?
 8. Do you find that the amount of academic work you are required to do is too much ?

Yes No

9. Do you feel you express yourself clearly when you write English ?
10. Would you be happy about attending an extra course in English if your lecturer recommended you did so ?
11. Would you be object if attendance of an extra course in English were made compulsory ?
12. Do you think difficulties you experience with language could be more easily solved if they were attended to by someone from the department offering that subject ?
13. Do you think the English Second Language Unit can provide you with enough help to solve your language difficulties ?
14. Do you think that your high school education adequately prepared you for the academic demands of the Technikon ?
15. Would you object to the extension of your studies by a period of one year, to include a course designed to improve your chances of successfully completing the National Diploma?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION.

G.F.JOHNSTON
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

STAFF RESPONSES : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
1	88.1	11.9	-	76.2	YES
2	78.6	19.0	2.4	59.6	YES
3	54.7	40.5	4.8	14.2	YES
4	26.2	73.8	-	47.6	NO
5	23.8	76.2	-	52.4	NO
6	83.3	16.7	-	66.6	YES
7	90.5	9.5	-	81.0	YES
8	9.5	90.5	-	81.0	NO
9	21.4	73.8	4.8	52.4	NO
10	64.3	28.6	7.1	35.7	YES
11	45.2	52.4	2.4	7.2	NO
12	83.3	16.7	-	66.6	YES
13	23.8	73.8	2.4	50.0	NO
14	2.4	97.6	-	95.2	NO
15	50.0	40.5	9.5	9.5	YES

The tables are laid out in columns which for ease of reference should be interpreted as follows:

- Q.No. - number of question asked.
 YES - number of positive responses to the question.
 NO - number of negative responses to the question.
 OTHER - responses other than 'yes' or 'no'.
 DIFF. - percentage difference between the positive and negative responses.
 YES/NO- dominant response ie. positive/negative.

A list of the questions with the relevant response is printed below each table for convenience.

NOTE: Although no provision was made for a response other than 'yes' or 'no', some staff were unable to respond as absolutely as this and indicated so on the returned questionnaires. Where there were responses which fell into this category, they have been indicated in the relevant places.

STAFF RESPONSES : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you feel you have given students sufficient information about what is required from them when requesting/setting an assignment ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
1	88.1	11.9	-	76.2	YES

2. Do you think the level of English in textbooks used in your course presents a problem for ESL students ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
2	78.6	19.0	2.4	59.6	YES

3. Do you think the level of English used in handouts issued to your students is understood by ESL students ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
3	54.7	40.5	4.8	14.2	YES

4. Do you think ESL students understand clearly the language you use during lectures ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
4	26.2	73.8	-	47.6	NO

5. Do you think ESL students express themselves clearly when they speak English ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
5	23.8	76.2	-	52.4	NO

6. Do you think ESL students have any difficulty taking notes during lectures ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
6	83.3	16.7	-	66.6	YES

7. Do you think ESL students have difficulty scanning information from textbooks and/or notes ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
7	90.5	9.5	-	81.0	YES

8. Do you think the volume of academic work students are required to cover is excessive ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
8	9.5	90.5	-	81.0	NO

9. Do you think ESL students express themselves clearly when they write English ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
9	21.4	73.8	4.8	52.4	NO

10. Do you think ESL students would agree to attend an extra course in English if you recommended that they did so ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
10	64.3	28.6	7.1	35.7	YES

11. Do you think ESL students would object if attendance of an extra course in English were made compulsory ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
11	45.2	52.4	2.4	7.2	NO

12. Do you think ESL students' subject-specific language related problems could be partially solved if more help were available to them on a departmental level ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
12	83.3	16.7	-	66.6	YES

13. Do you think the English Second Language Unit can provide all the help that is needed to alleviate the difficulties these particular students experience. ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
13	23.8	73.8	2.4	50.0	NO

14. Do you think the high school education ESL students have received has prepared them adequately for the academic demands of the Technikon ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
14	2.4	97.6	-	95.2	NO

15. Do you think ESL students would object to the extension of their studies by a period of one year, to include a course designed to improve their chances of successfully completing the National Diploma ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
15	50.0	40.5	9.5	9.5	YES

STUDENT RESPONSES : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
1	59.2	40.8	-	18.4	YES
2	23.3	76.7	-	53.4	NO
3	16.5	83.5	-	67.0	NO
4	64.1	35.9	-	28.2	YES
5	44.7	55.3	-	10.6	NO
6	48.5	51.5	-	3.0	NO
7	33.0	67.0	-	34.0	NO
8	54.4	45.6	-	8.8	YES
9	66.0	34.0	-	32.0	YES
10	84.5	15.5	-	69.0	YES
11	34.0	66.0	-	32.0	NO
12	78.6	21.4	-	57.2	YES
13	79.6	20.4	-	59.2	YES
14	50.5	49.5	-	1.0	YES
15	49.5	50.5	-	1.0	NO

The tables are laid out in columns which for ease of reference should be interpreted as follows:

- Q.No. - number of question asked.
 YES - number of positive responses to the question.
 NO - number of negative responses to the question.
 OTHER - responses other than 'yes' or 'no'.
 DIFF. - percentage difference between the positive and negative responses.
 YES/NO- dominant response ie. positive/negative.

A list of the questions with the relevant response is printed below each table for convenience.

STUDENT RESPONSES : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you feel enough information is given to you when you are asked to do an assignment ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
1	59.2	40.8	-	18.4	YES

2. Do you have any problems with the level of English in the textbooks prescribed /recommended in your courses ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
2	23.3	76.7	-	53.4	NO

3. Do you have the same difficulties with notes handed out by lecturers ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
3	16.5	83.5	-	67.0	NO

4. Do you always understand the language used by the lecturer during lectures ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
4	64.1	35.9	-	28.2	YES

5. Do you feel you express yourself clearly when you speak English ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
5	44.7	55.3	-	10.6	NO

6. Do you have any difficulty taking notes during lectures ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
6	48.5	51.5	-	3.0	NO

7. Do you have any difficulty extracting information from textbooks and/or notes ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
7	33.0	67.0	-	34.0	NO

8. Do you find that the amount of academic work you are required to do is too much ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
8	54.4	45.6	-	8.8	YES

9. Do you feel you express yourself clearly when you write English ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
9	66.0	34.0	-	32.0	YES

10. Would you be willing to attend an extra course in English if your lecturer recommended you did so ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
10	84.5	15.5	-	69.0	YES

11. Would you object if attendance of an extra course in English were made compulsory ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
11	34.0	66.0	-	32.0	NO

12. Do you think difficulties you experience with language could be more easily solved if they were attended to by someone from the department offering that subject ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
12	78.6	21.4	-	57.2	YES

13. Do you think the English Second Language Unit can provide you with enough help to solve your language difficulties ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
13	79.6	20.4	-	59.2	YES

14. Do you think that your high school education adequately prepared you for the academic demands of the Technikon ?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
14	50.5	49.5	-	1.0	YES

15. Would you object to the extension of your studies by a period of one year, to include a course designed to improve your chances of successfully completing the National Diploma?

Q.No.	YES	NO	OTHER	DIFF.	YES/NO
15	49.5	50.5	-	1.0	NO

**COMPARATIVE NEGATIVE RESPONSES
STAFF/STUDENTS : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE**

In this table the percentages of negative responses of both students and staff are shown, when comparing the same question asked in each group. In order to interpret the table the columns should be read as follows:

Q.No.	-	number of question asked
STF/NEG.	-	percentage of staff who answered negatively
STD/NEG.	-	percentage of students who answered negatively
DIFF.	-	percentage difference between staff/students
MAJORITY/NEG.	-	dominant negative group ie staff/students

A list of the questions, rephrased in a neutral register, with the relevant responses is printed below each table for convenience.

**COMPARATIVE NEGATIVE RESPONSES
STAFF/STUDENTS : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE**

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
1	11.9	40.8	28.9	STD
2	19.0	76.7	57.7	STD
3	40.5	83.5	43.0	STD
4	73.8	35.9	37.9	STF
5	76.2	55.3	20.9	STF
6	16.7	51.5	34.8	STD
7	9.5	67.0	57.5	STD
8	90.5	45.6	44.9	STF
9	73.8	34.0	39.8	STF
10	28.6	15.5	13.1	STF
11	52.4	66.0	13.6	STD
12	16.7	21.4	4.7	STD
13	73.8	20.4	53.4	STF
14	97.6	49.5	48.1	STF
15	40.5	50.5	10.0	STD

**COMPARATIVE NEGATIVE RESPONSES
STAFF/STUDENTS : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Are students given sufficient information about what is required from them when assignments are requested/set ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
1	11.9	40.8	28.9	STD

2. Does the level of English in textbooks used in courses present a problem for ESL students ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
2	19.0	76.7	57.7	STD

3. Is the level of English used in handouts issued to students understood by ESL students ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
3	40.5	83.5	43.0	STD

4. Do ESL students understand clearly the language used during lectures ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
	73.8	35.9	37.9	STF

5. Do ESL students express themselves clearly when they speak English ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
5	76.2	55.3	20.9	STF

6. Do ESL students have any difficulty taking notes during lectures ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
6	16.7	51.5	34.8	STD

7. Do ESL students have difficulty scanning for information from textbooks and/or notes ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
7	9.5	67.0	57.5	STD

8. Is the volume of academic work students are required to cover excessive ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
8	90.5	45.6	44.9	STF

9. Do ESL students express themselves clearly when they write English ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
9	73.8	34.0	39.8	STF

10. Would ESL students be willing to attend an extra course in English if it were recommended that they did so ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
10	28.6	15.5	13.1	STF

11. Would ESL students object if attendance of an extra course in English were made compulsory ?

Q.no.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
11	52.4	66.0	13.6	STD

12. Would ESL students' subject-specific language-related problems be partially solved if more help were available to them on a departmental level ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
12	16.7	21.4	4.7	STD

13. Can the English Second Language Unit provide all the help that is needed to alleviate the difficulties these particular students experience ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
13	73.8	20.4	53.4	STF

14. Has the high school education ESL students have received prepared them adequately for the academic demands of the Technikon ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
14	97.6	49.5	48.1	STF

15. Would ESL students object to the extension of their studies by a period of one year, to include a course designed to improve their chances of successfully completing the National Diploma ?

Q.No.	STF/NEG.	STD/NEG.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/NEG.
15	40.5	50.5	10.0	STD

**COMPARATIVE POSITIVE RESPONSES
STAFF/STUDENTS : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE**

In this table the percentages of positive responses of both students and staff are shown, when comparing the same question asked in each group. In order to interpret the table, the columns should be read as follows:

Q.No.	-	number of question asked
STF/POS.	-	percentage of staff who answered positively
STD/POS.	-	percentage of students who answered positively
DIFF.	-	percentage difference between staff/students
MAJORITY/POS.-	-	dominant positive group ie staff/students

A list of the questions, rephrased in a neutral register, with the relevant responses is printed below each table for convenience.

**COMPARATIVE POSITIVE RESPONSES
STAFF/STUDENTS : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE**

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
1	88.1	59.2	28.9	STF
2	78.6	23.3	55.3	STF
3	54.7	16.5	38.2	STF
4	26.2	64.1	37.9	STD
5	23.8	44.7	20.9	STD
6	83.3	48.5	34.8	STF
7	90.5	33.0	57.5	STF
8	9.5	54.4	44.9	STD
9	21.4	66.0	44.6	STD
10	64.3	84.5	20.2	STD
11	45.2	34.0	11.2	STF
12	83.3	78.6	4.7	STF
13	23.8	79.6	55.8	STD
14	2.4	50.5	48.1	STD
15	50.0	49.5	0.5	STF

**COMPARATIVE POSITIVE RESPONSES
STAFF/STUDENTS : FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Are students given sufficient information about what is required from them when assignments are set ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
1	88.1	59.2	28.9	STF

2. Does the level of English in textbooks used in courses present a problem for ESL students ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
2	78.6	23.3	55.3	STF

3. Is the level of English used in handouts issued to students understood by ESL students ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
3	54.7	16.5	38.2	STF

4. Do ESL students understand clearly the language used during lectures ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
4	26.2	64.1	37.9	STD

5. Do ESL students express themselves clearly when they speak English ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
5	23.8	44.7	20.9	STD

6. Do ESL students have any difficulty taking notes during lectures ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
6	83.3	48.5	34.8	STF

7. Do ESL students have difficulty scanning for information from textbooks and/or notes ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
7	90.5	33.0	57.5	STF

8. Is the volume of academic work students are required to cover excessive ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
8	9.5	54.4	44.9	STD

9. Do ESL students express themselves clearly when they write English ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
9	21.4	66.0	44.6	STD

10. Would ESL students be willing to attend an extra course in English if it were recommended that they did so ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
10	64.3	84.5	20.2	STD

11. Would ESL students object if attendance of an extra course in English were made compulsory ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
11	45.2	34.0	11.2	STF

12. Would ESL students' subject-specific language-related problems be partially solved if more help were available to them on a departmental level ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
12	83.3	78.6	4.7	STF

13. Can the English Second Language Unit provide all the help that is needed to alleviate the difficulties these particular students experience ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
13	23.8	79.6	55.8	STD

14. Has the high school education ESL students have received prepared them adequately for the academic demands of the Technikon ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
14	2.4	50.5	48.1	STD

15. Would ESL students object to the extension of their studies by a period of one year, to include a course designed to improve their chances of successfully completing the National Diploma ?

Q.No.	STF/POS.	STD/POS.	DIFF.	MAJORITY/POS.
15	50.0	49.5	0.5	STF

CATEGORIES OF COMPARISON OF RESPONSES OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

A comparison of the responses of students and staff produced three distinct categories of responses:

1. **OPPOSITE RESPONSES** - answers which either differed considerably ('yes' as opposed to 'no') or which differed by a clear majority of at least 20%.
2. **SPLIT RESPONSES** - answers in which either the students or the staff have indicated responses both positive and negative within 20% of each other, or where no clear feeling is demonstrated.
3. **AGREED RESPONSES** - responses in which both groups clearly have similar feelings about the issue under discussion.

The only exception to these categories was the response to question 15 which produced split results from both staff and students. The percentage of difference reflected was extremely low (1%) and hence the result might be regarded as an 'agreed but split response'.

For ease of reference a paraphrased version of the question is shown below with the compared responses.

COMPARISON OF CATEGORIES OF RESPONSES

Question	Staff %		Students %	Diff. %	Cat.
Q 1 Sufficient assignment data is given.	88.1	Yes	59.2/40.8	(18.4)	Split
Q 2 Understanding textbook English is a problem.	78.6	Yes	76.7	No	Opp.
Q 3 English in notes and handouts is understood.	54.7/40.5		83.5	Yes (14.2)	Split
Q 4 ESL students understand the English used in lectures.	73.8	No	64.1	Yes	Opp.
Q 5 ESL students express themselves clearly - verbally.	76.2	No	44.7/55.3	(10.6)	Split
Q 6 ESL students have difficulty taking notes in lectures.	83.3	Yes	48.5/51.5	(3.0)	Split
Q 7 ESL students have difficulty scanning for information.	90.5	Yes	67.0	No	Opp.
Q 8 Volume of work to be covered by ESL students is excessive.	90.5	No	54.4/45.6	(8.8)	Split

Q 9	ESL students express themselves clearly - written.	73.8	No	66.0	Yes	Opp.
Q10	Willing to attend English classes if recommended to do so.	64.3	Yes	84.5	Yes	Agree
Q11	ESL students would object if this were compulsory .	45.2/52.4		66.0	No (7.2)	Split
Q12	Dept-based help would reduce subject-specific problems.	83.3	Yes	78.6	Yes	Agree
Q13	The ESL unit can provide all the help that is needed.	73.8	No	79.6	Yes	Opp.
Q14	ESL students have received adequate education for their needs at the Technikon.	97.6	No	50.5/49.5	(1.0)	Split
Q15	ESL students would object to the extension of their studies to include an English course.	50.0/40.5		49.5/50.5	(1.0)	'split/agree'

TABLE 1

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF ESL ENROLMENT 1988 - 1990

GROUP	LANG.	1988	1988	1989	1989	1990	1990
		ESL INTAKE	% OF OVERALL INTAKE	ESL INTAKE	% OF OVERALL INTAKE	ESL INTAKE	% OF OVERALL INTAKE
WHITE	AFRIK.	200	3.44	226	3.57	242	3.55
	OTHER.	328	5.64	281	4.44	234	3.44
s-total		*528	9.08	*507	8.01	* 476	6.99
COL.	AFRIK.	5	0.08	4	0.06	6	0.08
	OTHER.	3	0.05	3	0.04	2	0.02
s-total		* 8	0.13	* 7	0.10	* 8	0.10
BLACK	VARIOUS (note 3)	202	3.47	297	4.70	388	5.70
	OTHER.	17	0.29	10	0.15	15	0.22
s-total		*219	3.69	*307	4.85	* 403	5.92
TOTAL		*755	12.99	*821	12.99	* 887	13.04
TOTAL STUDENT ENROLMENT		5809		6316		6802	

NOTE (1) : Black student increase since 1988 : 45.65 %
 Total student increase since 1988 : 14.59 %

NOTE (2) : Statistics for Indian students relating to language have been omitted as the recorded home language was 100% English (ie. no ESL students in the Indian group).

NOTE (3) : 'VARIOUS' in relation to languages spoken by black students includes the following :
 - Sotho (North)
 - Sotho (South)
 - Swati
 - Tsonga
 - Tswana
 - Xhosa
 - Zulu

TABLE 2

ENROLMENT OF ESL STUDENTS BY DEPARTMENT : 1st Semester 1991

 - TABLE INCLUDES 1ST, 2ND, 3RD, AND 'OTHER' YEAR STUDENTS
 - FIGURES FOR STUDENTS WITH ENGLISH/AFRIKAANS ARE NOT INCLUDED

	DISTRIBUTION	RANK ORDER
MANAGEMENT	92	1
EDUCATION	91	2
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	70	3
ACCOUNTING	60	4
RADIOGRAPHY	39	5
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	35	6
FASHION	31	7
DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	29	8
JOURNALISM	23	9
CHEMICAL ENGINEERING	22	10
COMPUTER STUDIES	21	11
FOOD AND NUTRITION	19	12.5
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY	19	12.5
CIVIL ENGINEERING	17	14.5
ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING	17	14.5
SECRETARIAL STUDIES	16	16
HOMEOPATHY	16	16
FINE ART	16	16
FOOD TECHNOLOGY	14	19
BUILDING	13	20.5
TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY	13	20.5
VIDEO TECHNOLOGY	11	23
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	11	23
ARCHITECTURE	11	23
CHIROPRACTIC	10	25
CHEMICAL SCIENCES	9	27
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING	9	27
DENTAL SERVICES	9	27
PAPER AND PULP TECHNOLOGY	8	30.5
MICROBIOLOGY	8	30.5
HORTICULTURE	8	30.5
TOURISM	8	30.5
PHOTOGRAPHY	7	33.5
PHARMACY	7	33.5
ACADEMY OF MUSIC	6	35
JEWELLERY DESIGN	5	36.5
PUBLIC RELATIONS	5	36.5
BEAUTY TECHNOLOGY	4	39
SURVEYING	4	39
INTERIOR DESIGN	4	39
MARITIME STUDIES	3	41
RESEARCH	2	43
TEXTILE DESIGN	2	43
COMMUNITY NURSING SCIENCE	2	43

TOTAL -----
 857 44

TABLE 3

LIST OF ENROLLED FULL TIME 1ST YEAR ESL STUDENTS AS AT 12 AUGUST 1991
(2nd SEMESTER 1991).

DEPARTMENT	DISTRIBUTION	RANK ORDER
EDUCATION	69	1
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING	19	2
ACCOUNTING	17	3
RADIOGRAPHY	15	4
ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING	13	6
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	13	6
JOURNALISM	13	6
DRAMA/THEATRE CRAFT	12	9
FASHION	12	9
FOOD AND NUTRITION	12	9
PAPER AND PULP TECHNOLOGY	11	11
COMPUTER STUDIES	10	13
FINE ART	10	13
SECRETARIAL STUDIES	10	13
HOMEOPATHY	9	15
CIVIL ENGINEERING	6	17.5
DENTAL SERVICES	6	17.5
MANAGEMENT	6	17.5
VIDEO TECHNOLOGY	6	17.5
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	4	20
ACADEMY OF MUSIC	3	23
AMBULANCE SERVICES	3	23
CHIROPRACTIC	3	23
MARKETING	3	23
PUBLIC RELATIONS	3	23
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2	27.5
JEWELLERY DESIGN	2	27.5
PHOTOGRAPHY	2	27.5
SURVEYING	2	27.5
CHEMICAL SCIENCES	1	31.5
GRAPHIC DESIGN	1	31.5
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY	1	31.5
TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY	1	31.5
TOTAL	300	33

[Statistics (not including rank order) issued by :
Computer Services : Technikon Natal, August 1991.]

TABLE 4

GROUPING OF STUDENT RESPONSES TO PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

Percentages of student responses to perceived problem areas.	%

Writing essays or doing assignments.	76
Understanding the English used in textbooks or articles.	76
Understanding what is said in class.	75
Expressing myself correctly when speaking English.	72

Taking effective notes during lectures.	68
Reading through material quickly or scanning for information.	68
The amount of academic work I have to get through.	68

Understanding what is required of me when I do an assignment.	56
Understanding the content of the notes I am given.	56
Expressing myself correctly when I write English.	54

Discussing academic issues with fellow students	48
Verbally taking part in tutorials.	36
The degree of interaction between staff and students.	32

The level of English used by lecturers.	20
Attending extra English classes on campus.	20
Following the instructions given during lectures.	18
English as the medium of instruction.	16
Finding out where to get help in English.	16
The lecturer's attitude towards me.	12

TABLE 5

BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS INTERVIEWED

The following information was obtained from a short biographical questionnaire (see APPENDIX A) which students were asked to fill in before the pilot questionnaire.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA.

Number of students interviewed..(SAMPLE GROUP).....	67	
Number of questionnaires filled in....(RETURN).....	25	37.3%
School of Arts.....	4	16%
School of Commerce.....	10	40%
School of Applied Science.....	6	24%
School of Engineering.....	0	nil
School of Design.....	0	nil
School of Health Services.....	5	20%
Black.....	25	100%
White.....	0	nil
Indian.....	0	nil
Coloured.....	0	nil
In residence.....	3	12%
Not in residence.....	22	88%
Financed by bursary.....	3	12%
Financed privately.....	22	88%
Home language.		
English.....	0	nil
Zulu.....	21	84%
Xhosa.....	1	4%
North Sotho.....	1	4%
South Sotho.....	1	4%
Zulu and Xhosa.....	1	4%
First year of registration.....	18	72%
First year of study.....	21	84%
Second year of study.....	3	12%
Third year of study.....	0	nil

Matric Symbol	A	0	nil
.....	B	0	nil
.....	C	0	nil
.....	D	10	40%
.....	E	14	56%
.....	F	1	4%

Type of matric obtained:

.....	D.E.T.	16	64%
.....	N.S.C.	3	12%
.....	J.M.B.	6	24%
.....	Indian Affairs	0	nil
.....	Coloured Affairs	0	nil
.....	Other	0	nil

Year of Matriculation

.....	1990	7	28%
.....	1989	11	44%
.....	1988	5	20%
.....	1987	1	4%
.....	1986	1	4%

Range.....5 years. (1990 ->1986)

Age groups

.....	28	1	4%
.....	25	1	4%
.....	24	1	4%
.....	23	5	20%
.....	21	4	16%
.....	20	5	20%
.....	19	5	20%
.....	18	3	12%

Range.....10 years...(28 -> 18)

TABLE 6

CHI-SQUARED ANALYSIS

Language problem perceived

	Yes		No		
Staff response	A	8	B	7	15
Student response	C	9	D	6	15
		17		13	30

Cell	f_o	appropriate marginals	f_e	$(f_o - f_e)$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$(f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$
A	8	$(17 \times 15) / 30 = 8.5$	8.5	-0.5	0.25	$.25 / 8.5 = 0.029$
B	7	$(13 \times 15) / 30 = 6.5$	6.5	0.5	0.25	$.25 / 6.5 = 0.038$
C	9	$(17 \times 15) / 30 = 8.5$	8.5	-0.5	0.25	$.25 / 8.5 = 0.029$
D	6	$(13 \times 15) / 30 = 6.5$	6.5	0.5	0.25	$.25 / 6.5 = 0.038$

Chi-squared formula

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}}{1} = 0.134$$

The expected frequency (f_e) < 10 in all cases, therefore Yates's correction for continuity must be applied.

Degree of Freedom

df for X^2 is calculated by multiplying the number of categories in each row minus one, by the number of categories in each column minus one. In this example there are two categories in the rows and two in the columns.

$$\begin{aligned} df &= (r-1)(c-1) \\ &= (2-1)(2-1) \\ &= (1)(1) \\ &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

(table 6 continued)

Critical value

χ^2 critical value where alpha $\alpha < .01$ against a df of 1 shows a critical value of 6.63490 ie. about 6.4 (Table source: Pearson and Hartley in Brown:1988).

$$\chi^2_{crit} = 6.4$$

Interpretation of results

Comparison of observed and critical statistics.

$$\chi^2_{obs} = 0.134$$

$$\chi^2_{crit} = 6.4 \quad \text{where} \quad \alpha = < .01 \\ \text{df} = 1$$

The observed statistic is less than the critical statistic in this case.

$$\chi^2_{obs} < \chi^2_{crit} \quad (0.134 < 6.4)$$

Therefore the null hypothesis H_0 is accepted.

The null hypothesis

This hypothesis states that there is no systematic relationship between the dependent and independent variables ($r = 0$).

(Brown:1988)

On the basis of these statistics, it may be said that there is no systematic relationship between the student and staff responses in their perceptions of language-related problems.

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