

**EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' EXPERIENCES IN THE ASSESSMENT
OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CLD) LEARNERS
IN KWAZULU NATAL REGION.**

By

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DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Science
(Psychology), in the Graduate Programme in Educational Psychology,
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I, Claudie Munyai, hereby declare that;

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Claudie Munyai

18 October 2013
Date



Supervisor: Ms Phindile Lungile Mayaba

18 October 2013
Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father Aaron Ntshengedzeni Munyai Mukalanga wamutsanadavhi waLombe, wasafareleladavhi udowa, Ahe! Wa mutsanga Luwa!

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Abstract

Educational psychologists encounter great controversies with regard to the use of traditional clinical and psycho-educational assessment tools to evaluate individuals from diverse communities. In order to gain a meaningful perspective of the matter it is important to gain an understanding of how educational psychologists experience the current available assessment tools and their usefulness in the diverse South African context. The study was therefore aimed at identifying educational psychologist's perception and attitude towards the use of current available assessment tools with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners. The study also aimed at exploring possible challenges educational psychologists may encounter during the assessment process as well as towards identifying ways that they use to cope with these challenges should they arise.

The theoretical framework of the study is informed by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach with emphasis on subjectivity, description, interpretation and agency. The qualitative design was used and data was collected using semi structured individual interviews. The study involved nine educational psychologists, who have been practicing for at least three years including an educational psychology intern – post-registration with the Health Professions Council of South Africa, in the area of KwaZulu-Natal. The data analysis of this study was informed by an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) in providing a detailed exploration of how the participants were making sense of their professional world and the meanings they attach their experience of assessing CLD learners.

Working with diverse communities was found to be a strenuous task for educational psychologists in ensuring that the level and quality of intervention is relevant to the context. Educational psychologists remain challenged in addressing the education, research and treatment obstacles associated with a diverse society. Although developments towards minimising these challenges have been implemented, it is evident that in order to address the diverse nature of our nation, objective and dependable assessments tools are still in need.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background to the Research Problem

Cross-cultural and multilingual assessment of the African¹ population poses as a daily challenge for practitioners throughout South Africa in ensuring that the true ability of the individual is reliably measured in spite of cultural and linguistic diversities. There is an even bigger challenge facing psychologists working in schools as they encounter an increasingly diverse clientele (Foxcroft, Paterson, Le Roux & Herbst, 2004; Schon, Shaftel & Markham, 2008). Parker, Philip, Sarai and Rauf (2007) argue that various factors such as cultural, linguistic and educational differences contribute to the inapplicability of assessment measures to all cultures and context thus having an effect on the validity of psychometric measures. Psychological assessments, in the South African context, were originally initiated with a White population in mind as a result psychological tests were primarily developed separately for Afrikaans and English speaking people thus excluding speakers of the African languages (Claassen, 1997 as cited in Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). The development of psychological assessments thus echoed the racially segregated society in which it evolved. Often driven by political ideologies, measures of intellectual ability were used for drawing out differences between races in attempt to indicate the superiority of one group over the other (Foxcroft, Roodt & Abrahams, 2009). Literature indicates that people from the historically disadvantaged groups in South Africa experienced similar discrimination as the minority groups in Western countries, such that:

- they tend to be unaccustomed with the material used in psychological tests;
- psychological tests measured different constructs from the ones which tests were designed and standardised for, and
- all groups in multicultural society are found to be inadequately represented in the standardisation samples used to derive the norms (Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004, p. 2).

Attempts were made to develop tests which were culture free however it became apparent that the development of a test free from any cultural influence was not possible. (Grieve & Foxcroft, 2009). This form of reference according to Gibbs (1985, as cited in Ramirez, Lepage, Kratochwill, & Duffy, 1998) professes colour blindness which denies the existence

¹Terms such as Black, African or Black African are enriched in scientific writings that may be perceived as both inaccurate and unpleasant (Agyeman, Bhopal & Bruijnzeels, 2005). Although it is a broad concept, for the purpose of this study, the term African will be used as the preferred term for individuals who have been historically marginalized socially, politically and in everyday life within the South African context.

of differences in the client's perception of society as a member within culturally diverse groups. Consequently with the aim to remove as much cultural bias as possible, the focus was placed on the development of culture-reduced/culture-common tests by including only behaviour that was common across cultures. For example, non-verbal intelligence assessment tools such as the Raven's Progressive Matrices were developed whereby the focus was on novel problem solving tasks in which language use was minimised (Foxcroft, Roodt, & Abrahams, 2009). On the contrary the nonverbal notion of such tests has been later argued not be as culture fair as it was intended; they were found to require the same analytical rule of analysis, coding and transformation of relationships – essential for the analysis of verbal content in assessment (Cormier, McGrew & Evans, 2011; Owen, 1998).

The need for culturally appropriate measures, free from language barriers, became even more essential in the 1980s and early 1990s when the socio-political situation in South Africa began to change as discriminatory laws were revoked. As a result cross-cultural test adaptation became more apparent as people from different racial groups were competing for the same jobs (Foxcroft et al., 2009; Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). This rendered the separate use of assessment measures useless and in attempt to remedy the situation two approaches were followed (Foxcroft et al., 2009).

Firstly, measures were developed for more than one racial group so that test performance can be interpreted to an appropriate norm group. This led to the development of measures such as the General Scholastic Aptitude Test (GSAT), the Ability Processing of Information and Learning Battery (APIL-B), as well as the Paper and Pencil Games (PPG) which is the first measure to be available in all eleven official languages in South Africa (Foxcroft et al., 2009). Furthermore other assessment tools such as the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire fifth edition (16PF5) and the Kaufman Assessment Battery for children (K-ABC) were translated and adapted for different languages and or cultural groups (Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009). Secondly, psychological measures which were developed and standardised only for White South Africans as well as ones imported from overseas were later used to assess other national groups.

However the absence of appropriate norms brought forth what Foxcroft et al. (2009) call a bad habit of interpreting such test results “with caution” (p. 20) which still prevails to date. The authors (Foxcroft et al., 2009), maintain that this approach placed the practitioners' consciences at ease and the sense that they were doing the best they could considering the

few available tools at their disposal. For this reason, Kanjee and Foxcroft (2009) discourage the approach of adapting widely used international assessment measures for the South African context because the internal consistencies remain low for the African population group. Further disadvantages are that constructs measured in the original and adapted version may not be equivalent moreover the way in which the constructs are put into practice might not be relevant or appropriate for the cultural group that it is being adapted for (Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009).

The translation of assessment tools into native languages has been found to not only pose a challenge for test developers but also for the assessors and test takers and consequently to the assessment process as a whole (Schon et al., 2008). For instance, the target word or expected response may be more or less difficult in the native language thus changing the difficulty of the items. As a result the assessment may prove to be unreliable. Furthermore direct translation of the words in the test may also prove to be impractical (Ortiz & Ochoa, 2005; Schon et al., 2008). Schon et al. (2008) maintain that another challenge, that needs to be considered in the translation of assessment instructions for learners from diverse communities, is that the learners are often taught academic content in English and may therefore have little or no knowledge of the equivalent words in their native language. The indistinguishable language proficiency of diverse communities is thus seen to create a dilemma in the translation of current available test as well as for the development of new ones. For instance, when translating the 16PF5 into Tshivenda from English using the back translation method, van Eeden and Mantsha (2007 as cited in Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009) encountered a number of difficulties such as:

- the fact that there is no equivalent term for a concept in the target language which made literal translation of items problematic. For example, the researchers found that there is no Tshivenda term for “depression”;
- idiomatic expressions cannot be literally translated; and
- the use of negative form often confuses test takers.

Such difficulties may result in errors that change the meaning of an item and make it difficult for the test taker to understand the test item (Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009). It can be argued that test adaptation and translation in South Africa has not flourished as it should be. This may be due the challenging nature of the process, which can be time consuming and expensive (Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009; Padilla & Borsato, 2008).

The widespread of use and misuse of potentially culturally biased measures brought about negative perceptions regarding the usefulness of psychological measures (Foxcroft et al., 2009). For instance, studies have found that practitioners often experience constraints and methodological challenges in coming up with a diagnosis as per controversies over the diagnosis of learning difficulties when applied to individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Abedi, 2006; Javier, Herron & Bergman, 1997; Schon et al., 2008).

Ortiz and Ochoa (2005) point out that assessment tools are linguistically biased because of the expectations and assumptions regarding comparability of language proficiency, that are hardly ever met when working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners, and not because of any fundamental psychometric defect. In response to the need for test bias to be scrutinised Owen (1986) conducted what is known as the first thorough study investigating test and item bias using the Senior Aptitude Test, Mechanical Insight Test and the Scholastic Proficiency test on Black, White, Coloured and Indian subjects (Foxcroft et al., 2009). Findings indicated major differences between test scores of the African and White sample group concluding that the understanding and reducing differential performance between African and White South Africans as a challenge. Owen (1992a, 1992b, as cited in Foxcroft et al., 2009) later concluded that comparable test performance between different groups in South Africa can only be achieved if environmentally disadvantaged test takers are provided with sufficient training in taking a particular test before they actually take it, i.e. have pre-test training sessions.

Javier, Herron and Bergman (1997) are of the opinion that other than the apparent discrepancies in standardised assessment tools the efforts to ensure that such discrepancies in performance are not as a result of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage are vague. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the home environment, schooling, nutrition and other factors on cognitive test performance in a multicultural society so as to provide an informed basis for adaptive planning and intervention in line with the identified learning needs (Javier et al., 1997).

This maintains that any assessment measure that does not yield adequate evidence, concerning the nature and quality of cognition associated with learning together with the environmental factors that may facilitate or hinder cognitive expression, cannot be considered as a learner centred procedure (Javier et al., 1997; Schon et al., 2008). The identification of cognitive and learning strategies, experiences and context is therefore important because they are seen to have an influence on the whole cognitive process. As a result, Schon et al. (2008)

maintain that in order to counter the potential of bias, when working with diverse communities, practitioners need to consider issues such as reliability and validity, cultural loading vs. representation, language bias vs. language demands as well as norm sample inclusion vs. representation. However, Javier et al. (1997) point out that such an approach seems to require much more from the assessor than may be considered practical, as a result it may be the subject of criticism.

In addition, Schon et al. (2008) found that although there are high expectations for practitioners to select and use appropriate assessment techniques and strategies, they are not all adequately trained to evaluate culturally and linguistically diverse learners; that very few psychology programs offer training in working with diverse learners, as a result practitioners have had to develop these skills on their own. In support of this finding, the needs analysis conducted by Foxcroft et al. (2004) on psychological assessment in South Africa indicates concerns of cross-cultural tests in South Africa. The findings in their study indicate that practitioners felt that very few of the tests were appropriate for cross-cultural assessment maintaining the need for more training with regards to adaptation, application and interpretation of tests for cross-cultural purposes (Foxcroft et al., 2004). The tests used needed revision in terms of factors such as the language used, the outdated nature of the test, item content and norms as well as the cultural appropriateness of the test content and norms (Foxcroft et al., 2004).

Furthermore, international studies have found that due to insufficient numbers of educational psychologists with either bilingual or multilingual skills, the assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse learners often require the use of interpreters (Nahari & Martines, 2008; O'Bryon & Rogers, 2010; Ochoa, Riccio, Jimenez, de Alba & Sines, 2004; Javier et al., 1997; Schon et al., 2008). The frequent need to use interpreters, who often do not have any formal training in interpretation and even psychological assessment, as part of the evaluation process is a challenge for practitioners working in diverse communities (Javier et al., 1997; Schon et al., 2008). According to Javier et al. (1997) such forms of practices are often prone to unintended distortions in communication such as omission, addition, condensation, substitution, and role playing thus seriously compromising the accuracy of communication during assessment. This is because interpreters with inadequate training often have little understanding of the assessment process and desired outcomes and it is often impractical for practitioners to have control of any mistakes that may occur (Javier et al., 1997; Nahari &

Martines, 2008; Xiong, 2007). The need for formal training and the establishment of standards of competence for interpreters becomes more evident in diverse societies as this will allow interpreters to function as a bridge or liaison between the linguistic and cultural world of the assessor and that of the learner. It is also important for practitioners to consider their own training in the use of interpreters (O'Bryon & Rogers, 2010).

1.2 The Research Problem

South Africa is regulated under the new constitution in which basic human rights and equality of individuals are guaranteed since the first democratic elections in 1994. This placed the use of tests in the industry and education in particular under scrutiny (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009; Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004).

The promulgation of the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (Section 8) had a major impact on the usefulness of psychological assessment with demands on the cultural appropriateness of psychological tests and their usage placed in the spotlight (RSA, 1998). The Education White Paper 6 titled: *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive education and Training System* (Department of Education [DoE], 2001) further questioned the usefulness of psychometric test results and assessment practices in the education system; according to the policy these should contribute to the identification of learning difficulties, educational programme planning as well as informing the instruction of learners, however it is not always the case. As a result, testing practices that were perceived as exclusionary and maintaining discriminatory policies of the past were banned, i.e. the group tests in schools and school readiness testing (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009).

The inclusive education system brought about change in the role of educational psychologists and other support staffs by upholding the establishment of provincial multi-disciplinary professional support teams (Department of Education [DoE], 2005). The primary focus for psychologists, in relation with other professionals, is to provide indirect support to learners through the support of educators and school management.

For example, identifying the learners' needs, teaching and learning strategies that correspond with these needs as well as to conduct research to either map out the needs of learners and educators or establish the efficiency of a programme (DoE, 2001, 2005). This can be done, for instance, by supporting educators to identify barriers to learning through training in use of educational and psychological screening measures. The secondary focus is to provide direct support to learners, for example, through diagnostic assessment in order to understand and

describe a learner's specific learning difficulties so as to develop an effective intervention plan (DoE, 2005).

Foxcroft et al. (2009) are of opinion that the policies on inclusive education and the strategies for its implementation bring forth a positive challenge to educational psychologists in developing new competencies. They maintain that this aids in assessments being more developmentally focussed by linking assessment results to development opportunities that educators can provide instead of being too diagnostically focussed (Foxcroft et al., 2009).

However the use of traditional clinical and psycho-educational assessment tools to evaluate individuals from diverse cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic background continues to be a subject of great controversy among psychologists. Practitioners remain challenged in addressing the education, research and treatment challenges associated with diverse societies as there continues to be a need for objective and dependable assessments to address the diverse nature of the nation.

1.3 Aims

The main aim of this study is to explore the subjective experiences of educational psychologist when assessing culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners. The aim is to find out about educational psychologist's perception and attitude towards the use of current available assessment tools with CLD learners. The study also intends to identify the challenges that they may encounter during assessment as well as to identify the ways in which they cope with these challenges, if there are any.

1.4 Rationale

The review of literature indicates the limitations of current available assessment tools in the sense that there are not enough and well standardised assessment tools available to effectively assess people of diversity such as South Africa (Foxcroft et al., 2004). Limited studies have reported on the actual subjective experiences and challenges which educational psychologists encounter when evaluating CLD learners more especially from a multicultural perspective. The majority of the available studies are based on a more Western perspective (Javier et al., 1997; Rogers et al., 1999; O'Bryon & Rogers, 2010; Ortiz & Ochoa, 2005; Padilla & Borsato, 2008; Schon et al., 2008). Although it is important to explore the results of these available studies, they however do not fully reflect on the multicultural South African context.

The results of this study may prove useful in the development of appropriate and effective measures for a multicultural context such as South Africa as well as identify themes and generate questions for further research thus benefiting both practitioners and learners.

1.5 Research Questions

The primary research question for the study is:

What are the educational psychologists' subjective experiences in using the currently available assessment tools with CLD learners?

In answering this question, data was collected based on the following secondary questions:

1. What is the nature of diversity of clientele which educational psychologists encounter?
2. Which assessment tools do educational psychologists mainly use with CLD learners?
3. What are the challenges of using presently available assessment tools for CLD learners?
4. What coping skills do educational psychologists make use of in order to deal with such challenges (if challenges are experienced)?

1.6 Methodology

In order to gain the participants' experiences, perceptions and attitudes towards the use of currently available assessment tools with CLD learners, the researcher adopted the following methodology:

1.6.1 Research design.

The research design is the plan and structure used to obtain evidence so as to answer the above mentioned research questions (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006). The researcher chose the qualitative research design for its holistic nature of viewing phenomena within the context where it occurred. This allowed the researcher to study the experiences of educational psychologists in assessing CLD learners in depth and in detail while attempting to understand the themes which emerge from the data (Terre Blanche, Kelly et al., 2006).

1.6.2 Sampling.

Sampling is the selection of research participants from an entire population which involves making a decision about the type of people, setting, events, behaviours and social processes to be observed (Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The researcher made use of the snowball sampling technique, a technique compatible with purposive sampling, so as to access a

particular subset of people (Babbie, 2010; Denscombe, 2007; Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Accordingly, participants selected in this study comprised of known educational psychologists, who were then asked to nominate other psychologists relevant to the purpose of the study. The nominees were then contacted with the hope to include them in the sample.

1.6.3 Data collection instruments and method.

The data was collected using semi-structured interviews which allowed for the nature of open and close ended questions to be tailored in a manner that will elicit different varieties of information with the guide of a pre-planned interview schedule (Kelly, 2006a; Roodt, Stroud, Foxcroft & Elkonin, 2009). The interviews were recorded depending on the consent of the participant. The ethical issues were also discussed with the participants and a consent form was signed as a form of agreement to participate in the study.

1.6.4 Data analysis and interpretation.

The analysis of data in this study was informed by interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) with the purpose of placing real life events and phenomena into perspective (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006). The process of analysis began by identifying themes in the data and relationships between them with use of codification of arising themes also known as analytical/theoretical ordering – a form of thematic analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003; Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 2006).

1.7 Definition of Terms and Concepts

In order for the researcher and the readers to have a clear understanding of the principal terms/concepts used in the study the key terms and concepts used in this study and those related to the study are as follows:

African: Terms such as Black, African or Black African are enriched in scientific writings that may be perceived as both inaccurate and unpleasant (Agyemang, Bhopal & Bruijnzeels, 2005). Although it is a broad concept, for the purpose of this study, the term African will be used as the preferred term for individuals who have been historically marginalized socially, politically and in everyday life within the South African context.

Experience: refers to any event through which one has lived and the knowledge gained through participation in the event (Reber, Allen & Reber, 2009).

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse learners (CLD): Learners, for whom English is not their primary language, have been referred to by a variety of terms such as: English Language

Learners (ELL), Second Language Learners (SLL), English as a Second Language (ESL), Limited English Proficient (LEP) (Schon et al., 2008). These terms take on a deficit model of defining a learner as having deficits and not acknowledging the diversities within which learners are born into, thus another term was developed defining learners as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) (Schon et al., 2008). CLD is a broad term which includes all individuals from diverse backgrounds regardless of their proficiency in English. It provides a multidimensional approach to issues of diversity by incorporating both aspects of culture and language in providing independently unique and interactive qualities of a person's ability to function as part of a multicultural society (Cormier, McGrew & Evans, 2011).

Culture: The term can be defined as the values, norms, and traditions that affect how individuals from a particular group perceive, think, interact, behave, and make judgements about the world in which they live (Chamberlain, 2005; Oregon Department of Education, 2007; Ramirez, Lepage, Kratochwill, & Duffy, 1998). These are shared by a group of people and are communicated from one generation to the next through the use of language or some other means of communication (Sternberg, 2004).

Language: The term refers to a set of subjective conventional symbols through which people convey meaning; a medium through which we code our feelings, thoughts, ideas and experiences (Reber et al., 2009). It is more so a cultural tool used to socialise individuals into linguistic and cultural communities and is in turn shaped by the cultural experiences of social group that use it (Gopaul-McNicol, Reid & Wisdom, 1998; Nahari & Martines, 2008).

Psychological assessments: The term refers to a process-oriented activity whereby an assessor gathers a wide range of information with use of assessment measures (tests) in conjunction with information from many other sources such as interviews, behavioural observations, a person's history, as well as collateral sources (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009). The assessor will then evaluate the information gained in order to reach conclusions and make decisions.

Paterson and Uys (2005) clarify that assessment include but is not limited to testing, maintaining that the distinction between the two can be viewed in terms of the features required from the person applying the tests. Psychological assessments require comprehensive skills and expertise from the assessor who is expected to know which tests to select as well as how to integrate information gained from tests with other sources in order to accomplish a holistic assessment (Paterson & Uys, 2005).

Psychological assessment measure (test): It should be noted that for the purpose of this research, tools of assessment may be referred interchangeably to assessment measures or tests however preference is given to the term *assessment measure* for its broader connotation as compared to the term *test*. Foxcroft and Rood (2009) are of opinion that the term test mainly refers to an objective, standardised measure used to gather data for a specific purpose, such as to determine a person's intellectual capacity, personality, aptitude, and interest to name a few. Assessment measures are seen to include a variety of procedures that can be used in psychological, occupational, and educational assessment. They can be administered to individuals, groups and organisations to sample specific domains of functioning such as, intellectual ability, personality and even organisational climate from which inferences can be made about both functional and dysfunctional behaviour (Foxcroft & Rood, 2009). Assessment measures can be administered under standardised conditions whereby systematic methods are applied to score and evaluate the results with the use of available guidelines.

Psycho-educational assessments: The term refers to assessment of learners' functioning designed to identify a learner's cognitive strengths and weaknesses, to diagnose potential intellectual and or learning difficulties in order to make recommendations for academic supports as well as accommodations that will allow learners to function at their best (Glatt, 2011; Ministry of Education Singapore, 2011). The sources of assessment data include aspects such as; background information, educational history and records as well as data from tests of attention, behaviour or emotions and adaptive behaviour. The main focus of assessment is therefore on three primary areas that impact learning and academic functioning such as learning aptitude or intelligence, basic academic skill development and personality/adjustment factors (Bell, 2002; Glatt, 2011).

Educational psychologist: According to the Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1974 (HPCSA, 2012), an educational psychologist is a practitioner specialising in the assessment, diagnosis and implementation of interventions aimed at enhancing human functioning in relation to educational, scholastic, learning and development. For the purpose of this study reference of school psychologists as indicated in international studies such as (Ochoa et al., 2004; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; O'Bryon & Rogers, 2010; Ortiz, 2008) are equivalent to and will be used to refer to educational psychologists in the South African context.

Psychologists: For the purpose of this study the term practitioner and psychologist are clinical terms that will be used interchangeably as reference to persons registered under the

Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1974 (HPCSA, 2012) as a psychologist, registered counsellor, psychometrist, psycho-technician and intern in psychology or student in professional psychology. However, in Chapter four the term will be used specifically with reference to educational psychologists.

1.8 Overview of Chapters and Layout

Chapter one covers the background and statement of the problem, the rationale, aims and objectives of the study, research questions, methodology, target population, definition of terms/concepts featured in this study, as well as the outline of the research.

In Chapter two the researcher reviews the literature relevant to the study with reference to the theories, models and guidelines informing the process of assessment. The chapter further explores the socio-political history of psychological assessment in South Africa as well as an outline of the South African assessment policies - looking at the impact of culture and language in the assessment process.

Chapter three provides a detailed overview of the research methodology adopted in this study. It expands on the sampling method used, data collection and analysis thereof, as well as the ethical considerations.

Chapter four gives a presentation of the analysis and interpretation data. The data is presented in themes and excerpts are used to present the findings of the study.

In Chapter five the researcher discusses the findings documented in Chapter four. This is done in relation to theory as well as currently available literature.

Chapter six gives conclusions of the research, the limitations of the research as well as the recommendations.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the background and statement of the problem. Having analysed the problem, the aims and objective of the study were explained. The research method and various relevant concepts of the study were explained followed by a presentation of the chapter outline. In the next chapter literature relevant to the study will be reviewed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature relevant to the study, looking at the framework in which educational psychologists find themselves when assessing CLD learners using currently available assessment tools. The chapter looks at some theories, models and guidelines which inform the process of assessment. The chapter will explore the socio-political history of psychological assessment in South Africa as well as an outline of the South African assessment policies. The chapter will also look at the impact of culture and language in the assessment process, looking at how this affects both the assessor and the client as well as how the use of interpreters affects the assessment process.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was informed by the theories of language acquisition and the theory of socio-constructivism. These are discussed as follows:

2.2.1 Theories of language acquisition.

The understanding of how language is acquired has been a challenge for researchers as it is a complex skill of the human mind. In order to understand the phenomenon of language acquisition, mainly second language acquisition, the following will be discussed; Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of language acquisition.

2.2.1.1 Chomsky's theory of universal grammar.

Chomsky's theory of universal grammar in language acquisition, also known as the nativist theory, postulates language acquisition as a biologically programmed activity which involves highly specialized linguistic processing capabilities that operate most efficiently in early childhood – an inherent biological gift that makes learning possible (Freeman & Long, 1991; Shaffer & Kipp, 2007). According to Chomsky (1959, 1968), humans are born with a language acquisition device (LAD) – an inborn linguistic processor that is activated by verbal input containing a universal grammar – and the knowledge of rules that are common to all languages (Shaffer & Kipp, 2007). Hence it is called a 'nativist' theory.

The LAD allows persons to acquire adequate vocabulary skills that allow them to combine words into new rule bound utterances as well as the ability to understand what is heard regardless of the language being listened to (Shaffer & Kipp, 2007). People therefore have an inherent knowledge of applicable universals such as syntactic categories (i.e. subject, object,

noun, and verb), unique phonological features and formal universals such as abstract principles governing conceivable rules and parameters of languages (Freeman & Long, 1991; Shaffer & Kipp, 2007). Chomsky therefore proposes an ideal process of language acquisition, unaffected by maturation, processing limitations, memory restrictions and other cognitive and motivational factors.

According to Chomsky's theory of universal grammar (McLaughlin, 1987), the environment can play both a negative and positive role in language acquisition. Chomsky denies that the environment is able to provide the child with adequate knowledge for learning particular aspects of syntax without the aid of the LAD, in this sense the environment is said to play a negative role in language acquisition. For example, children are often exposed to people who speak in a fragmented manner, who change their minds and make lisps of the tongue; however, according to Chomsky's theory they still manage to learn the correct form of language (Freeman & Long, 1991; McLaughlin, 1987).

On the other hand Chomsky's theory acknowledges that the environment is able to provide evidence of correction to help the learner fix the ways in which the universal grammar is applied to the target language, thus playing a positive role (Freeman & Long, 1991). Chomsky's theory maintains that children do not simply copy the language they hear around them, they are able to deduce rules from the language which they can then use to produce sentences that they have never heard of before (Freeman & Long, 1991). Children therefore learn the grammar which enables them to generate a number of new sentences. This entails that external factors have an influence on the course of language acquisition and that the right environmental input at the right time is able to advance the process of acquisition. Cook (1985 as cited in McLaughlin, 1987) further mentions that the universal grammar, which is present in a child's mind, is able to grow into an adult's knowledge language provided there are certain environmental triggers present.

2.2.1.2 Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of language acquisition.

The socio-cultural theory in language acquisition has its origins in the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978). According to Vygotsky (1978 as cited in Turuk, 2008) the biological factors that form the basis of human thinking and development are not sufficient enough to account for the ability to voluntarily and intentionally regulate mental activity. Thus he developed a general genetic law of cultural development, which takes on a dialectical perspective in human development, in stating that a person's development occurs on two planes namely; the inter-

psychological plane, known as the social plane, and the intra-psychological plane which is the individual/psychological plane (Khatib, 2011; Mkhize, 2004).

According to Vygotsky's theory, the socio-cultural setting is a primary and determining factor in the development of mental activity such as voluntary attention, intentional memory, logical thought, planning and problem solving (Turuk, 2008). This suggests that a person's mental functioning is a mediated process, organised by cultural artefacts, activities and concepts whereby the use of language, its organisation and structure are the primary means of mediation (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Thus individuals emerge from social interaction and are therefore social beings. Similarly, Mitchell and Myles (2004 as cited in Turuk, 2008) maintain that children's early language learning skills are facilitated by the processes of meaning making in collaborative activity with other members of a given culture. Hence the argument made by Lantolf and Thorne (2007), indicating language as "the most pervasive and powerful cultural artefact that humans possess to mediate their connection to the world, to each other, and to themselves" (p. 202).

Important in the process of language acquisition is the dynamic of scaffolding which is the assistance that one receives from another knowledgeable person (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). This enables the person to perform a given task by assimilating, internalising and integrating new information with the one which they already possess towards realising the functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, also known as the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Mkhize, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). It is through this collaborative process that the learner is able to construct meaning of learned material thus bridging the gap between the inter-psychological plane and the intra-psychological plane (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Mkhize, 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). When people communicate socially, they appropriate the patterns and meanings of this speech and utilise it inwardly to mediate mental activities through a phenomenon called private speech or self-talk (Khatib, 2011; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978).

Piaget's theory of language development defines private speech/self-talk as the non-social utterances that illustrate the transition from pre-linguistic to verbal reasoning, serving as a cognitive self-guidance system, allowing children to become more organized and good problem solvers (Shaffer & Kipp, 2007). As children develop their private speech becomes internalised, Vygotsky (1978) called this inner speech (Khatib, 2011; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007).

The use of inner speech plays a crucial role for performance in psychological assessment as learners make use of this skill as a self-guide tool in completing assessment tasks (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978).

An important aspect of language acquisition in diverse communities is that of second language acquisition. Contrary to the deficit view on the development of a second language, Vygotsky's theory maintains that second language acquisition is mediated by the learner's first language thus the learner does not return to the immediate world of objects or repeat the past linguistic developments, instead they use the semantics of the native language as a foundation and mediator towards understanding the use of the second language (Khatib, 2011). This may prove to be a useful psychological intervention in second language skill development as well as for use in classroom settings.

According to Lacroix (2008) it was only until the 1960's that the development of a second language was seen to have a negative impact on the development of learners' first language skills, which in turn was seen to result in detrimental effects on intellectual growth.

Consequently to such erroneous assumptions, low scores obtained by non-English speakers were interpreted as evidence of a learning disability and in some cases, this led to the diagnosis of intellectual impairment (DoE, 1997; DoE, 2005; Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Naiker, 2000). The erroneous assumptions on second language acquisition called for the understanding of the dynamics in the process of second language acquisition. As a result the work by Peal and Lambert (1962 as cited in Lacroix, 2008) indicated a turning point towards the understanding of second language learners as having cognitive advantages, as compared to monolinguals, due to their unique skill of "verbal flexibility" (p. 31).

More recent studies that support these findings indicate second language acquisition as a positive force that helps to enhance learner's cognitive and linguistic development (Akbulut, 2007; Bialystok, 2006; Lacroix, 2008). For example, in their study, Bialystok (2006) found that second language acquisition improved the learner's access to literacy and the development of general executive processes for solving a wide range of non-verbal problems that require attention and control which is seen to be the core of intelligent thought. Bialystok (2006) therefore paints an interdependent nature between language and cognition with views of the two as proceeding through similar mechanisms in response to similar experiences with mutual influences on each other.

The above discussion on second language acquisition thus indicate the need for practitioners working in diverse communities to be critically aware of relevant issues in this area of development so as to conduct assessment in an ethical manner towards preventing the misuse of assessment tools and questionable diagnoses. These include the concepts of learning and acquisition in language development as well as the phenomena of a natural order of language acquisition for LAD, needed in establishing higher level linguistic skills. All the same practitioners need to acknowledge the context in which the learner develops and the effects this has on their language skills.

2.2.2 Code-switching.

Linguistic studies, especially those of bilingualism, have been devoted to the understanding of how bilingual and multilingual communities organise their multiple linguistic resources. The use of elements of multiple languages in conversation, also known as code-switching, is commonly found amongst people who are bilingual or multilingual such as the diverse population in South Africa.

Myers-Scotton and Ury (1977) define code-switching as the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation. Code-switching can occur in different forms; it could be intra-sentential whereby the switching occurs within the sentence or inter-sentential whereby switching occur between sentences (Myers-Scotton, 1993). The illustration below in example1 is a demonstration of intra-sentential code-switching and example 2 inter-sentential code-switching of English and isiZulu respectively:

Example1

Sizo hamba what time nge Sonto?

What time are we leaving on Sunday?

Example2

Please come with me to the market. *Ngifuna ukuyo thenga inkukhu ephilayo.*

Please come with me to the market. I want to buy a live chicken.

Although they are essentially different intra-sentential code-switching is often used interchangeably with code-mixing (Boztepe, 2003). Kieswetter (1995, cited in Mokgwathi, 2011) defines code-mixing as the use of morphemes from two languages to form a new word in a new variety of speech community. For example, *uku-drive-a* is an isiZulu form meaning *to drive*.

Borrowing is another important concept formed around the phenomena of code-switching. Linguistic items that are structurally adapted to a new language are defined as borrowed. Gumperz (1986, as cited in Mokgwathi, 2011) defines borrowing as the introduction of single words or short idiomatic phrases from one language to another, once borrowed the linguistic item becomes integrated into the grammatical system of the host language. The following are examples of borrowing from English to isiZulu:

English	IsiZulu
School	Isikole
Ball	Ibhola

(Kamwangamalu, 2000, as cited in Mokgwathi, 2011)

There are two related approaches that take on a different perspective in the study of code-switching; the structural linguistic and the sociolinguistic approach (Boztepe, 2003; Woolard, 2004). The structural approach, such as theories of language acquisition, is mainly concerned with grammatical aspects of code switching, these are the structural features of syntactic and morphosyntactic patterns underlying the grammar of code-switching. In contrast the sociolinguistic approach views code-switching as a discourse phenomenon with focus on how social meaning is created and the discourse functions of code-switching (Boztepe, 2003; Woolard, 2004; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Nilep, 2006). According to Arnfast and Jorgensen (2003) various principles of language choice have been found to prevail in different bilingual communities in that some attend to the linguistic or social identity of the person being addressed, others to the setting in which the interaction takes place or the topic under discussion while most depend on the combination of the two, this will be discussed more in Myers-Scotton's (1993) markedness model later on.

In theories of second language acquisition code-switching is considered as a strategy to get the message through to the listener or keep the conversation flowing by inserting a first language word or phrase in a second language utterance (Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003). There have been disagreements however as to whether code-switching is a strategy of avoidance or achievement (Boztepe, 2003). For example, linguistic anthropologists such as Tarone, Cohen and Thomas (1983, as cited in Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003) view code-switching as an avoidance strategy with mentions that people are motivated to switch codes due to linguistic deficiencies, as an attempt to avoid a difficult language form or one that has not yet been learned, or due to social status such as the desire to fit in with peers.

In response to the deficit approach, studies on bilingualism have taken a sociolinguistic approach to code-switching as a systematic, skilled and socially meaningful phenomenon (Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003; Boztepe, 2003; Lacroix, 2008; Woolard, 2004). For example, Færch and Kasper (1983 as cited in Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003) characterise code-switching as an achievement strategy based on the person's attempt to keep the conversation flowing without having to pause or abandon the message thus indicating language flexibility. The choice of language, according to Fishman (1965 as cited in Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003), is determined by factors such as the participants in the conversation, the social setting and even the topic at hand. This means that a speaker will speak one language in certain circumstances, and if the circumstance changes this may lead to switching to another language, also known as situational switching. These aspects come into play in the evaluation of intelligence. For instance, Lacroix (2008) points out that code-switching can follow different patterns such as those observed during the evaluation process when learners need to make use of their most fluent language, which is not of the test, in order to provide an appropriate response to a verbally presented item.

Blom and Gumperz (1972) identified situational and metaphorical code-switching as the two types of code-switching defined by the topic place, person or purpose of the conversation. For example, as a way of encouraging an open discussion an educator may choose to speak isiZulu, as a local language, before or after classes but switch to speaking in English, as a standard medium of instruction, during class. Metaphorical code-switching later became known as conversational code-switching (Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003; Boztepe, 2003; Myers-Scotton, 1977; Nilep, 2006; Woolard, 2004). Conversational code-switching is used to draw attention or emphasis on the difference in social relationship. This, according to Woolard (2004) is achieved through transient use of a language that serves as a metaphor for another social relationship it is frequently associated with. For example, a mother's switch to her mother tongue can be heard as a warning to her badly behaved child because of the authoritative connotation in the language.

Influenced by Blom and Gumperz (1972) concepts of situational and metaphoric switching, Myers-Scotton's (1993) markedness model is based on the premises that humans are innately predisposed to exploit code choices as negotiations of position between the speakers. According to Myers-Scotton (1993) speakers use code-switching as an indication, a form of marking, to others their perceptions of self as well as rights and obligations they hold between self and others. Three maxims follow from this premise:

- a) The unmarked choice maxim, which requires the speaker to switch from one unmarked code (expected medium) to another, on the basis of situational changes during interaction, such that the unmarked code changes. This occurs typically among bilingual peers in a casual in-group conversation.
- b) The marked choice maxim applies when the speaker chooses to negotiate the rights and obligations balance so as to increase social distance or inclusion. Code-switching can be used to deliberately exclude others present in the conversational situation or to include other members present in the audience. For instance the speaker may switch to a language which can only be understood by certain members in the audience.
- c) The exploratory choice maxim occurs when the unmarked choice in relation with community norms is not obvious from situational factors, for instance, when there is a clash of norms and role relationships the speaker may switch to a language that is comprehensible for both parties (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

Lacroix (2008) maintains the importance to make proper use of code-switching in a more global evaluation of intelligence, especially when majority of the subtests are mediated verbally, as it is a verbal skill that requires a large degree of linguistic competence in more than one language. Practitioners will therefore need to be aware of and assess the basis for which learners use code-switching rather than wrongfully assuming its use as indicative of language deficiencies. Lacroix (2008) gives an example of a study by Costa and Santesteban (2004) looking at the effects of code-switching on psychological test performance. In their study, Costa and Santesteban (2004 as cited in Lacroix, 2008) found that code-switching was time consuming when the individuals were tested to switch from L2 (second language learnt after the mother) to L1 (first language or mother tongue) than the reverse, indicating that the subjects responded internally in both languages but had to inhibit their response in the L1 language (dominant language) in order to provide a response in L2 (language of the test).

Lacroix (2008) points out that such difficulty may be experienced as responses are not always available in the less dominant language. Lacroix (2008) also gives reference to nonverbal tests with verbal directions in which the learner might need to translate the instructions to self in order to fully understand the task at hand. Such difficulties may also be observed to affect examiners in the process of test administration. Thus caution need to be extended when interpreting results where code-switching may have taken place, particularly in testing that is

under time limitations. These aspects will be further explored in the section below looking at the impact of language proficiency on assessment.

Studies have found that individuals from diverse communities express themselves in two or more languages either separately or through code-switching thus further indicating code-switching as a prominent practice in multicultural classroom settings (Omidire, 2009; Probyn, 2009; Mokgwathi, 2011). It is not surprising to see recommendations by Ortiz (2002) maintaining that the administration of tests need to be adapted to a point where items can be presented bilingually and for alternate responses to be considered acceptable. This may prove to be useful for learners to understand what is expected of them as well as a form of opening the lines of communications as seen in the situational switching above. For instance, in his study Lacroix (2008) found that bilingual learners indicated great improvement in the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for children – fourth edition (WISC-IV) and the Woodcock Johnson test of cognitive abilities – third edition (WJ III) cognitive assessment when code-switching was allowed as this offered them the opportunity of a wider range of responses on test items. This suggests that code-switching in the psychological assessment may help counter erroneous acts of simply hypothesising that a learner can be assessed in one language or the other solely on language dominance.

2.3 Socio-Political History of Assessments in South Africa

The development of psychological assessments in South Africa cannot be viewed separately from the countries' political, economic and social history as it reflects the racially segregated society in which it evolved (Foxcroft, Roodt & Abrahams, 2009). Nzimande (1995) maintains that the apartheid policies on test development and use account for the impact they had on the nature and history of psychological assessment in South Africa.

As mentioned above, in South Africa psychological assessments in South Africa were often driven by political ideologies as they were originally initiated with White individuals (Afrikaans and English speaking groups) in mind thus excluding speakers of the African languages (Claassen, 1997 cited in Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). Psychological assessments were therefore used to draw distinctions between races in attempt to show superiority of one group over the other (Foxcroft et al., 2009). Biased norms were therefore used on groups that the tests were not intended for. As a result biased and hasty conclusions were made about test results which served to maintain the cycle of the misuse of test results – that sought to affirm the skewed notion of certain racial groups (Radebe, 2010).

For instance in the education system, such practices led to the establishment of Bantu education, following the study conducted by Fick (1929 as cited in Foxcroft et al., 2009) using measures standardised for white children only on a large sample of learners from all racial categories. The findings, which indicated the mean score of Black children as inferior to that of Indian and Coloured children whilst the mean score of the Whites was superior to all groups, were attributed to innate differences (Foxcroft et al., 2009).

Owen (1986) further scrutinised the issues of test bias by conducting a study investigating test and item bias of tests such as the Senior Aptitude Test, Mechanical Insight Test and the Scholastic Proficiency test on Black, White, Coloured and Indian subjects (Foxcroft et al., 2009). Findings led to conclusions that comparable test performance between different groups in South Africa can only be achieved if environmentally disadvantaged test takers are provided with sufficient training in taking a particular test before they actually take it (Owen, 1992a, 1992b as cited in Foxcroft et al., 2009).

The misuse of psychological tests raised critiques regarding the value and appropriateness of Western type of intelligence for the South African population, highlighting upon the influence that different cultural, environmental, socio-economical and educational factors have on intelligence (Gopaul-McNicol, Reid & Wisdom, 1998; Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009; McCloskey and Athanasiou, 2000; Owen, 1998; Parker, Philip, Sarai & Rauf; 2007; Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). Similar trends of discrimination in psychological assessments were observed concerning the minority groups in Western countries, with indications that:

- they tend to be unaccustomed with the material used in psychological tests;
- psychological tests measured different constructs from the ones which tests were designed and standardised for, and
- all groups in multicultural society are found to be inadequately represented in the standardisation samples used to derive the norms (Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004, p. 2).

When the socio-political situation in South Africa began to change and discriminatory laws were revoked in the 1980s and early 1990s, there was a greater need for culturally appropriate measures and test adaptation as people from various racial groups started competing for the same jobs (Foxcroft et al., 2009; Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). Initially, the development and use of tests was regulated by different bodies in South Africa. The National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR) concentrated on the development of measures for

industry while the Institute for Psychological and Edumetric Research (IPER) developed measures for educational and clinical practice (Foxcroft et al., 2009). These institutions were later incorporated into the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) which became the largest test development agency in South Africa (Foxcroft et al., 2004; Owen, 1998).

In response to needs for culturally appropriate measures the HSRC adapted two approaches (Foxcroft et al., 2009): In the first instance, measures were developed for more than one racial group in order for test performance to be interpreted to an appropriate norm group. This led to the development of measures such as the Paper and Pencil Games (PPG) which is the first measure to be available in all eleven official languages in South Africa (Foxcroft et al., 2009). Other assessment tools such as the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire-fifth edition (16PF5) and the Kaufman Assessment Battery for children (K-ABC) were also translated and adapted for different language and cultural groups (Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009). On the contrary, the task of adapting and translating measures into multiple languages provided South African researchers, as well as in other multi-cultural countries, with a number of challenges. For instance, internal consistencies for the black population group often remain low as constructs measured in the original and adapted version may not be equivalent and the way in which the constructs are put into practice might not be relevant or appropriate for the cultural group that the test is being adapted for (Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009; Owen, 1998).

Furthermore, researchers have found the process of test translation also challenging with indications that equivalent terms for concepts in the target language may not be available thus rendering the literal translation of items problematic moreover idiomatic expressions cannot be literally translated (Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009). The act of overlooking such challenges may result in errors that could change the meaning of an item thus making it difficult for the test taker to understand the test item (Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009). Kanjee and Foxcroft (2009) therefore discourage the approach of adapting widely used international assessment measures for the use in the South African context preference is made rather for the development of context based assessment tools.

In the second instance, psychological measures which were developed and standardised only for White South Africans as well as ones imported from overseas were later used to assess other national groups. However the absence of appropriate norms meant that psychologists had to interpret assessments results “with caution” (Foxcroft et al., 2009, p. 20), a practice

seen to place practitioners' consciences at ease, with the sense that they are doing the best they can considering that there are few available appropriate assessment tools.

According to Owen (1998), the HSRC was trapped in a rather peculiar situation whereby on one hand it was accused of producing inappropriate race based test while on the other hand it was criticised for not providing culture specific test. The HSRC was later privatised and restructured which lead to the erosion of the needed resources for test development expertise in South Africa (Foxcroft et al., 2004). Other agencies gradually emerged to fill the void and as a result the use of assessment tools developed by the HSRC became less popular. Even so, in their survey on test use patterns and needs of practitioners in South Africa, Foxcroft et al., (2004) found that there is still a long way to go before all tests, offered by these agencies, are adapted for their use here and with South African norms. The researchers maintain that there is a need for a body that will coordinate test development activities as practitioners are often not sure as to which assessment tools, provided by these agencies, are applicable for the diverse South African clientele.

The new South African constitution in which basic human rights and equality of individuals are guaranteed placed the use of tests in the industry and education system in particular under the scrutiny (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009; Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). Furthermore, the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (Section 8) had a major impact on psychological assessment with demands on the cultural appropriateness of psychological tests thus placing their usage in the spotlight (RSA, 1998). Moreover, the Education White Paper 6 titled *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive education and Training System* (DoE, 2001) further questioned the usefulness of psychometric test results and assessment practices in the education system. It maintained that assessment measures should contribute to the identification of learning difficulties, educational programme planning as well as informing the instruction of learners (DoE, 2001). As a result testing which was seen as exclusionary and perpetuating discriminatory policies of the past were banned (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009).

Although attempts were made to reflect the South Africa nature of equality in psychological assessment, it can be argued that test development, adaptation and translation in South Africa has not flourished at the level that it should due the challenging nature of the process, which can be time consuming and expensive (Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009; Padilla & Borsato, 2008). Foxcroft and Roodt (2009) found that most of the assessment measures used in industry,

clinical and educational contexts have not been thoroughly researched for bias, few cross-cultural studies have been published on their use in South Africa and very few are available in a variety of South African languages.

2.4 Assessment Paradigms in Educational Psychology

The following discussion aims to highlight the major aspects of the frameworks that guide psycho-educational assessments and intervention namely the medical-deficit paradigm, and the inclusion and social constructionist paradigms.

2.4.1 Medical-deficit paradigm.

Historically, Western medicine has been influenced by the medical model that viewed illness as the malfunction of a biological mechanism whereby it is the role of the doctor to correct the malfunction through physical or chemical intervention (du Preez, 2004). In view of this model, the locus of human adjustment and maladjustment is characterised by biological constructs whereby people are passive victims of intra-psychic and biological forces beyond their control and should therefore be passive recipients of expert cure (Snyder & Lopez, 2005).

The medical model, also referred to as a psycho-medical model, child-deficit model or the individual gaze thus uses a deficit paradigm that highlights disorder and dysfunction (DoE, 1997; Swart, 2004). In agreement, Joseph and Wood (2010), maintain that the taxonomic approach grounded in a medical ideology is by definition not concerned about wellbeing but simply about the presence or absence of a disorder. It is viewed as a reactive model that takes on resultant curative interventions whereby practitioners wait for problems to occur and then responds with their 'savvy' expertise to treat illness and maximise human functioning (Ahmed & Suffla, 2007; Radebe, 2010; Snyder & Lopez, 2005; Swart, 2004).

Similarly, psychological assessments informed by the medical discourse view the learner as somewhat deficient as the focus is mainly on pathology. A learner is viewed as a patient with a disorder that needs diagnosis and treatment from a professional, often in the form of medication or placement in special education schools (Harcombe, 2003). The discourse of the medical model therefore constructs a disability or learning breakdown as lying within the learner and the process of classification, diagnosis and intervention is necessary in identifying and managing the disability (DoE, 1997). The focus is therefore on the learner's deficits than on their educational needs and abilities.

The medical model is limited in acknowledging system deficiencies that play a role in learning such as the school environment, socio-economic factors, familial and health factors – the categorisation of learning difficulties is depended largely on intelligence testing (DoE, 1997; DoE, 2005; Radebe, 2010; Naiker, 2000). Studies have argued that causes of learning and developmental difficulties such as inadequate learning opportunities and development of reasonable motive for learning were stronger predictors than IQ scores (McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Ortiz, 2008; Snyder & Lopez, 2005). In accord Snyder and Lopez (2005) maintain that the overreliance on test findings results is highly unreliable and yields invalid data being used when decisions about diagnostic classifications are made thus impinging on meaningful interventions that could assist the learner with their learning and development.

Furthermore, the discourse of the medical model leads to the exclusion of learners as they are seen as unfit for mainstream education – those who are identified as in need of special education services are often labelled as ‘deficient’ and in need of special education services (DoE, 1997; Engelbrecht, Green & Newmark, 1999; Harcombe, 2003; Radebe, 2010).

Moreover Swart (2004) maintains that the criteria for school admission and placement in special education using this model is clinically described and based on categories of disability, for example, schools for children with cerebral palsy, the deaf and hard of hearing, the blind and partially blind. According to Van Rooyen, Le Grange and Newmark (2002) the categorisation system often excluded learners who experienced learning difficulties because of systemic factors as it often only allowed access to support programmes for learners with diagnosed medical, physiological and neurological disabilities.

However, political changes in South Africa gave birth to the formulation of a new constitution which is grounded on the principles of democracy, equity, non-discrimination and respect for the rights and dignity of all (RSA, 1996). Among the policies that were formulated was the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (DoE, 2001) that led to a major paradigm shift in policies and legislation as the policy sought to integrate special education and mainstream education in order to benefit all learners in the nation.

2.4.2 Inclusion and social constructionist paradigms.

As mentioned above, in its traditional form, psychological assessment in South African schools used the medical model as a framework for assessment and intervention. Its basic function was to find out what was wrong with the learner in order to determine the disability category of the learner followed by their reassignment to special education programmes

known as special /remedial education or education for the gifted (DoE, 1997). Such assessment practices led to a dual education system of mainstream education vs. special education whereby learners were segregated according to the notion of normality and abnormality (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2001). This meant that there was a mainstream system for 'ordinary learners' and a separate special education system for learners who fall out of the 'normal spectrum'. Moreover, special education was also provided according to race with a lot of disparities between services for the different racial groups (DoE, 1997; Swart, 2004).

The inclusion paradigm moves from categories of disability to levels of support. In accordance with the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (DoE, 2001), the inclusive paradigm posits the notion that every child can learn and that those experiencing barriers to learning can positively benefit from ordinary classroom placement as long as the environment is adaptive and accommodative of learners and their needs (DoE, 1997; 2001). The inclusion of learners with 'special education needs' or 'learning barriers' into mainstream classes is based on the democratic state that respects and values diversity and the advancement of human rights and freedom (RSA, 1996; Swart, 2004).

The inclusion model therefore advocates for equal opportunities for all learners to learn and succeed (DoE, 2001; Swart, 2004). It accepts and respects that all learners are different as a result they have different learning needs which need to be equally valued. The model encourages the empowerment of learners by developing their unique strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning. As part of a whole school approach it aims to meet the needs of all learners, through facilitation of education structures, systems and learning methodologies (DoE, 2001). The inclusion model therefore acknowledges that barriers to learning do not function in isolation instead they interact and impact on one another (Swart, 2004).

In line with policies on inclusion, special schools have therefore been developed and advanced into resource centres, known as Special Schools Resource Centres (SSRC), that will help to further the process of providing support dynamically by making provision for learners to move to SSRCs for intensive support in order to later transition back to an ordinary school after receiving it (DoE, 2005). For example, a learner who is blind may require learning how to read using Braille before moving back to an ordinary or full-service school depending on other forms of support required.

Psychological assessments are therefore used as aids towards assessing the level of cognitive functioning, intervention and support that a learner may need.

In accord with notions of the inclusion paradigm is the social constructionist paradigm, also known as the socio-constructionism paradigm that views humans as social beings with values and norms that facilitate relationships (Maree, 2004). The paradigm views knowledge as a social construct, language as a social phenomenon and the individual as a rational person and anthropological character of the construction (Maree, 2004). The self is therefore a manifestation of human interaction which is constructed by communication (language) and relationship systems (Maree, 2004; Mkhize, 2004). Following on Vygotsky's (1978) concept of mediation, learning is conceptualized as a process in which knowledge is constructed between members of an indirectly mediated community (Maree, 2004; Mkhize, 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). As a result inadequate development is not considered as a fault that lies within the child but within the child's environment as per inadequate mediation – the mediator needs to be aware of the quality of mediation required for the learner to reach his or her innate capabilities, known as the zone of proximal development (Mkhize, 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). This concept will be discussed further in the following discussion on the impact of culture on assessment.

The social constructivist approach to assessment procedures and support delivery through inclusion are essential frameworks that help ensure that maladaptive systems are identified and that support is provided in order to establish more adaptive and supportive systems of interaction. This can only be achieved in a unified education system wherein all role players work together and are supported in creating learning communities that meet the diverse learning needs of every learner (Swart, 2004).

2.5 The Experiences of Educational Psychologists in the Assessment of CLD Learners

Various studies indicate that factors such as cultural, linguistic and educational differences contribute to the inapplicability of assessment measures to all cultures and context thus having an effect on the validity of psychometric measures (Flores, Lopez, & De Leon, 2000; Foxcroft et al., 2004; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Ochoa, Rivera & Ford, 1997; Parker et al., 2007; Schon et al., 2008). Consequently when working with diverse communities, practitioners are expected to consider issues such as reliability and validity, cultural loading vs. representation, language bias vs. language demands as well as norm sample inclusion vs. representation so as to counter the potential of bias (Schon et al., 2008).

However as Van De Vijver and Rothmann (2004) point out the task of ensuring valid, reliable and unbiased assessment results has put practitioners under a lot of pressure, especially when working in diverse communities. This is due to the fact that standard measures of cognitive ability measure the product of prior learning as they rely heavily on the assumptions that all learners have had comparable opportunities to acquire the skills and abilities being measured (Lacroix, 2008). As a result practitioners often experience constraints and methodological challenges in coming up with a diagnosis, in turn learners from poor educational and/or socioeconomic backgrounds as well as diverse cultures are often at a disadvantage (Javier et al., 1997). Lacroix (2008) maintains that these measures are created to point out individual performances with the primary goal of comparing individual performances with that of a group sharing similar attributes. Furthermore Bainter and Tollefson (2003) maintain that concerns with cognitive assessments of CLD individuals are that the tests often measure their language skills instead of their cognitive abilities. This poses as a challenge for practitioners working in a cultural and linguistic diverse context.

In their needs analysis study on psychological assessment in South Africa Foxcroft et al. (2004) found that most of the tests used by practitioners needed revision with issues relating to the language used in the test; the outdated nature of the test, item content and norms; as well as the cultural appropriateness of the test content and norms (Foxcroft et al., 2004). Very few of the available assessment tools were found to be appropriate for cross-cultural assessment.

Furthermore, the study by Schon et al. (2008) found that although there are high expectations for practitioners to be skilled in the selection and use of appropriate assessment techniques and strategies, they are not all adequately trained to evaluate culturally and linguistically diverse learners as very few psychology programs offer training for working with diverse learners. Practitioners have often had to develop these skills on their own (Flores, Lopez, & De Leon, 2000; Foxcroft et al., 2004; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Ochoa, Rivera & Ford, 1997; Schon et al., 2008). For instance, a study in the United States by Ochoa et al. (2004) found that due to the limited number of psychologists with bilingual skills 78% of school psychologists had to resort to using an interpreter when conducting psychological evaluations with English language learners and that only 52% of these practitioners were trained to do so. This raises the portability of assessment error in turn impacting on the diagnosis. Moreover Ochoa et al. (2004) found that practitioners' use of interpreters are often

in conflict with standards of test translations thus impacting on the construct validity of the test, i.e. using translators to translate rating scales written in English to parents and learners. In attempt to avoid issues of assessment bias in formal assessment tools practitioners often rely on general assessment practices such as behavioural observation, child interview, educator interview and parent interview for assessing the emotional/ behavioural of CLD learners. Ochoa et al. (2004) found that 90% of practitioners found the use of these methods useful as they are not merely relying on formal test tools rather it presents a multifaceted approach to assessment. Such practices however, requires that practitioners have sufficient knowledge about the learner's particular culture in order to ascertain if the behaviours and emotional functioning are appropriate in the context of their culture (Ochoa et al., 2004).

In accordance McCloskey and Athanasiou (2000) found that non-traditional assessment procedures require practitioners to be more skilful with the on-going measurement and progress of a learner as compared to the traditional static assessment as it shifts the focus to the learners' progress and less on the assessment itself. The most commonly used measures for assessing CLD learners are primarily nonverbal and projective in nature as they require minimal verbal output from the learner, i.e. Bender Visual Motor Gestalt, Ravens Progressive Matrices, Draw-a-Person Test, House-Tree-Person Test and Kinetic Family Drawing. Unfortunately studies have also found that such instruments are the least psychometrically sound with no indications of validity studies on emotional indicators of various culturally and linguistically diverse groups (Cormier et al., 2011; Ochoa et al., 2004; Owen, 1998).

In this study the experiences of educational psychologists in the assessment of CLD learners were examined. In order to ascertain the experiences in assessing CLD learners a review of literature on the current practices was essential. Given the increased number of diverse learners in the school population and the need to assess their cognitive abilities in a fair and appropriate manner, and given that the current practice in the assessment of these learners is a challenge (Lacroix, 2008), this study became an opportunity to describe how adequate the current assessment procedures are as well as the need for great improvement. The impact of culture and language proficiency on the assessment process has been a part of most theories of cognitive abilities as well as key components in the development of measures of cognitive abilities. These are explored more as follows.

2.5.1 Impact of culture on assessment.

The conceptualisation, assessment and development of intelligence cannot be fully and meaningfully understood outside its cultural context (Sternberg, 2004; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004; 2006). Culture is a key determinant of a person's developmental outcome as it shapes and sharpens the nature of many features of every developmental environment (Nsamenang, 2008). Culture can be defined as the values, norms, and traditions that affect how individuals from a particular group perceive, think, interact, behave, and make judgements about the world in which they live (Chamberlain & Medeiros-Landurand, 1991 as cited in Chamberlain, 2005; Ramirez et al., 1998; Sternberg, 2004).

According to Grieve and Foxcroft (2009), considering the Piagetian stages of cognitive development, studies have shown that the pattern and sequence of knowledge acquisition is universal, however, that the rate of acquisition varies amongst different cultures. The belief that culture, civilisation and mental activity are interlinked was supported by Spencer (1886 as cited in Kasese-Hara, 2009), who introduced the idea of cultural stages of development in the lifespan; by concluding that as societies develop throughout history they become more complex and organised with each stage marked by more advanced forms of thought. Spencer (1886 as cited in Kasese-Hara, 2009) was therefore taking a stance against the reductionist approach to development and more debates, falling under the umbrella of critical psychology, about the influence of culture and cognition followed.

Vygotsky (1978) postulated that the individual's development depends on their social and historical forms of life (Mkhize, 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). This is in contrast to the dominant social science view; that psychological functions can be studied in isolation from their context. In order to explain his notion of development, Vygotsky (1981 as cited in Mkhize, 2004) developed the notion of the "genetic law of cultural development" indicating a person's development on two planes, namely, the social plane and the psychological plane (p.55). The social plane is development which occurs between people, also known as the inter-psychological plane and the psychological plane is development which occurs in a form whereby relations become part of an individual's inner world, also known as the intra-psychological plane (Mkhize, 2004).

According to Vygotsky's (1981) general genetic law of cultural development, for psychology to be truly social, cultural and historical it must take into consideration the things that people in a specific context say and do. Mkhize (2004) mentions that these are cultural tools in form

of narratives, proverbs, songs and stories which play an important role because they mediate the actions and higher mental functioning of individuals in a particular culture. People in the society are thus viewed as social beings in dynamic interaction and relation with their environment thus taking on a broader view of culture and cognition (Visser, 2007).

Such interaction, according to Nsamenang (2000 as cited in Kasese-Hara, 2009), characterise the process of learning, in the African society also known as participatory learning. He identifies three stages of participatory learning, namely, observation, imitation and creative action. A child will first observe before imitating, usually through play, and is then able to exercise his/her skills by taking perspective and acting creatively – similar to Vygotsky's social plane of development mentioned above. For instance, in the process of playing 'house', known as *ukudlala imizi* in isiZulu, a girl child will model the observed behaviour of her mother cooking for her family with the use of mud as food and a tin can as a pot. What is learned on the social plane is therefore internalised in psychological plane through the process of *self-talk*; a phenomenon, often observed in child development, that marks the beginning of a process of conversing with self in a way that we usually do with others (Mkhize, 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006). This he mentions is a sign of maturity indicating the ability to solve problems on our own, using the learned instructions from our parents/ the learned to instruct ourselves through engaging in a dialogue with ourselves (inter-intra-psychological plane). The zone of proximal development is a concept Vygotsky (1978) used to define the distinction between what the learner is capable of doing and able to do thus aiding in identifying the occurrences at the zone between the individual and his/her social and cultural context (Mkhize, 2004; Sigelman & Rider, 2006).

Similarly, Sternberg's (2004) theory of successful intelligence conceptualises intelligence as a person's ability to achieve success in life, in terms of their personal standards, within their socio-cultural context. According to Sternberg (2004) individuals acquire the strength, skills and knowledge by capitalising on strengths and correcting or compensating for weakness in order to adapt to, shape and select environments that will better serve their skills through a balance of analytical, creative and practical abilities.

In essence, knowledge is socially constructed in an interactive context where the central metaphor in the social construction is communication, and language is the tool for constructing knowledge (Mkhize, 2004). Various cultural and language groups, with respect to the differences that exist between these groups in terms of tradition customs, values and

different world views, have unique ways of constructing intelligence (Foxcroft, 2004). In accord studies have found that certain constructs and terms are experienced differently in different cultures and that in essence intellectual abilities are culture bound (Foxcroft, 2004; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Owen, 1998; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004; 2006). Moreover Suzuki et al. (2001) found that learners from varying backgrounds will interpret items in psychological assessments differently and will generally score lower than members of the mainstream culture on standardised tests. Assessment measures and their resultant scores therefore cannot be assumed to have equivalent meaning for different cultures and countries because cultural experience influences the meaning of events for an individual (Grieve & Foxcroft, 2009).

Thus Foxcroft et al. (2009) argue that South Africa, as a multicultural country, accentuates the importance of considering the influence of culture on the application and interpretation of cognitive assessments measures. A multicultural frame of reference will enable psychologists to understand how particular behaviours, within the client's culture, make sense and are valued (Ramirez et al., 1998). Hence the argument made by Gopaul-McNicol et al. (1998) maintaining that the subjects which learners' are exposed to in their homes and community as well as the cultural values associated with these subjects create the frame of reference which they bring to the testing situation. It is therefore the practitioner's responsibility to try and understand and consider the test taker's ability in terms of linguistic and cultural proficiency in order to gain a better idea of whether the assessment instrument is appropriate for the individual to be tested (Suzuki et al., 2001; Foxcroft, 2002). However as Allik and McCrae (2004) maintain, it cannot be denied that the vast difference between cultures and nations in cognitive abilities pose a hurdle that practitioners need to cross over.

2.5.2 Impact of language proficiency on assessment.

It is not only cultural but also linguistic diversities which could contribute to the inappropriate usage of assessment measures. Best practices dictate the deliberation of test taker's cultural and linguistic proficiency as practitioner's responsibility (Foxcroft, 2002; O'Bryon & Rogers, 2010; Suzuki et al., 2001). However, given the diversity of languages and dialects spoken in South Africa there is a large population of learners for whom English is not the first and the only language through which they must learn it is often difficult to find representative tests with norms thus impacting on their academic performance (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009; O'Bryon & Rogers 2010; Parker et al., 2007; Suzuki et al., 2001). Likewise there is a high probability that the test-taker and assessment practitioner might not speak the

same language thus further impacting on the test-taker's performance. In accord, the study by Foxcroft et al. (2004) found language as the most frequent hindrance in the administration of psychological tests, in both the test and the test taker's language competency.

Language proficiency refers to the degree to which a person is able to exhibit control over the use of language (Naude, 2004). Cummins (2000 as cited in Naude, 2004) conceptualised two aspects of language proficiency: The first aspect is the basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) also known as social language skills, which refers to the language skills needed in daily personal and social situation. The second aspect is the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) which refers to the more abstract higher aspects of language such as vocabulary, concept knowledge, metalinguistic insights as well as the ability to integrate graphic information with verbal descriptions (Naude, 2004).

The CALP thus encompasses skills such as reasoning, problem solving and other cognitive processes required for academic achievement (Naude, 2004). It is important to point out the contrast between these two levels, especially in the context of cognitive assessments, when higher levels are solicited by test items that require learners to make use of their verbal comprehension skills (Lacroix, 2008; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000). For example, studies have found that many of the cognitive assessment tools measure the CALP in the verbal portion of the test whereby descriptive responses that refer to their knowledge of abstract concepts, their social judgement as well as their ability to make complex comparisons are required (O'Connor & Geiger 2009; Parker et al., 2007; Shuttleworth-Jordan, 1995). As a result McCloskey and Athanasiou (2000) argue that results of the verbal cognitive measures can underestimate the cognitive functioning of second language learners, depending on the degree of CALP acquisition. The researchers found that whereas it may take a learner two or three years to develop the BICS in a language other than the mother tongue, it takes on average five to seven years to attain CALP at a level that would support grade level performance and academic tasks (McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Naude, 2004).

This suggests that failure to recognise these differences can have unfortunate consequences for linguistically diverse learners. Naude (2004) cautions that the fact that learners have acquired communicative proficiency does not necessarily imply that an ability to handle tasks that require CALP. According to Suzuki et al. (2001) this entails that a culturally appropriate test should also incorporate features that credit individuals for bilingual competency skills.

There is therefore an increased need to match the instruments and procedures to the linguistic realities.

Further challenges associated with language proficiency can be related to the process of translation. Parker et al. (2007) explain that translation can prove to be ineffective for three reasons:

- translation could be difficult in contexts of overwhelming illiteracy, such as rural areas;
- there are specific concepts used in the English language for which there are no synonymous terms in the language which the learner is familiar to; and
- learners might not even comprehend concepts in their first language as their language of instruction might be English thus proving it inappropriate to merely translate the concept to their first language.

In addition, psychological constructs assessed by translated tests are sometimes not universal across cultures, for example, with measures of verbal functioning, a vocabulary test cannot be merely translated into another language as the words may not be of the same level of difficulty in the two languages (Bainter & Tollefson, 2003; Grieve & Foxcroft, 2009).

Practitioners are therefore faced with a challenge of not only choosing the best appropriate assessment tool but also with procedural challenges of administering the test in order to yield good results reflecting the learner's abilities as the task of isolating and disentangling the effects of the language acquisition process from poor quality educational services or what may be academic difficulties that result from processing disorders, attention problems, and learning disabilities is quite challenging (O'Connor & Geiger 2009; Klingner & Harry, 2006 as cited in O'Bryon & Rogers 2010). However Lacroix (2008) maintains that the development of tests that acknowledge linguistic particularities of a growing multilingual population will aid in addressing concerns with construct validity. In their study Foxcroft et al. (2004) found that while some practitioners felt need for test to be translated into various languages, in order for test takers to be assessed in their first language, others felt that English is the *lingua franca* in the world of business as well as the medium of instruction in most higher education institutions thus test takers should be tested in English in these contexts.

On the other hand Rogers et al. (1999), are of the opinion that it is important for psychologists to develop cross-cultural competencies: "An important step...is to become informed regarding the existing knowledge base of empirical findings, legal decisions,

regulatory standard codes, and [best professional] practices specific to work in diverse schools” (Rogers et al., 1999, p. 244).

This suggests that psychologists need to be positive and skilful in responding to the diverse clientele with limited resources. As a result guidelines provided by Rhodes, Ochoa and Ortiz (2005) recommend that language proficiency assessments need to include formal and informal measures due to the fact that formal measures may be normed to a sample that is not representative of the learner thus may not consider the dialectical variations; assuming that language is used similarly across distinct languages. Suzuki et al. (2001) is of the opinion that such assessment tools require practitioners to be skilful and fluent in the language of the client in order to separate issues of language competence and those that are associated with deficits in learning. For example, Kamara (1971 as cited in Foxcroft, 2002) found that the conversation skills in children from Sierra Leone were age appropriate when tested by an administrator who spoke their home language as opposed to when tested by an administrator did not speak their home language.

2.5.3 Working with interpreters.

According to the cross-cultural assessment guidelines by Rogers et al. (1999) CLD learners are best served by psychologists who have cross-cultural training and are proficient in the language(s) of the learner. However given the diversity of languages and dialects spoken in South Africa there is a high probability that the learner and the assessor may not speak the same language. As a result interpreters may need to be used to help minimise the language barriers by functioning as a bridge that links the linguistic and cultural world of the assessor and the learner.

However the use of interpreters also seems to have its disadvantages. Studies have found that the process of interpretation is often prone to unintended distortions in communication, although not limited to the following, these include;

- providing additional information or prompts to learners during testing;
- incomplete translation of a test prompt or interview question;
- providing additional information to learner’s or parent’s response thus altering the original meaning;
- inaccurate translation of the learner’s or parent’s response; and

- problems with dialectical or regional differences in language thus altering the meaning or level of difficulty of the words (Javier et al., 1997; Ochoa et al., 2004; Xiong, 2007; Nahari & Martines, 2008; Schon et al., 2008).

Schon et al. (2008) maintain that because the assessor is not fluent in the learner's language, they are often not aware that these problems occur. Furthermore interpreters with little proper training often have little understanding of the assessment process and desired outcomes and it is often impractical for practitioners to have control of any mistakes that may occur (Javier et al., 1997; Nahari & Martines, 2008; Xiong, 2007). For instance, Schon et al. (2008) maintain that at times the interpreter may not fully relate the required information to the assessor or even reveal symptoms that they feel may portray the family in a negative light. Moreover, the presence of an interpreter may hinder the process of assessment when parents or learners do trust them with their information (Schon et al., 2008).

According to the ethical code of professional conduct stipulated by the HPCSA (2004), psychologists who engage in the services of an interpreter need to take steps which will ensure that: The interpreter is, at minimum, bilingually fluent and is particularly conversant in the client's language preference; the interpreter preferably holds a qualification approved by council in interpretation; the interpreter does not have multiple relationships, with a client being served, that would likely lead to exploitation or loss of objectivity as well as to ensure that an interpreter performs the delegated tasks competently. Practitioners often defer to nonverbal tests in order to avoid the cultural and linguistic biases. However studies have shown that just because oral language requirements are decreased in nonverbal assessments it does not mean that all potential biases associated with language, especially acculturation, are eliminated (Flanagan & Ortiz, 2001). As aforementioned various studies have also observed weaknesses in CLD learners on tasks requiring the interpretation of complex pictures and analysis of spatial relationships within pictures that were attributed to the unfamiliarity with the test material rather than to deficits in perceptual and / or reasoning skills (Cormier et al., 2011; Holding, Taylor, Kazungu, Mkala, Gona, Mwemuye et al., 2004; Owen, 1998). This is attributed to the unfamiliarity with the test material rather than to deficits in perceptual and/or reasoning skills.

Researchers have further stressed upon the importance for practitioners to consider their own training in the use of interpreters (O'Bryon and Rogers; 2010; Ochoa et al., 2004). Ochoa et al. (2004) found that 26% of educational psychologists used an interpreter without training to

do so. This suggests that when an interpreter is used in the assessment of CLD learners the probability for error and misunderstanding to occur is high thus impacting on the process of diagnosis. Moreover Ochoa et al. (2004) maintain that the degree to which an educational psychologist can guarantee that the interpreter they use is qualified enough becomes highly questionable when they do not have the training to do so. Their findings further indicate that although it is expected for practitioners to receive this training during their training programme in university, most educational psychologists receive their training from continuing education efforts (Ochoa et al., 2004). The researchers maintain that training will ensure that psychologists use interpreters who are capable of providing services that render accurate information between the learner and/ or parent and practitioner (Ochoa et al., 2004).

The need for formal training and the establishment of standards of competence for interpreters and their use is more evident in diverse societies. Ochoa et al. (2004) maintain that very few empirical studies examine critical factors associated with the use of interpreters during psychological assessment of CLD learners. This includes the extent to which psychologists are trained to use interpreters as well as how interpreters are used during the assessment process.

2.8 Assessment Policies in South Africa

In South Africa, matters relating to the classification, possession, control and use of psychological assessments and any other device used to for the assessment of individuals in the working context, are strictly controlled by legislation. Two sets or streams of legislation are identified: The first stream, that deals with matters of individuals' rights and specific the substantive issues, includes the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No. 108 of 1996 (RSA, 1996); the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 (RSA, 1995); and the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (RSA, 1998). The second stream of legislation is the Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1974 (HPCSA, 2012) in which the scope of profession of psychology, the responsibilities and duties/functions of psychologists are addressed within the context of health care in the country (Mauer, 2000).

As mentioned above, the aforementioned legislations had a major impact on psychological assessment with demands on the cultural appropriateness of psychological tests thus placing the use of tests in the industry and education in particular under the scrutiny (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009; Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). Practitioners and organisations are

therefore encouraged to develop assessment policies, suited to their unique needs, based on the abovementioned legislations (Foxcroft, 2004; Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009).

Furthermore the International Test Commission (ITC) has included guidelines on developing a psychological assessment policy in the *International Guidelines for Test Use* (2000 as cited in Foxcroft et al., 2009). Foxcroft (2004) and Foxcroft et al. (2004) provide a general overview of expected stipulations required in assessment policies and guidelines for test development in a multicultural context, such as the rationale for usage of tests, psychometric properties, procedure, rights of testees, application of test results and lastly storage. These are outlined as follows:

- Firstly in accounting for the rationale of test usage, the policy should indicate that practitioners must justify the use of tests in a specified context, explain and prove the relevance of using psychological tests i.e. doing a screening analysis to help avoid irrelevant testing, specifying the target population for testing and lastly using an instrument that has a clear demonstrable relation to the work behaviour that it is intended to describe or predict.
- Following are stipulations on psychometric properties with indications that instruments must be constantly monitored and improved in terms of reliability, validity and fairness, and that if it impossible to apply a test without biases the test should then be used in a responsible manner.
- Thirdly stipulations on assessment procedure should have indications that will minimise unfair discrimination striving towards equitable use, cultural relevance and adaptation should be addressed, clear indications on which tests and measures are appropriate and acceptable with systems that will help promote equitable use of tests in place. Stipulations on storage should indicate that test materials and results are to be stored in a safe place.
- Furthermore policies should address rights such as equitable and fair treatment in terms of the application of tests as well as right of the test-taker to feedback provided by a suitably trained person (qualified psychologist). The stipulations on application of test results should indicate that test results are an additional source of information and should not be used in isolation.
- Lastly stipulations on access should state who is allowed to use the test (e.g., qualified psychologists and psychometrists under the supervision of a psychologist), who has

access to the results maintaining that results and reports should be treated as highly confidential (Foxcroft, 2004; Foxcroft et al., 2004). Assessment policies are available ensure that users are aware of their responsibility towards ethical application of tests and test results thus increasing the sense of ownership. However Foxcroft et al. (2004) maintains that in most cases policies that have been developed are not widely implemented as strategies or measures to enforce their implementation are often not available.

2.9 Guidelines for Assessment

In view of the above mentioned factors that affect the assessment process, psychologists have an ethical and professional responsibility to become informed and knowledgeable of ways in which they can effectively address the delivery of psychological services to children from diverse backgrounds (Rogers et al., 1999). As noted in the previous discussions, the practitioner needs to be aware factors that may affect the assessment process such as the cultural, family, linguistic, educational and socio-economic background and heritage of the learner (DoE, 1997, 2005; O'Connor & Geiger 2009; Foxcroft, 2002; O'Bryon & Rogers 2010). This form of inquiry adopts an 'emic approach' in examining human behaviour using criteria related to a specific culture as opposed to the 'etic approach' of using behavioural criteria that are presumed to be universal (Foxcroft, 2002; Ramirez et al., 1998).

In addressing challenges of providing psychological services in diverse communities, various studies and organisations (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004; Oregon DoE, 2007; Rogers et.al, 1999) have provided ethical guidelines for working multicultural setting such as South Africa. These ethical considerations apply when preparing for assessment in choosing the appropriate test, during test administration as well as for intervention.

Foxcroft (2002) maintains that practitioners need to be hands-on practitioner in understanding the test taker's world. This can be done through communication with relevant stakeholders and key informants in communities in order to gain the worldview of the test-taker as well as by obtaining the family genogram of the test-taker in order to gain insight into the cultural factors that underlie the individual's family development (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004). Imperative in the assessment process is obtaining consent from relevant stakeholders, parents, guardians or caregivers in order to continue with assessment. This includes describing and explaining the reasons for testing to the guardians in ways they can relate to – this is more

effective when the practitioner has immersed him/herself in the test-taker's culture (Foxcroft, 2002).

According to Foxcroft (2002) it is important to consider when it is appropriate to use a test or not as some learners may be disadvantaged in test-taking skills due to diverse qualities mentioned above. The practitioner may need to adapt other forms of assessment such as behavioural observation and obtaining collateral information from relevant stakeholders as opposed to administering a test (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004; Ortiz, 2008). In cases where there is a need to administer a test, Foxcroft (2002) mentions that the practitioner may try to lessen the impact of lack of test-wiseness by being thoroughly prepared before testing as well as by using practice examples or practice tests with the test-taker. This helps prepare the test taker for both the nature of the test tasks and the demands of the assessment context (Foxcroft, Roodt, & Abrahams, 2009). Furthermore, aspects of time and place of assessment are important. Practitioners need to be sensitive to days and times of the day dedicated to traditions and religious observations. In addition assessment needs to take place in a space that is conducive for assessment process and not provoking emotionally and psychologically; a familiar space such as the community or village is recommended (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004).

When choosing the appropriate test it is important to note that most available test batteries are designed in particular context, western mono-cultural contexts, for a specific purpose which poses a challenge for their application in other contexts (Foxcroft, 2002; Foxcroft et al., 2004; Schon et al., 2008). The practitioner thus needs to address the following aspects when deciding on the appropriateness of a test and its adaptation for a certain group:

- **Construct equivalence.** The practitioner considers whether a test developed in a certain culture measures the same constructs in another by comparing the factor structures of the test in the two cultural groups (Foxcroft, 2002; Kanjee & Foxcroft, 2009; Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). If there is no equivalence in the factor structures then the test will need to be adapted for use in the other cultural group.
- **Nature of test content or task.** The content and task of the test to be administered need to be culture-appropriate (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004). This can be done by making use of available indigenous tools and methods of assessment, for example, oral instead of written tests, beads or stones for arithmetic problems.

- **Language issues and translation.** Test-takers have a right to be assessed in the language of their choice; normally this is their home language (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004). However this poses as a challenge for practitioners when having to translate the test instructions and verbal items (Foxcroft, 2002; Parker et al., 2007). In more westernised areas such as cities people are often educated in English, where the test taps on previously learned knowledge it may be ethical and valid to assess these individuals in the language medium in which they have received their instruction or through the use bilingual assessment (Foxcroft, 2002). Hence the importance for the practitioner to gain information about the test-takers' home language as well as the language of instruction used during schooling.
- **Self-report questionnaires and self-directed tasks.** It is important to consider the person's cultural norms and values when deciding which tasks to give the test-taker. Foxcroft (2002) describes westernised and non-westernised people as different considering the relative importance given to individual needs as opposed to group needs. For example, non-westernised children learn to place their personal desires below that of the needs of their community; awareness and participation in the welfare of their society is seen as more important than pursuing personal happiness. This is in line with the Afrocentric saying by Mbiti (1969 cited in Mkhize, 2004, p. 47), "*...I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am... Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu...*" As a result, tests that tap on introspection will yield different challenges for persons from individually based and collectively based societies (Foxcroft, 2002). The non-westernised person may therefore be disadvantaged when confronted tasks of introspection.
- **Speed versus power tests.** In deciding whether to use speed or power tests it is important to consider the test-takers' test-taking skills (test-wiseness) as well as cultural norms. According to Foxcroft (2002), test-takers who are test-wise may find it less provoking and be less anxious when using a power test as they are not pressurised for time. Foxcroft (2002) is of the opinion that being ruled by and precise about time is something common in westernised cultural groups as opposed to non-westernised people. According to the African perspective of personality (Viljoen, 2008), Africans are not enslaved by time, because they create time to suit themselves. Thus the use of speed tests may yield unreliable results as non-westernised are less driven by time.

- **Familiarity with the laws governing testing.** It is the practitioner's ethical duty to familiarise self with laws governing testing in order to yield reliable results for the best presentation of the learner (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004).

The above mentioned steps of ethical guidelines are based on requirements to be considered before administering a test, following are ethical guidelines which need to be considered during test administration.

During test administration it is important that the practitioner is aware of his or her impact on the learner's test performance. The practitioner needs to consider the language use of the test-taker as language can pose as a barrier of communication when the two parties do not comprehend each other during the testing process (Foxcroft, 2002; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000). As mentioned above test-takers are able to perform much better when they understand the language of instruction. Secondly, the test-taker needs to be aware of the appropriate times and spaces for providing help during assessment (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004). For example, during group testing, especially in multicultural contexts, different cultures may not understand each other due to cultural dynamics. Foxcroft (2002) also found that test-takers are less likely to ask for help when practitioners are from a different cultural background with fear of displaying their 'weakness' or inabilities. This could negatively impact their test performance thus the practitioner needs to be aware of such behaviour.

After administering the test the practitioner needs to consider the use appropriate norms for interpretation of assessment results (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004; Rogers et al., 1999). In cases where detailed information about the test taker is not exactly known such as, for example age and current school grade the practitioner will have to make use of collateral information in order to make estimations (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004). The lack of appropriate local norms also pose as a challenge for interpretation of results, this entails that the norms need to be interpreted with caution as they are not applicable cross-culturally. Other factors which the practitioner needs to be sensitive about include background factors such as the level and quality of formal education, test-wisness cultural and family background of the test taker during interpretation of test results as well as the impact of physical status of test taker on test performance (Foxcroft, 2002; Ortiz, 2008; Rogers et al., 1999). Finally the practitioner has an ethical responsibility to provide feedback to relevant stakeholders in clear and practical manner (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004).

2.10 Conclusion

Psychologists have an ethical and professional responsibility to become informed and knowledgeable of ways in which they can effectively address the delivery of psychological services to learners from diverse backgrounds; acknowledging that learners are social beings whose development is affected by the context in which they live. To aid in this process policies and frameworks have been developed in order to help establish more adaptive and supportive systems of interaction. Even so, it cannot be denied that the vast difference between cultures and nations in cognitive abilities pose many challenges in the assessment of CLD learners. Although attempts were made to reflect the South Africa nature of equality in psychological assessment there is still room for progression in test adaptation and translation in South Africa.

In the next chapter the research methodology will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods used in conducting the current study to answer the core questions outlined in chapter one. The chapter will first focus on the theoretical framework which informs the methodology, followed by aspects such as: the research design, sampling method, data collection and analysis thereof, as well as the ethical considerations.

3.2 Paradigm

The paradigm informing this study is that of a hermeneutic phenomenological approach as initiated by Heidegger (1927, 1962 cited in Lavery, 2003). This approach is seen as central to the methodology of the study as well as the language used in discussing the findings and implications of this research. The emphasis of this approach is placed on subjectivity, description, interpretation and agency as compared to the objective and structural positivist approach (Denscombe, 2007; Lavery, 2003).

Hermeneutic phenomenological research is concerned with the meanings that people attach to life, their attitudes and beliefs as well as their feelings and emotions. The research thus aims at clarifying the situations a person lives through in everyday life – a situation in which individuals have first-hand experience – emphasising on the individual's views and personal experiences thus achieving a sense of understanding (Denscombe, 2007; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). The understanding of a person's lived experiences is embedded within the historical background of the person which informs the person's understanding of the world. Thus hermeneutic phenomenology conceptualises people as being in a reciprocal relationship with the world in that, according to Lavery (2003), meaning is found as we are constructed by the world of which at the same time we are constructing the world from our own background and experiences.

According to the phenomenological approach the understanding of phenomena and its essence is achieved through the process of bracketing – suspending one's judgement or beliefs and past knowledge about a phenomenon in order to understand it clearly (Giorgi, 1994, 1997; Lavery, 2003).

In contrast to phenomenology, for hermeneutic phenomenology interpretation is significant in the process of understanding and disclosure of phenomena through language as according to Heidegger (1927, 1962 cited in Lavery, 2003) every human encounter involves interpretation

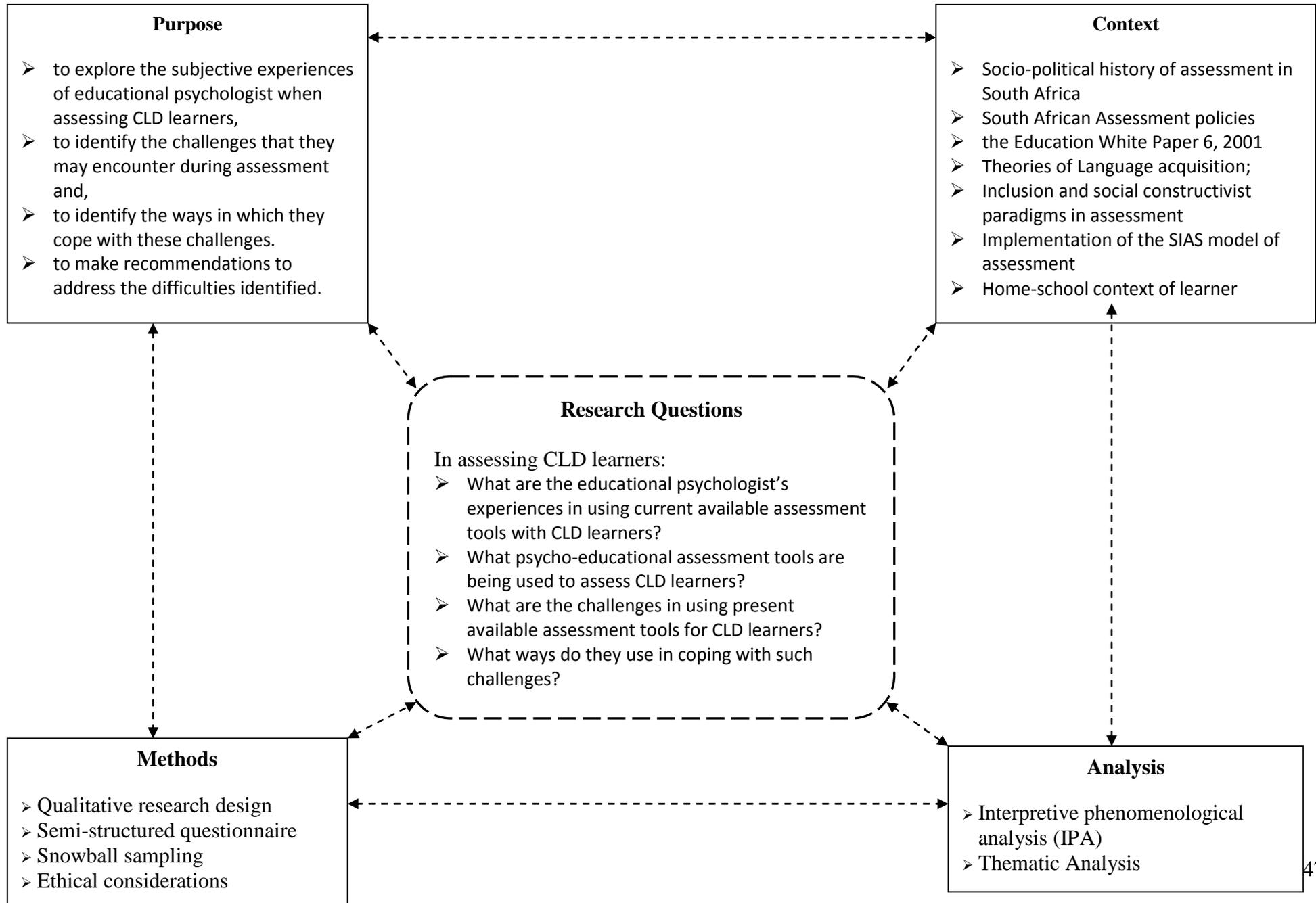
influenced by the historical meanings of experience. Interpretation in this study thus takes place in the process of communication, a dialectical interaction between the researcher and participant, in which questioning is an essential tool which helps reveal the possibilities of meaning (Gadamer, 1976; Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000). The study thus gives an indication of how social life is constructed by those who participate in it as they outline their views and experiences in the assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse learners (CLD).

3.3 Research Design

The research design refers to the plan and structure used to obtain evidence in order to answer research questions. It involves planning, visualising of data and the employment of this data in the research project as a whole (Leedy, 1993). The research methods chosen for this study have emerged from the researcher's orientation and the aim of this study. The qualitative method was seen as the most effective for the study in understanding the experiences of educational psychologists. This method was chosen because a holistic picture, of the phenomena within the context where it occurred, was required.

The research process was informed by the theory behind the research design. The research principles were therefore set along the following four dimensions: the purpose of the research, the paradigm informing the research, the context within which the research would be carried out, and the techniques to collect data (Durrheim, 2006). This is illustrated in Figure 2 (adapted from Mayaba, 2008).

Figure 2: Research design



3.3.1 Qualitative research design.

This qualitative research design allowed the researcher to study the experiences of educational psychologists in the assessment of CLD learners in depth, with openness and in detail while attempting to understand the categories which emerge from the data (Terre Blanche, Kelly et al., 2006). The design is therefore used with the aim to determine how people experience life as informed by the hermeneutic phenomenology mentioned above which describes the importance of the relation of the world and the self, of which the relationship between the person and the world – personal experience within which each person lives – cannot be separated (Denscombe, 2007; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Lavery, 2003; Lindegger, 2006).

Such characteristics portray the qualitative research design as transactional and interpretive in nature (Lavery, 2003), as it helps in studying phenomena as they unfold in real world situation. The qualitative design is therefore an interactive approach which is relevant for this study by taking into consideration the historical context within which the practitioners find themselves in as well as the important role it plays in their experiences of assessing CLD learners.

3.3.2 Validity and reliability.

“The understanding of verification starts in the lived world and daily language where issues of reliable craftsmen and reliable observations, of valid arguments, of transfer from one case to another are part of everyday social interaction” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 245).

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), reliability is the consistency and trustworthiness of the research findings concerning whether findings are reproducible in a different time by other researchers. This is in connection with whether the participants will change their answers during the interview as well as whether they will reply differently to different interviewers. During the interview sessions, interviewer reliability lies heavily on leading questions which may influence the answers; thus the researcher needed to structure the questions in a manner which will yield substantial information from participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The question of reliability also comes into play during the process of transcribing and analysis of data, whereby the researchers need to take caution in order to counter biased presentation of data. However Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe the

shortcomings of reliability in that focusing on the reliability factor may limit the researcher's creative innovations and variability. For qualitative research it is quite difficult to present reliable findings as they vary in different context.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), define validity in qualitative research as the degree whereby the method investigates what is intended to investigate to the extent to which the researchers' observation actually reflect the phenomena of the study which in turn will lead to valid scientific knowledge. Interviews concern matters of emotions, feelings and experiences of the participant, this makes it difficult to make checks of validity and reliability as there is no absolute way of verifying someone else's thoughts and feelings.

According to Denscombe (2007) in order for researchers to ensure that what they have been told is credible, it is important to check as to whether the data is plausible as well as to look for themes in transcripts that emerge across a number of interviews. Direct contact with the participants at the point of the interview entails that the data can be checked for accuracy and relevance. The researcher accounts for validity of the findings as the questions used in the study are relevant to the review of literature. Furthermore by analysing themes in the interview transcripts, the researcher was able to ensure that the findings give a presentation of the participant's experiences in assessing CLD learners using the current available assessment tools.

3.3.3 Generalisability and transferability.

In addition to reliability and validity, it was also important for the researcher to consider the generalisability and transferability of the study. Kelly (2006b) defines generalisability as the extent to which the interpretive account of the study can be applied to contexts other than the one being researched. For instance, in order for this study to be generalisable the results on educational psychologists' subjective experiences in assessing CLD learners need to be true and applicable in another context other than the area of KwaZulu-Natal.

Smaling (1992, as cited in Kelly, 2006b) takes it further, mentioning that a study needs to be transferable. This is known as 'transferential validity' – the ability of the research to provide answers in other context; the transferability of the findings to other context (Smaling, 1992 as cited in Kelly 2006b). To account for generalisability and transferability the research indicates a detailed description of the process, the method used as well as the research situation and context (Smaling, 1992 as cited in Kelly, 2006b). This study poses a threat to

generalisability in the sense that the findings can only be generalised to the area of KwaZulu-Natal, however the results may be transferable to other context other than the KwaZulu-Natal area.

3.3.4 Design coherence.

The researcher did not only consider threats to validity but also the coherence of the design. A coherent research design is one in which the research purpose and techniques are logically arranged so as to fit within the research framework provided by a particular paradigm (Durrheim, 2006). For the purpose of this study, the researcher ensured design coherence whereby the sampling techniques, data collection and interpretation as well as the context of the study fall within the logic of the interpretive paradigm and with the purpose of the research (Durrheim, 2006).

3.4 Sampling

In order to sample the participants from the population the researcher made use of the snowball sampling technique – a technique compatible with purposive sampling. This sampling technique, which is a type of non-probability sampling, allowed the researcher to actively select the most productive sample to answer the research questions (Babbie, 2010; Denscombe, 2007; Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Snowball sampling makes it possible for the sample to emerge through the process of reference from one person to the next. The aim here was to involve a few known educational psychologists, who will then be asked to nominate other psychologists who will be relevant to the purpose of the study; these nominations will then be contacted with the hope to include them in the sample.

Snowball sampling, as mentioned above, is compatible with purposive sampling with regard to nominating other participants who meet certain criteria of choice and conditions related to the project. For the purpose of this study the core characteristics considered in recruiting the sample included practitioners working with children, using psycho-educational assessments, years of experience, qualifications, and area of location. The sample thus consisted of nine educational psychologists who have been practicing for at least three years including an educational psychology intern – post-registration with the Health Professions Council of South Africa in the area of KwaZulu-Natal. Due to difficulties experienced in recruiting educational psychologists the researcher broadened the sample frame to also include registered intern psychologists.

Most participants were employees of the Department of Education (N = 6), one was in private practice and the other an intern psychologist at the time the study was conducted. Of the total participants, three were Indian females, one Indian male, three Black females, one White female and one White male.

3.5 Data Collection Method and Instrument

The data collection process was aimed at exploring the meaning and concept of the experiences of practitioners with regard to assessing CLD learners, making the study valid.

The process of data collection took a form of semi-structured individual interviews which were recorded depending on the consent of the participant. Semi-structured interviews contain interview guidelines which provide a sequence of themes to be covered in the interview. The advantages of using this form of interview is that it allows room for the change of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given in the stories told by the respondents (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In contrast structured interviews may render this difficult to do due to their inflexible nature.

A further advantage of using semi-structured interviews is that they allow for a thematic contribution of knowledge production as well as for a dynamic interpersonal relation during the interview interaction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). These are qualities which are difficult to ensure in a structured interviews. According to Durrheim and Painter (2006) validation in this type of data collection is defined by the degree to which the researcher can produce observations that are believable to self and the subjects being studied as well as the readers of the study.

During the process of data collection, the aim was to acquire appropriate time in order to interview educational psychologists, in the area of KwaZulu-Natal, about their experiences and challenges when conducting assessment with CLD learners. The researcher's interviews with the practitioners ranged from 15 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes. As indicated above, the researcher found it quite difficult to recruit participants for the study, mainly due to time constraints, as very few participants were available and the ones which the researcher was able to recruit had little time to spare.

The rationale of conducting interviews is that they take a more natural form of interacting with people as opposed to participants filling out questionnaires which are less interactive.

The interviews (Appendix 3) allowed the researcher and participants to enter in a dialogue whereby the initial questions were modified in the light of the participant's responses (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The researcher was therefore able to probe interesting areas which came up during the sessions.

Individual interviews therefore fit well with the interactive approach to research – providing the opportunity to get to know the psychologists better and understand how they feel about their experiences of using current available assessment tools with CLD learners. These are the advantages of using individual interviews, as opposed to focus groups, in that they provides a safe environment for respondents to talk freely about uncomfortable issues and also allow more control for the researcher (Babbie, 2010). Babbie (2010) further states that focus groups are often difficult to assemble, they require much special skills to moderate for one person and that the data is difficult to analyse.

Even though interviews are conversational and not merely question and answer sessions, they require great skill performance in order to gain the necessary information from the participants (Kelly, 2006a; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interviews were therefore conducted in a language understandable to both the participants and researcher in order to establish good rapport in ensuring that the conversation was understood so as to glean enough of the essential information from the participants.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The study takes on an interpretive form of data analysis of which the purpose is to place real live events and phenomena into perspective (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 2006). The data analysis of this study was informed by interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). In using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) the researcher aimed at exploring in detail how the participants were making sense of their personal and social world as well as the meanings which they hold in their experience of assessing CLD learners (Smith & Eatough, 2007; Smith & Osborn, 2003). IPA is thus a combination / double hermeneutic of empathetic hermeneutics, in trying to understand the lived experiences from the participant's point of view, and a questioning hermeneutics, in asking and critically analysing the text given by the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

The process of data analysis in this qualitative study began by identifying themes in the data and relationships between the themes with use of codification of arising themes also known

as analytical/theoretical ordering – a form of thematic analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003; Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 2006). This project takes on “immersion/crystallisation styles” of interpretive analysis:

“[Which] involve[s] becoming thoroughly familiar with a phenomenon, carefully reflecting on it, and then writing an interpretation by relying on one’s intuitive grasp of what is going on rather than on any particular analytic techniques” (Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al., 2006, p. 322).

This followed a five step process as presented by Terre Blanche, Durrheim et al. (2006):

- **Familiarisation and immersion:** with the use of the field notes taken during interviews and recordings, the researcher familiarised self with the text. This is a continuation from the collection of data as the researcher was actively engaged with the participants during the interviews, while simultaneously formulating ideas and theories about the phenomena of assessing CLD learners using current available assessment tools.
- **Inducing themes:** this involved inferring general rules from the specific content by looking at the material and pulling out themes that arose from the data during the emersion stage. The researcher was guided by a sustained qualitative inquiry such as: What is it that the person is trying to communicate? What issues are they expecting the researcher to hear? What is the nature of their experience? How do they understand their experience? This allowed the researcher to make theoretical connections within the transcripts while at the same time focusing on the specifics that were said (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Drawing from a hermeneutic phenomenology frame this involved analysing the conversations the researcher co-created with the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Mkhize (2005) makes use of the metaphor of ‘voice’ which implies that when people tell a story they tell it from a particular point of view which takes on a certain ‘voice’ that the researcher needs to listen to and extract from text. The voice incorporates, as alluded in the theoretical framework, the significant others in the life of the responded thus taking into consideration the context which the respondent comes from. This is known as the voice-centred relational method (Mkhize, 2005), reflecting on the relational dynamics between the researcher and respondent during the interviews, the researcher draws out the different

voices thus accessing the meaning and purpose of the respondent's lived experience. The themes, for each respondent, were then listed in the sequence with which they came up in the transcript.

- **Coding:** with use of labels (page and line number) and colour to mark relevant themes and the source from which they came from, the themes were clustered together in order to capture a particular topic which the respondent was concerned with thus developing what Smith and Osborn (2003) termed as super-ordinate themes. In this process certain themes which did not fit well with the structure were dropped. At this stage convergence and divergence in the data was recognised, taking into account ways in which the participants were similar and different in their response.
- **Elaboration:** this step involved exploring the themes more closely by revisiting the coding system developed above, moving back and forth step two and three until there are no more themes which can emerge
- **Interpretation and checking:** the interpretations were put together in writing using the thematic categories of which care is taken to distinguish between what the respondents said and the researcher's interpretation of the phenomena.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical responsibility is essential at all stages of the research process so as to protect the rights and welfare of the research participants (Wassenaar, 2006; Kimmel, 2007). In planning and implementing the research study the researcher was guided by three main principles namely; autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence (Wassenaar, 2006).

The principle of autonomy places responsibility upon the researcher to ensure that participation in the research study is voluntary and informed and that the participant is free to withdraw from the study at any time (Wassenaar, 2006; Kimmel, 2007). The researcher obtained ethical clearance, from the Higher Degrees committee as well as the School of Applied Human Science (SAHS) Research Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, permitting the researcher to proceed with the study (Appendix 1). The aims and rationale of the study were explained in writing (Appendix 2) and verbally so as to allow the participants to make an informed decision on whether they wish to participate in the research or not. As an agreement to participate in the study the participants were given consent forms to sign (Appendix 2) in which the participants were informed that the information they give

will be treated as confidential. The researcher referred to the participants in the text according to the numbers assigned to each individual so as to maintain anonymity.

Non-maleficence refers to the researcher's obligation of doing no harm to the participants or any other person involved in the research process (Wassenaar, 2006; Kimmel, 2007). The research study presented no apparent risks or physical, emotional and psychological harm to the participants.

The third principle is that of beneficence which requires the researcher to design the research in manner that will be of benefit to not only the participants but also the society at large (Wassenaar, 2006). The advantage of participating in the research as indicated in the consent form is that the exploration the research topic could be used to facilitate the development of useful psychological assessments for assessing culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter the various methods used in conducting the study were discussed in depth. Bearing in mind the information gained from the review of literature, the following chapter is a discussion around the key findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The South African constitution, in which basic human rights and equality are guaranteed, has placed the use of traditional psychological assessment tools under scrutiny. Consequently policies on inclusive education and strategies for its implementation brought about change in the role of educational psychologists. These uphold the primary focus for psychologists as one which aims to provide indirect support to learners through the support of educators and school management. Whilst the secondary focus is to provide direct support to learners in order to understand and describe their specific learning difficulties towards developing an effective intervention plan. This has posed a challenge for educational psychologists in lieu of the current available assessment tools and the diverse clientele.

The main aim of this study was to determine the subjective experiences of educational psychologists in using the currently available assessment tools with CLD learners in the area of Pietermaritzburg. In this chapter, the information obtained from the individual interviews is integrated to summarise the key findings of the study.

Two major themes were identified in the analysis of data. The first theme is based on the experienced challenges in the assessment process of CLD learners which was subdivided into four subthemes focussed on the following: the experienced challenges in the referral system, the implications of the current available assessment tools on the assessment process, lack of proper training for the use of assessment tools and lastly, the decline in test development and adaptation.

The second major theme, which is based on the mechanisms educational psychologists use in order to cope with the experienced challenges of assessing CLD learners, branches into the following four subthemes: planning ahead for the assessment procedure, coping with language and culture barriers, working in multidisciplinary teams and lastly using alternative methods of assessment.

4.2 Experienced Challenges in the Assessment Process of CLD Learners

In the course of working in diverse communities, using current available tools, the participants of this study relate various challenges experienced such as: the process of the referral system, the implications of the current available assessment tools on the assessment

process, lack of proper training for the use of assessment tools and lastly the decline in test development and adaptation. These are discussed as follows:

4.2.1 The experienced challenges in the referral system:

4.2.1.1 Racial issues affecting the influx of clientele.

The participants indicated that the diverse nature of their clientele is often enhanced by the referrals received from schools than the private based and that the race of the practitioner seems to play a role in help seeking behaviour.

Mr. R: ... Because you'll find that er Whites will go to Whites in most cases unless maybe the child has been referred by a school because maybe er there is no White person who can assess that learner; and then also Indians are few ja and and and Coloureds. But the majority were Black and then er the the Coloureds the Indians and and the Whites.

On the other hand the participants indicated that it is often not a matter of choice but rather a matter of the available resources, often found in formerly White schools, which determines help seeking behaviour. Given that psychological assessments are not so readily available to learners in disadvantaged communities, a large portion of their clientele seems to come from the advanced communities who are seen to be more informed about available psychological resources.

Mrs. M: Because erm psychological services were not necessarily available in in Black schools, the formally Black schools, for for quite a long a time there wasn't erm an established sort of practice of referring learners with disabilities; so although the demographics sort of dictated that I should have been receiving far more uhm referrals from traditionally Black schools, I was actually receiving the bulk of my referrals from formally White schools ... Because they were far more conversant with PGSES, the kind of work that we did, and were then more likely to refer learners who were experience experiencing some kind of learning breakdown.

This is seen to give a distorted representation of psychological needs in the overall population. Whereas formerly White schools would continue to receive the needed interventions, learners in formerly Black schools continue to be at risk of struggling with undiagnosed and untreated learning difficulties. Furthermore referrals from formerly black schools are seen to be a result of misinterpretation of cultural norms thus extending to

contradicting assessment results as per learners' abilities, misdiagnosis and acts of labelling in the school setting.

Mr. R: Maybe, especially you will find those contradicting reasons for referral from schools that are being headed by white, White principals where you find that the majority is white, If it's a black learner ... Some of the learners you'd find that I would say maybe they are just naughty or misbehaving, stealing a pen or maybe climbing a tree and and falling maybe swearing and and fighting with others and then they refer the learner and say "the learner is misbehaving or there's something wrong in the mind of the child". So this child must go to a special school?

All the same the participants empathise with the educators' referral practice as a cry for help resulting from the lack of support networks. They maintain that it is a coping mechanism for educators who find it challenging to manage unruly learners, especially in large classrooms – that psychologists are there to help take 'the load off their hands'. Thus the reason of referral in relation to the learners' needs is often distorted and as a result the assessment findings are incongruous.

Mrs. M: or there aren't supportive networks around the child to rely on and even internally within the school system the educator doesn't have a support network to rely on. So referral on becomes a way of coping with a number of children who can't learn and the expectation is that you're going to come in and remove the child from the situation, so the educator has one less to deal with.

Mr. R: and that another thing which is interesting. You'll find that the reason for referral could be maybe this child does not belong to this school, it could be the language it could be the child does not make any progress; others would just say this child is hyper active. And you will wonder that er who diagnosed the child as being hyper active? ... And now after assessment you you you don't detect that.

The participants find that having insight about different cultural norms plays a major role in the referral and assessment process as it aids in the understanding of normal behaviour in relation to various cultures. Cultural sensitivity is seen as essential; acknowledging that naturally people tend to think through their own culture. Consequently behaviour that is perceived as different runs the risk of being misinterpreted as pathological.

Mr. R: But all the while I can say is culture tolerance and understanding the person from the background where or she comes from. Maybe that that will be better, because I don't have to impose what I think it's right to me to you. And again maybe the the understanding of what is culture because some of us we tend to say this is culture only to find that it's not culture it's a habit...because er you, know not understanding the culture, you tend to think through your culture...and maybe label the child as misbehaving or being dis disrespectful.

4.2.2 The Implications of using the currently available assessment tools on the assessment process.

4.2.2.1 Cultural issues.

The participants experience the current available test norms as outdated and irrelevant for the present population. They maintain that these tests are culture loaded and biased towards one culture, Western/Eurocentric, allowing little room for context based knowledge skills. They find that learners who are not exposed to the environment and culture norms which the test aims to assess often perform poorly. Moreover those who may have some exposure or experience in that particular culture were found incapable of going beyond a certain level.

Mr. R: Ja you know maybe let's start in the issue of er assessment test if we talk of assessment test, the tests that that we have presently, in fact all tests are culture loaded. but the tests that we have in South Africa, a majority of them you'll find that er they are biased towards the white culture, because er they have been er er er er er developed and er piloted in the white culture...now again I think maybe when we assess, we need to be very much cognisant of culture loaded in the tests first...

Mrs N: Some words are not relevant to the culture, for example the game of the handkerchief, I forgot for which test, you find that the test is not understood because it's not part of the culture.

Mrs. G: because it does it does slant your scores. You know if the child stumble across a picture and it was totally foreign to them and they score zero on it it's gonna affect your scores anyway...Uhm I must say in terms of the Burt the Burt word reading test we use it a lot. but I found that majority of the learners you know, although we were seeing quite a white spectrum, they don't go beyond a certain level it sort of looks like, why does all of the children stuck get stuck at this level?

In their experience participants felt that even tests which are developed to be culture fair are not fair at all. With specific reference to the Raven's Progressive Matrices, participants maintain that learners who are exposed to formation toys, such as building blocks and puzzles, are inclined to perform much better than learners who have not been exposed to such material. Participants thus stress on the need for development of assessment tools for a specific community for norms to be based on that particular community.

Mr. D: huge, huge. you know the ther er there are are some of the tests which don't use language, uhm the most popular test which was used in in in the black community in the old days was uhm Progressive Matrices ... this is all these designs and that...but even that its unfair it's a it's a culture thing er children who have played with bo blocks and er done puzzles and that sort of thing as as small children, have developed those skills very quickly and when you get get to progressive matrices and things like that they can see patterns and designs. Whereas, children who have never had that opportunity can't do that. It doesn't mean that they're less intelligent it just means that they haven't developed those specific skills. So although those are those are those are what they call culture fair tests test...in fact there is no such as a culture fair test. er the honest truth is er uh you have to develop things for the s the specific community if you want to talk talk start talking norm based tests...

The participants further give examples of errors encountered in test items. With specific reference to the Individual scales for IsiZulu Speaking Pupils (ISZSP), also commonly referred to as the SSAIS-Z, there are meanings of cultural norms in the test items that are distorted. As a result of test item error, the participant maintains that the expected responses may not necessarily equate to the response of the learners.

Mrs. M: ja it's extremely, extremely unfair because, I can't remember what kind of concept it was testing but the response from the child who's worldview is one of ancestral worship uhm traditional healing, sacrificial slaughter a child with that kind of background would have seen that kind of activity, would have kind of a picture, would have seen it and identified with it in his or her own context, and the concepts for for witchcraft and and traditional healing are very separate in an African context ... and yet the Z-SAIS fused that, it fused traditional traditional healing and

traditional worship, approaches to worship with witchcraft and they're very separate. One is an antonym to the other in Zulu culture. So it's problematic...

The standardised nature of test administration is experienced as a challenge during the assessment process; it is seen to offer very little room for the learner and assessor to effectively engage with one another. For instance, the participants illustrate that often learners would give responses which are relevant in their everyday life environment and also prove to be correct at that level however, incorrect according to the expected response in the test item. The participant maintains that if practitioners are not aware of this and do not probe the learner to determine if they understand the nature of the task they run the risk of giving a wrong impression of the learner's skills due to miscommunication.

Mr. R: ja, when you when you assess its difficult because psychometric assessment is structured, unlike you know, this interview which is an unstructured interview...you have to follow the manual, but maybe the best things is to explain to to to the learner. maybe after the assessment that "look some of these things we experience them in our daily lives, what is happening is that you know for the purpose of the test er the correct answer is this, but in the real situation you've experienced it difficultI mean different"...

The participant gives an example of the difference between the expected response in the SSAIS-R Similarities subtest and the learner's concept formation, as informed by their cultural norms – indicating that the structured nature of the test makes it challenging to effectively address misinterpretations.

Mr. R: and then er one one child said "we eat the apple, we eat the banana and we brew traditional beer with pineapple" And according to the answer sheet that was wrong, but according to the child's experience that was correct...so then er you'll find that you want to say "ja its correct" but then the manual is saying it's wrong.

4.2.2.4 Language issues.

The language issues in the available assessment tools are closely tied to the cultural issues. Participants felt that they are often faced with the ethical dilemma of relating assessment results from the outdated test tools to the learners' capabilities and that the vocabulary subtest is a good indicator of these flaws

Mrs M: I struggle with the ethical dilemma of using the vocabulary subtests of the SSAIS-R. Nonverbal to verbal, the concepts are there but not in English “the English”. Our language is quite archaic and it’s important to note that children develop language socially. The concept formation in mother tongue, you can’t compare that child with the 1st language English speaking learner.

Participants maintain that the challenge of using current available test is that the language in the tests is inconsistent with the current spoken language. With specific reference to the ISZSP, isiZulu speaking participants have found it challenging to assess isiZulu speaking learners due to the outdated language norms that do not relate to the current spoken isiZulu language. The respondent stresses that often learners do not understand the test items and what is expected of them in the tasks giving warning that, if left undetected, this may yield to misinterpretation of skills.

Mrs Z: But what was, what happened is that, uh when I use the SSAIS-Z it was difficult to use it (laugh) uh because the language that was there, I don’t know whether it was the the the translation but it made it difficult even for the child to understand...Because of some of the concepts that were were there that children could not quite understand...If you’d like. That the the kind of Zulu isiZulu that we we speak is is ii is, let’s say if the tests now is in should be done in such a way that it’s in the current spoken isiZulu language.

The participants argue that the available assessment tools fall short in accounting for the differences between a first language English speaking learner and a second language English speaking learner. Consequently participants find that often the assessment results suggest delays in cognitive functioning for second language English speaking learners.

Mrs N: I think when you test children that are 2nd language speaking, I find that it is sometimes not relevant to administer the known standard tests...ja, uh I think er in terms of the schole er the scholastic test and the IQ test er one must be guarded because sometimes you can misdiagnose especially a second language speaker, as being learning disabled or having er a low kind of IQ. Whereas that may may not be the eh the, the, the real case eh because eh it could be a language barrier.

In addition these tools are seen to be biased towards the English spoken language with little regard for other spoken African languages. Participants therefore stress the need for tests to be available in other vernacular so as to cater for learners who are not English speaking thus further extending the need for the development of assessment tools which are suitable for the South African context as well as readily available for psychologists.

Mrs Z: and there I must say that I could only use that with the English speaking children because there were none in the vernacular so there was that challenge.

Mrs. GI: Ya I think we need more South African tests...Because uh you know most of the tests that are available are uhm you know either very Euro-centric or American based and they're not culture friendly to South Africans. So uhm ya I would like to see more South African based uh tests that are developed and uh you know available for, for for ya psychologists. That's about the only ya that's it.

Mrs. G: and there is a big need for for us to start getting to into a test that are relevant for for our country...they were not identifying with them.

Mrs R: It is a question of having culture faire tests. In many cases it's not so. We need the latest development of tests.

For example, the respondent below recalls a time when they were involved in a project evaluating learners for possible special needs school placements and found that majority of the black African children experienced profound cognitive delays. A reassessment of the same group of learners following their placements in English medium schools indicated exactly the opposite of the initial assessment. Thus the learners' change of environment, from first language isiZulu speaking schools to first language English speaking schools, was seen to have contributed to their significant progress because they were exposed to and became more familiar with the cultural norms presented in the test items.

Mr. D: so we found, we had three classes of special class children which were not special class children at all. they were in fact er pretty ordinary children who just have uh experiencing the cultural change from uh going to Zulu speaking schools to coming to English speaking schools. So that is that's we decided never again will we use those tests because they they're terribly misleading. So there are no formal assessments done...Because they're totally unreliable.

4.2.2.5 The challenge of choosing a suitable assessment battery as per language barriers.

The participants point out that although learners may come from a particular language group they are also social beings who are influenced by their social environment and thus their language development is equally affected which needs to be accounted for during assessment. For this reason participants are seen to experience challenges when it comes to choosing the best suitable assessment tools based on the learner's language proficiency. They acknowledge that learners should be assessed in the language they are most comfortable with.

Mrs Z: we should take that into cognisance. I think for every person particularly if you speak if that is your mother tongue. it's good for you to be assessed in in that language that you are comfortable with. but the challenge is that sometimes when you start to engage with the child in that mother tongue you find that there are some deficiencies in terms of the current test of isiZulu that we have...

However the participants maintain that as per cultural diversity, learners are exposed to a "mixture" of cultures and subsequently to different forms of languages resulting in little proficiency in either their first or second language of instruction.

Mrs Z: Which I think eh there's a aaa lot of mixture, uh well my children have been to the the English school schools where they speak er ya English has been the medium of instruction and that is the culture that is coming through. Therefore you might find that the other words they they they don't know although they can be very very comfortable in conversing with the the with the the assessor in isiZulu BUT there are words that they will not know so which means then that if we were to to to to do the the Zulu version or revisit the Zulu version that we have.

The participants further express concerns that, as per dynamics of acculturation, learners have become accustomed to interact through language borrowing and code-switching. They maintain that through acculturation languages have evolved into diverse dialects.

Mr. R: Er one time I said to a learner he must count from one to five in Sesotho. Then the learner started counting 1,2,3,4,5 I said "no nono wait in Sesotho" and he said "ja" I said "no in Sesotho you you say ngwe, pedi, tharu, nne, hlanu, like in Zulu kunye, kubili, kuthathu, kune, kuhlanu...and the learner was surprised and said "no

but normally we say” say for instance “ngithengele iiii drink ei two Ngifun’ izinkwa eziwu two”...So that has been acculturated in such a way that ‘two is is in Zulu is just ‘two’ in Zulu ... Now when you say I must say two in isiZulu, what are you s what are you talking about now?

Mrs Z: ...if you you you you go to to Northern KwaZulu-Natal there are some dialects and er here when I talk some people say I sound like a Xhosa speaking person. So I think that there are those differences but I think what is uh also playing a role in this is the uh acculturation...

However in response to such dilemma, the participants stress that learners should be encouraged to speak appropriate forms of language be it isiZulu, isiXhosa, English, Afrikaans, etc. as this will assist in closing the language barrier gap.

Mrs Z: Ja because uh I think that when children are speaking isiZulu they need to be encouraged to speak isiZulu and speak isiZulu not this mixture...

On the other end of the spectrum some participants felt that language is not a barrier for second English language speakers as they are often exposed to the English medium of instruction from a young age. In such cases assessment tools are seen to be useful and accurate in assessing second English language learners skills.

Mr. N: Uhm but also you must keep in mind that many of the second language speakers er have been taught through English medium from Grade R. so you know language barrier ehm some is sometimes is not a barrier at all, because the learner has adapted to English as eh you know as the language of instruction. Uh other than that I found that er the tests are fairly accurate uh for English language speakers.

Furthermore, participants acknowledge that at times they are the ones with limited language skills thus contributing the language barriers during assessment

Mrs. G: I think first and foremost I must say, er when we’re dealing with cultural diversity I think we’re speaking more about the the learner that has speak isiZulu as a first language as er psychologist as a tester, first and foremost I must say I was the language barrier (laughing). I didn’t speak the language of the the client...

4.2.2.6 Multiple roles in the assessment process.

The participants maintain that there are multiple roles which a psychologist plays from the point of assessment to intervention. In an “ideal traditional setting” the psychologists work in partnership with therapists from other disciplines so as to arrive at the best possible intervention plan. However the participants argue that, especially in the DoE, they have to stretch themselves as far as possible in assessment as well as designing and implementing an intervention plan that will best cater for the learner’s needs.

Mrs. M: who would participate really in designing and an intervention plan, you are it! in this work setting. You have multiple roles ...so assessment in its in its uhm in a traditional sense uhm wouldn't really be possible because you have such multiple roles that you're playing (laughing). You are counselling the parent, you are intervening with uhm the educator, and very often you'd find that you're doing uhm a lot of intervention with the educator just in terms of burnout.

Due to the psychological needs and other factors that play a role in learners’ development, the participant maintains that essentially psychologist often find themselves actively engaged in “support work” and very little in the standardised “psychological work”, i.e. of learners, educators, parents and other family members.

Mrs. M: The major challenge of course is that you are not necessarily doing psychological work, you're doing support work...Because you you're doing all you intervening and assessing at the same time...Uhm because of the nature of of the the referral that's come to you and also because of the nature of relationship you have with the school. You are there in a support role.

4.2.3 Lack of proper training for the use of assessment tools.

The participants expressed concerns of not being well trained and prepared enough to work in diverse environment with the use of available assessment tools. They therefore express the need for continuous development programmes which will help enhance their skills for working in the diverse South African environment.

Mrs R: There is a need for us to be workshoped on the tools in terms of how to use them. We need something that is approved and authorised by the KZN Department,

this is not done as yet...Training is important, I wish to have been given more exposure to the SSAIS-R. I'm not sure what has been done with it.

4.2.4 The decline in test development and adaptation.

The participants in this study express concerns about the decline in test development and adaptation exacerbating the irrelevance of norms and items to the current population and era. The participants are concerned that the development and adaptation of test in South Africa fails to keep up with the changes in time. For example, the participants maintain that the school environment has changed throughout history indicating that what was expected as general knowledge then is different to what is expected presently. The participants further point out that intelligence tests often fall short of their use within about three years of standardisation.

Mr. D: but in South Africa they did er the Human Science Research Council we were involved very often you know they'd bring out a new test and then we would have to go to the schools and use the test so they then could develop norms for it. That's not happened I promise you that has not happened since, before you were born...we're talking 30 years ago, ja. That's the last time they standardised tests so anyone that brings out these old tests that they use now and uses them they're crazy. Because you know we even found that if you took a test like the JSAIS or the SSAIS... We found that that within two or three years they were already inaccurate.

Participants further argue that test developers need to be aware awareness of the culture context, the various dialects in a language and the national curriculum.

Mrs Z: Unlike English, I think for instance isiZulu there are different er dialects, and eh therefore the the the the the the the eh the the translation and the standardisation will need to take the the the the geographical dialects into cognisance when they're doing that...That the the kind of Zulu isiZulu that we we speak is isii is, let's say if the tests now is in should be done in such a way that it's in the current spoken isiZulu language.

On the other hand they also point out to the possible cause and reason why tests have not been developed and adapted over a long period of time maintaining that that in practice psychologists seek to develop their individual careers with little regard for being involved in

the development and adaptation of assessment tools. Thus participants stress upon the need for practitioners to take part in projects that will better the nature and process of assessment in the South African community.

Mr. R: now let me say the opposite of what I am saying now. to say who is going to develop them? because people who are in practice they are interested in making money, they don't give themselves time to sit down and say "lets research and come with a culture fair test that is er that is er you know fair to to the South African population".

The participants further acknowledge the process of acculturation as a contributing to the delays in test development with mentions that we live in a world that is continuously evolving and thus our cultures are in continuous transition.

Mr. D: ja well you see that's another world, here here (sigh) one of the questions one of the issues which is very relevant to your whole study is we are such a world in transition, such a culture in transition... that whatever I say about Zulus is untrue because am I talking about traditional Zulus or westernised Zulus or whatever...uhm so were living in transition and er anything that you do nowadays it's hard to standardise...

4.3 The Mechanisms Educational Psychologists use in Order to Cope with the Experienced Challenges of Assessing CLD Learners

In view of their experienced challenges the participants also indicated the methods they use to cope with their work in diverse environment. These are as follows:

4.3.1 Planning ahead for the assessment procedure.

The participants mention the importance of familiarising self with the assessment tools that are to be used in order to plan ahead for the assessment process. The participants state that this is a form of best practices which aids in providing the best presentation of learners' abilities while simultaneously preventing both internal and external factors, such as fatigue and low SES, which might impact on the assessment process.

Mrs N: I found that the length of assessment is important If you want to do a full assessment you need a lot of time. Therefore I will need to plan it in a way that it is not too heavy for the child. Otherwise the child can be fatigued...therefore I mix them.

For example, the IQ with the CAT or projective drawings, which is more fun...It is therefore important to consider the stress levels of the child for reliability of assessment...I take into consideration the financial status of the family. If there are financial problems, I have to select and do the assessments all of them in one day...

4.3.2 Coping with language and culture barriers.

Participants in this study seem to have adapted various ways to help minimise barriers in culture and language. These are summarised as follows:

- Participants use the English, or isiZulu, equivalent of the test as a tool for translating the tasks in order to ensure that learners understand the expectations of a given task.
- Participants also switch language codes between English and isiZulu while giving instructions to ensure that learners understand what is required of them.
- Learners are inducted into a school setting which allows them to learn English so that they can progress better when placed in available remedial projects.
- Participants use the perceived culture friendly assessment tools such as the Raven's Progressive Matrices which is seen to require little verbal interaction
- The participants also use referral notes as a guideline of selecting cases in their area of language expertise
- Some rely on the use of translators. However the use of translators is also experienced as tricky at times due to the possibilities of distortions in communication thus impacting on the process and quality of assessment.

Mrs N: Sometimes when you have a translator, for example in Edendale I relied on the nurses for translation. It can be frustrating, the response is too slow, sometimes it gives in (room for) other topics and not directive to the question...

Mrs R: However the use of interpretation is not so efficient. You lose the essence of the meaning of what is said and this has an impact on the assessment process.

As a result participants have also found it benefiting to equip themselves with better second language skills as per demand for multilingual psychologists, due to the influx of learners from diverse communities.

Mrs N: I know colleagues who have been promoted to go to isiZulu courses in order to learn how to translate tools such as the DAP...We have colleagues who are

learning a second language. There are many posts which haven't been filled as there is the pressure of the need for a multicultural team. So we are going for isiZulu classes.

Participants maintain that learners who are well informed in their own home language adapt easier when learning second language. They further recommend that learners be actively engaged when encountered with a different language or culture as a general way of being informed in the sharing of knowledge.

Mr. R: No I'm saying like in KZN there is isiZulu. That a learner will have to learn and understand isiZulu... or maybe learn English and another language...If there is another language. But if I am a Zulu I don't understand isiZulu, I'm not clear about isiZulu, how will I learn English? ... A child will have to understand his or her culture at a younger age and the language. So that when they adapt or mix with other learners at least they will know that "look, in my language we call this this..".

4.3.3 Working in multidisciplinary teams.

The participants find working in multidisciplinary/support teams beneficial and effective as compared to using traditional forms of assessment. The participants maintain that valuable information regarding learners' skills and areas of concern can be drawn from information gathered from various support networks, i.e. educator and parents. The respondent thus puts forth the importance of forming alliance with these networks which is in line with the Inclusive Education Programme. This includes providing programmes that will equip all systems so as to effectively assist in the intervention plan. For example, a reading and writing programme for parents in disadvantaged communities so as to equip them with skills that will in turn enable them to assist their own children with homework.

Mrs N: ...It is therefore a multidisciplinary approach in identifying and addressing the problem...So we liaise with the educator and not passively work with the child or refer them to programmes, for example, remedial or place units. We liaise with parents, for example, family counselling...

Mrs R: So what is the solution? It is to use the inclusive education model that says that all stakeholders need to give input in the child's development and assessment...

4.3.4 Using alternative methods of assessment.

The participants also found the use of alternative assessment methods helpful and effective in assessing CLD learners. These are as follows:

4.3.4.3 Scholastic assessment vs. IQ assessment.

Participants find the use of scholastic assessments, in combination with traditional tools, useful in providing important indications of learners' level of functioning in relation to their grade or age level function. Participants mention that a simple evaluation of the learner's academic work and progress provides important information in assessing skills and areas which need developing. For example, the DoE has also developed the Annual National Assessment (ANA) which provides an overall perspective of learners' skills in relation to their educational phase.

Mr. D: only assessments we use we look at the kid's work. and that is uh that is that is a trend uhm in s in educational psychology that you know we we don't want to measure what is already being shown to us, when you see how a kid is working and how they are spelling and and how they're reading. Why do you need to go and find some abstract IQ score that tells us this? It's sometimes useful because because it really re uh reassures you that we're dealing with an intellectually strong or intellectually weak child but er the the Education Departments of KwaZulu-Natal have not used a formal test uh for a very long time.

4.3.4.4 Test-Teach-Retest: Dynamic assessment.

Another form of assessment which participants have found useful is the dynamic form of assessment. They maintain that this form of assessment allows them to be more interactive with the learners, not only during assessment but in the process of learning as it follows a test-teach-retest model. Practitioners are able to simultaneously engage in the process of implementing the intervention plan while in the process of assessment thus providing room for change in the intervention when needed. This further allows for miscommunication to be resolved during assessment.

Mrs N: I think when you test children that are 2nd language speaking, I find that it is sometimes not relevant to administer the known standard tests. It is therefore important to switch to more dynamic ones. A big part in my assessments is dynamic

assessment. I tend to work dynamically most of the time with the use of tests such as the CAT, projective drawings as well as the self-concept scales.

4.3.4.3 Implementation of the SIAS strategy.

Due to the strenuous nature of the traditional assessment process the Department of Education has developed a programme, in line with the inclusive education policy, which brings in support personnel from within the community of the learners, i.e. educators, parents and lay counsellors. This is achieved through the implementation of the Screening, Intervention, Assessment and Support (SIAS) strategy.

Mr. R: But in the Department of Education there is you know assessment of learners, but it's too prompt now. There is er psychological assessment whenever there's a need. But now we don't stress too much the use of psycho psychometric assessment... We we now use er an assessment strategy which we call uh SIAS it's an acronym... It's er screening er [Identification], Assessment SIAS and Support ya.

The participants maintain that it has little focus on the use of traditional assessment tools but rather on support. Secondly there is little focus on the comparison of norms, the focus is rather on meeting the needs of the learners which will enable them to develop in a more conducive environment. The participants maintain that the SIAS strategy takes on a humanistic approach as opposed to the Eurocentric scientific approach of traditional assessment tools, with the aim to ascertain how to best support learners in developing their skills.

Mr. R: so so in other words, i it's humanistic in approach unlike er psychometric assessment which is er scientific and Eurocentric...now we are saying "how best can we support this learner once the learner is at that particular school?" unless maybe the challenge is so intrinsic that erthe assessor will have to use psychometric er assessment or maybe a eurologi a neurologist is necessary or a medical doctor or whatever it depends

4.4. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that educational psychologists in the area of Pietermaritzburg are assessing learners from various language and cultural groups with IsiZulu being the most frequent language group assessed.

The results also bring to light the vast amount of dissatisfaction participants have with the current available assessment tools which are seen to perpetuate the challenges of working in a diverse community. In addition very few educational psychologists working with CLD learners feel competent enough to do so – most participants also feel limited in bilingual skills although some have taken the initiative of equipping themselves. It is therefore not surprising that most of the practitioners in this study had to resort to using interpreters when performing psychological evaluations with CLD learners. However, even with the use of interpreters for the assessment, practitioners have faced additional challenges concerning the reliability of their assessment results due to possible errors of translation during the assessment.

The results also indicate that, although with limitations, practitioners have also adapted to alternative methods of assessment for their diverse working environment

The following chapter covers the discussion of the study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

There are great controversies among psychologists, regarding the use of traditional clinical and psycho-educational assessment tools to evaluate individuals from diverse communities. Various factors such as cultural, linguistic and educational differences contribute to assessment measures not being applicable in all contexts thus having an effect on the validity and reliability of psychometric measures (Parker et al., 2007). Even so, psychologists are expected to find accurate means of assessing the psychological potential of their clients as well as being sensitive to their diverse nature.

The inclusive education system brought about change in the role of educational psychologists, and other support staff, bringing to question the usefulness of psychometric test results and assessment practices in the education system. The policies on inclusive education maintain that assessments should contribute to the identification of learning difficulties, educational programme planning as well as informing the instruction of learners (DoE, 2005). All the same, the added role which educational psychologists are expected to play, in lieu of the current available assessment tools, seems to pose a challenge for the practitioners in ensuring that the true ability of the individual is reliably measured regardless of cultural and linguistic diversities. There continues to be a need for objective and dependable assessments that will address the diverse nature of the nation.

The main aim of this study was to explore the subjective experiences of educational psychologist when assessing CLD learners, using the currently available assessment tools, in the area of Pietermaritzburg. The aim was to find out about educational psychologist's perception and attitude towards the use of current available assessment tools with CLD learners. The study was also aimed at identifying challenges that may be encounter during assessment as well as towards identifying ways in which educational psychologists cope with these challenges, if there were any mentioned.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

The following discussion deals with the various challenges experienced in the process of assessing CLD learners. Included in these challenges are issues experienced the referral system, the implications of the current available assessment tools on the assessment process,

lack of proper training for the use of assessment tools as well as the decline in test development and adaptation.

5.2.1 Experienced challenges in the assessment process of CLD learners.

5.2.1.1 The experienced challenges in the referral system.

The element of race seems to inform help-seeking behaviour as clients often prefer practitioners of the same race. However it is often not a matter of choice but rather a matter of the available resources, mostly in formerly white schools, which determine help seeking behaviour as psychological assessments are not so readily available to learners in disadvantaged communities. This may give a distorted representation of psychological needs in the overall population. While formerly White schools would continue to receive the needed interventions, learners in formerly black schools continue to be at risk of struggling with undiagnosed and untreated learning difficulties. This might also be related to findings by Ochoa et al. (2004) which looked at school psychologist's current practices in the assessment of bilingual and/ ELL. The study indicates that families from CLD communities had no access to health insurance which gave indications of their lack of access to psychological services (Ochoa et al., 2004).

Furthermore the participants in this study argue that referrals of learners from formerly African schools are often as a result of misinterpretation of cultural norms thus extending to contradicting assessment results on learner's abilities, misdiagnosis and acts of labelling in school.

Referral for psychological intervention is also seen as a coping mechanism for educators when encountered with demanding learners, especially in large classrooms. Often it is with the expectation that the learner will be removed from their class and transferred to a special needs school. On the other hand the participants empathise with the educator's referral practices as their cry for help as a result of the little support they receive from parents and other support networks.

Being insightful of and well-informed about different cultural norms plays a major role in the referral and assessment process. This aids in the understanding of normal behaviour in relation to various cultures. Cultural sensitivity is essential as it is acknowledged that naturally people tend to think through their own culture. Thus behaviour that is perceived as different runs the risk of being misinterpreted as pathological. It is for this reason that various

studies have developed pre-referral strategies and interventions (Burnette, 2004) to assist in obtaining relevant information in determining whether a learner is experiencing difficulties which stem from either language or cultural differences, from limited opportunities to learn or from a disability.

5.2.1.3 The Implications of Using the Current Available Assessment Tools on the Assessment Process.

5.2.1.2.1 Cultural issues.

The participants of this study expressed concerns about the ethical dilemma of relating assessment results from the outdated test tools to the learners' capabilities. The root of these concerns is related to cultural and linguistic issues experienced with current tests. Studies attest that erroneous assumptions about CLD individuals are related to culture and language systems and that these lie at the core of inaccuracies in traditional assessment tools (Gopaul-McNicol et al., 1998; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000).

Previous studies have found that certain constructs and terms are experienced differently in different cultures and that in essence intellectual abilities are culture bound (Foxcroft 2004; Owen, 1998). It is therefore not surprising that, in the present study, participants found that learners who are not exposed to the environment and culture norms which the assessment tool aims to assess often performed poorly and that even learners who have some exposure or experience in a particular culture were found to be incapable of going beyond a certain level. In support of this finding Owen (1998) found that cultural factors that affect test performance have an impact on the wider behaviour domain than the test it is designed to sample. Even relatively trivial experiential differences in some test items have the effect that is considered worthless for individuals from certain cultures.

The participants in the present study felt that the culture loaded nature of current tests provides little room for context-based knowledge skills and that even the tests which are developed to be culture fair are not fair at all. Previous research that supports this finding shows that culture fair tests have elements of bias as they only measure what the learner has experienced (McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000). In accordance, Olson (1986 as cited in Owen, 1998) strongly argues that the nonverbal notion, of tests such as the Ravens Progressive Matrices, is equally culturally biased as they are highly related to literacy. Such tests have been found to require the same analytical rule (for analysis, coding and transforming of

relationships) required by the analysis of verbal content (Cormier et al., 2011; Owen, 1998; Ochoa et al., 2004).

Consistent with the observation of cultural specificity of nonverbal tests in the present study, various studies (Cormier et al., 2011; Holding et al., 2004; Owen, 1998) have also observed weaknesses in CLD learners on tasks requiring the interpretation of complex pictures and analysis of spatial relationships within pictures. This is attributed to the unfamiliarity with the test material rather than to deficits in perceptual and/or reasoning skills.

The current study supports findings of a study by Gopaul-McNicol et al., (1998), which looked at the issues and challenges in the psychoeducational assessment of Ebonics speakers. In their study, cultural differences were seen to have an effect on the learner's scores in traditional assessments of language and comprehension such as the Wechsler scales (Gopaul-McNicol et al., 1998). There was an indication that such measures assess the learners' abilities to draw inferences and that these are informed by their background knowledge which is in turn determined by their cultural frame of reference. The researchers argue that the subjects which learners are exposed to in their homes and community as well as the cultural values associated with these subjects create the frame of reference which they bring to the testing situation (Gopaul-McNicol et al., 1998). Thus awareness of the behaviour of different cultures or racial groups in a particular situation is important when interpreting assessment observations.

5.2.1.2.4 Language issues.

Closely tied to issues of culture is that of language. The participants expressed concerns of language both in terms of the test administration and the learner's language proficiency. The concerns are based on inconsistencies between the language in the tests and the current spoken language in communities. Best practices dictate the deliberation of test taker's cultural and linguistic proficiency as the practitioner's responsibility towards assessing whether an instrument is appropriate for the individual to be tested (Foxcroft, 2002; O'Bryon & Rogers 2010; Suzuki et al., 2001). However participants maintain that the irregularities between the spoken language, home language and that which is used in the test renders the task challenging.

These findings concur with the needs analysis conducted by Foxcroft et al. (2004), which looked at test use patterns and needs of psychological assessment practitioners. In their study,

the psychologists indicated language as the most frequent hindrance in the administration of psychological tests, in both the test and the test taker's language competency (Foxcroft et al., 2004).

The findings of the current study also support findings by Foxcroft et al. (2004) who found that test takers often do not understand the language of the test and as a result performed poorly on cognitive measures. As a result learner's poor performance resulting from poor comprehension of the language can be mistaken for poor cognitive skills.

Participants in the present study further argue that assessment tools fall short in accounting for the differences between a first language English speaking learner and a second language English speaking learner. In their study Foxcroft et al. (2004) found that the outdated and irrelevant nature of the language norms in some tests affects both first language English speaking and second language English speaking test takers.

Various scholars have noted similar disparities in test performance between English speaking learners and second language English speakers, attributed cultural and linguistic diversities (Foxcroft et al., 2004; Gopaul-McNicol et al., 1998; Owen, 1998). Hence, to cater for learners who are not English speaking participants in the present study stress the need for tests to be available in other vernacular.

5.2.1.2.5 The challenge of choosing a suitable assessment battery as per language barriers.

The findings indicate that the multicultural environment of the South African context presents a problem when it comes to selecting a suitable assessment battery based on language proficiency. The participants are of the opinion that due to the exposure to various forms of cultures and consequently to various forms of languages, learners often have little proficiency in either their first or second language of instruction. On the contrary Ortiz (2008) argues that the learning of two or more languages does not lead to any kind of linguistic confusion or interference. However in support of this finding research does indicate that, although best practice dictate the deliberation of test taker's cultural and linguistic proficiency as practitioner's responsibility (Foxcroft, 2002; Suzuki et al., 2001), it is often difficult to find tests with norms that are representative of English language learners in a multicultural environment (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009; O'Bryon & Rogers 2010; Parker et al., 2007). Findings by O'Bryon and Rogers (2010) indicate that as a result it is difficult to isolate and

disentangle the effects of the language acquisition process from other factors such as: poor quality educational services, academic difficulties that result from processing disorders, attention problems, and learning disabilities.

In the present study, participants maintain that although learners may come from a particular language group they are social beings influenced by their social environment thus equally affecting their language development. This is in support of the argument by McGrew and Evans (2011), that the process of acculturation is a fundamental variable that underlies the issues of cultural and linguistic diversity in assessment. It is therefore not surprising that participants expressed concerns that, as per dynamics of acculturation, learners have become accustomed to interact through language borrowing and code-switching. It is through acculturation that languages have evolved into various dialects, i.e. in its traditional form the isiZulu language has two dialects (Stats SA, 2012) however this has evolved over the years which may prove to be a challenge for the assessment process as well as in test development. All the same, participants in this study stress the need for learners to speak appropriate forms of language be it isiZulu, isiXhosa, English, Afrikaans, and so forth, in order to minimise the experienced language barriers.

On the other end of the spectrum, some participants felt that language is not a barrier for second English language speakers as they are often exposed to the English medium of instruction from a young age. This might also be related to findings by Foxcroft et al. (2004) which indicated that while some practitioners felt need for test to be translated into various languages, so that test takers can be assessed in their first language, others felt that English is the *lingua franca* in the business world as well as the medium of instruction at most higher education institutions thus test takers should be tested in English in these contexts.

The findings of this study further indicate that language barriers are not only an issue directed at the test takers, that practitioners also experience their limited language skills as barriers. This has been found to be the case in other studies where challenges of assessing CLD learners were related to language skills needed by psychologists (Burnette, 2004; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; O'Bryon & Rogers 2010; O'Connor & Geiger, 2009); that due to deficiencies in bilingual skills there is a shortage of psychologists qualified to assess CLD learners.

Participants in the present study seem to manage by either switching to a dynamic form of assessment or through assistance for interpretation from available educators. The various forms which practitioners use to adapt will be discussed further below.

5.2.1.2.6 Multiple roles in the assessment process.

Participants in the present study stress that they often have multiple roles from the point of assessment to intervention due to psychological needs and other important factors in a learner's development that need to be addressed. In line with policies on inclusive education (DoE, 2005) the participants working with the DoE maintain that they are actively engaged in support work and very little in the traditional standardised psychological work. According to the findings in this study, they often have to stretch themselves as far as possible during assessment as well as in designing and implementing an intervention plan that will best cater for the learner's needs. This finding concurs with the report by Van De Vijver and Rothmann (2004) who maintain that the task of ensuring valid, reliable and unbiased assessment results puts practitioners under a lot of pressure especially when working in diverse communities.

The participants in this study argue that this is contrary to the ideal traditional setting where there are possibilities of working in partnership with therapists from other disciplines. These findings support findings of the study by McCloskey and Athanasiou (2000), who conducted a study looking at assessment and intervention practices with second-language learners among school psychologist. The study shows that non-traditional assessment procedures require practitioners to be more skilful with the on-going measurement and progress of a learner as compared to the traditional static assessment as it shifts the focus to the learners' progress and less on the assessment itself.

The current study also support findings of the study by Owen (1998) who defines a psychological evaluation as a process in which information obtained from a wide array or variety of sources is used in order to make a valued judgement. A single score in the form of a test result is seen to have very little contribution to a personal description of the test taker. Participants in the present study concur to the dangers of relying solely on standardised assessment tools as measures of functioning and thus work in collaboration with educators and parents who assist providing a holistic perspective of a learner's functioning. Evaluation thus takes place in light of other information concerning the individual whether objective or subjective (Owen, 1998).

5.2.1.3 Lack of proper training for the use of assessment tools.

The findings of this study support findings from previous research, which show that psychologists feel inadequately trained and prepared to work in culturally and linguistically diverse environments (Flores et al., 2000; Foxcroft et al., 2004; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Ochoa et al., 1997; Schon et al., 2008). In their study, Ochoa et.al (2004) stress that the lack of trained personnel will have significant impact on the obtaining of appropriate diagnosis as well as on decisions for intervention.

Rivera-Mills and Gould (n.d.) argue that psychologists are expected to be sensitive to the cultural and language background of learners whilst there are no specific strategies provided in order to accomplish such a task. Hence participants in the present study express the need for continuous development programmes which will help prepare and enhance their skills for working in the diverse South African environment.

The findings in the study by Foxcroft et al. (2004) further look at the initial training of practitioners. They indicate that training programmes need to focus more on guidelines that relate to good ethical assessment practices such as: adaptation, application and interpretation of tests and test results in cross cultural contexts thus providing practitioners with skills for generating local normative and psychometric data themselves.

5.2.1.4.1 The decline in test development and adaptation.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is evident that the participants in this study were concerned about the decline in test development and adaptation in South Africa seen to exacerbate their irrelevance to the current population and era. This finding supports findings of a study by Foxcroft et al. (2004) who found that practitioners are concerned about the lack of test development competence in South Africa, maintaining that very few African test developers and assessment practitioners are available. The practitioners in the study also expressed concerns that tests are not reviewed and updated on a regular basis in order to keep pace with the rapidly changing world.

Owen (1998) argues that assessment tools used in a multicultural context such as South Africa should preferably be ones which have been developed in South Africa for South Africans. In accordance with various studies (Debb, 2007; Foxcroft, 2004; Foxcroft et al., 2004; Owen, 1998), participants in the current study argue that test developers need to be aware of the cultural context, the various dialects in a language and the national curriculum.

They further challenge practitioners nationwide to take part in projects that will better the nature and process of assessment for the South African community.

As mentioned above, the participants in the current study acknowledged the process of acculturation as a factor contributing to challenges of test development in the diverse nation. This finding supports findings in previous research (Cormier et al., 2011; Khin, 2005; O'Bryon & Rogers, 2010; Schon et al., 2008) which show that we are living in a world in transition where cultures, values, norms and school curricula are forever changing thus making it challenging for assessment tools to be standardised to a particular norm group. Furthermore findings in the study by Foxcroft et al. (2004) maintain that not least among the challenges is the fact that there are eleven official languages in South Africa. The participants stress that researchers should involve people who speak the various target languages to assist with language issues as this will aid in developing test that are culture fair and specific.

5.2.2 The mechanisms educational psychologists use in order to cope with the experienced challenges of assessing CLD learners.

In view of the above mentioned challenges of working in diverse communities the participants in this study have also adapted methods of coping. These are discussed as follows:

5.2.2.1 Planning ahead for the assessment procedure.

It was found that participants practice methods of best practices in order to provide the best presentation of learners' abilities while simultaneously managing both internal and external factors which might impact on the assessment process, i.e. participants in this study report that they familiarise themselves with the assessment tools in order to plan ahead for the assessment process. This finding is in support with the various studies and professional organisations (Foxcroft, 2002; Foxcroft et al., 2009; Ochoa et al., 2004; Oregon Department of Education [Oregon DoE], 2007; Ortiz, 2008; Rogers et al., 1999; Suzuki et al., 2001). It is evident that participants in this study strive to be in line with the ethical principles by recognising differences in individuals, using appropriate assessment techniques as possible as well as developing appropriate interventions. According to Foxcroft (2002) practitioners need to be immersed in the test-takers world in order for the practitioner to be able to acquire knowledge of the test taker. This is in relation to the test taker's familial, linguistic,

educational, socio-economic background, cultural and heritage. In chapter two a detailed account of these guidelines is discussed.

The participants in this study maintain that prior preparation allows for possible test item errors to be flagged. As per doubts in their reliability, participants use the assessment tools only when there is an absolute need to do so, i.e. clear diagnosis.

5.2.2.1 Coping with language and culture barriers.

Participants have adapted various ways to help minimise language and culture barriers. For instance, participants in this study make use of the referral note as a guideline for selecting cases in one's area of language expertise. This finding is in support of practitioners' ethical duty to provide services within the boundaries of their competence based on formal education, training, supervised and/professional experience (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004; Oregon DoE, 2007; Rogers et.al, 1999). Furthermore, irrespective of the ambiguous nature of culture friendly assessment tools (Cormier et al., 2011; Holding et al., 2004; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Owen, 1998), participants in this study have continued to adopt the use of culture tools, such as the Ravens Progressive Matrices, as they require little verbal interaction.

As a measure of ensuring that learners understand the expectations of a given task, participants use the English or isiZulu equivalent of the test, depending on the language barrier, as a tool for translating the tasks. Foxcroft (2002) cautions that when different versions of a test exist and are used, empirical evidence which demonstrates their equivalence needs to be accounted for to counter questions regarding bias and fairness. Another measure used to minimise language barriers participants in this study make use of code-switching during assessments. Although the switching of language codes during assessment is seen as beneficial in the present study, very little research exists of such practices in psychological assessment however it is seen to be a prominent practice in multicultural classroom settings (Mokgwathi, 2011; Omidire, 2009; Probyn, 2009). Some practitioners indicate their reliance on the use of translators. However the use of translators is also experienced as tricky at times due to the possibilities of distortions in communication thus impacting on the process and quality of assessment. This finding relates to findings of various studies (Javier et al., 1997; Nahari & Martines, 2008; O'Bryon & Rogers, 2010; Schon et al., 2008; Xiong, 2007), which show that the use of translators is prone to unintended distortions in communication.

Practitioners are therefore required by ethics to make use of trained translators should the need arise and that they also must have acquired skills of working with translators (Foxcroft, 2002; HPCSA, 2004; O'Bryon & Rogers, 2010).

The results of the present study further indicate that some participants have found it beneficial to equip themselves with better second language skills as per demand for multilingual psychologists due to the influx of learners from diverse communities. This finding supports findings of a study by O'Bryon and Rogers (2010) who found the use of bilingual practitioners as useful and acceptable. According to Rogers et al. (1999) CLD learners are best served by practitioners who have cross cultural training and are proficient in the languages of a non-English background. Learners are also inducted into a school setting which allows them to learn English so that they can progress better when placed in available remedial projects.

Furthermore participants in this study uphold the importance for learners to have knowledge and understanding of their own home language as a prerequisite of learning another language such as English or Afrikaans is seen as vital in developing language proficiency. This finding supports previous research and theories on second language acquisition (Freeman & Long, 1991; Krashen, 1981, 1982; Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000). For example, in their study McCloskey and Athanasiou (2000) maintain that a learner's second language will only become as proficient as the first language. This entails that learners need to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS) in their first language in order to develop a CALPS level in their second language (McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000).

The participants in this study further recommend that learners be actively engaged when encountered with a different language or culture as a general way of being informed in the sharing of knowledge. According to Krashen's (1981, 1982) affective filter hypothesis learners whose language and culture are valued will learn a second language quicker and with less resistance.

5.2.2.3 Working in multidisciplinary teams.

As mentioned above participants in this study rely very little on traditional forms of assessments. They rather place great value towards working in multidisciplinary support teams from which valuable information regarding learners' skills and areas of concern can be

drawn. The alliance formed with these networks is in line with the Inclusive Education Programme (DoE, 2001; 2005), whereby parents, educators and other support teams are actively engaged in the assessment and treatment process. These findings are in support of studies and relevant guidelines maintaining that psychological assessments are incomplete without information from relevant sources (Burnette, 2004; Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009; HPCSA, 2004; Oregon DoE, 2007; Owen, 1998; Paterson & Uys, 2005). Foxcroft (2002) even maintains that it is possible to conduct a psychological assessment without the use of traditional assessment tools.

5.2.2.4 Using alternative methods of assessment.

The participants in this study have also found the use of alternative assessment methods helpful and effective in assessing CLD learners. These include scholastic assessments as opposed to traditional IQ assessment, dynamic assessment as opposed to the structured form of assessment as well as the implementation of the DoE SIAS strategy. These are

5.3.2.4.1 Scholastic assessment vs. IQ assessment.

Scholastic assessments are seen to be useful in providing important indications of learners' level of functioning in relation to their grade or age level function. For instance, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2010) developed the Annual National Assessment (ANA) programme which provides an overall perspective of learners' skills in relation to their educational phase thus providing important information for assessing the learners' skills and areas of improvement. This finding supports findings from previous research which indicate that scholastic assessments, also known as curriculum-based assessment, prove to be useful in providing information about test-takers' performance with use of clearly defined domain of construct or behaviours (Foxcroft, 2004; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Oregon DoE, 2007; Ortiz, 2008; Schon et al., 2008). The participants in this study also find the use of a combination of both scholastic and psychometric assessments efficient.

5.3.2.4.2 Test-Teach-Retest: Dynamic assessment.

Majority of the participants in this study found the dynamic form of assessment useful as opposed to the traditional forms of assessment. This form of assessment seems to be a common thread in the current study as it incorporates the above mentioned scholastic assessments and interventions of the SIAS strategy discussed below. This allows them to be more interactive with the learners, not only during assessment but in the process of learning

as it follows a test teach retest model. Similarly, studies have found dynamic assessment as providing good indications on how learners arrive at answers as well as further insight into learners' motivation, self-control and temperament which are important components of the assessment process (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009; Javier et al., 1997; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Murphy, 2002; Murphy & Maree, 2009; Omidire, 2009; Owen, 1998).

The researchers however acknowledge the disadvantage of such forms of assessment as time consuming however these are compensated by the knowledge that is gained to help CLD learners (McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Murphy, 2002; Murphy & Maree, 2009; Omidire, 2009; Owen, 1998). Hence the absence of the mention of disadvantages in the present study suggest that participants' view of dynamic assessment is positive as it allows practitioners to engage in the process of implementing the intervention plan while simultaneously in the process of assessment thus providing room for change in the intervention when needed. Furthermore dynamic assessment allows for miscommunication to be resolved during assessment. Researchers agree that dynamic assessment begins where traditional assessments end (Lidz, 1997; Owen, 1998).

5.3.2.4.3 Implementation of the SIAS strategy.

In response to the strenuous nature of the traditional assessment process the Department of Education (DoE, 2008) has developed a programme which brings in support personnel from within the community of the learners, i.e. educators and parents as well as lay counsellors. This action gave birth to development of the Screening, Intervention, Assessment and Support (SIAS) strategy which is also line with the inclusive education policy (DoE, 2008).

The participants in this study maintain that with its focus of support, the SIAS strategy has little focus on the use of traditional assessment tools. The intervention is aimed towards meeting the needs of the learners which will enable them to develop in a more conducive environment. The SIAS strategy thus take on a more humanistic approach as opposed to the Eurocentric scientific approach of traditional assessment tools, with the aim to ascertain how to best support learners in developing their skills (Radebe, 2010). Apart from the knowledge gained in the process of this study there is little research on the implementation of the SIAS strategy as it is in its infant stage.

5.3 Conclusion

The use of traditional psychological assessment tools to evaluate individuals from diverse cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic background continues to be a subject of great controversy among psychologists. It is clear from the above discussion that working with diverse communities is a strenuous task for educational psychologists in ensuring that the level and quality of intervention is relevant to the context. Educational psychologists remain challenged in addressing the education, research and treatment obstacles associated with a diverse society. Although developments towards minimising these challenges have been implemented it is evident that, in order to address the diverse nature of our nation, objective and dependable assessments tools are still in need.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The study was undertaken in attempts to explore the subjective experiences of educational psychologist in the assessment of CLD learners, with the use of current available assessment tools, in the area of Pietermaritzburg. The intention was to find out about educational psychologist's perception and attitude towards the use of current available assessment tools with CLD learners. The study was also aimed at identifying challenges that may be encountered during assessment as well as identifying the available ways of coping with these challenges.

The focus of this chapter will be on highlighting significant conclusions drawn from this study as well as the formulation of relevant implications. The limitations and recommendations will also be stated in this chapter.

6.2 Conclusions About the Research Questions

The conclusions drawn from the responses to the research questions, in addressing the research problem, are presented as follows:

The first research question was: "What is the nature of diversity of clientele which educational psychologists encounter?" It appears that psychologists render their services to a wide spectrum of clientele, in terms of culture and race, whereby the majority are those who are isiZulu speaking followed by Indians and Coloureds and very few who are first English language speakers. This is not surprising, considering the geographic nature of the sample, as majority of the population (77.8%) in Kwazulu-Natal is isiZulu speaking (Stats SA, 2012). It can also be concluded that educational psychologists in the area of Pietermaritzburg see clients from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

The second research question was: "Which assessment tools do educational psychologists mainly use with CLD learners?" It can be concluded that most practitioners try to avoid the use of traditional assessment tools when assessing learners from diverse cultures and linguistic backgrounds. Traditional assessment tools are seen to present more problems than solutions in the assessment of CLD learners, most especially the IQ assessments, these are outlined below.

However when there is a need to use the more traditional assessments practitioners prefer projective assessments such as the Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD) and Draw-a-Person (DAP) as well as non-verbal assessment tools, such as the Raven's Progressive Matrices.

Participants in this study rather find including scholastic assessments in their assessment battery useful as this allows them to present the age or grade level of functioning of the learner from within a specific context.

The third research question was: "What are the challenges of using presently available assessment tools for the assessment of CLD learners?" It can be concluded that the irrelevant nature of the available assessment tools pose a great challenge for educational psychologists especially in the assessment of CLD learners. Among the limitations of the current available tests was the fact that most of the tests developed in South Africa are: old and outdated in terms of the item content, the language used, the norms as well as in relation to the rapidly changing nature of the world and education system; not culturally appropriate and can mostly be applied to the first language English speaking group of South Africans; and lastly very few tests are available in other vernacular of South Africa.

The above mentioned limitations further make it challenging for participants to choose the best appropriate assessment battery for CLD learners. Participants in this study have found that language barriers, both in terms of test administration and the language used in the test items, difficult to counter even in the use of translators as this had further limitations of its own.

The irrelevance of current available tests to the present population is attributed to the decline in test development and adaptation. There are very few African test developers and practitioners are available thus adding further to the disparities in tests which are being developed. It can also be concluded that the training programmes for educational psychologists do not adequately prepare them to work in diverse communities thus predisposing them to the experienced challenges of working with CLD learners.

The fourth research question was: "What coping skills do educational psychologists make use of in order to deal with such challenges (if challenges are experienced)?" as mentioned above, psychologists try as much as possible to avoid the used of traditional assessment tools as a result they have adapted to using alternative forms of assessments such as: the use of scholastic assessments as opposed to traditional IQ assessment, dynamic assessment as

opposed to the structured form of assessment as well as the implementation of the DoE SIAS strategy which are all seen to be in line with the inclusive education policy.

It can also be concluded that psychologists make use of best practice strategies of assessment such as: striving to work in multi-disciplinary teams where possible, incorporating collateral information from significant figures and support personnel, the use of translators in light of culture and linguistic barriers. Participants in this study have also found it crucial to equip themselves with better second language skills as per demands for multilingual psychologists considering the influx of clients from diverse communities.

It is clear that psychologists have had to adapt ways of coping with both the limited nature of the traditional assessment tools and the assessment process although widely used their execution is not seen as clearly cut and dry.

6.3 Conclusions About the Research Problem

South Africa is regulated under a constitution which upholds basic human rights and equality of individuals thus bringing to question the use of traditional psychological assessment tools (RSA, 1996, 1998; Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004; Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009). Even so there continues to be great controversies among psychologists regarding the use of traditional clinical and psycho-educational assessment tools to evaluate individuals from diverse communities. Factors such as cultural, linguistic and educational differences are seen to contribute to the inapplicable nature of current assessment tools thus affecting their validity and reliability (Parker et al., 2007).

In response to the need for less biased forms of assessment the inclusive education system brought about change in educational psychologists' roles, towards ensuring that the level and quality of intervention is relevant to the context (DoE, 2005). However, such implementations seem to throw an added load in the direction of psychologists instead of alleviating the strains of working in this diverse nation. The onus of finding accurate means of assessing the psychological potential of their clients, whilst being sensitive to their diverse nature, seems to be on them (HPCSA, 2004).

It can thus be concluded that the regular development and adaptation of assessment tools in South Africa can make a great difference in the assessment of learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Participants in this study challenge practitioners nationwide to

take part in projects that will better the nature and process of assessment for the South African community.

It also can be concluded that training institutions need to be more vigorous in equipping practitioners with skills for the assessing CLD communities on a more practical level. Such training should also incorporate the development of skills for working with translators and guidelines for choosing the best suitable translator.

These implementations will allow for the best presentation of learner's abilities as well as alleviate the strains in cross-cultural assessment.

6.4 Implications for Theory, Policy and Practice

There is a need for the field of psychology to revise the theories of intelligence as these speak or relate to the process and outcome of assessment. Looking at the areas in need, the theories of intelligence used in the present available assessments are seen to give very little account for the functioning of CLD learners. There is therefore a need for a theory that puts forth the understanding of intelligence within its multicultural context. For instance, Sternberg's (2004) theory of successful intelligence forms the interface between culture and intelligence towards the understanding of intelligence within a given cultural context. As mentioned in the section on the impact of culture and assessment above, Sternberg's (2004) theory of successful intelligence defines intelligence not as a predictor of academic performance (as seen in most current available assessment tools) but as a predictor of success in life within a specific given context. Thus people use their cognitive skills to achieve a state of wellbeing within their own cultural context. Consequently, as soon as an assessor assesses intelligence they essentially assess the mental processes and representations found in a particular cultural context.

In the current available assessment tools, theories of intelligence are seen to typically specify relatively fixed set of abilities (Sternberg, 2002, 2004; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004, 2006). For instance, through one general factor known as 'g' and several specific factors as indicated in Spearman's (1904) theory of intelligence, or seven multiple factors as indicated in Thurstone's (1938) multiple factor theory, or eight multiple intelligences as per Gardner's (1999) eight frame of mind theory. According to Sternberg (2004) such forms of conceptualising intelligence may be useful in establishing a common set of skills to be tested however people achieve success, even in a particular context such as occupation, in many

different ways and this needs to be accounted for by the assessment tools we use. In addition current available assessment tools often indicate flawed assumptions that concepts such as implicit theories of intelligence or results, based on explicit theories of intelligence obtained in one culture, can apply anywhere (Brislin, Worthley & Macnab, 2006; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004, 2006). Cultural intelligence helps us to understand intelligence in a broad way as opposed to the narrow perspective found in current available assessment tools.

According to Sternberg (2002, 2004) the conceptualisation, assessment and development of intelligence cannot be fully and meaningfully understood outside its cultural context thus suggesting that assessment tools that are developed and validated in one culture may not be equally be valid or even be valid at all in another culture. For instance, in their study Sternberg and Grigorenko (2004, 2006) found that individuals in different cultures may construct concepts in different ways thus rendering results of concept formation or identification studies in a single culture suspicious.

Furthermore behaviour that is considered intelligent in one culture may not be considered as intelligent in another and vice versa, moreover people in different cultures have different implicit theories of intelligence thus 'intelligence' may not mean the same thing (Brislin et al., 2006; Gopaul-McNicol et al., 1998; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Sternberg, 2002, 2004; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004, 2006; Van De Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). A theory of intelligence that encompasses all three elements of intelligence, such as practical-intelligence, analytical intelligence and creative intelligence, provides a better prediction of success in life than one that looks only at analytical elements (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004, 2006).

Psychological assessments therefore need to lean more on theories and models of culture and intelligence towards conceptualising cognitive functions within a specific culture context thus adapting in form and content that will take into account the differences in the adaptive tasks that individuals confront in diverse cultures, within and cross countries (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004, 2006). Such interventions however require policies and frameworks that are more practical to the needs of practitioners when working in CLD communities as it cannot be denied that the vast difference, between cultures and nations, in cognitive abilities pose many challenges in the assessment of CLD learners.

Practitioners are expected to be sensitive to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of learners whilst there are limitations in policy and training in providing specific strategies

towards accomplishing such a task (Flores et al., 2000; Foxcroft et al., 2004; McCloskey & Athanasiou, 2000; Ochoa et al., 1997, 2004; Schon et al., 2008).

6.5 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following are limitations and implications for future research.

This study is limited in scope, as most participants were employees of the Department of Education. Due to difficulties experienced in recruiting educational psychologists the sample frame had to be broadened to also include registered intern psychologists. It may be beneficial to determine if the experiences of respondents in this study are comparable to a substantial sample of practitioners in private practice. As a result, the nature of the sample in this study makes it difficult for the findings to be transferable to the whole population of educational psychologists in the area of Pietermaritzburg. The researcher thus recommends that for future research in this area and/or relevant topics, the sample should include various practices in the world of work of educational psychology.

This study proved it difficult to arrange sessions for focus groups, in terms of time and availability of participants, thus mainly relied on individual interviews as a form of data collection. Although limitations of using focus groups were noted, it may be interesting and beneficial to obtain findings from both forms of interviews, individual and focus groups. This is because focus groups may help bring forth different viewpoints on the presented issue and the lively collective interaction may elicit more spontaneous, expressive and emotional views than in individual interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

As there is little research addressing psychologists' experiences of working in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, it is recommended that this be researched in the near future. This will enlighten the present needs in assessment practices thus providing support towards the development of relevant guidelines for best practices in South Africa. As most psychological research studies in understanding cultural dynamics and mental processes were executed within a single culture Sternberg (2004) maintains that single cultural studies do injustice to psychological research in that they:

- present a limited and often narrow scope in defining psychological phenomenon and problems,
- they create risks of unjustified assumptions about the phenomena under investigation,

- they raise questions about cultural generalisability of findings.
- this engenders risks of cultural imperialism which is the belief that one's own culture and its assumptions are superior to those of other cultures
- lastly this may lead to wasted opportunities to collaborate and develop psychology and psychological understanding around the world.

Furthermore, given our present state of knowledge of the failed attempts in creating culture free and fair test there is therefore a need for culture relevant tests and this should be the goal of research today. If practitioners know what is considered intelligent in everyday behaviour in particular cultures and how it contrasts with intelligent behaviour in the culture of the test they will have greater understanding of how to administer as well as interpret the assessment results.

6.5 Summary of Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that, policies and guidelines for working with individuals from CLD environments in the South African context be developed for feasible use in the South African context. Such guidelines have been developed in international countries and have proven to be useful in practice (Ridley, Hill & Weise, 2008; Rogers et.al, 1999; O'Bryon & Rogers, 2010; Oregon DoE, 2007; Ortiz, 2008). More so, specific standards for educational and psychological testing of CLD learners may also prove to be useful.

It is further recommended for training programs to focus more on guidelines related to good ethical assessment practices such as: adaptation, application and interpretation of tests and test results in cross-cultural contexts so as to provide practitioners with skills related to ways of generating local normative and psychometric data themselves.

In order to address the decline of test development in South Africa, it is recommended that practitioners, from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, take interest in the development of relevant assessment tools for the South African contexts.

6.6 Conclusion

Psychologists express a large amount of dissatisfaction with the available assessment tools and their applicability to CLD environments as it is a strenuous task to ensure that the level and quality of intervention is relevant to the context of our diverse nation. All the same, the rapidly evolving nature of the South African context necessitates the development of context specific assessment tools. This can only be facilitated by the availability of practitioners in addressing the education, research and treatment obstacles associated with a diverse society. Policies on inclusion have brought forth a positive challenge to educational psychologist in developing these competencies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1



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4 July 2011

Miss C Munyal (211529396)
School of Psychology
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Dear Miss Munyal

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0441/011M

PROJECT TITLE: An exploration of the experience of educational psychologists in using current available psycho-educational assessment tools with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) learners/children in the area of Pietermaritzburg

In response to your application dated 29 June 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Ms P Mayaba

cc. Mrs B Jacobsen, Higher Degrees Office, Pietermaritzburg Campus



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23 September 2013

Ms C Mnyazi (211529396)
School of Applied Human Sciences - Psychology
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0441/011M
New project title: Educational Psychologists' experiences in the assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) learners in the KwaZulu-Natal Region

Dear Ms Mnyazi

Approval - Change of project title

I wish to confirm that your application in connection with the above mentioned project has been approved.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully


.....
Dr S Singh (Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Ms P Mayaba
cc Academic leader: Professor D McCracken
cc School Admin. Mr Sbonelo Duma

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Sheruka Singh (Acting Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

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Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS



Appendix 2

School of Psychology
P/Bag X01 Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg
South Africa
3209

Phone: +2733 260 5371

Fax: +2733 260 5809



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

Educational psychologists' experiences in the assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) learners/Children in KwaZulu Natal region.

I am a Psychology Masters student at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Pietermaritzburg) conducting a research study which aims to explore the experiences of educational psychologists in using current available psycho-educational assessment tools with CLD learners/children. I am interested in exploring the impact of the current available psycho-educational assessment tools on the assessment process. The main aim is to explore how your experience of present available psycho-educational assessment tools has affected your perceptions of their relevance to your workplace. A part of this research aims to determine the usefulness of psychological assessments for assessment of culturally diverse learners in South Africa, mainly in the area of Pietermaritzburg. I would therefore like to invite you to participate in this research.

Participation in this research will entail taking part in a one-on one interview session. Participants may also be asked to take part in a focus group session. Participation is voluntary and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not to. The one-on-one interview is designed to be approximately half an hour; the focus group session has been designed to last about one hour in length. However, please feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Also, if there are any questions you would rather not answer or that you do not feel comfortable answering, please say so and we will stop the interview or move on to the next question, whichever you prefer. All the information will be kept confidential; only my supervisor and I will have access to this information.

If you choose to participate in the study you are welcome to contact me or my supervisor (see contacts below) for further details. This research will contribute to exploring the problems associated with current available psycho-educational assessments in South Africa, as well as your contributions to the development of appropriate assessment tools.

Sincerely,

Claudie Munyai
Student Educational Psychologist
211529396@ukzn.ac.za
0791830467

Ms P. Mayaba
Educational Psychologist & Supervisor
mayabap@ukzn.ac.za
033 260 5364

Consent form: Interview & recording

I understand the intent and purpose of the research study by Claudie Munyai on “Educational psychologists’ experiences in the assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) learners/Children in KwaZulu-Natal region”. I am aware that my participation in the interview and focus group is voluntary; that no information that may identify me will be included in the research report and that my responses will remain confidential. I consent to being tape-recorded understanding that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person at any time other than the researcher and the supervisor
- The tapes and transcripts will only be processed by the researcher.
- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

If for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop participating in the project, I may do so without having to give an explanation.

If I have any questions about this study, I am free to contact the student researcher or the supervisor.

I have read the above form and, with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in this project.

Participant's signature

Date

Appendix 3

Interview schedule:

Q1 : demographics

- Name
- Surname extensively
- Age
- Gender

Q2 : for how long have you been practicing as a professional psychologist?

Q3 : when did you start/open your private practice?

Q4 : Tell me more about the diversity of the clientele you have encountered (in terms of culture language ethnicity etc.).

Q5 : which assessment tools do/have you mainly use with CLD learners?

Q6 : what are your experiences in using current available assessment tools with CLD learners?

Q7 : what motivates you to use those tools?

Q8 : have you encountered challenges in using these tools? If so what steps do you take to cope with such challenges?