

# **The influence of gratitude journalling on the motivation and English language proficiency of young adult isiXhosa speakers**

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degree Master of Philosophy in Intercultural Communication*



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# Declaration

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*Lara Lee Aspeling*

March 2011

## ABSTRACT

The scientific study of gratitude is one of the topics currently researched by the emergent positive psychology movement, which seeks to understand more about the very best in human beings. Studies in psychology have found that gratitude and other positive emotions in the workplace seem to be linked to motivation, which in turn results in increased productivity. Much research in second language (L2) acquisition has shown a link between increased motivation and improved levels of L2 proficiency. My thesis aims to link these two types of research, by investigating the effect of gratitude journaling on isiXhosa-speaking students at a South African university of technology, in respect of their motivation to improve their English, their attitude towards English, and their English language proficiency. I also attempt to determine whether the language in which the journaling is done has any impact.

I developed several tasks for my participants, in order to ascertain their attitudes towards English, their motivation to improve their English, and their English proficiency. These tasks took the form of surveys and questionnaires, which were completed before and after a journaling intervention. The intervention was in the form of journaling online, using the university's e-Learning Centre's WebCT application. The participants were divided into four groups: factual journaling in English; factual journaling in isiXhosa; gratitude journaling in English; gratitude journaling in isiXhosa. They were asked to write two to three sentences in their online journals on five out of every seven days for the period of one month. In line with the findings of previous research conducted with isiXhosa learners, the results of my investigations showed that these isiXhosa students had a fairly positive attitude towards English to begin with. No significant changes in attitudes towards English, motivation to improve English, or English proficiency, were noted among any of the four groups of journalers pre- versus post-intervention.

It makes sense intuitively that gratitude journaling should increase the motivation and thus the proficiency of isiXhosa learners in English. However, in retrospect, I realise that it was somewhat ambitious to expect to see a change in English language proficiency over the period of just one month. If my participants had experienced enhanced levels of motivation as a result of the gratitude journaling (in English and/or in isiXhosa), their proficiency in English might have increased over time. However, the gratitude journaling seems not to have had an impact on the attitude towards English/motivation to improve English of these third-year isiXhosa university students. Whatever the effect might have been of the gratitude journaling in these young adults' lives, it is not reflected directly in the results of my study. Perhaps future research on the impact of gratitude journaling in the lives of university students could be conducted, using larger samples of participants, and extending the intervention over a longer period of time.

## OPSOMMING

Die wetenskaplike bestudering van dankbaarheid is een van die onderwerpe wat deesdae nagevors word deur die opkomende positiewe sielkunde beweging, wat daarna streef om meer te wete te kom oor die heel beste eienskappe van die mens. Ondersoeke in sielkunde het gevind dat dankbaarheid en ander positiewe emosies in die werksituasie gekoppel skyn te wees aan motivering, wat weer op sy beurt lei tot verhoogde produktiwiteit. Baie navorsing in tweedetaal(T2-)verwerking het 'n verband gevind tussen verhoogde motivering en verhoogde vlakke van T2-vaardigheid. Hierdie tesis poog om hierdie twee tipes navorsing te verbind, deur ondersoek in te stel na die invloed van die hou van 'n dankbaarheidsjoernaal op die motivering en houding teenoor Engels en die Engelse vaardigheidsvlakke van isiXhosa-sprekende studente aan 'n Suid-Afrikaanse universiteit van tegnologie. My doel was om vas te stel of die hou van 'n dankbaarheidsjoernaal hierdie leerders sou kon help om hul motiveringsvlakke te verhoog en daarom indirek hulle vaardigheid in Engels, en om vas te stel of die taal waarin die joernaal gehou word enige impak sou hê.

Ek het verskeie take ontwerp vir my deelnemers, om sodoende vas te stel wat hulle houding teenoor Engels was, sowel as hulle motivering om hul Engels te verbeter, en hulle Engelse vaardigheidsvlak. Hierdie take het opnames en vraelyste behels wat voltooi is voor en na 'n joernaal-hou intervensie. Die intervensie het behels dat die deelnemers aanlyn 'n joernaal moes hou en ek het gebruik gemaak van die universiteit se e-leer sentrum se WebCT. Die deelnemers is in vier groepe verdeel: feitelike joernaal in Engels; feitelike joernaal in isiXhosa; dankbaarheidsjoernaal in Engels; dankbaarheidsjoernaal in isiXhosa. Hulle is gevra om vir een maand lank twee of drie sinne in hulle aanlynjoernale te skryf op vyf uit elke sewe dae. In aansluiting by die bevindinge van vorige navorsing op isiXhosa-sprekende leerders, het die resultate van my ondersoek daarop gedui dat hierdie isiXhosa studente 'n relatief positiewe houding teenoor Engels gehad het, nog voor die intervensie. Geen beduidende verskille in houdings teenoor Engels, motivering om Engels te verbeter, of Engelse vaardigheid is gevind vir enige van die vier groepe toe pre-intervensie en post-intervensie prestasie met mekaar vergelyk is nie.

Dit maak intuïtief sin dat die hou van 'n dankbaarheidsjoernaal deur T2-leerders sou lei tot verhoogde motivering en daarom tot verhoogde vaardigheidsvlakke in Engels. Agterna beskou, besef ek egter dat dit effens ambisieus van my was om te verwag om 'n verandering in Engelse

vaardigheidsvlakke te sien binne een maand. Miskien sou my deelnemers se vaardigheidsvlakke in Engels met verloop van tyd verbeter het indien hulle wel verhoogde motivering ervaar het as gevolg van die hou van 'n dankbaarheidsjoernaal (in Engels en/of isiXhosa). Die dankbaarheidsjoernale skyn egter geen impak te gehad het op die houding teenoor Engels / motivering om Engels te verbeter by hierdie derde-jaar isiXhosa universiteitstudente nie. Watter effek die hou van 'n dankbaarheidsjoernaal ookal gehad het in die lewens van hierdie jong volwassenes, dit word nie gereflekteer in die resultate van my studie nie. Miskien sou verdere navorsing gedoen kon word oor die impak van dankbaarheidsjoernale in die lewens van universiteitstudente, met groter steekproewe en 'n langer intervensietydperk.

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*There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle.*

*The other is as though everything is a miracle. (Albert Einstein)*

I am deeply thankful for the experience of compiling this thesis. It has challenged and grown me in many ways, and has reinforced my desire to live a thankful life, to live "as though everything is a miracle".

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# CHAPTER 1:

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

*Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary. (Margaret Cousins)*

### 1.1 Introduction

The scientific study of gratitude is one of the topics currently researched by the emergent positive psychology movement. Positive psychology, launched in the 1990s, focuses on human strengths and virtues rather than on our inadequacies and pathologies. The proponents of positive psychology seek to understand more about the very best in human beings. They investigate "the strengths of the human spirit as it faces the multitude of challenges presented in life" (Snyder & McCullough 2000:152). This approach to psychology makes an empirical study of the virtues, and strives to widely publicise its findings, in order to benefit as many people as possible.

I first heard about gratitude journalling on an Oprah Winfrey show several years ago. Then, a few months later, I heard about it again at church, during a sermon on facing the challenges of life with "an attitude of gratitude". Research on this topic interests me because I have seen the powerful effect of this type of journalling in my own life. During those times that I am committed to the practice, I find that it affects my state of mind positively. It makes me a happier and more optimistic person, and results in me being generally more pleasant for others to be around. This in turn has a positive impact on my productivity in my personal life and work experience.

I have over ten years' experience teaching English and communication skills at tertiary level to students who speak a variety of first languages. English has always been the medium of instruction in my classes, and I have found that students from other linguistic backgrounds often battle to grasp all the concepts covered. The question arose: Could gratitude journalling increase my learners' motivation and thus, indirectly, their proficiency in English?

Studies in psychology have found that gratitude and other positive emotions in the workplace seem to be linked to motivation, which in turn results in increased productivity (see, for example, George & Bettenhausen 1990 and Emmons 2003, as discussed in Chapter 2). Much research has been done in second language (L2) acquisition that shows a link between increased motivation and improved levels of L2 proficiency (see, for example, Ellis 1994 and Dornyei 2001 & 2003, as discussed in Chapter 2). My paper aims to link these two types of research, by investigating the effect of gratitude journaling on the motivation and attitude towards English and English language proficiency of isiXhosa-speaking students at a South African university of technology. I set out to establish whether or not gratitude journaling could help these learners to improve their motivation levels, and thus, indirectly, their proficiency in English, and to determine if the language in which the journaling is done would have any impact.

My hypotheses were that: (i) the use of gratitude journaling would improve these isiXhosa young adults' *attitudes* towards the English language and their *motivation* to improve their ability to communicate in it, and (ii) that this should lead to a subsequent enhancement of their *competence* in using this L2. If gratitude journaling were found to improve students' morale and motivation, my ultimate goal would be to provide a platform from which the practice of gratitude journaling among students in general could be promoted, in order to raise their overall morale, which should then lead to an improvement in their performance in all their subjects.

## **1.2 Definitions of key terms**

### **1.2.1 First language (L1)**

A first language (L1) is also referred to as a native language or mother tongue. One's L1 can be classified according to various criteria, such as origin (the language/s one learned first); internal identification (the language/s with which one identifies oneself); external identification (the language/s with which one is identified by others); competence (the language/s one knows best); and function (the language/s one uses most often) (Defining mother-tongue 2010). However, for the purposes of this thesis, the term "first language" is defined as the language that a person was first exposed to, that he/she acquired first, as a young child. Acquiring a language is effortless for most children. It happens without explicit teaching; on the basis of

positive evidence (i.e., what is heard); under changing circumstances; in a limited amount of time; and in an identical manner across different languages (Guasti 2002).

### **1.2.2 Second language (L2)**

A second language (L2) is any language that a person knows other than his/her first language. The term is used to refer to a person's second as well as to his/her third, fourth or fifth language.

Krashen (1982) proposed a distinction between acquiring a language and learning a language. He proposed that acquisition is an unconscious process that leads to unconscious knowledge of the language, while learning is a conscious process that leads to conscious knowledge about the language. In this thesis, I shall not distinguish between these two terms and shall use them interchangeably.

The acquisition or learning of an additional language is a lot more difficult for adults than for children. Whereas the acquisition of an additional language is usually effortless for young children, it requires a conscious effort on the part of the adult learner (Ellis 1994). For this reason, motivation plays a significant role in adult L2 acquisition.

### **1.2.3 Proficiency**

"Proficiency" is a term derived from the Latin *proficere*, meaning to make progress. *Chambers Dictionary* (1999) defines proficient as: "fully trained and competent".

Being proficient in a language means different things to different people, ranging from being able to order food to having the skills of a L1 speaker. See Appendix A for a representation of the stages of language aptitude. It gives a brief description of each of the following stages: Novice, Survivor, Conversationalist, Debater, and Native-Speaker.

#### 1.2.4 Attitude

The *Learning and Performance Dictionary* (2008) defines attitude as:

A persisting feeling or emotion of a person that influences choice of action and response to stimulus ... a disposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain thing (idea, object, person, situation). Attitudes encompass, or are closely related to, our opinions and beliefs and are based upon our experiences.

Attitude is a complex concept, and many attempts have been made to describe it over the years. Allport (1954, in Gardner 1985:8) defines it as "a mental and neural state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a direct or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related". It is widely accepted that attitudes have cognitive (belief structure), affective (emotional reactions), and conative (tendency to behave toward the attitude object) components (Harding *et al.* in Gardner 1985:9). When it comes to L2 acquisition, attitudes could refer to: i) educational factors, for example, attitudes towards the teacher or towards the language itself; ii) social factors, for example, attitudes towards people who speak the language; iii) general attitudinal dispositions, for example, ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, or anomie<sup>1</sup> (Gardner 1985:40).

There are various attitudes that might influence people's language learning, for example, beliefs about the value, meaningfulness, and implications of it, as well as expectations about what they themselves are and are not able to achieve when it comes to learning the language (Gardner, 2007:13). Gardner (1985:42-43) believes that attitudes may be more strongly linked to achievement in L2 acquisition than in any other learning area, with some aspects of attitude being more closely related to achievement than others. He mentions factors such as tolerance, utilitarianism, aestheticism, gender differences, upbringing, cultural characteristics, age, and prior achievement. Research has shown that attitudes towards L2 acquisition are not dependent on intelligence (Jones 1950; Clément *et al.* 1977), or on language aptitude (Gardner & Smythe 1975). It would thus seem that attitude does not simply relate to achievement because attitudes covary with ability, but rather because of important *affective* components. Spolsky (1969, in Gardner 1985:45) asserts that "one of the most important attitudinal factors is the attitude of the learner to the language and to its speakers".

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<sup>1</sup> Anomie refers to dissatisfaction with one's role in society.

### 1.2.5 Motivation

The *Chambers Thesaurus* (1996) gives the following synonyms for motivation:

(noun) reason, incitement, inducement, prompting, spur, stimulus, provocation, drive, push, hunger, desire, wish, urge, impulse, incentive, ambition, inspiration, instigation, momentum, motive, persuasion, interest

The English word *motivation* is derived from the Latin verb *movere*, which means “to move”. Motivation is what moves people to action. In the context of this study, it is what moves young adult isiXhosa speakers to learn English. According to McDonough (2007:369), human motivation involves: the reasons we want to learn, the strength of our desire to learn, the sort of person we are, and the task itself and what we think it requires of us. Put simply, motivation is something that “gets us going, keeps us working, and helps us complete tasks” (Schunk *et al.* 2008:4).

There are numerous other definitions of motivation, and much debate concerning its exact nature. Early researchers associated it with inner forces – instincts, traits, volition, and the will. The behavioural/conditioning approaches linked it to a heightened or ongoing level of responding to stimuli brought about by reinforcement/reward. Present-day cognitive theorists see motivation as being largely dependent on individuals' thoughts, beliefs, and emotions. Wlodkowski (1986, in Dörnyei 2002:12) states that there are currently more than 20 internationally accepted theories of motivation, comprising many differing viewpoints and experimental methodologies. When it comes to research involving learners, motivation is a critical variable, and can be defined as “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained” (Schunk *et al.* 2008:41). It has a strong influence on new learning as well as on the performance of skills, strategies, and behaviours that have already been learned. It affects what an individual learns, as well as when and how he/she learns it.

In his research on L2 acquisition, Gardner (1985, 2000) refers to *integrated motivation*, which is made up of integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, and motivation. *Integrativeness* involves an openness to identify in some way with a different language community. When an individual learns an L2, he/she has to adopt various new sounds, pronunciations, word orders, and other behavioural and cognitive attributes that are part of another culture. The openness of integrativeness facilitates the individual's motivation to learn

the new material. *Attitudes towards the learning situation* refers to an individual's reaction to anything within the immediate context in which the L2 is being taught (Gardner 1985; Masgoret & Gardner 2003). *Motivation* here entails an individual's applying effort; being persistent and attentive; having goals, desires, and aspirations; enjoying the activity; gaining reinforcement from success and experiencing disappointment from failure; making attributions concerning success and/or failure; being aroused; making use of strategies to facilitate goal achievement; having expectancies; exhibiting positive affect; and demonstrating self-confidence (Masgoret & Gardner 2003:173; Gardner 2007:15).

### 1.2.6 Gratitude

*Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity ... It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow. (Melodie Beattie)*

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2010) defines gratitude as "the quality or condition of being thankful; the appreciation of an inclination to return kindness".

As Emmons (2007:3), a pre-eminent researcher and author on the topic of gratitude, points out, most people have an everyday sense of the concept of gratitude – it is the acknowledgement of having received a gift, recognition of the gift's value, and appreciation of the giver's intentions. The gift might be a benefit or personal gain; it might be material or nonmaterial (emotional or spiritual). It is not as easy, however, to classify gratitude from a scientific perspective. Gratitude has been portrayed as an attitude, and also as "an emotion, a mood, a moral virtue, a habit, a motive, a personality trait, a coping response, and even a way of life" (Emmons 2007:4).

The term "gratitude" is derived from the Latin words *gratia*, meaning "favour", and *gratus*, meaning "pleasing". Derivatives from this Latin root word all have to do with kindness, generosity, gifts, the beauty of giving and receiving, or getting something for free (Pruyser 1976, as quoted in Emmons & Shelton 2002:460). The Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu faiths all encourage gratitude in their followers. Roberts (2004:68), a theological philosopher, emphasises the generous nature of gratitude, stating that it involves "a readiness or predisposition to respond to the actions of others by seeing the goodness and benevolence in

them, and consequently desiring to return acknowledging tokens of benefit". As we shall see in the Literature Review in Chapter 2, there are many benefits resulting from the practice of gratitude, including increased happiness levels, improved mental functioning, enhanced physical health, more satisfying personal relationships, and, ultimately, the upliftment of communities.

### **1.2.7 Gratitude journalling**

*Reflect on your present blessings, of which every man has many, not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some. (Charles Dickens)*

Gratitude journalling is a useful, practical way of reflecting on these present blessings. It entails the daily listing of the things for which one is thankful. Some days this is easy, for example, someone has done something thoughtful for you, given you a gift, or spoken some encouraging words; or perhaps you have done well in a test, or won an award of some sort. On other days it is a little more difficult, and one needs to think a little harder. However, those days present a good opportunity to count the blessings which one might otherwise take for granted, for example, being able to see, hear, smell, taste, and feel; having a warm bed to sleep in at night; having enough to eat each day; having family and/or friends who care. Gratitude journalling helps one live each day with the eyes of one's heart and mind open to the good things that surround one. This in turn gives one a more positive frame of mind, and leads to the results mentioned in section 1.2.6 above, and discussed in more depth in the Literature Review that follows in Chapter 2.

As Emmons (2007:189) points out, being thankful is a way of affirming that there are sources of goodness in one's life. As one writes in a gratitude journal each day, this magnifies and expands these sources of goodness. It is an activity that helps to cultivate an ongoing life theme of thankfulness, as well as a powerfully affirming underlying attitude towards life. He goes on to say that the translation of one's thoughts into words has been proved to be more beneficial than just thinking the thoughts. As one writes, one's thoughts become organised and integrated. Writing in a gratitude journal also helps one to accept the things that happen in one's life and put these in context. It helps one to see the meaning of life's experiences and create personal meaning for them. Writing about something unpleasant, or even traumatic, in one's gratitude journal may result in the emergence of a fresh and redemptive frame of reference.

### **1.3 Outline of this thesis**

This thesis has commenced with an introduction to the topic of gratitude journalling. It has defined the study's key concepts, namely, first language, second language, proficiency, attitude, motivation, gratitude, and gratitude journalling.

Chapter 2 comprises a literature review. It involves an overview of (a) the psychological studies relating to gratitude, and to its effect on motivation and thus productivity in the workplace, and (b) the L2 acquisition research that demonstrates a link between increased motivation and improved levels of L2 proficiency.

The design and methodology of the study are presented in Chapter 3. My participants were isiXhosa-speaking third-year Financial Information Systems (FIS) students. I developed several tasks for them to complete, which were delivered to them via the University's e-Learning Centre's WebCT application. The tasks took the form of questionnaires, surveys, and online gratitude journalling.

Chapter 4 contains the results of my gratitude journalling study carried out with these young adult isiXhosa speakers, as well as a discussion of these results. This is predominantly a qualitative presentation and discussion, with statistics included where possible to help substantiate my claims.

Conclusions are drawn in Chapter 5. In this chapter, I provide a summary of the results and consider the strengths and limitations of this thesis. I also indicate some of its implications for future studies, and highlight some of its practical implications.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Chapter 2 gives an overview of literature relevant to this thesis on the influence of gratitude journaling on the motivation and English language proficiency of isiXhosa-speaking young adult learners. No research has been conducted to date on gratitude journaling in an L2, or on the effects of gratitude journaling on L2 learners. This literature review is organised as follows: I begin by introducing the psychology of gratitude in section 2.1; I then discuss some of the studies that have been conducted on gratitude journaling in section 2.2. In sections 2.3 and 2.4, respectively, I provide an overview of research concerning the link between gratitude and motivation in the workplace (2.3), and on the role of motivation in L2 acquisition (2.4). Section 2.5 considers a couple of studies which investigate isiXhosa speakers' perceptions of English. A brief conclusion to this chapter is offered in section 2.6.

#### **2.1 The psychology of gratitude**

Theologians and philosophers have long been interested in gratitude and its benefits (although, as we shall see in section 2.1.1, this particular virtue has often been neglected by even these scholars). It is only recently, however, that researchers from the sciences and the humanities have begun to investigate this emotion empirically. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the positive psychology movement makes a scientific study of the human virtues, including gratitude. When it comes to scientific research on the topic of gratitude, there is a most helpful volume, *The Psychology of Gratitude*, edited by Emmons and McCullough (2004). It is a collection of chapters by various experts in the field. It starts by presenting the historical, philosophical, and theological foundations of the study of gratitude. It moves on to consider current research from social, personality, and developmental psychology perspectives, as well contributions from the disciplines of primatology, anthropology, and biology. This section discusses several of the approaches found in this book, supplemented by corroborating ideas from elsewhere.

### **2.1.1 Some general insights**

Gratitude seems to have been undervalued by the majority of people throughout the ages. Solomon (2004:v) notes that it is not even included in Aristotle's famous list of the virtues. He goes on to comment that human beings are often not comfortable thinking of themselves as being indebted. We have a tendency to link our good fortunes to our own abilities and efforts – while not often taking any responsibility for our losses and sufferings. Being grateful to another involves acknowledging vulnerability and dependence, something our pride does not easily allow. Gratitude may also be overlooked because it is one of the "calm passions" (Hume 1739, referred to by Solomon 2004:vi), displaying none of the forcefulness or drama of the more "violent passions". It is not linked to any specific facial expression; it does not result in a particular type of hardwired behavioural reaction; it cannot be traced to any specific neurological processes.

Despite all of this, many of the authors who have contributed to *The Psychology of Gratitude* believe – and have done empirical research to substantiate their belief – that being able to feel and convey gratitude is essential to an individual's well-being. All positive emotions, including gratitude, "are worth cultivating, not just as end states in themselves but also as a means to achieving psychological growth and improved well-being over time" (Fredrickson 2001:218). The experience of positive emotions results in many social, intellectual, and physical benefits for individuals, and also in many benefits for the society in which these individuals live. Human beings are social creatures linked closely to those around them through passions and affections, and gratitude can be seen as "one of the building blocks of a civil and humane society" (Smith 1790, in Harpham 2004:21).

### **2.1.2 The blessings of gratitude: a conceptual analysis**

The virtue of gratitude is a readiness or predisposition to respond to the actions of others by seeing the goodness and benevolence in them, and consequently desiring to return acknowledging tokens of benefits (Roberts 2004:68).

Roberts (2004:58-78) sees gratitude as a virtue which has life-blessing properties, leading to maturity, happiness, fulfilment, and general well-being. Because thankful people tend to be satisfied with what they have, they are less prone to the destructive internal influences of negative emotions and attitudes such as resentment, frustration, regret, and envy.

Roberts (2004:64) describes emotions as being concern-based, and proposes the following analysis for "I am grateful to S for X":

1. X is a benefit to me (I care about having X).
2. S has acted well in conferring X on me (I care about receiving X from S).
3. In conferring X, S has gone beyond what S owes me, properly putting me in S's debt (I am willing to be in S's debt).
4. In conferring X, S has acted benevolently towards me (I care about S's benevolence to me, as expressed in S's conferral of X).
5. S's benevolence and conferral of X show that S is good (I am drawn to S). (Or: S's goodness shows that X is good and that, in conferring X, S is benevolent.)
6. I want to express my indebtedness and attachment to S in some token return benefit.

Gratitude involves givers, gifts, recipients, and the attitudes of the givers and the recipients towards one another. It is "a deeply social emotion" (Roberts 2004:65). People are inclined to repay gratitude with further favourable attitudes. They tend to be willing to show additional acts of kindness to the grateful person, to react to his/her goodwill with their own goodwill. They consider that person to be good, and are happy to do favours for him/her again in the future. This grateful person, in turn, will react with goodwill again, and so a cycle of generosity and mutual kindness is established, binding participants together "in relationships of friendly and affectionate reciprocity" (Roberts 2004:68).

Gratitude is highly praised in Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian thought (Emmons 2003:82). Søren Kierkegaard, a nineteenth-century Christian philosopher, prayed that he might become constitutionally grateful. He believed that everything that comes from God is good, regardless of whether or not it seems so to our finite human minds, because it comes from God who is benevolent (Roberts 2004:71). According to Christian theology, even seemingly negative things such as lost opportunities, may actually turn out to be good, as they are part of God's

providential care. Sin is not good, but even this can cause a Christian to give thanks, because God is willing to forgive a repentant person, through Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice. A Christian can thus develop constitutional thankfulness, "with a gratitude that transcends and levels the circumstances of his or her life, for he or she is disposed to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18<sup>2</sup>)" (Roberts 2004:71). When things go well, the Christian thanks God for worldly blessings, seeing these as symbols of His goodness, a goodness ultimately manifested in the person and work of Jesus Christ. When things do not go well, the Christian still thanks God for the person and work of Jesus Christ, which assures him/her of God's love and grace and gives him/her hope for the future.

### **2.1.3 Gratitude, like other positive emotions, broadens and builds**

Gratitude ... not only feels good, but also produces a cascade of beneficial social outcomes, because it reflects, motivates, and reinforces moral social actions in both the giver and recipient of help (Fredrickson 2004:158).

Fredrickson (2004:145-165) discusses the lasting benefits of positive emotions including gratitude. These benefits range from personal and social growth, to individual health and well-being, and also to enriched and harmonious community life. Fredrickson views gratitude as a temporary emotional state, although other authors in *The Psychology of Gratitude* view it as an enduring disposition, virtue, or affective trait. According to Fredrickson (2001:218), emotions can be viewed as multi-component response tendencies, which usually develop in a relatively short period of time, as an individual consciously or unconsciously assesses the personal meaning of something that happens to him/her. *Emotions* usually have an object, in that they arise because of some personally meaningful event. *Moods*, on the other hand, usually are unfixed and without an object. Then there is *affect*, which is a general term, referring to consciously accessible feelings. Affect is present within emotions (the subjective experience component), and also within other affective phenomena, such as physical sensations, attitudes, moods, and affective traits.

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<sup>2</sup> "Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."

Many theorists link emotions to specific action tendencies (Fredrickson 2004:146<sup>3</sup>). For example, fear is associated with an urge to escape, anger is associated with an urge to attack, and disgust is associated with an urge to expel. People will not necessarily act on these urges, but their thoughts concerning potential courses of action become limited to a particular set of behavioural choices. These specific action tendencies are said to make emotions evolutionarily adaptive, for example, experiencing fear helped our ancestors to escape from dangerous animals. These tendencies are also linked to physiological changes, for example, fear and its urge to escape are accompanied by the body getting its various systems ready to run. The action tendencies associated with positive emotions, however, are general rather than specific. For example, joy is accompanied by directionless activation, and contentment is actually linked with an urge to do nothing. This caused Fredrickson to devise a novel theoretical model to better illustrate the distinctive effects of the positive emotions – the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson 1998, 2001).

According to this broaden-and-build theory, positive emotions such as joy, interest, pride, contentment, and love, are all able to broaden human beings' thought-action repertoires, as well as develop our enduring personal resources, i.e., our physical, intellectual, social and psychological resources, which help us cope, and even flourish in our lives. As mentioned above, the specific action tendencies invoked by negative emotions helped our ancestors survive life-threatening situations. In such settings, quick and decisive action would have been needed, and it was highly beneficial to have a narrowed thought-action repertoire. Positive emotions, on the other hand, are usually experienced in safe, unthreatening circumstances, and appear to initiate changes in cognitive rather than physical activity (physical activity might then result from these cognitive changes, but not always) (Fredrickson 1998:303). When it comes to describing the effects of positive emotions, Fredrickson refers to thought-action tendencies. These tendencies widen people's thought-action repertoires as they broaden their range of potential thoughts and actions. For example, joy ignites urges to play, extend boundaries, and be innovative and creative. These urges are expressed in social, physical, intellectual and artistic behaviour.

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<sup>3</sup> Fredrickson refers to the work of these theorists: Frijda 1986; Frijda *et al.* 1989; Tooby and Cosmedes 1990; Lazarus 1991; Levenson 1994; Oatley and Jenkins 1996.

This expansion of cognitive context has also been linked to increases in dopamine levels in the brain. Aspinwall (1998:19-20) proposes that positive mood enhances people's ability to make creative decisions and effectively solve problems. This is because positive affect facilitates diverse and unusual associations in the mind, as well as the capacity to categorise stimuli in more flexible ways. She also comments on the way that positive mood seems to enhance certain types of complex decision-making and problem-solving. She refers to Ashby *et al.* (1998), who suggest that positive affect leads to an increase in dopamine levels in two particular areas of the brain's frontal cortex, which results in greater flexibility in judgement and behaviour. They conducted well-controlled experiments, comparing various subtle stimulations of positive mood to neutral conditions, and found that positive affect leads to "greater elaboration of information, more efficient decision-making, improved problem-solving, and a richer view of the task context" (Aspinwall 1998:20).

The personal resources that our positive emotions build in us last far longer than the momentary emotional states that gave rise to them. These physical, intellectual, social and psychological resources are stored away to be drawn from later when they are needed to help us cope, survive, and prosper. Fredrickson (2004:149) refers to research done on nuns, which found that those who had expressed the most positive emotions when they were young adults, lived for up to ten years longer than their counterparts who had expressed fewer positive emotions (Ostir *et al.* 2000; Danner *et al.* 2001). She goes on to write about the broadened thought-action tendency ignited by gratitude, which seems to be the urge to act pro-socially, towards one's benefactor and/or towards other people. This reveals gratitude functioning as a moral motive, prompting people to creatively contemplate a variety of different pro-social behaviours to reflect their gratitude, promoting the well-being of others (Fredrickson 2004:150-151). Experiencing gratitude also inhibits people from committing destructive interpersonal behaviours (Emmons & Shelton 2002:464).

Over time, the beneficent actions of a grateful individual build and strengthen his/her social bargains and friendships (Emmons & Shelton 2002; Harpham 2004; Komter 2004). Gratitude promotes reciprocal altruism, which promotes enduring friendships and alliances (Trivers 1971, in Fredrickson 2004:151)<sup>4</sup>. People who regularly feel grateful, tend to feel loved and cared for by

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<sup>4</sup> Frederickson (2004:149) also mentions evidence of gratitude and reciprocal altruism in nonhuman primates (referring to De Waal 1997; De Waal and Berger 2000; and Bonnie and De Waal 2004).

others (McCullough & Tsang 2004). The social bonds formed as a result of gratitude represent a social resource, which can be drawn upon for support during times of need. As alluded to in section 2.1.1, gratitude also helps to build the social resources of entire communities. Those who experience and communicate gratitude regularly are more likely to benefit from their interpersonal relationships. The more they become consciously aware of how they have been helped, the more they will reciprocate; and the more often such interactions take place, the better suited the whole network becomes to maximising the mutual advantages for all concerned (Bono *et al.* 2004:468). Smith (1790)<sup>5</sup> asserts that gratitude plays a major role in holding a society together on the basis of goodwill. Simmel (1908)<sup>6</sup> proposes that when members of a community feel gratitude towards artists, politicians, poets, etc. (people whom they do not know personally), for having done something beneficial, this gratitude connects them to society.

The broaden-and-build theory highlights the link between positive emotions and personal growth and development. Positive emotions broaden individuals' customary ways of thinking and acting, and set in motion an upward spiral that leads to significantly enhanced functioning and emotional well-being (Fredrickson 2001; Fredrickson & Joiner 2002). They also help individuals to cope with stress and difficulty, and even have an "undoing effect" on the lingering after-effects of negative emotions (Fredrickson 2004:153<sup>7</sup>). As mentioned earlier in this section, negative emotions, such as fear and anger, limit people's thoughts to a particular set of behavioural choices (e.g., fear prompts escape urges, and anger prompts attack urges). Negative emotions thus *narrow* individuals' momentary thought-action repertoires. Positive emotions, on the other hand, *broaden* these repertoires. These two effects cannot happen simultaneously, and so negative and positive emotions seem to be fundamentally incompatible.

Negative emotions heighten cardiovascular activity. Research has shown that positive emotions invoked after negative emotions accelerate cardiovascular recovery, returning the individual's system to a more balanced level of operation, and thus facilitating the pursuit of a wider array of

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<sup>5</sup> In Fredrickson 2004:153.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Fredrickson refers to the works of several researchers: Lazarus *et al.* 1980; Folkman 1997; Fredrickson and Levenson 1998; Aspinwall 1998; Folkman and Moskowitz 2000; Fredrickson *et al.* 2000; Aspinwall 2001; Tugade and Fredrickson 2002.

thoughts and actions (Fredrickson 2004: 153)<sup>8</sup>. Resilient people show quicker cardiovascular recovery after experiences of negative emotions, and suffer fewer symptoms of depression and trauma after having been through distressing events (e.g., the terrorist attacks in the United States in September 2001) (Tugade & Fredrickson 2002; Fredrickson *et al.* 2003)<sup>9</sup>. Studies done on the physiological effects of appreciation and compassion show reliable positive changes in cardiovascular activity and also in immune functioning. When we experience appreciation, there is an increase in parasympathetic activity, and this change is related to improvements in our control of stress and hypertension (Emmons & McCullough 2003; Fredrickson *et al.* 2000).

The broaden-and-build theory also highlights ways in which positive emotions transform organisations and communities. Many positive emotions, and gratitude is no exception, are derived from social interaction. Transformation in organisations and communities happens because emotions are contagious, and each person's positive emotions echo and resound through the people with whom he/she has contact (Fredrickson 2004:157). Organisational leaders have particularly contagious emotions, and we shall see something of the strength of the contagiousness of their positive emotions in section 2.3. Positive emotions also spread through groups of people by generating chains of events that convey positive meaning for others. Gratitude, for example, affects both the giver and the receiver of help positively, in that it: (i) *reflects* moral social actions, as it emerges when an individual acknowledges that someone has been helpful to him/her; (ii) *motivates* moral social actions, because somebody who is grateful often wants to repay his/her benefactor in some way; and (iii) *reinforces* moral social actions, in that the help-giver who is thanked/acknowledged is made to feel appreciated, and will be more likely to help someone again in the future (Fredrickson 2004:158).

Gratitude "underlies the appreciation of goodness in others and in oneself" (Klein 1957, in Emmons & Shelton 2002:461). An interesting phenomenon is that individuals who witness or hear about somebody doing something helpful for somebody else often also experience positive emotions. They experience elevation, which is "a generalised desire to become a better person, and to perform helpful acts oneself" (Haidt 2000, in Fredrickson 2004:158). As we have seen, gratitude, like all positive emotions, broadens people's thought-action tendencies, so that

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<sup>8</sup> Fredrickson refers to the findings of Fredrickson & Levinson 1998 and Fredrickson *et al.* 2000.

<sup>9</sup> In Fredrickson 2004:154-155.

receiver and elevated onlooker are not prompted to merely imitate the helpful act(s) they have experienced/witnessed, but are able to be creative as they contemplate a whole variety of helpful acts as a way to become more moral people. An upward spiral ensues, and this is how individuals as well as organisations and communities can be transformed by the influence of gratitude, and become increasingly compassionate and harmonious (Fredrickson 2004:158).

## **2.2 Research on gratitude journalling**

In this section, I shall concentrate on the pioneering paper written by Emmons and McCullough (2003), titled *Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life*, in which they reported on a set of studies conducted in order to examine the influence of grateful thinking on psychological well-being in daily life. They see gratitude as deriving from a perception of a positive personal outcome, which is not necessarily earned or deserved, that is the result of someone else's actions (Emmons & McCullough 2003:377). They quote Bertocci and Millard (1963), who define gratitude as "the willingness to recognise the un-earned increments of value in one's experience", and Solomon (1977), who describes it as "an estimate of gain coupled with the judgement that someone else is responsible for that gain". It is important to note that the benefit/gift/personal gain might be material or might be emotional or spiritual in nature (Emmons & McCullough 2003:378). Like Weiner (1985), Emmons and McCullough depict gratitude as an attribution-dependent state, resulting from a two-step cognitive process: (i) acknowledging that one has gained a positive outcome; and (ii) acknowledging that this positive outcome has an external source. They see it as a complex state, belonging to the category of affective cognitive conditions (Clore *et al.* 1987), in which both affect and cognition are represented as predominant-meaning components (Emmons & McCullough 2003:378).

The *Counting blessings versus burdens* paper presents an overview of previously conducted research, and notes that it has been hypothesised that gratitude has happiness-bestowing properties (Chesterton 1924), and that it characteristically has a positive emotional valence (Weiner 1985; Ortony *et al.* 1986; Mayer *et al.* 1991; and Lazarus & Lazarus 1994). Studies on gratitude have shown that it is a pleasant state, associated with other positive emotions, including contentment (Walker & Pitts 1998), happiness, pride, and hope (Overwalle *et al.* 1995). Research has also shown that gratitude may lead to other positive subjective

experiences (for example, Gallup 1998). Emmons and McCullough (2003:378) suggest that having a grateful response to life circumstances may be an adaptive psychological strategy, and a significant method by which everyday experiences can be positively interpreted. The ability to notice, appreciate, and savour the various aspects of one's life is considered to be an essential determinant of well-being (Bryant 1989; Langston 1994; Janoff-Bulman & Berger 2000). The individual who makes a personal commitment to invest energy in developing a personal schema/outlook/worldview of his/her life as a "gift", or his/herself as being "gifted", is highly likely to achieve optimal psychological functioning. Several religious/spiritual groups and self-help groups and organisations embrace this insight. An example is Alcoholics Anonymous (2002), who include gratitude in 2 of their "15 Points"<sup>10</sup>, and who even celebrate "Gratitude Month" every November. Considering all this information, Emmons and McCullough (2003:378) hypothesise that the individual who regularly practises grateful thinking should obtain enhanced psychological and social functioning. The purpose of their studies in the *Counting blessings versus burdens* paper is to investigate empirically the effects of a "grateful outlook" on people's psychological and physical well-being.

- *Study 1*

This study (Emmons & McCullough 2003:379-381) followed 192 undergraduate university students over a period of ten weeks. Each participant was given a pack of ten weekly reports. The packs were randomly distributed among the participants, and each contained instructions pertaining to one of three experimental conditions: gratitude, hassles, and events. Each Monday, the participants were asked to write five things on their reports. Those who had a gratitude pack were instructed to list five things for which they were thankful; those who had a hassles pack were to write down five things which had upset them; and those who had an events pack were asked to note five events/circumstances that had impacted them in some way. The weekly forms also included ratings of mood, physical symptoms, reactions to social

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<sup>10</sup> "15 points for an alcoholic to consider when confronted with the urge to take a drink":

Point 2 "Cultivate enthusiastic gratitude that you have had the good fortune of finding out what was wrong before it was too late."

Point 13 "Cultivate gratitude... that so much can be yours for so small a price... that you can trade just one drink for all the happiness sobriety gives you... that AA exists, and you found out about it in time... that you are an alcoholic – you are not a bad or wicked person but you have been in the grip of a compulsion... that since others have done it, you can in time bring it to pass that you will not want or miss the drink you are doing without."

support received, estimated amount of time spent exercising, and two global life appraisal questions.

The results of this study showed some positive benefits for well-being specific to the gratitude condition. When compared with the hassles and life events groups, gratitude condition participants felt better about their lives in general, and were more optimistic in their expectations for the upcoming week. They were found to have fewer physical complaints, and to spend significantly more time exercising than the participants of the other two groups. However, the gratitude condition did not seem to have an influence on the students' global positive or negative affect. A limitation of the study is that participants only filled out one report per week. It was proposed that the effects of a gratitude intervention on emotional well-being might be more pronounced with a more intensive strategy. And so, a second study was conducted.

- *Study 2*

This second study (Emmons & McCullough 2003:381-386) was very similar to the first, except that: (i) participants were asked to keep diaries on a daily basis over a two-week period; (ii) the life events condition was replaced by a downward social comparison focused group; and (iii) a wider range of well-being outcomes was included. A cohort of 157 undergraduate university students participated in this study. They were given a pack of 16 "daily experience rating forms"<sup>11</sup>. The affect rating section of the daily mood and health report was almost identical to that used in the weekly report in Study 1, containing only a few minor changes. The participants were asked to fill in the form each evening before going to sleep, and to hand it in the next day in class. The gratitude and hassles conditions were given the same instructions as in Study 1. Participants in the third condition, the downward social comparison focus, were asked to think about ways in which they were better off than others, and to list those things. This condition was used by the researchers because it appeared to be positive on the surface<sup>12</sup>, but might actually result in different outcomes to those of the gratitude focus group. Smith (2000)<sup>13</sup>, in a review of

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<sup>11</sup> The first two days were counted as practice, and not included in the investigation.

<sup>12</sup> This was an attempt to control for demand characteristics, i.e., to make it difficult for the participants to work out what the experimenters were expecting to find, as that might have influenced their daily contributions.

<sup>13</sup> In Emmons and McCullough 2003:381.

the emotional effects of social comparison, had found that pride and *schadenfreude*<sup>14</sup> were two common reactions to a downward social comparison.

There was a section on each daily form which required participants to record how long they had spent exercising strenuously, how long they had spent exercising moderately, how many caffeine drinks they had had, how many alcohol drinks they had had, and how many pain relievers they had taken. They were also asked to record how much sleep they had had the previous night, and to rate its quality. There were two additional questions, to detect pro-social behaviour. Participants were asked if they had helped anyone with a problem, and if they had offered anyone emotional support.

The results of this study showed that members of the gratitude condition experienced higher levels of positive affect during the two-week intervention period. The researchers report that it seems likely that this general effect on positive affect was caused by the intervention influencing the participants' gratitude *per se* (Emmons & McCullough 2003:383). These students also reported having helped with a personal problem or offered emotional support more often than did their counterparts in the other two conditions. This suggests that stimulating gratitude in participants caused these people to become more pro-socially motivated. However, no differences were detected in physical symptomatology or in health behaviours. This could have been a result of this study's relatively short time frame, as people are not likely to change their exercise habits over a two-week period. Because some of the effects noted in Study 1 were not replicated in Study 2, Emmons and McCullough decided to design a third study.

### ○ *Study 3*

This study's main aims were to:

- (i) determine whether the benefits of a grateful outlook could be observed over a longer period of time by extending the experimental period from two weeks to three weeks;
- (ii) broaden the participant base beyond healthy university students by enlisting adults with chronic disease;

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<sup>14</sup> *Schadenfreude* is malicious enjoyment derived from the misfortune of others.

(iii) investigate whether the affective benefits observed in Study 2 could be replicated in another daily study, and to ascertain if these effects could be observed by people in close relationship with the participants, by including spouse-rated affect and satisfaction with life variables.

65 people with either congenital or adult-onset NMDs (neuromuscular diseases) were recruited for this study<sup>15</sup>. Each of these participants was given a pack of 21 "daily experience rating forms" that were very similar to those used in Study 2. They were also given business reply envelopes so that they could post their completed forms to the researchers. They were asked to fill out their forms as close to the end of each day as possible<sup>16</sup>, using their ratings to summarise that day as a whole. There were only two conditions in this third study: a gratitude condition and a control condition. Members of the control group did not do daily journaling; they only completed the affect, well-being, and global appraisals each day.

Each day, participants filled out a daily experience form, on which they:

- rated their experience of various affects;
- completed the same two global life appraisals as used in Study 2;
- rated how connected they felt with others<sup>17</sup>;
- recorded their quantity and quality of sleep the night before<sup>18</sup>;
- indicated how much physical pain they experienced that day, as well as how pain interfered with what they had wanted to accomplish;
- stated whether or not they had exercised that day.

The daily experience form also included a section where participants indicated whether they had difficulties with various daily living activities, for example, dressing, eating, climbing stairs, etc.<sup>19</sup> At the end of the 21-day period, each participant's spouse or significant other was asked to fill out questionnaires concerning their partner's affect and satisfaction with life<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Their ages were between 22 and 77 years (the mean age was 49 years), and the majority of them had Post-polio, Charcot-Marie-Tooth, or Facioscapulohumeral diseases.

<sup>16</sup> The optimal time for filling out the form was in the early evening, before they became too sleepy to do it accurately.

<sup>17</sup> This item was included because a sense of integration into their community is an important issue for NMD sufferers' quality of life.

<sup>18</sup> The sleep items were included because sleep is a quality of life predictor in older people (Hoch *et al.* 2001).

<sup>19</sup> These items were averaged to create an overall measure of functional status.

<sup>20</sup> The Positive and Negative Affect Scales and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener *et al.* 1985).

This study found that members of the gratitude condition experienced significantly more daily gratitude and significantly less daily negative affect<sup>21</sup> than did their counterparts in the control condition. Gratitude condition participants also reported significantly more satisfaction with their lives in general, experienced more optimism concerning the week ahead, and felt more connected to others. Thus, it would seem that their daily gratitude journalling resulted in substantial and consistent improvements in their assessments of global well-being. These participants also reported getting more sleep each night than did the people in the control condition. However, unlike in Study 1, there were no other differences between the two groups in reported physical health symptoms or on the functional status measure. The spouses and significant others of the gratitude journalers rated them higher in positive affect and in life satisfaction than the partners of the control group members; no difference was observed for negative affect.

- *General discussion of the three studies*

These three studies were ground-breaking in their empirical research on gratitude and happiness, as they provided some important findings that had not yet been reported in academic literature. They showed that there are definite benefits to regularly focusing on one's blessings.

In each study, generating a state of gratitude through self-guided gratitude exercises resulted in some emotional, physical, and/or interpersonal benefits. The daily intervention of writing down lists of things for which participants were thankful in Studies 2 and 3 was found to be a more powerful facilitator of gratitude than was Study 1's weekly listing.

This research established a relatively easily implemented strategy for improving people's levels of well-being. It did not, however, determine how long these effects would last or how sustainable they are over time.

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<sup>21</sup> This finding is consistent with correlational research which had found that trait gratitude is associated with less negative affect (McCullough *et al.* 2002).

The researchers considered their intervention to be fairly minimal, and thus observed that the results obtained were rather noteworthy. They comment that "there are a myriad of influences on well-being, from personality factors to genetic influences to chronic and temporary life events, and thus any one factor by itself would not be expected to be particularly potent" (Emmons & McCullough 2003:386). They go on to note that developing an intentional grateful focus is a way of cognitively appraising life circumstances that has the potential to impact long-term levels of well-being.

They also refer to Fredrickson's broaden-and-build model of positive emotions (1998, 2000) and its upward spiral of gratitude and well-being, including: the broadening of mindsets; the building of enduring psychological, social, and spiritual resources; the motivation towards pro-social reciprocity; the building and strengthening of social bonds and friendships; the building and strengthening of spirituality; the broadening of scope of cognition that enables flexible and creative thinking; the improvement of coping with stress and adversity; and the increased likelihood that people will feel good and also function optimally in the future (Emmons & McCullough 2003:387-388).

## **2.3 Research on gratitude and workplace performance**

Gratitude is a wellspring of trust and goodwill that can serve as a hallmark of positive organisational performance (Emmons 2003:82).

### **2.3.1 Positive affect and favourable work outcomes**

Various studies (e.g., Wright *et al.* 1993 and Munz *et al.* 2001)<sup>22</sup> have found that well-being has an important influence on positive performance. Donald *et al.* (2005) investigated work environments, stress, and productivity, using 16 001 employees across 15 different organisations in the United Kingdom. Their study found psychological well-being to be the strongest predictor of productivity. Productivity decreased when people experienced burnout and emotional exhaustion, which is not surprising, as these extreme forms of stress lead to

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<sup>22</sup> In Donald *et al.* 2005:420.

energy depletion. Negative mental well-being is a commonly accepted precursor of burnout (Donald *et al.* 2005:420). Additional research suggests that there is likely to be a strong association between affective states and work behaviour (e.g., George & Bettenhausen 1990; George 1995; Wright & Staw 1999; Emmons 2003). It has been found that people experiencing positive affective states are more helpful, more creative, better negotiators, and more persistent on uncertain tasks (Isen & Baron 1991; George & Brief 1992). Positive affect seems to increase the expectancy that one's effort will lead to performance, and also seems to result in confidence that performance will lead to positive outcomes; positive affect often leads to enhanced self-efficacy (Forgas *et al.* 1990; George & Brief 1996) and optimistic biases when contemplating the future (Seligman 1991; Wright & Bower 1992).

Beyond these motivational aspects of task performance, individuals displaying positive affect may also be more successful in the workplace because they are generally proficient in the interpersonal aspects of organisational life (Wright & Staw 1999:2). Studies have shown that optimists in the insurance industry tend to remain on their jobs twice as long as pessimists, and tend to sell more insurance than their pessimistic counterparts (Seligman & Schulman 1986)<sup>23</sup>. They have also shown affect to be a strong predictor of changes in individuals' salaries, performance evaluations, and social support in their work environments (Staw *et al.* 1994)<sup>24</sup>. Wright and Staw (1999:17) found pleasantness-based dispositional affect to be a strong predictor of performance evaluation in the workplace. Perhaps supervisors provided more positive evaluations for employees displaying positive affect simply because happy people are likeable and fun to be around. However, even if this halo effect were to come into play, the fact remains that people with higher positive affect somehow tend to be more successful than others in any given organisation (Wright & Staw 1999:18).

George and Bettenhausen (1990) and George (1995) conducted research on the effects of leaders' positive moods on the performance of their subordinates. *Moods* can be defined as pervasive or generalised affective states. Their focus is not necessarily any specific object, person, or event. They do not demand attention or interrupt cognitive processes or behaviours. Moods provide affective context for experience. Although they do not interrupt behaviours and thoughts, moods can have wide-ranging effects on them; effects of which we are often unaware

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<sup>23</sup> In Wright and Staw 1999:2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

(George, 1995:779<sup>25</sup>). A *positive mood* involves a state of pleasurable or positive engagement (Tellegen, 1985; Watson *et al.* 1988), and is associated with adjectives such as *active, enthusiastic, excited, strong, interested, alert, and inspired* (Watson *et al.* 1988)<sup>26</sup>. Leaders experiencing positive moods/high levels of positive affect tend to energise the people whom they supervise via their behaviour, verbalisations, body language, and interpersonal style and interactions. Such leaders exude a sense of enjoyment, confidence, competence, and determination. This results in their subordinates displaying heightened levels of confidence in their own abilities to succeed, and they consequently are active and enthusiastic in their approach to their tasks (George 1995:779).

Leaders in positive moods are likely to have higher expectations of their subordinates than do their counterparts who are not in positive moods, because they have a more positive perception of their subordinates and tend to be more optimistic regarding their capabilities. Eden (1990)<sup>27</sup> researched the Pygmalion effect in groups, and found that groups actually tend to perform at higher levels when their leaders have higher expectations of them. In this way, these leaders enhance their subordinates' self-efficacy, causing them to have more positive perceptions of themselves and their capabilities, and resulting in their performing at improved levels. This improved group performance may then positively impact the leader's mood, generating an upward spiral of positive affect and positive effects (see section 2.1.3; Fredrickson 2004). Another way in which positive leader mood influences subordinates is that leaders in positive affective states tend to behave pro-socially towards their colleagues, subordinates, customers/clients, and other organisational stakeholders. In this way, they act as pro-social role models for their group members (George 1995:780).

Another way that positive emotions spread through an organisation is by generating chains of events that carry positive meaning for others. For example, acting on one's experience of gratitude leads to the creation of meaningful situations for others (see Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory, referred to in section 2.1.3). The original benefactor feels affirmed for his/her initial pro-social act, which leads to the bestowing of further altruistic gifts, which leads to more gratitude, etc. "The beneficiary ... is perceived as the repository of someone's goodwill and the

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<sup>25</sup> George's definition is based on the works of Brady (1970), Nowlis (1970), Clark and Isen (1982) and George and Brief (1992).

<sup>26</sup> In George 1995:779.

<sup>27</sup> In George 1995:780.

good things that have flowed to him or her as a result of another's efforts. This can call forth an appreciative, celebratory attitude towards a benefactor which set up a beneficent circle of concern" (White 1996, in Emmons 2003:90). This beneficent circle of concern could keep going *ad infinitum*. In this way, positive emotions, attitudes, and behaviours tend to produce more positive emotions, attitudes, and behaviours. This "amplification effect" is a significant way in which gratitude results in positive outcomes in the workplace (Emmons 2003:90).

Some of gratitude's transformational power in a work environment arises from its ability to offset toxic emotions and attitudes. As we saw in section 2.1.3, positive emotions broaden and build, whereas negative emotions narrow and tear down. Several theorists have proposed that "gratitude is a prophylactic for harmful impulses of envy and greed" (e.g., Solomon & Flores 2001, in Emmons 2003:90). Envy has been conceptualised as a breeding ground for ingratitude, as its fundamental problem is a non-awareness of the blessings that always surround us. Practising gratitude as a mental discipline may also be an antidote to excessive materialism, along with its accompanying negative emotions of envy, resentment, disappointment, and bitterness. Gratitude stems from perceiving a benefactor's good intentions, whereas resentment stems from perceiving a malefactor's ill will (Robertson 2003). Research has found that dispositional gratitude is negatively correlated with materialistic attitudes and with trait envy (McCullough *et al.* 2002). Resentment and envy have been implicated as the causes of such deviant workplace behaviours as absenteeism, sabotage, and theft (Aquino *et al.* 2001; Seabright & Schminke 2002)<sup>28</sup>. Cultivating gratitude and its associated positive feeling states (e.g., humility and empathy towards others) that are incompatible with these destructive emotions, may be a way of neutralising their toxicity. Some of gratitude's power lies in its ability to "inoculate individuals against negative states and behaviours" (Emmons 2003:91, 92).

### **2.3.2 Emotional intelligence, spirituality and workplace performance**

Tischler *et al.* (2002) conducted research exploring the impacts of emotional intelligence and spirituality on workplace effectiveness. In the article reporting their findings, they refer to Emotional Intelligence (EI) literature. EI has been defined as "the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman 1996:317). It can be seen to denote "an array of

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<sup>28</sup> In Emmons 2003:91.

non-cognitive skills, capabilities and competencies that influence a person's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures” (Martinez 1997:72, in Tischler *et al.* 2002:204). People who have a higher EI have been found to lead healthier, happier, more productive lives and seem to do better at work. The same has been found to be true of people with higher levels of spirituality. Research indicates that individuals are capable of growth from less to more EI and spirituality (Tischler *et al.* 2002:203).

It seems likely that EI impacts success at work more than does IQ or the ability to think rationally. EI improves people's competency at work as well as in their relationships with others; it helps individuals work more productively with other people and helps them to influence other people to work more productively with them. It has been found that employees who are self-confident, self-managing and conscientious tend to be more productive than those who are not (Bandura 1976 & 1977; Barrick & Mount 1991)<sup>29</sup>. People who are service orientated, who have organisational awareness, who have good social skills and skills in leadership, influence, communication, conflict management, teamwork, and collaboration, tend to be able to work effectively in their work environments (Tischler *et al.* 2002:205-206). All these traits are found in individuals with high EI, and thus we can conclude that people with high EI are likely to be productive and successful at work. Table 2.1 lists EI competencies.

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<sup>29</sup> In Tischler *et al.* 2002:205.

**Table 2.1:** EI competencies

	<i>Awareness</i>	<i>Skills</i>
<b><i>Personal competence</i></b> <i>(how we manage ourselves)</i>	Self-awareness Emotional self-awareness Accurate self-assessment Self-confidence	Self-management Adaptability Self-control Conscientiousness Initiative Achievement Trustworthiness
<b><i>Social competence</i></b> <i>(how we handle relationships)</i>	Social awareness Empathy Service orientation Organisational awareness	Social skills Leadership Influence Developing others Change catalyst Communication Conflict management Building bonds Teamwork and collaboration

Definitions of spirituality abound. Tischler *et al.* (2002:206) categorise the various uses and definitions as follows:

- the *spirit* of a culture/organisation/workgroup involves vitality, mood, nature, all intent;
- *spiritual* has to do with emotions, behaviours and attitudes;
- being spiritual has been associated with being open, giving, compassionate, holy, unflappable, and buoyant;
- spiritual people are often attributed with many similar types of awareness and skills to people with high EI;
- *spirituality* is associated with having personal experience of God/Allah/the Transcendent/the Beyond/the Sacred;
- this experience may result in similar behaviours, feeling states, etc. to those of people with high EI.

Research has found that spiritual practices result in many positive physiological and psychological health benefits (Tischler *et al.* 2002:208). A wide variety of studies have shown that there are numerous advantages to practising spiritual techniques/having spiritual experiences (Tischler *et al.* 2002:208-211), including (but not limited to):

- decreased stress hormone production
- increased muscle relaxation
- lower baseline levels of heart and respiration rates
- faster physical reactions
- increased stability of the autonomic nervous system
- enhanced creativity and intelligence
- improved brain functioning
- improved problem-solving ability
- increased innovation
- increased self-esteem
- increased ability to deal with abstract and complex situations
- decreased anxiety
- enhancement of general psychological health
- stronger self-identity
- improved perception of others
- greater empathy
- orientation towards positive values
- growth of wisdom
- increased self-actualisation
- less neuroticism
- less depression
- increased time competence
- more positive social psychological attitudes
- improved work performance
- improved relations with co-workers and supervisors
- increased work satisfaction
- decreased turnover propensity

Emmons (2000) and Zohar and Marshall (2001)<sup>30</sup> propose that spirituality could be an intelligence, namely, SQ.

As we have seen, there are many similarities between EI and spirituality. Both of these seem to lead to enhanced success at work. Tischler *et al.* (2002:215) conclude that many of the EI and spiritual competencies that can lead to improved individual success at work can be developed, and they envisage future research discovering the most practical, effective, and efficient methods of cultivating these competencies. If we review the benefits of gratitude discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2, it is evident that many of these are shared by people who have high EI and/or a developed sense of spirituality. It would thus be highly advantageous for organisations to cultivate attitudes of gratefulness in their employees. Studies involving gratitude and positive life outcomes propose that gratitude training results in sustained personal and interpersonal benefits (Emmons 2003:91). Other studies (e.g., Ellis & Davidi 2005, in Anseel *et al.* 2009:23) have also proposed that reflection is instrumental in enhancing performance. Encouraging employees to list the things for which they are thankful in a gratitude journal could help enhance their EI and/or their sense of spirituality, and thus result in their becoming more productive and more successful in their work environments.

## **2.4 Second language acquisition studies relating to motivation**

### **2.4.1 Factors influencing L2 acquisition**

Various factors have been said to influence L2 acquisition (SLA). Ellis (1994:472) provides a useful table which lists the results of three surveys concerning individual learner differences in language learning:

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<sup>30</sup> In Tischler *et al.* 2002:211.

**Table 2.2:** Factors influencing L2 acquisition

<i>Altman (1980)</i>	<i>Skehan (1989)</i>	<i>Larson-Freeman and Long (1991)</i>
1 Age	1 Language aptitude	1 Age
2 Sex	2 <i>Motivation</i>	2 <i>Socio-psychological factors</i>
3 Previous experience with language learning	3 Language learning strategies	a <i>motivation</i>
4 Proficiency in the native language	4 Cognitive and affective factors	b <i>attitude</i>
5 Personality factors	a extroversion/introversion	3 Personality
6 Language aptitude	b risk-taking	a self-esteem
7 <i>Attitudes and motivation</i>	c intelligence	b extroversion
8 General intelligence (IQ)	d field independence	c anxiety
9 Sense modality preference	e anxiety	d risk-taking
10 Sociological preference (e.g., learning with peers vs learning with teacher)		e sensitivity to rejection
11 Cognitive styles		f empathy
12 Learner strategies		g inhibition
		h tolerance of ambiguity
		4 Cognitive style
		a field independence/dependence
		b category width
		c reflexivity/impulsivity
		d aural/visual
		e analytic/gestalt
		5 Hemisphere specialisation
		6 Learning strategies
		7 Other factors, e.g., memory, sex

We can see from Table 2.2 that motivation – and the closely associated factor of attitudes – appears to be one of the top predictors of success in SLA. To quote Ellis (1994:508), motivation is a "key factor in L2 learning". The idea that this particular social psychological factor plays a significant role in the acquisition of an L2 has an intuitive appeal, as it makes sense that someone who is motivated will learn another language more easily than someone who is not. Much additional research has been done in this area, producing a lot of statistical evidence which substantiates the findings of Altman (1980), Skehan (1989) and Larson-Freeman and Long (1991) regarding motivation and language learning success (Gass & Selinker 2001:349). As we have already noted, motivation involves an attitudinal component; attitudes towards learning an L2 and attitudes towards the L2 community have both been found to correlate with proficiency in the new language. Gardner's studies (1985) showed that both these types of attitudes are relatively independent of intelligence and/or language aptitude. As we saw in section 1.2.5, Gardner (1985, 2000) refers to *integrated motivation*, which is made up of integrativeness (an openness to identify with a different language community), attitudes towards

the learning situation (reactions to things within the L2 learning context), and motivation (effort, persistence, attention, goals, desires, aspirations, positive affect, self-confidence, etc.)<sup>31</sup>.

## 2.4.2 Gardner's *integrativeness* revisited

Dörnyei (2003) notes that learning an L2 differs in several ways from learning other subjects:

While an L2 is a "learnable" school subject in that discrete elements of the communication code (e.g., grammatical rules and lexical items) can be taught explicitly, it is also socially and culturally bound, which makes language learning a deeply social event that requires the incorporation of a wide range of elements of the L2 culture.<sup>32</sup>

He goes on to comment that this social dimension is only part of the picture, as various other motivational aspects are also involved. He then discusses Gardner's *integrative motivation* (see section 1.2.5), and includes an extension of Gardner's concept of *integrativeness*. He suggests that the motivation dimension of the term is related to a more basic *identification process* within the individual's self-concept, rather than to any actual/metaphorical integration into an L2 community (Dörnyei 2003:6). This identification process appears to be similar to that discussed in the theory of *possible* and *ideal selves*, researched by social psychologists (e.g., Marcus & Nurius 1986; Higgins 1987). "Possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming, and thus provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation" (Marcus & Nurius 1986, in Dörnyei 2003:6). The *ideal self* is said to be one of the most important possible selves, and it denotes a person's hopes, aspirations, and desires, i.e., attributes that he/she would like to have. Within this context, integrativeness can be seen as attributes of the ideal self which are related to the L2 (Dörnyei 2003:6).

## 2.4.3 Alternative theoretical approaches

Dörnyei (2003:7-10) mentions four alternative theoretical approaches to the motivational aspects of SLA:

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<sup>31</sup> See section 1.2.5 in Chapter 1 for a fuller explanation of each of these components.

<sup>32</sup> Dörnyei refers to the works of Gardner (1979) and Williams (1994) in this explanation.

i) *Motivational Orientations and Self-Determination Theory*

The *self-determination theory* of Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002) is one of the most influential models in the field of motivational psychology. Noels and her colleagues (1999, 2000, 2001), in a principled and systematic manner, promoted the application of this theory to L2 motivational issues. This research has provided insights into how the concepts of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motivation*<sup>33</sup> relate to established L2 concepts such as *integrative* and *instrumental orientation*<sup>34</sup>. It has also provided a valid and reliable instrument for assessing the range of self-determination theory components in L2 learning. Noels (2001) also applied self-determination theory to the topic of *student autonomy* and the relationship between this and L2 motivation.

ii) *L2 Motivation and Attribution Theory*

*Attribution theory* was the dominant approach to research on learner motivation in the 1980s. It used *causal attributions* as the mediating link between individuals' past experiences and their future achievement efforts. Weiner (1992), the main advocate of this theory, proposed that the subjective reasons to which one attributes one's past successes and failures significantly shape one's motivational disposition. For example, if someone believes that past failure was due to low ability, he/she is likely not to attempt that activity again; however, if he/she feels that it was due to lack of effort or unsuitable learning strategies, he/she will probably attempt the activity again. The high incidence of language learning failure worldwide corroborates the supposition that attributional processes play a significant motivational role in language learning. This hypothesis has also been substantiated by research, for example, that conducted by Williams and Burden (1999, 2001).

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<sup>33</sup> *Intrinsic motivation* refers to motivation that comes from inside an individual; it comes from the pleasure that he/she gets from the activity itself and/or the sense of satisfaction that accompanies this. *Extrinsic motivation*, on the other hand, refers to motivation that comes from outside an individual, i.e., the motivation of rewards such as test results or money.

<sup>34</sup> *Integrative orientation* has to do with an L2 learner's attitudes towards the target language itself and towards its speakers. *Instrumental orientation* has to do with an L2 learner's attitudes related to perceived consequences and benefits of learning the target language (Dörnyei 2001:51).

### iii) *Goal Theories*

Language learning *goals* are often referred to as *orientations* in L2 motivation studies, and they have always been a fundamental element of this research<sup>35</sup>. Tremblay and Gardner (1985) proposed a motivation construct in which *goal salience* was a central component. They described goal salience as comprising the *specificity* of the learner's goals and the *frequency* of his/her goal-setting strategies. Dörnyei (2003:9) notes that hardly any L2 studies have focused their attention on the well-known *goal-orientation theory* of educational psychology, despite its direct implications for L2 learners and teachers.

### iv) *The Neurobiology of L2 Motivation*

Schumann (1998, 1999, 2001) conducted neurobiological investigations of the brain mechanisms involved in SLA by means of brain scanning and neuroimaging. The first area of SLA that Schumann examined was that of L2 motivation, and what resulted was the intriguing theory of *stimulus appraisal*.

The five dimensions along which stimulus appraisal occurs in the brain are:

- *novelty* (degree of unexpectedness/familiarity);
- *pleasantness* (attractiveness);
- *goal/need significance* (whether the stimulus is instrumental in satisfying needs or achieving goals);
- *coping potential* (whether the individual expects to be able to cope with the event);
- *self- and social image* (whether the event is compatible with social norms and the individual's self-concept).

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<sup>35</sup> Dörnyei (2003:9) refers to research done by Clément and Kruidenier 1983, Belmechri and Hummel 1998, and McClelland 2000.

Schumann demonstrated that "stimulus appraisals become part of the person's overall value system through a special 'memory for value' module, and thus they are largely responsible for providing the affective foundation of human action" (Dörnyei 2003:10). Schumann went on to broaden his stimulus appraisals theory by including a model of learning as a type of *mental foraging*, i.e., foraging for knowledge, which utilises the same neural systems as those used when creatures forage to feed or to mate. This mental foraging results from an incentive motive, and is powered by the stimulus appraisal system.

#### **2.4.4 A situated approach**

There was a research boom in the 1990s known as "the motivational renaissance" (Dörnyei 2003:11-12<sup>36</sup>). During this time, researchers focused on the motivational impact of the learning context. They examined the following aspects: *course-specific motivational components* (e.g., relevance of teaching materials, interest in tasks, and appropriateness of teaching method); *teacher-specific motivational components* (e.g., motivational impact of teacher's personality, behaviour, and teaching style/practice); and *group-specific motivational components* (e.g., various characteristics of the learner group such as cohesiveness, goal-orientedness, and group norms). This line of research was important because it introduced a *situated approach* to the study of SLA, characterised by a *micro perspective*, which differed from the *macro perspective* of Gardner's social psychological approach. McGroarty (2001, in Dörnyei 2003:12) explains that this "contextualisation" of L2 motivation coincided with a parallel shift in psychology that placed fresh emphasis on the role of social context in any learning activity.

Dörnyei (2003:12-17) describes three subsequent research directions that embrace the situated approach perspective:

##### **(a) *Willingness to Communicate (WTC)***

This is an extension of motivation research that involves studying the L2 speaker's willingness to engage in the act of L2 communication. It has to do with the fact that, when given the choice, individuals exhibit consistent predispositions towards or away from communicating. WTC is considered to be a fairly stable personality trait; however, in the case of L2 use, the situation

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<sup>36</sup> He refers to the work of Gardner and Tremblay 1994, and to a review written by Dörnyei 2001.

becomes more complex, because of the additional impact of L2 proficiency and L2 communicative competence. The WTC model contains psychological and linguistic factors, which are integrated in an organic manner. These include: linguistic self-confidence; desire to affiliate with another person; interpersonal motivation; intergroup attitudes, motivation, and climate; parameters of the social situation; communicative competence and experience; and various personality traits. See Appendix B for a schematic representation of the variables influencing WTC.

(b) *Task Motivation*

It has been said that the situated approach in L2 motivational research has culminated in a focus on the motivational basis of language learning tasks. The concept of tasks is useful to SLA researchers as it enables them to break down the multifaceted and prolonged L2 learning process into distinct components, each with a clear boundary, and in so doing create behavioural units to investigate. Julkunen (2001) argues that learners' task behaviour is influenced by both generalised and situation-specific motives. This is consistent with the distinction between *state* and *trait motivation* conceptualised by Tremblay *et al.* (1995). State motivation refers to stable and enduring dispositions; trait motivation refers to transitory/temporary responses or conditions. Dörnyei (2003:15) offers a more dynamic *task processing system* to depict the negotiation and finalisation of task motivation in an L2 learner.

This system comprises: (i) *task execution* (learner engages in task-supportive learning behaviours); (ii) *appraisal* (learner continually processes numerous environmental stimuli, and progresses towards action outcome)<sup>37</sup>; and (iii) *action control* (self-regulatory mechanisms to enhance, scaffold, or protect learning-specific action). Task processing involves the interaction of these three components: as learners *execute a task*, they continually *appraise* the process, and if the process seems to be slowing/halting/backsliding, learners then activate the *action control* system to save/enhance the action.

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<sup>37</sup> This concurs with Schumann's (1998) emphasis on *stimulus appraisal* discussed in section 2.4.3.

### (c) *Motivation and Learning Strategy Use*

Students employ learning strategies of their own free will, in order to improve their learning success. Dörnyei (2003:16)<sup>38</sup> states that "strategy use – by definition – constitutes instances of motivated learning behaviour". He goes on to discuss the history of the study of the connection between L2 motivation and language learning strategy use<sup>39</sup>. He concludes this section by noting that educational psychology now prefers to discuss learners' strategic contribution to their own learning under the term *self-regulatory learning* instead of using the label *learning strategy*.

#### **2.4.5 A process-orientated approach**

The situated approach to L2 motivation research soon led to a fresh focus on the dynamic character and temporal variation of motivation. When it comes to learning, "the common experience would seem to be motivational flux rather than stability" (Ushioda 1996, in Dörnyei 2001:21). Mastering an L2 is a prolonged learning activity, and there can be a dramatic variation in learners' commitment/motivation within a single lesson, and even more so over a longer period like an academic term (Dörnyei 2003:17), or a year, or a few years. In order to portray the ongoing changes in motivation over time, Dörnyei and Ottó (1998, in Dörnyei 2001:19) developed a model based on a *process-oriented approach*, i.e., a model that takes a dynamic view of motivation. According to this model, motivation comprises three discrete phases:

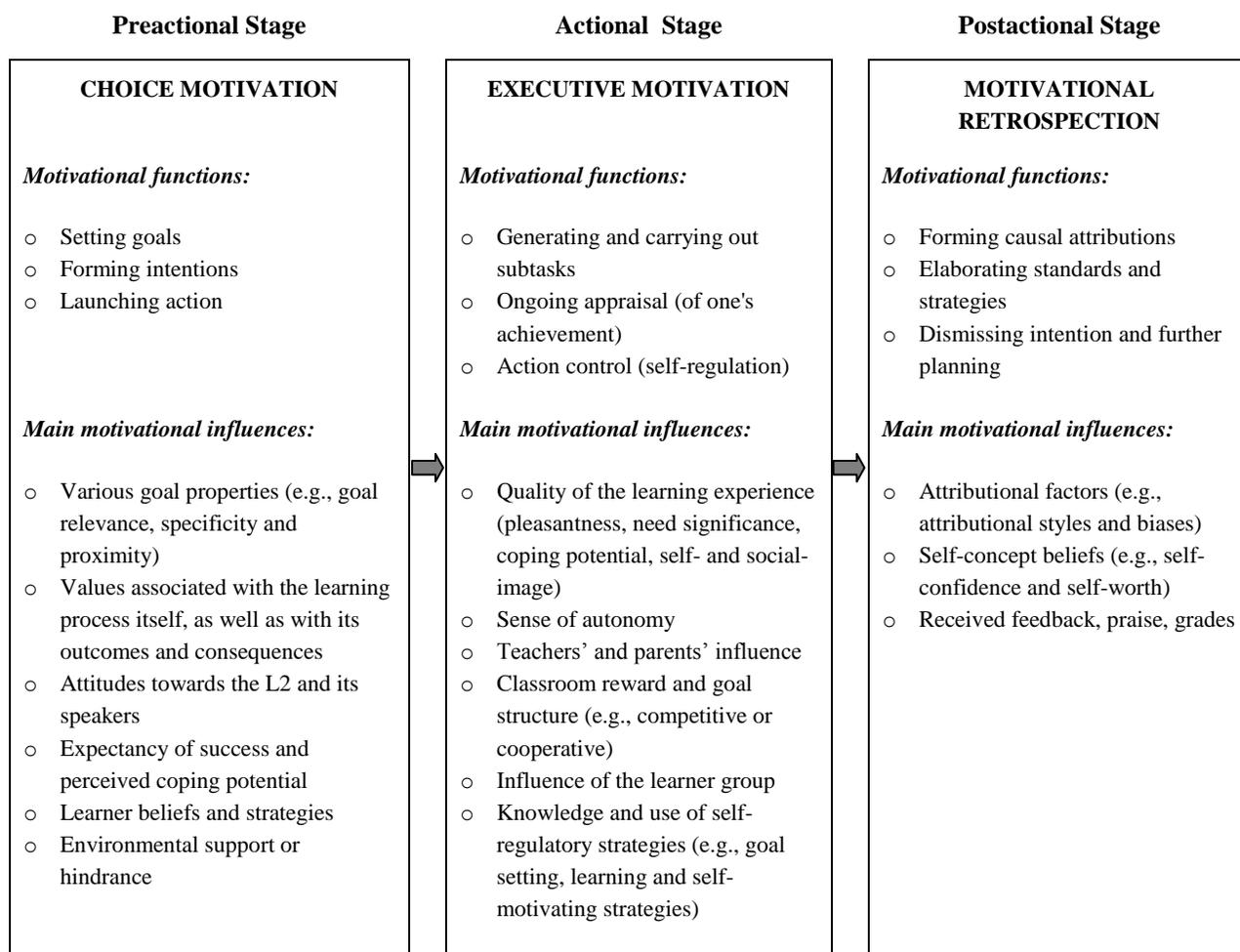
(i) motivation is generated, leading to the selection of a goal/task – *choice motivation*; (ii) motivation needs to be actively maintained and protected for the duration of the particular action – *executive motivation*; and (iii) after the completion of the action, learners embark on retrospective evaluation – *motivational retrospection*. Each motivational phase seems to be driven by a different set of motives (Dörnyei 2001:21). See Table 2.3 for the main motives influencing learners' behaviour/thinking during the three phases (Dörnyei 2001:22).

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<sup>38</sup> Dörnyei refers his readers to Cohen 1998 and Cohen and Dörnyei 2002.

<sup>39</sup> He refers to MacIntyre and Noels 1996, Schmidt *et al.* 1996, Schmidt and Watanabe 2001, and Williams *et al.* 2002.

**Table 2.3:** A process model of L2 learning motivation



### 2.4.6 Self-motivating strategies

The process-orientated approach highlights *action control mechanisms*, which makes it useful for promoting effective self-regulated learning (Kuhl 1985, in Dörnyei 2003:25). These mechanisms are a subclass of *self-regulatory strategies* and are related to learners' *self-motivating function*<sup>40</sup> (Dörnyei 2003:25). There are said to be five main classes of *self-motivating strategies* (Dörnyei 2001:110-115<sup>41</sup>). These are:

<sup>40</sup> Dörnyei refers his readers to Boekaerts *et al.* (2000) for a review of self-regulation.

<sup>41</sup> These classes are based on the taxonomies of Kuhl (1987) and Corno and Kanfer (1993).

- *Commitment control strategies* – conscious techniques used to preserve/enhance learners' original goal commitment
- *Metacognitive control strategies* – conscious techniques used to monitor and control concentration and to stop procrastination
- *Satiation control strategies* – these add extra attraction to an activity once it has lost its novelty in order to prevent satiation
- *Emotion control strategies* – these are used to manage obtrusive emotional states/moods and to consciously generate helpful emotions
- *Environmental control strategies* – these are used to eliminate negative environmental influences and to exploit positive ones

The class of *emotion control strategies* is the one most pertinent to this thesis, and so we will now examine it in a little more detail. There are certain emotional states/moods that tend to disrupt or inhibit action and thus weaken a learner's determination, and others that help the learner see things in a more optimistic and positive light. As mentioned above, people use emotion control strategies in order to deal with interfering emotional states/moods and to consciously generate more useful ones. The following strategies are used in order to realise these objectives (Dörnyei 2001:113-114):

- *Generating useful diversions*
- *Self-affirmation*
- *Constructing positive narratives of events*
- *Self-encouragement*
- *Finding humorous elements*
- *Using relaxation and meditation techniques*
- *Counting to ten*
- *Sharing your feelings with someone else*
- *Praying*

For the purposes of this thesis, we shall again focus on just one of these strategies, that of *constructing positive narratives of events*<sup>42</sup>. This strategy entails "explaining away" a negative experience by placing it into a larger narrative in which it is portrayed in a more positive light, for

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<sup>42</sup> Details of each of the others can be found in Dörnyei 2001:114.

example, a learner toning down a failure by highlighting the positive aspect of having circumvented an even greater failure (Dörnyei 2001:114). This ties in with the process of gratitude journaling. As we saw in section 1.2.7, writing in a gratitude journal helps a person to accept his/her life events and put them in context. It helps us to see the meaning of our experiences and to create personal meaning for them. Writing about something unpleasant (or even traumatic) in a gratitude journal may result in the emergence of a fresh and redemptive frame of reference (Emmons 2007:189).

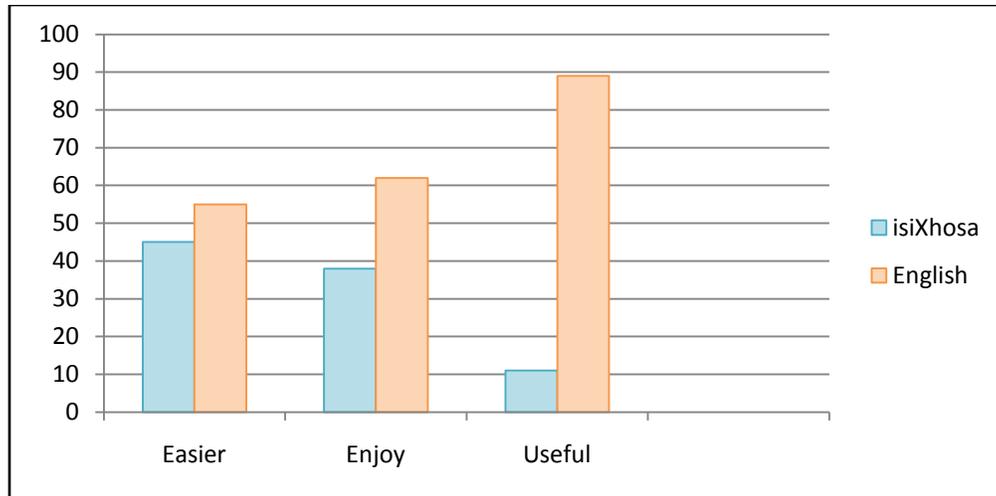
## **2.5 IsiXhosa speakers' perceptions of English**

This section mentions a few of the interesting results that have emerged from research conducted among isiXhosa-speaking learners in high school (2.5.1) and at university (2.5.2) in South Africa. The focus is on some of the findings from these studies that are pertinent to this thesis.

### **2.5.1 IsiXhosa and English at South African high schools**

English holds a dominant position in education in South Africa. Students in schools want to learn English, and their parents agree with them ... It has often been stated that English is the language of progress, development and economic success (Barkhuizen 2002:499-500).

Barkhuizen (2002) conducted research on high school learners' perceptions of the status and role of isiXhosa and English in the educational context. His study surveyed 2 825 students across 26 high schools in the Eastern and Western Cape Provinces. All learners followed the English Second Language (ESL) and Xhosa First Language (XL1) syllabi. The isiXhosa and English subjects were compared in terms of three variables: (i) which language students found easier at school; (ii) which language they enjoyed more as a subject; and (iii) which language they thought would be more useful to them one day when they had finished school. English was rated higher for all three variables – see Figure 2.1 (Barkhuizen 2002:505).



**Figure 2.1:** comparison of isiXhosa and English with regard to difficulty as a school subject, enjoyment as a subject, and usefulness after school

The usefulness after school question showed the highest difference in ratings, obtaining 89% for English compared with 11% for isiXhosa. This finding substantiates the claims of many theorists and researchers on African languages in education, who have proposed that African language speakers "perceive English to be the language of progress and opportunity" (Barkhuizen 2002:505<sup>43</sup>). One might find it surprising that these isiXhosa learners rated English, their L2, as an easier subject to study than their L1. Reasons for this finding could be: (a) the way in which isiXhosa is taught in schools, with a large emphasis being placed on structural rather than communicative activities; and (b) the variety of isiXhosa that is taught, with a focus on a traditional, standard variety<sup>44</sup> rather than the urbanised, informal variety that the students themselves speak.

<sup>43</sup> Barkhuizen refers his readers to the works of Kamwangamalu (1997) and Sarinjeive (1999).

<sup>44</sup> The students refer to this as "deep" Xhosa (Barkhuizen 2002:507).

## 2.5.2 IsiXhosa and English at South African universities

The spread of English to so many parts of the world and the increase in the number of those learning and using it (as L1 and L2) has been the most striking example of language expansion this century (Platt *et al.* 1984). There is abundant evidence that English is ... growing as the language of power, the international medium for the dissemination of knowledge in important world forums and the primary medium for 20th century science and technology (De Klerk 1996:114).

Some South Africans, however, perceive English to be too potent a language, threatening to overshadow the country's other 10 official languages. Yet, even with a threat of personal language loss, elitism and social injustice, which have all been said to result from the spread of English in this country, the language's instrumental and pragmatic appeal prevails (De Klerk 1996:114). English is becoming the *de facto*<sup>45</sup> *lingua franca*<sup>46</sup> across wide areas of South Africa, owing to the uneven geographical distribution of the country's 11 official languages<sup>47</sup>. De Klerk (1996:111) refers to the 1991 census<sup>48</sup>, which states that 17% of South Africans speak isiXhosa as their L1, whereas 9% speak English as theirs. The 2001 census gives a slightly increased 17.64% for isiXhosa speakers, and a slightly decreased 8.2% for English speakers<sup>49</sup>. De Klerk (1996:111) gives language figures for the Western Cape of 569 885 isiXhosa speakers, and 685 589 English speakers. The 2001 census states that the predominant languages in the Western Cape are Afrikaans, spoken by 55.3% of its population, isiXhosa, spoken by 23.7%, and English, spoken by 19.3%<sup>50</sup>.

De Klerk (1996) conducted a survey among 2 975 students who were non-native speakers of English at a university in the Eastern Cape, where isiXhosa students were in the majority. When declaring their home language, several speakers of "other" languages indicated that their L1 was English. When the linguistic profiles were further analysed, it was discovered that English could be viewed as an L1 in the educational domain for many of these L2 learners.

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<sup>45</sup> *De facto* means in practice or actuality but without being officially established/for all intents and purposes.

<sup>46</sup> *Lingua franca* refers to a language that is widely used as a means of communication among speakers of another language/other languages.

<sup>47</sup> The other nine official South African languages are: Afrikaans, isiNdebele, isiZulu, Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga.

<sup>48</sup> De Klerk's reference is Schuring 1993.

<sup>49</sup> Source: *The languages of South Africa*, <http://www.southafrica.info/about/people/language.htm>.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

The participants were asked why they had chosen an English-medium university. Their answers fell into seven main categories (De Klerk 1996:117-118):

- Practical reasons (e.g. being granted a bursary)
- The high standards of the university/appeal of particular subjects
- An expressed anti-Afrikaans sentiment
- English was the home language (this indicates some sort of language shift having occurred)
- English is an international language (learners want to be marketable world-wide)
- A desire to improve competence in English
- A strong pro-English sentiment (often linked to fluency and competence)

Overall, it was found that English was highly regarded among these learners. Only a very small number of them were negative towards English being used as the medium of instruction (MOI) or as the medium of informal social interaction (De Klerk 1996:119). There was also a positive perception of personal competence in English. Positive perceptions and confidence were found to be closely correlated with the age at which these learners had had their first exposure to English – the earlier someone had acquired this L2, the higher his/her levels of confidence and enjoyment of the language. De Klerk notes that the 228 participants who had been using English since before they started primary school might be said to have English as "a second first language" (De Klerk 1996:120).

A learner's success at mastering an L2 depends on formal exposure to the language at school, as well as social and psychological distance, i.e., actual levels of contact and more personal aspects of the learner. Quality of learning is enhanced as the learner experiences more contact with the target language and closer psychological distance with the target language community, which results in improved competence and an increase in positive attitude towards the language and its speakers (Ellis 1994, in De Klerk 1996:122). Social distance between learner group and target language group is also an important factor affecting attitudes and relative success levels in L2 acquisition. "If the second language learning group is politically, culturally, technically or economically superior to the [target language group] it will tend not to learn the target language" (Schumann 1978, in De Klerk 1996:123). Apartheid and its language policies left a legacy of separation in South Africa; however, social distance seems to be narrowing between some communities.

Cultural congruence should also be taken into account. South Africa's ethnic groups are very distinctive culturally. Differences are apparent in "all aspects of human life, including physical appearance, clothes, body language, music, food, traditions, etc." (De Klerk 1996:125). Apart from the outward differences, each culture is loyal to its own group, which, in the case of isiXhosa people, has a strong negative impact on mastering English too well: "One doesn't want to sound too much like an English speaker if one is a Xhosa speaker, in case one is seen as putting on airs" (De Klerk 1996:125).

De Klerk (1996:125) asserts that linguistic attitudes exert a powerful influence over learners, either positively or negatively. This corroborates similar claims made by Spolsky (1969) and Gardner (1985, 2007) (see section 1.2.4), and by Ellis (1994) and Dörnyei (2001, 2003) (see section 2.4). Most of the L2 learners in De Klerk's (1996) study were found to have strongly positive *cognitive attitudes* towards English. For these tertiary level students, English symbolises education, modernisation, access to the wider world, mobility, and advancement (De Klerk 1996:126, 127). They are motivated to succeed academically and to communicate in English on a daily basis for instrumental reasons. They were also found to have positive *emotive attitudes* towards the language, with many of them declaring English to be "a nice language". De Klerk (1996:126) believes that these positive linguistic attitudes would most likely lead to improved competence and increased use of English among these university students.

A subsequent study conducted by De Klerk (2000) asserts that many isiXhosa-speaking parents want English, and not isiXhosa, for their children. It presents evidence of a steady shift to English occurring among the more affluent members of the isiXhosa community in the Eastern Cape, the area from which over 65% of my participants hail. De Klerk (2000:198) notes that this shift is taking place on a practical level as well as on a socio-psychological level<sup>51</sup>. Various other researchers have also reported strongly positive perceptions of the value of English among African language speakers in South Africa; they have also reported an escalation in the use of English in L2 schools and in L2 households (Pather 1994; Pluddeman 1995; Mutasa 1996; Winkler 1997; and Verhoef 1998<sup>52</sup>).

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<sup>51</sup> De Klerk (2000:198) also comments that "there is evidence of considerable internal conflict in the minds of both the parents and children undergoing this shift as to the future role of the Xhosa language and culture in their lives".

<sup>52</sup> In De Klerk (2000:212).

## **2.6 A brief conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of various studies which relate to this thesis on the influence of gratitude journaling on the motivation and English language proficiency of young adult isiXhosa speakers. It has looked at the psychology of gratitude, and indicated how beneficial positive emotions are, highlighting gratitude in particular. Empirical evidence was presented in support of the claim that being able to feel and convey gratitude leads to psychological growth and improved well-being over time. Three studies on gratitude journaling conducted by Emmons and McCullough (2003) were discussed. In each of these, it was found that emotional, physical, and/or interpersonal benefits resulted from participation in self-guided gratitude exercises. Daily gratitude journaling over a number of weeks was shown to be more effective than weekly journaling.

Chapter 2 continued with an overview of research conducted linking positive affect, emotional intelligence (EI) and spirituality to favourable work outcomes. It was suggested that there is a strong link between affective states and work behaviour, with positive affect strongly influencing motivational aspects of task performance. Again, it was shown that gratitude, along with other positive emotions and other manifestations of EI and spirituality, can result in numerous benefits for employees and for their places of work. The next topic covered was that of L2 acquisition studies relating to motivation, showing that motivation is a key factor in language learning success. The last section of this chapter focused on isiXhosa learners' perceptions of English, and showed these to be generally very favourable. I shall link the findings discussed in this literature review to those of my own study in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This thesis involves an investigation of the effect of gratitude journaling on the motivation and attitude towards English and English language proficiency of young adult isiXhosa speakers. I set out to ascertain whether or not gratitude journaling could help these learners to improve their motivation levels, and thus, indirectly, their English proficiency. I also wanted to determine if the language in which the journaling is done would have any impact. My hypotheses were that the use of gratitude journaling would improve these isiXhosa-speaking students' attitudes towards the English language and their motivation to improve their ability to communicate in it, which should lead to a subsequent enhancement of their competence in using this L2.

The literature review in Chapter 2 has shown that positive emotions, including gratitude, tend to result in enhanced intellectual, physical, social, and psychological functioning (e.g., Fredrickson 2001, 2004 and Emmons & McCullough 2003). Several studies have found that well-being has a strong influence on positive performance in the workplace, and psychological well-being is claimed to be the strongest predictor of productivity (e.g., Donald *et al.* 2005). A significant association has been noted between positive affect and the motivational aspects of task performance (e.g., George & Bettenhausen 1990 and Emmons 2003). It seems feasible that focusing on their blessings by means of keeping a gratitude journal might lead to improved well-being, and subsequently enhanced performance and productivity in the academic life of tertiary level students.

Motivation, including its attitudinal components, has been labelled a key factor in successful language learning (e.g., Ellis 1994 and Dörnyei 2001, 2003). The literature review has highlighted the class of emotion control strategies among learners' self-motivating strategies, and, in particular, the approach of constructing positive narratives of events (Dörnyei 2001). This approach involves placing a negative experience into a larger narrative in which it is portrayed in a more positive light, for example, a learner toning down a failure by highlighting the positive aspect of having avoided an even greater failure (Dörnyei 2001:114). This ties in

with the practice of gratitude journalling, which helps a person to accept his/her life events and put them in context. Writing about something unpleasant in a gratitude journal often leads to a fresh and redemptive frame of reference (Emmons 2007:189). I thought it would be interesting to investigate whether gratitude journalling could result in enhanced motivation in young adult students, and whether this could have an effect on their proficiency in an L2.

The people I asked to participate in my research were isiXhosa students to whom I had taught Communications during their first year of tertiary study in 2008. I introduced them to the idea as a group in April 2010. The project was originally scheduled to start at the beginning of July, however, because of the extended mid-year break (FIFA World Cup time<sup>53</sup>), we eventually began on 15 July. Those who agreed to participate in the study signed consent forms, which included a clause saying that they were free to withdraw at any time<sup>54</sup>.

I developed several tasks for the students, which were delivered to them via the university's e-Learning Centre's WebCT application<sup>55</sup>. WebCT (web-based course tools) operates as a virtual classroom, which lecturers can use to keep in contact with their students outside of class time. It has numerous functions, including announcements, assessments, a calendar, discussion boards, e-mail, grade books, syllabus information, etc. I made use of the announcements, assessments and discussion functions in order to communicate with the students, and had them complete surveys, quizzes and journal entries for this thesis<sup>56</sup>.

The tasks were<sup>57</sup>:

*Task 1* - personal details, first exposure to English, etc.

*Task 2* - attitude to English / motivation to improve

*Task 3* - English proficiency test

*Task 4* - Journalling

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<sup>53</sup> Several students went home to the Eastern Cape for the holiday, and came back to university later than the start of the new term.

<sup>54</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>55</sup> See Appendix D for an outline of the activities as presented to the students on WebCT.

<sup>56</sup> See Appendix E for a screenshot of the Course Contents page displaying links to some of the tasks.

<sup>57</sup> See Appendices F to J.

*Task 5* - attitude to English / motivation to improve re-administered

*Task 6* - English proficiency test re-administered

*Task 5 Revisited* - Task 5 re-administered, including a few extra questions<sup>58</sup>

Participants were not told the full purpose of each task so as not to influence their performance. They were debriefed at the end of the study.

### **3.2 Questionnaire: Information about participants**

A questionnaire was compiled in order to gather information about the participants. It included questions about their parents' first languages, languages spoken to the participants at home while they were growing up, what they consider their first language to be, the language that they are most comfortable speaking now, how old they were when they had their first exposure to English (spoken, written, aural), etc. See Appendix F (Task 1) for the full questionnaire.

### **3.3 Survey: Attitude towards English**

A second questionnaire was developed in order to assess participants' morale and motivation in terms of their attitude towards English<sup>59</sup>. This was a multiple choice survey, which included questions about how much the participants enjoyed learning English (spoken, written, aural) as children, how they felt about English lessons in high school and at university, whether they like various forms of English media, how much interest they take in other cultures and countries, their attitude towards English-speaking people, etc. See Appendix G (Task 2/original Task 5) for the full list of questions in this survey.

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<sup>58</sup> The reason for Task 5 Revisited will be explained in section 3.8.

<sup>59</sup> My survey was loosely based on two questionnaires devised by fellow-student Keith Weaver for use in his thesis research with Korean participants. His sources were Spolsky (1969) and Pierson *et al.* (1980).

### 3.4 English language proficiency test

An L2 English proficiency test was administered to the participants. The test used was the Human Sciences Research Council's *Proficiency Test: English Second Language Advanced Level* (van der Schyff, 1991). See Appendix H (Task 3/Task 6) for the questions contained in this test.

### 3.5 Division into four groups

Participants were divided into four groups based on the results of the English language proficiency test described in section 3.3. This was so that each group could have a spread of members who were weaker and stronger in their English skills. The groups were given the names of colours, rather than of numbers or alphabetical letters, so that the participants would not think of one as any better than another. The following table (Table 3.1) briefly describes the four journaling groups.

**Table 3.1:** The four journaling groups

<b><i>Blue group:</i></b> IsiXhosa-speaking students keep a <i>factual</i> journal in <i>English</i> n = 8	<b><i>Green group:</i></b> IsiXhosa-speaking students keep a <i>factual</i> journal in <i>isiXhosa</i> n = 9
<b><i>Yellow group:</i></b> IsiXhosa-speaking students keep a <i>gratitude</i> journal in <i>English</i> n = 9	<b><i>Red group:</i></b> IsiXhosa-speaking students keep a <i>gratitude</i> journal in <i>isiXhosa</i> n = 9

### **3.6 Daily journalling**

I asked the students to carry out daily journalling on at least five days a week over a four-week period. They were asked to write two or three full sentences each day. See Appendix I for the different sets of instructions given to each of the four journalling groups. The WebCT discussion function was a very useful forum for this journalling, as I could keep a constant watch that participants were in fact making the required number of submissions, as well as check that they were writing the appropriate type of entries for their group. I sent them e-mails and SMSes to remind them to be consistent in their journalling. I also used the comment facility that is part of the discussion function in order to steer people back in the right direction when some had gone off track in their journalling. For example, some keeping factual journals had to be reminded not to include any emotions in their entries, and some keeping gratitude journals needed prompting on how to write about negative experiences in a positive/thankful light.

### **3.7 Survey: Attitude towards English (2<sup>nd</sup> round)**

After the journalling intervention, the same survey was administered as in section 3.2, i.e., the questionnaire to assess participants' morale and motivation in terms of their attitude towards English (Appendix G: Task 2/original Task 5). It was hoped that the results of these two surveys (pre- and post-intervention) would be able to give me an indication of whether there had been any change in the students' attitude towards English and their motivation to improve their English. However, a major problem arose, in that I did not understand that a WebCT survey was a strictly anonymous instrument. There was no way to link a set of answers with the person who gave them, and thus no way of comparing any changes in attitude/motivation between members of the four different groups.

Because of time constraints, it was not feasible for me to recruit a new group of participants with whom to work, and to re-run the whole experiment. I therefore had to be creative and devise a "Plan B" in order to be able to test for differences in attitude/motivation between the members of each of the different journalling groups. This "Plan B" is discussed in section 3.8.

### **3.8 English language proficiency test (2<sup>nd</sup> round)**

After the journalling intervention, the English language test of section 3.3 was also re-administered to the participants, i.e. the Human Sciences Research Council's *Proficiency Test: English Second Language Advanced Level* (van der Schyff, 1991), contained in Appendix H (Task 3/Task 6). This was done in order to determine whether there had been any change in the English language proficiency of the students as a result of their involvement in the journalling.

### **3.9 Survey: Attitude towards English (3<sup>rd</sup> round)**

As mentioned in section 3.6, a "Plan B" had to be devised in order to test for differences in attitude towards English and motivation to improve English between the members of the four different journalling groups. This took the form of yet another survey, but this time I included questions about participants' names and groups, so that I could use the results to see if there were any differences in attitude/motivation between the groups. I used the same 20 questions as in the original and revisited surveys (i.e., Tasks 2 and 5), and included an additional eight questions, including ones to find out whether the participants thought there was any difference in the way they answered these questions pre- and post-intervention. I realised that such questions would be answered very subjectively, and not very scientifically, but I thought it would be interesting to get the participants' perspectives. See Appendix J (Task 5 Revisited) for a list of all the questions used in this additional survey.

The results of the above questionnaires, surveys and tests are reported and discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Because of the sample sizes and many of the types of questions used in these experiments, a qualitative analysis might be more useful than a quantitative analysis. Thus, this is predominantly a qualitative presentation and discussion of the results that I obtained. Statistics are also included where possible to help substantiate my claims.

#### **4.1 The journalling**

As mentioned in section 3.5, the students were asked to write two or three full sentences in an online journal each day, on at least five days a week, over a four-week period. Here are some samples of what this journalling looked like. The different groups' instructions appeared at the top of each participant's journalling page, to remind them of the details of their task (these instructions have been included in the screenshots that appear below). Some participants were very good about following their instructions, while others needed to be corrected a few times (i.e., some only wrote one sentence instead of two or three, some put emotions into factual journals, some put negative interpretations of experiences into gratitude journals, etc.). Some students were faithful about writing in their journals every day/almost every day, while others made very few entries, and some tried to catch up missed days by writing several entries on a subsequent day.

eClassroom | Accessibility | Help | Log out

**FNL301S - Financial Information Systems 3**

Your location: [Discussions](#) > **Journal - Blue group**

**Journal - Blue group** (Hidden + Conditional)

Description (click to collapse)

**Factual Journal written in English:**

- \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week)
- \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in English on each day
- \* State what has happened during the day; please state facts only, with no emotions (i.e. don't say if the happening was a good or bad thing, don't say if it made you feel happy or sad)
- \* Example:
  1. I had fish and chips for lunch.
  2. Lulu and I watched the film Invictus on DVD this afternoon.

Topic Type: Journal  
 Graded: No  
 Peer Review: No  
 Posting Restrictions: Allow post only  
 Access: Private  
 User Identification: User Name

**[Redacted] 's Journal**

Select All | Deselect All Sort by: **Date** ↓

**Subject:** Friday - 13 August 2010 **Date:** 13 August 2010 11:49

1. Submitted my final journal entry.  
 2. I have to rush to town to run an errand and come back to finalise the Internal Auditing project.  
 3. My niece is coming back today and we will bond with DVD's tonight.

Comments (1 Comments) | Forward | Lock Message

**Subject:** Thursday - 12 August 2010 **Date:** 12 August 2010 11:57

1. We are getting our Taxation marks today, hopefully.  
 2. I need to edit my Application Letter to apply for jobs.  
 3. I need money to buy a new wallet because mine is totally broken.

Internet | 100%

IL MINI-THESIS ... | DragonBar | Appendices | Blackboard Learning ... | Cape Peninsula Univ... | Document2 - Microso... | 06:55 PM

**Figure 4.1:** Sample of Blue group entries – factual journal written in English

eClassroom | Accessibility | Help | Log out

**FNL301S - Financial Information Systems 3**

Your location: [Discussions](#) > **Journal - Green group**

**Journal - Green group** (Hidden + Conditional)

**Description (click to collapse)**

**Factual Journal written in Xhosa:**

- \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week)
- \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in Xhosa on each day
- \* State what has happened during the day; please state facts only, with no emotions (i.e. don't say if the happening was a good or bad thing, don't say if it made you feel happy or sad)
- \* Example:
  1. Isidlo sam sasemva kwemini sibe yintlanzi namazambane.
  2. Mna nomhlobo wam u Lulu sibukele ibali ethi "Invictus" ngalenjikalanga.

Topic Type: Journal  
Graded: No  
Peer Review: No  
Posting Restrictions: Allow post only  
Access: Private  
User Identification: User Name

**'s Journal**

Select All Deselect All Sort by: Date

**Subject:** Impela vekhi ende Date: 10 August 2010 14:19

Kulempela vekhi inde edlulileyo kuye kwanyanzeleka ndizame ukuleqa umsebenzi wam wesikolo bendisemva ngawo. Izolo ndiye ndaphumla imini yonke, imini yonke koko bendibukele umabona kude, ndihleli nje netshomi zam ababhinqileyo namadoda.

Comments Forward Lock Message  
(0 Comments)

**Subject:** Umzimba Date: 10 August 2010 13:59

Umzimba uyazixela ukuba namhlanje kungomvulo ndidiniwe, andinamdla wokwenza nto. Kodwa ke unyaka uyaphela andinayo enye indlela kufuneka ndisebenze noba kanjani.

Comments Forward Lock Message

Taskbar: HIL MINI-THESIS ... DragonBar Appendices Blackboard Learning ... Cape Peninsula Univ ... Document2 - Microso ... 06:56 PM

**Translation:**

- *Over the past long weekend I had to push my school work because I was behind.*
- *Yesterday I rested the whole day, I was just relaxing watching TV, with my male and female friends.*

**Figure 4.2:** Sample of Green group entries – factual journal written in isiXhosa

eClassroom | Accessibility | Help | Log out

**FNL301S - Financial Information Systems 3**

Your location: [Discussions](#) > **Journal - Yellow group**

**Journal - Yellow group** (Hidden + Conditional)

Description (click to collapse)

**Gratitude Journal written in English:**

- \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week)
- \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in English on each day
- \* Write about things that have happened during the day that you are thankful for
- \* Example:
  1. I'm thankful for the delicious lunch I had today (fish and chips).
  2. I'm thankful for my friend Lulu. She and I enjoyed watching Invictus on DVD this afternoon.

Topic Type: Journal  
 Graded: No  
 Peer Review: No  
 Posting Restrictions: Allow post only  
 Access: Private  
 User Identification: User Name

**[Redacted]'s Journal**

Select All | Deselect All | Sort by: **Date** ↓

**Subject:** My Journal **Date:** 13 August 2010 11:50

1. God has give me 86,400 second so just want to take this one and say thank you Lord for this day.  
 2. I'm grateful that god has give me strength to finish writing your journals every day it was so nice.

Comments (0 Comments) | Forward | Lock Message

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**Subject:** My Journal **Date:** 12 August 2010 14:41

1. Today i'm thankful of the fruit that lungi bring me .  
 2. i'm grateful of the day i have it was so nice and wonderful.

Comments (0 Comments) | Forward | Lock Message

Taskbar: Mini-thesis..., DragonBar, Appendices, Blackboard Learning..., Cape Peninsula Univ..., Document2 - Microso..., 06:57 PM

**Figure 4.3:** Sample of Yellow group entries – gratitude journal written in English

eClassroom | Accessibility | Help | Log out

**FNL301S - Financial Information Systems 3**

Your location: [Discussions](#) > **Journal - Red group**

**Journal - Red group** (Hidden + Conditional)

Description (click to collapse)

**Gratitude Journal written in Xhosa:**

- \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week)
- \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in Xhosa on each day
- \* Write about things that have happened during the day that you are thankful for
- \* Example:
  1. Ndiyabulela ngesidlo esimnandi sasemva kwemini (intlanzi namazambane).
  2. Ndiyabulela ngomhlobo wam u Lulu. Mna naye sikonwabele ubukela ibali elithi "Invictus" kumabonakude.

Topic Type: Journal  
 Graded: No  
 Peer Review: No  
 Posting Restrictions: Allow post only  
 Access: Private  
 User Identification: User Name

**[Redacted Name]'s Journal**

Select All | Deselect All | Sort by: **Date** ↓

**Subject:** Ixhala endinalo **Date:** 13 August 2010 11:53

Ndiziva ndinovalo lwevimviwo zikugqibela enyakeni. Kodwa ndizinika ithemba, uba ndifunde kakhulu

Comments (0 Comments) | Forward | Lock Message

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**Subject:** Isidlo nomhlobo **Date:** 13 August 2010 11:46

Namhlanje ndizodibano nohlobo wam. Noko nahlanje siphuma kwangethuba esikolweni. Ndizotshe ndikwazi umbona. Sendibulela lento efike nahlanje.

Comments (0 Comments) | Forward | Lock Message

... **Date:** 13 August 2010 11:53

Taskbar: ILL MINI-THESIS..., DragonBar, Appendices, Blackboard Learning..., Cape Peninsula Univ..., Document2 - Microso..., 06:58 PM

**Translation:**

- *I'm feeling nervous about the end of the year exams. But I have hope, because I am studying hard.*
- *Today I'm meeting with my friend. Today I'm leaving early from school. So I'll have time to see my friend. I'm happy that she arrived today.*

**Figure 4.4:** Sample of Red group entries – gratitude journal written in isiXhosa

## 4.2 A summary of the results

### 4.2.1 Information about participants (Task 1)

The case summaries descriptive statistical analysis shows that participants are similar across all groups as far as ages go, with the mean age being 22 years across all groups (the youngest person was 20, and the oldest was 26). A one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) testing for differences between the means of each of the variables in Task 1 of each of the four journalling groups delivered a p-value of greater than 0.05, and so we can conclude that there are no statistically significant differences between the four groups in terms of the relevant personal characteristics of their members. This analysis is summarised in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1:** ANOVA of a sample of Task 1 questions

		<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Age</i>	Between Groups	1.365	3	0.455	0.128	<b>0.942</b>
	Within Groups	109.778	31	3.541		
	Total	111.143	34			
<i>Age I started hearing and speaking English</i>	Between Groups	17.626	3	5.875	0.649	<b>0.590</b>
	Within Groups	262.556	29	9.054		
	Total	280.182	32			
<i>Age I started reading and writing English</i>	Between Groups	9.727	3	3.242	0.677	<b>0.573</b>
	Within Groups	148.444	31	4.789		
	Total	158.171	34			
<i>Matric English mark – percentage</i>	Between Groups	330.243	3	110.081	1.669	<b>0.195</b>
	Within Groups	1912.484	29	65.948		
	Total	2242.727	32			
<i>1st year University Communication mark</i>	Between Groups	244.400	3	81.467	1.737	<b>0.180</b>
	Within Groups	1454.000	31	46.903		
	Total	1698.400	34			
<i>3rd year University Communication mark</i>	Between Groups	61.179	3	20.393	0.291	<b>0.832</b>
	Within Groups	1333.690	19	70.194		
	Total	1394.870	22			

What follows is a qualitative analysis of the overall results of Task 1.

All of the participants in this study were L1 isiXhosa speakers, with English as their L2. As mentioned in section 1.2.2, all of their mothers were L1 isiXhosa speakers, as were all of their fathers except for one (who was Sotho). 74% of the participants (26 people) listed isiXhosa as the only language spoken to them at home while they were growing up. Four participants listed English along with isiXhosa in answer to that question. Three included Afrikaans as well as English. Two listed other African languages along with isiXhosa (namely, Phondo and Sotho).

80% of the participants (28 students) considered their L1 to be isiXhosa. Interestingly though, five of them declared their L1 to be English. As we saw in section 2.5.2, several of the university students in De Klerk's (1996) study who were speakers of other languages (mainly isiXhosa) also indicated that their L1 was English, because of their educational background.

Just over a quarter (26%) of my study's participants (nine people) had their first exposure to English before they entered primary school. Most of them (60%, 21 participants) learnt the language at primary school, while only three encountered it for the first time at high school. De Klerk (1996:120) commented that a large number of her participants who had been using English since before they began primary school might be said to have English as "a second first language". Perhaps the same may be said of some of the students who participated in my study.

The mean mark obtained for English in Matric by my participants was 57% (lowest mark 39%, and highest 79%). This brings to mind the results of Barkhuizen's (2002) study from section 2.5.1, in which isiXhosa high school students demonstrated a high regard for English as a subject, rating it higher than their own language in terms of easiness, enjoyment, and perceived usefulness after school. The mean result for 1<sup>st</sup> year university Communication was 62% (lowest result 50%, and highest 82%). For 3<sup>rd</sup> year university Communication, the mean dropped slightly to 58% (lowest result 43%, and highest 70%). These results show a reasonable proficiency in English as an L2 at secondary and tertiary level.

When it came to the question about the language that they are most comfortable speaking now, just fewer than half of my participants stated only isiXhosa (49%, 17 people), while nine participants (26%) said that they were most comfortable with only English, and an additional nine participants (26%) said that they were equally comfortable speaking isiXhosa and English. This could be as a consequence of the steady shift to English occurring within the isiXhosa community in the Eastern Cape (De Klerk 2000:198, in section 2.5.2), the area where over 65% of my participants grew up; many isiXhosa-speaking parents want English rather than isiXhosa for their children. African language speakers in South Africa seem to have strongly positive perceptions of the value of English; and there has recently been an escalation in the use of English in L2 schools and in L2 households (De Klerk 2000:212, in section 2.5.2)<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> De Klerk mentions research conducted by Pather 1994; Pluddeman 1995; Mutasa 1996; Winkler 1997; and Verhoef 1998.

## 4.2.2 Attitude towards English (Task 2, Task 5 and Task 5 Revisited)

### 4.2.2.1 Task 2 and Task 5

**Table 4.2:** Results of Task 2 and Task 5

	Average Task2	n - Task 2	Std Dev Task 2	Average Task5	n - Task 5	Std Dev Task 5	<i>Ttest:</i>		
							pooled std	t-value	p-value
<i>Q1</i>	1.571	35	1.008	1.486	35	0.853	0.934	0.384	0.702
<i>Q2</i>	1.714	35	0.987	1.686	35	0.932	0.960	0.124	0.901
<i>Q3</i>	1.735	34	0.790	1.771	35	1.140	0.983	0.153	0.879
<i>Q4</i>	1.500	34	0.896	1.429	35	0.778	0.838	0.354	0.725
<i>Q5</i>	1.794	34	0.978	1.657	35	0.802	0.893	0.637	0.526
<i>Q6</i>	1.529	34	0.748	1.543	35	0.741	0.745	0.075	0.940
<i>Q7</i>	1.412	34	0.743	1.486	35	0.887	0.819	0.375	0.709
<i>Q8</i>	1.765	34	1.103	1.686	35	0.832	0.975	0.337	0.738
<i>Q9</i>	1.294	34	0.524	1.343	35	0.539	0.532	0.381	0.705
<i>Q10</i>	1.265	34	0.511	1.200	35	0.406	0.461	0.583	0.562
<i>Q11</i>	2.029	34	0.969	1.943	35	0.998	0.984	0.365	0.716
<i>Q12</i>	1.088	34	0.379	1.171	35	0.453	0.418	0.827	0.411
<i>Q13</i>	1.618	34	0.779	1.514	35	0.781	0.780	0.550	0.584
<i>Q14</i>	1.324	34	0.638	1.429	35	0.655	0.647	0.675	0.502
<i>Q15</i>	1.971	34	1.218	2.086	35	1.314	1.268	0.377	0.707
<i>Q16</i>	1.588	34	0.857	1.514	35	0.818	0.837	0.367	0.715
<i>Q17</i>	<b>1.471</b>	34	0.662	<b>1.829</b>	35	0.785	0.727	2.044	<b>0.045</b>
<i>Q18</i>	1.853	34	0.958	2.086	35	0.853	0.906	1.067	0.290
<i>Q19</i>	2.706	34	1.088	2.457	35	1.094	1.091	0.947	0.347
<i>Q20</i>	1.088	34	0.288	1.029	35	0.169	0.235	1.053	0.296

A t-test was run on the overall results of Tasks 2 and 5. The results showed only a slight statistically significant difference for the question about attitude towards English-speaking people (Question 17: "I like most of the English-speaking people that I know"). The overall scores moved from 1.48 (Task 2) to 1.83 (Task 5). This still leaves the majority of answers to this question between "Strongly Agree" and "Agree", but now they are closer to "Agree". Statistically, this is regarded as a very small but significant change. As one can see from Table 4.3, before the journalling intervention, 21 participants had a very positive attitude towards the English-speaking people in their acquaintance, this number dropped to 14 post-intervention. Unfortunately, because of the anonymity issue, we are not able to see to which group/s these participants with changed perspectives belong. We are only able to surmise as to the reason/s for the change. I hope that all my nagging to get the students to do their daily journalling, and then to complete the follow-up tasks, was not what brought about the slight drop in positive attitude towards my kind (i.e. English-speaking people).

**Table 4.3:** Task 2 and Task 5 – responses to Question 17

	Task 2, Q 17	Task 5, Q 17
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	21	14
<i>Agree</i>	10	13
<i>Neither Agree or Disagree</i>	3	8

The overall results of Tasks 2 and 5 showed that there is no change (apart from that one question) in the overall attitude/motivation of students. So even if we had the names, it is highly probable that this would not have made much of a difference to the results obtained. Also, there is no reason to assume that there would have been any differences in attitude/motivation between the groups before the journalling intervention took place, as group membership was randomly assigned from a sample of young adult students who were similar in many ways (age, home language, year of study, course of study, etc.). So the comparison of differences in attitude/motivation between the groups is more important post-intervention. Task 5 Revisited can be used for this inter-group comparison.

#### 4.2.2.2 Task 5 Revisited

When one compares Task 5 to Task 5 Revisited, the mean and standard deviation are very similar. The Student's T-test for the difference between the two groups showed a p-value that is not smaller than 0.05. We can therefore conclude that the results of these two tasks are statistically similar, and thus Task 5 Revisited gives us analogous information to that which the original Task 5 would have done.

**Table 4.4:** Single-factor ANOVA for Task 5 Revisited

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	14.899	3	4.966	1.123	<b>0.365</b>	3.127
Within Groups	84.057	19	4.424			
Total	98.957	22				

The results of the ANOVA (one-way analysis of variance) to test for differences between groups yielded a p-value of 0.365, as we can see from Table 4.4. Because this value is greater than 0.05, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between the four groups when it comes to attitude towards English/motivation to improve English proficiency after the journaling intervention.

**Table 4.5:** Comparison of the percentages of positive answers to Task 5 Revisited

	<i>Blue group Factual journal in English</i>		<i>Green group Factual journal in isiXhosa</i>		<i>Yellow group Gratitude journal in English</i>		<i>Red group Gratitude journal in isiXhosa</i>	
	Participant	Score	Participant	Score	Participant	Score	Participant	Score
	B 4	11	G 2	20	Y 1	18	R 3	20
	B 5	20	G 4	20	Y 2	20	R 4	18
	B 6	18	G 7	17	Y 5	19	R 5	18
	B 7	17	G 8	20	Y 6	15	R 6	19
	B 8	19	G 9	20	Y 7	17	R 7	17
					Y 8	19	R 9	16
					Y 9	17		
Average score /20	17		19.4		17.8		18.4	
Average percentage	<b>85.0%</b>		<b>97.0%</b>		<b>89.0%</b>		<b>92.0%</b>	

It is interesting to note the overall percentages of positive answers given to Task 5 Revisited by the four different journalling groups in Table 4.5. The two groups that did their journalling in isiXhosa have positive scores in the 90s, while the two groups that journalled in English also have positive scores, but theirs are slightly lower, in the 80s. These results could possibly lead one to surmise that the overall journalling experience was more positive for the participants who did the journalling in their own language. What is even more interesting, in the context of this study, is that the highest overall average percentage for this task is found in a factual journalling group: 97% in the factual journalling group in isiXhosa. This is not what I would have expected; according to my hypotheses, the gratitude journalling groups should have scored higher than the factual journallers. However, we must bear in mind that these scores are only percentages. Although these percentages yield interesting and important results, we have already seen that the statistical analysis of these particular findings shows that there is no significant difference in the attitude/motivation of these four groups.

### 4.2.3 English proficiency tests (Task 3 and Task 6)

The overall scores obtained by participants in Task 3 (administered before the journaling intervention) and Task 6 (administered after the journaling intervention) were compared, in order to ascertain whether there had been an increase in English proficiency among members of any of the four groups. The raw scores are reflected in Table 4.6 as a mark out of 20. The mean for Task 3 was 9.35 (lowest mark 2, highest mark 17), and that for Task 6 was 10.31 (lowest mark 5, highest mark 18).

**Table 4.6:** Scores out of 20 obtained for Task 3 and Task 6

<b>Blue group</b> <i>Factual journal in English</i>			<b>Green group</b> <i>Factual journal in isiXhosa</i>		
<i>Participant</i>	<i>Task 3</i>	<i>Task 6</i>	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Task 3</i>	<i>Task 6</i>
B 1	4	-	G 1	11	12
B 2	12	12	G 2	3	7
B 3	6	-	G 3	-	13
B 4	10	11	G 4	12	14
B 5	8	12	G 5	7	-
B 6	11	11	G 6	13	13
B 7	7	6	G 7	10	11
B 8	16	16	G 8	9	8
			G 9	8	6
<b>Yellow group</b> <i>Gratitude journal in English</i>			<b>Red group</b> <i>Gratitude journal in isiXhosa</i>		
<i>Participant</i>	<i>Task 3</i>	<i>Task 6</i>	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Task 3</i>	<i>Task 6</i>
Y 1	12	12	R 1	13	13
Y 2	13	15	R 2	3	5
Y 3	4	7	R 3	7	10
Y 4	2	6	R 4	8	11
Y 5	9	8	R 5	15	15
Y 6	6	6	R 6	6	8
Y 7	11	8	R 7	10	8
Y 8	17	18	R 8	11	9
Y 9	7	6	R 9	17	13

A one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) was performed for Task 3 and Task 6, using only the cases where both tasks were completed by a student. One can see from the results in Table 4.7 that not all the participants in the two factual journalling groups participated in both of these tasks (6 out of the 8 in the English group, and 7 out of the 9 in the isiXhosa group), while all members of the two gratitude journalling groups did participate in both of these tasks. Perhaps the gratitude journalling had some positive motivational effect on its participants, which caused them all to follow through with their commitment to the study and take part in the post-journaling Task 6. One can only surmise about such consequences of the intervention, as no testing was done for a possible increase in general motivation at the end of the study. However, such speculation would be supported by the findings of previous studies on the positive effects of gratitude (e.g., see Chapter 2, Fredrickson 1998, 2001, 2004 and Emmons & McCullough 2003).

**Table 4.7:** One-way ANOVA for Tasks 3 and 6: Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std Dev	Std Error	95% Confid. Interval for Mean		Min	Max
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
<b>TASK 3</b>	Factual journal in English	6	10.67	3.204	1.308	7.30	14.03	7	16
	Factual journal in isiXhosa	7	9.43	3.309	1.251	6.37	12.49	3	13
	Gratitude journal in English	9	9.00	4.743	1.581	5.35	12.65	2	17
	Gratitude journal in isiXhosa	9	10.00	4.500	1.500	6.54	13.46	3	17
	Total	31	9.71	3.960	0.711	8.26	11.16	2	17
<b>TASK 6</b>	Factual journal in English	6	11.33	3.204	1.308	7.97	14.70	6	16
	Factual journal in isiXhosa	7	10.14	3.132	1.184	7.25	13.04	6	14
	Gratitude journal in English	9	9.56	4.419	1.473	6.16	12.95	6	18
	Gratitude journal in isiXhosa	9	10.22	3.114	1.038	7.83	12.62	5	15
	Total	31	10.23	3.442	0.618	8.96	11.49	5	18

**Table 4.8:** One-way ANOVA for Tasks 3 and 6: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>TASK 3</b> Between Groups	11.339	3	3.780	0.222	<b>0.880</b>
Within Groups	459.048	27	17.002		
Total	470.387	30			
<b>TASK 6</b> Between Groups	11.451	3	3.817	0.300	<b>0.825</b>
Within Groups	343.968	27	12.740		
Total	355.419	30			

The ANOVA (analysis of variance) performed on Tasks 3 and 6 yielded a high p-value (the "Sig." value in Table 4.8). This tells us that there is no significant difference in the students' proficiency in English before and after the journalling intervention. The correlation between the results of Tasks 3 and 6 is high, but this does not indicate anything significant regarding an increase in English proficiency.

The Student's T-test for paired observations was run on the results of Tasks 3 and 6 for each of the four journalling groups (see Tables 4.9 to 4.12 below). This type of analysis tests for a statistically significant difference between two sets of observations. Because the p-value is greater than 0.05 in each of the four cases, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between the results of these two tasks for any of the four groups.

**Table 4.9:** Paired samples test for Tasks 3 and 6 for the factual journalling in English group

	Paired Differences					t	df	p-value (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std Dev	Std Error	95% Confid. Interval of the Diff.				
				Lower	Upper			
TASK 3 - TASK 6	-0.667	1.751	0.715	-2.504	1.171	-0.933	5	<b>0.394</b>

**Table 4.10:** Paired samples test for Tasks 3 and 6 for the factual journalling in isiXhosa group

	Paired Differences					t	df	p-value (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std Dev	Std Error	95% Confid. Interval of the Diff.				
				Lower	Upper			
TASK 3 - TASK 6	-0.714	1.976	0.747	-2.542	1.113	-0.956	6	<b>0.376</b>

**Table 4.11:** Paired samples test for Tasks 3 and 6 for the gratitude journalling in English group

	Paired Differences					t	df	p-value (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std Dev	Std. Error	95% Confid. Interval of the Diff.				
				Lower	Upper			
TASK 3 - TASK 6	-0.556	2.186	0.729	-2.236	1.125	-.0762	8	<b>0.468</b>

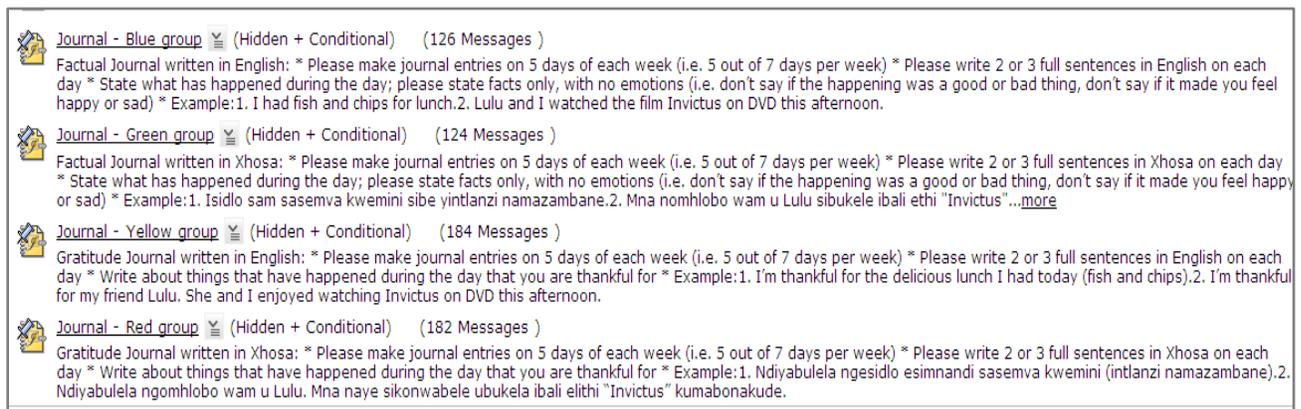
**Table 4.12:** Paired samples test for Tasks 3 and 6 for the gratitude journalling in isiXhosa group

	Paired Differences					t	df	p-value (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std Dev	Std Error	95% Confid. Interval of the Diff.				
				Lower	Upper			
TASK 3 - TASK 6	-0.222	2.489	0.830	-2.135	1.691	-0.268	8	<b>0.796</b>

It is actually not that surprising that there was no change in the participants' English proficiency test results pre- and post-intervention. Only in hindsight did I realise that English proficiency is highly unlikely to increase as the result of an intervention like this one over the period of just one month – "improving proficiency in a second language is a long-term project" (Gass & Selinker 2001:354); "mastering an L2 is a prolonged learning activity" (Dörnyei 2003:17).

### 4.3 An interesting finding: Number of journal entries per group

Although this was not something for which I was originally testing, I made a very interesting discovery when I looked at the final number of entries made into the four different types of journals. The screenshot below (Figure 4.5) shows these entries as the number of messages posted onto the discussion board section of WebCT.



The screenshot displays four journal groups, each with a description of the journaling task and an example entry. The groups are:

- Journal - Blue group** (Hidden + Conditional) (126 Messages )  
Factual Journal written in English: \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week) \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in English on each day \* State what has happened during the day; please state facts only, with no emotions (i.e. don't say if the happening was a good or bad thing, don't say if it made you feel happy or sad) \* Example:1. I had fish and chips for lunch.2. Lulu and I watched the film Invictus on DVD this afternoon.
- Journal - Green group** (Hidden + Conditional) (124 Messages )  
Factual Journal written in Xhosa: \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week) \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in Xhosa on each day \* State what has happened during the day; please state facts only, with no emotions (i.e. don't say if the happening was a good or bad thing, don't say if it made you feel happy or sad) \* Example:1. Isidlo sam sasemva kwemini sibe yintlanzi namazambane.2. Mna nomhlobo wam u Lulu sibukele ibali ethi "Invictus" ...[more](#)
- Journal - Yellow group** (Hidden + Conditional) (184 Messages )  
Gratitude Journal written in English: \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week) \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in English on each day \* Write about things that have happened during the day that you are thankful for \* Example:1. I'm thankful for the delicious lunch I had today (fish and chips).2. I'm thankful for my friend Lulu. She and I enjoyed watching Invictus on DVD this afternoon.
- Journal - Red group** (Hidden + Conditional) (182 Messages )  
Gratitude Journal written in Xhosa: \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week) \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in Xhosa on each day \* Write about things that have happened during the day that you are thankful for \* Example:1. Ndiyabulela ngesidlo esimnandi sasemva kwemini (intlanzi namazambane).2. Ndiyabulela ngomhlobo wam u Lulu. Mna naye sikonwabele ubukela ibali elithi "Invictus" kumabonakude.

Figure 4.5: final number of journal entries (messages) in each group

As one can see in Figure 4.5, the factual journalling groups (English and isiXhosa) had considerably fewer overall journal entries than did the gratitude journalling groups (English and isiXhosa). I asked the statistician to see if this difference was statistically significant. She worked with the percentages of possible entries versus the actual entries for each group. Taking five days of journalling per week, over four weeks of journalling, the factual journalling groups submitted 77% and 78%, respectively, of their possible entries, where as the gratitude journalling groups both submitted 100% of their possible entries. Using the Chi-squared test to test for the differences between the four proportions, we found that there was in fact a statistically significant difference between the number of entries submitted by factual groups versus those of the gratitude groups.

The statistician then analysed these numbers using the Poisson distribution, which she felt would be a statistically better measure than the Chi test in this situation. The fact that some participants wrote more than one message on some days, and no messages on other days, is captured with Poisson (we can count the number of messages, but we cannot count the number of "non-messages"). Using this method, we found that the factual journalling groups had significantly fewer messages than they could have had over this one month period. For both of these factual groups, the number of entries was found to be significantly lower than what was expected. For the gratitude journalling groups, on the other hand, the number of entries submitted was what was expected (as one can see from Table 4.13, they were actually slightly higher than expected).

**Table 4.13:** Poisson distribution for number of journal entries per group

<i>Group</i>	<i>No. participants</i>	<i>Possible no. entries</i>	<i>Actual no. entries</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Factual journal in English	8	160	126	0.0031
Factual journal in isiXhosa	8	160	124	0.0018
Gratitude journal in English	9	180	184	0.6355
Gratitude journal in isiXhosa	9	180	182	0.5786

This finding could indicate that the two groups of gratitude journalers found something inherently beneficial and/or enjoyable in the process of regularly writing about the things for which they were thankful. In fact, several of these participants commented on their last day of the intervention that they were sad that the experience was coming to an end. As mentioned in section 1.1, I find that the practice of gratitude journalling affects my state of mind positively and makes me feel generally happier and more optimistic<sup>61</sup>. It is likely that these students were affected in a similar way by their gratitude journalling.

It is also probable that these individuals who continually reminded themselves to be aware of their blessings experienced the broadened thoughts-action tendencies referred to by Fredrickson (1998, 2001, 2004, in section 2.1.3). We saw in the literature review that thankful individuals (as well as those who are being thanked and those who witness helpful actions) are

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<sup>61</sup> These personal findings have been echoed in Chapter 2's literature review, see section 2.2 in particular (Emmons & McCullough 2003).

inspired to become better people, and are able to be creative as they consider a wide range of helpful acts that they can perform for others (Fredrickson 2004:158). Perhaps this phenomenon lead the two groups of gratitude journallers to be more motivated to help me with my research than were the members of the two factual journalling groups; they knew that I needed daily journal inputs in order for my study to yield valid results, and wanted to assist me by playing their part in this process.

#### **4.4 Conclusions**

The majority of the participants passed English at high school and Communication at university. Just over half of them are either most comfortable speaking English or are equally comfortable speaking isiXhosa and English. Their overall attitude towards English seems to be positive, however, no statistically significant difference was found between the four groups when it came to attitude towards English/motivation to improve English proficiency after the journalling intervention.

Analysing the English proficiency scores pre- and post-intervention showed no significant difference in proficiency. This is not surprising, as it generally takes far longer than one month for people to improve proficiency in an L2.

Although not tested for, a possible increase in general motivation in the gratitude journallers could be inferred as: all of them followed through and took part in the post-journalling English proficiency task; and the factual journalling groups had noticeably fewer overall journal entries than did the gratitude journalling groups.

It would seem that the gratitude journallers found something inherently beneficial/enjoyable in the process of regularly listing their blessings. Thankful individuals tend to be inspired to become better people, and creatively consider a wide range of helpful acts that they can perform for others. Perhaps increased gratitude in the two groups of gratitude journallers motivated them to assist me with my research.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **CONCLUSION**

The evidence that cultivating gratefulness is good for you is overwhelming. Gratitude is a quality that we should aspire to as part and parcel of personal growth. This wisdom derives not only from ancient philosophers and theologians but also from contemporary social science research ... Specifically, we have shown that gratitude is positively related to such critical outcomes as life satisfaction, vitality, happiness, self-esteem, optimism, hope, empathy, and the willingness to provide emotional and tangible support for other people (Emmons 2007:186).

#### **5.1 Introduction**

I had an idea about research that needed to be done on the effects of gratitude journalling in the academic lives of students. It makes sense intuitively that gratitude journalling should increase the motivation and thus the proficiency of isiXhosa-speaking learners of English. It was somewhat ambitious, though, to expect to see a change in English language proficiency over such a short period of time. If participants had experienced enhanced levels of motivation as a result of the gratitude journalling (in English and/or in isiXhosa), their proficiency in English might have increased over time. However, the gratitude journalling seems not to have had an impact on the attitude towards English/motivation to improve English of these third-year isiXhosa university students. Whatever the effect might have been of the gratitude journalling in these young adults' lives, it is not reflected directly here. The four different journalling interventions appeared to have had the same effect on all of the students participating in the study as far as their attitude/motivation and English language proficiency are concerned.

## 5.2 Summary of results

Five participants stated that their L1 was English. Perhaps they might be thought of as having English as "a second first language" (De Klerk 1996). The majority passed English in Matric and Communication at university. Previous studies (e.g., Barkhuizen 2002) have shown that isiXhosa high school students tend to have a high regard for English as a subject. Just over half the participants in the current study stated that they were either most comfortable speaking English or that they were equally comfortable speaking isiXhosa and English. This could be due to the steady shift to English within the isiXhosa community in the Eastern Cape (De Klerk 2000), the birthplace of most of these young adults.

No statistically significant difference was found between the four groups when it came to attitude towards English/motivation to improve English proficiency after the journalling intervention. An unanticipated finding was that the people who journalled in isiXhosa had greater percentages of positive answers post-intervention for the attitude/motivation task. One might wonder if the journalling experience was more positive for the people who wrote in their own language. Even more surprising was that the highest overall average for this task (97%) came from the factual journalling in isiXhosa group. I would have expected the gratitude journalling groups to have scored higher here. However, the differences in the percentages for the groups were not statistically significant.

Analysing the English proficiency scores pre- and post-intervention showed no significant difference in proficiency. We should not be surprised at this, as it generally takes far longer than one month for people to improve proficiency in an L2 (Gass & Selinker 2001 and Dörnyei 2003). Not all the students in the two factual journalling groups participated in both of these tasks, while all members of the two gratitude journalling groups did participate. Perhaps the gratitude journalling had some positive motivational effect on its participants, which caused them all to follow through and take part in the post-journalling task. Although only speculation, this idea is supported by the findings of previous studies on the positive influence of gratitude (e.g., Fredrickson 1998, 2001, 2004 and Emmons & McCullough 2003).

It was interesting to note the final number of entries made into the four different types of journals. The factual journalling groups had noticeably fewer overall journal entries than did the gratitude journalling groups. Analysis showed that there is a statistically significant difference

between these numbers of entries. This finding could indicate that the two groups of gratitude journalers found something inherently beneficial and/or enjoyable in the process of regularly writing about their blessings. In fact, several gratitude journalers commented on their last day of writing that they were sad the experience was ending. Previous studies (and my own personal experience) have shown that the practice of gratitude journaling increases positive affect, and generally improves people's levels of well-being (e.g., Fredrickson 1998, 2001, 2004 and Emmons & McCullough 2003).

It is also probable that these individuals who continually reminded themselves to be aware of their blessings experienced broadened thoughts-action tendencies (Fredrickson 1998, 2001, 2004). Thankful individuals are inspired to become better people, and are creative as they consider a wide range of helpful acts that they can perform for others (Fredrickson 2004). Perhaps this phenomenon led the two groups of gratitude journalers to be more motivated to help me with my research than were the members of the two factual journaling groups.

### **5.3 Strengths and limitations of this thesis**

Gratitude is important because of its demonstrated causal link with positive outcomes, including mood and pro-social behaviour ... a grateful response to life circumstances may be an adaptive psychological strategy ... gratefulness is an attitude underlying successful functioning over the life course (Emmons 2003:85-86).

"Motivation" is related to one of the most basic aspects of the human mind, and most teachers and researchers would agree that it has a very important role in determining success or failure in any learning situation (Dörnyei 2001:2).

Linguistic attitudes are powerful in influencing learners either positively or negatively (De Klerk 1996: 125).

Limitations of this thesis are the small size of the sample of participants, and the short period of time over which the study took place. In retrospect, I think that I might have gained more useful results had I enlisted a larger number of students to participate in the journaling, and followed them over a longer period of time.

One of the strengths of the research in this thesis is that it is interdisciplinary in nature. It has attempted to link findings from the fields of psychology and linguistics. Studies in psychology have found that gratitude and other positive emotions in the workplace seem to be linked to motivation, which in turn results in increased productivity. Much research in L2 acquisition has shown a link between increased motivation and improved levels of L2 proficiency.

Another strength of this study is that it adds to the rather sparse body of existing literature on the L2 acquisition of English by isiXhosa speakers in South Africa. This is a valuable line of research, as according to the 2001 census, isiXhosa is the second most widely spoken L1 in our country, and studies have shown that the vast majority of L2 English speakers "embrace (English) with enthusiasm, believing in its mystical appeal as an agent of modernisation and social change, and provider of access to mobility and advancement" (De Klerk 1996:126-127).

#### **5.4 Implications for future studies**

Psychology sorely needs more studies on positive emotions ... to guide applications and interventions that might improve individual and collective functioning, psychological well-being, and physical health (Fredrickson 1998:300).

It might be beneficial to conduct a similar study to the one reported in this thesis, but have it follow a larger number of students over a longer period of time. Once again, some participants would journal in English and others in isiXhosa. In addition to the gratitude and factual journaling groups, it might also be useful to have an extra group of learners who do not carry out any journaling as a control group.

Another proposal would be to conduct similar studies with children at primary school, and adolescents at high school, in order to see what role age might play in the effect of gratitude journaling on learners' attitudes towards English and motivation to improve their English.

"Through experiences of positive emotions, individuals can transform themselves, becoming more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated, and healthy ... positive emotions generate an upward spiral toward optimal functioning and enhanced emotional well-being" (Fredrickson 2004:153). Finding ways to help South African young people access the power of gratitude would be a very worthwhile endeavour.

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## APPENDIX A

Lawless (2009), presents the following stages of language aptitude:

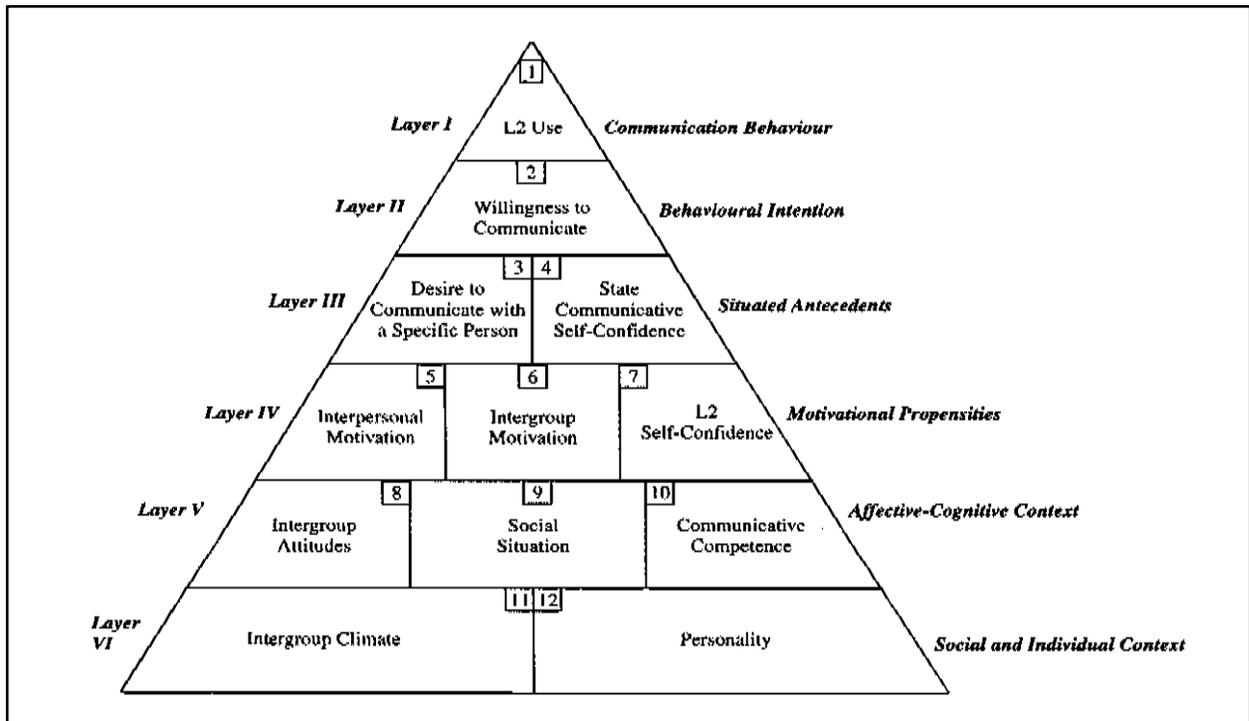
- i. Novice (beginning): very limited vocabulary and grammar; understands very little when spoken normally; has difficulty making self understood.
- ii. Survivor (intermediate): can use basic vocabulary (time, date, weather, family, clothes); uses the present, past and future tenses fairly correctly; is aware of difficult grammar topics (e.g., subjunctive, relative pronouns), but uses them incorrectly or awkwardly rearranges sentences in order to avoid them.
- iii. Conversationalist (advanced): can converse about fairly abstract ideas, state opinions, read newspapers, understand the language when spoken normally on TV, radio, film, etc. with slight-to-moderate difficulty; has some difficulty with specialised vocabulary and complicated grammar, but can reorganise sentences in order to communicate and work out most new vocabulary within its context.
- iv. Debater (fluent): can take part in extended conversations; understand we are today but he didn't play mum working s the language when spoken normally on TV, radio, film, etc.; can work out meanings of words in context, debate, and use/understand complicated grammatical structures with little or no difficulty; has good accent and understands dialects with slight-to-moderate difficulty.
- v. Native speaker (mother-tongue): has spoken the language from at least 5 years old (there is debate about this age); understands essentially everything in the language (in theory), including vocabulary, complicated grammatical structures, cultural references and dialects; has an invisible/"normal" accent.

Source:

Lawless, Laura K (2009), *French Language Guide*. Retrieved 10 September 2010, from <http://french.about.com/library/weekly/aa072701b.htm>.

## APPENDIX B

A schematic representation of the variables influencing Willingness to Communicate (WTC):



Source:

Dörnyei, Zoltán. 2003:13. From the original source by McIntire *et al.* 1998. Conceptualising Willingness to Communicate in a L2: A Situated Model of Confidence and Affiliation. *Modern Language Journal* 82:547.

## APPENDIX C

**STUDY ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**  
**Ms Lara Smith (Aspeling)**  
**(MPhil student, Department of General Linguistics,**  
**Stellenbosch University)**

**LETTER OF CONSENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to participate in Ms Lara Smith's study on Xhosa students' acquisition of English, which will run via WEBCT from 8 July until 13 August 2010.

I understand that I can opt to withdraw from the study at any stage, without having to provide a reason.

I understand that my participation in the study is anonymous – my identity will never be made public in Ms Smith's thesis or in any other publication that might flow from it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## APPENDIX D

An outline of the activities as presented to the students on WebCT (with revised dates):

### WELCOME TO THIS PROJECT! 😊

Lara Smith's Masters research project – FIS 3<sup>rd</sup> year Xhosa mother-tongue students

ACTIVITY (ON WEBCT, under the "FIS 3" link)	Old dates	NEW DATES – PLEASE LET'S STICK TO THESE!
TASK 1 Your details (name, age, etc.)	Thurs 8 July (8am) to Tues 13 July (12 noon)	Deadline: Thurs 15 July (12 noon)
TASK 2 (1 hour time limit once you start) (It'll probably take you less time than this)	Thurs 8 July (8am) to Tues 13 July (12 noon)	Deadline: Thurs 15 July (12 noon)
TASK 3 (1½ hour time limit once you start) (It'll probably take you less time than this)	Thurs 8 July (8am) to Tues 13 July (12 noon)	Deadline: Thurs 15 July (12 noon)
<b>TASK 4</b> <b>JOURNALLING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will be split into 4 groups just before you start working on this task – be sure you follow the instructions for your own group!</li> <li>You will be asked to make brief journal entries on 5 out of 7 days per week – 2 full sentences on each day (or more if you'd like 😊)</li> </ul>	Wed 14 July (10am) to Wed 11 Aug (12 noon)	Start: Fri 16 July (10am)  End: Fri 13 August (12 noon)
TASK 5 (instructions to follow)	Wed 11 Aug (12 noon) to Fri 13 Aug (12 noon)	Fri 13 August (12 noon) to Tues 17 August (midnight)
TASK 6 (instructions to follow)	Wed 11 Aug (12 noon) to Fri 13 Aug (12 noon)	Fri 13 August (12 noon) to Tues 17 August (midnight)
De-briefing and AWARDS (in real-life, rather than on WEBCT! 😊)		Fri 20 Aug (after your final FIS presentations)

## PLEASE NOTE:

Answer ALL of the questions for ALL of the tasks

**Please DO NOT ask anyone for any help! (apart from me! 😊)**

*It is very important for me to get the results of each person's individual work in order for my research to be a success.*

Please DO NOT discuss your answers for ANY of the tasks with anyone else until after our project is complete on 13 August. We need to keep things professional!

### TASKS 1, 2 & 3

Are only available until Thurs 15 July (12 noon). Each task will probably take you between ½ hour and 1 hour. Please make sure you get them all done in good time!

### TASK 4

This will become available on Fri 16 July at 10am. It consists of online journalling. You will be divided into 4 groups for this task (Blue, Red, Yellow, Green). You'll find out which group you're in just before you start working on the task. The task involves you making online journal entries 5 days each week (until Fri 13 August at 12 noon).

**Please DO NOT discuss which group you are in or your daily journal entries with anyone!**

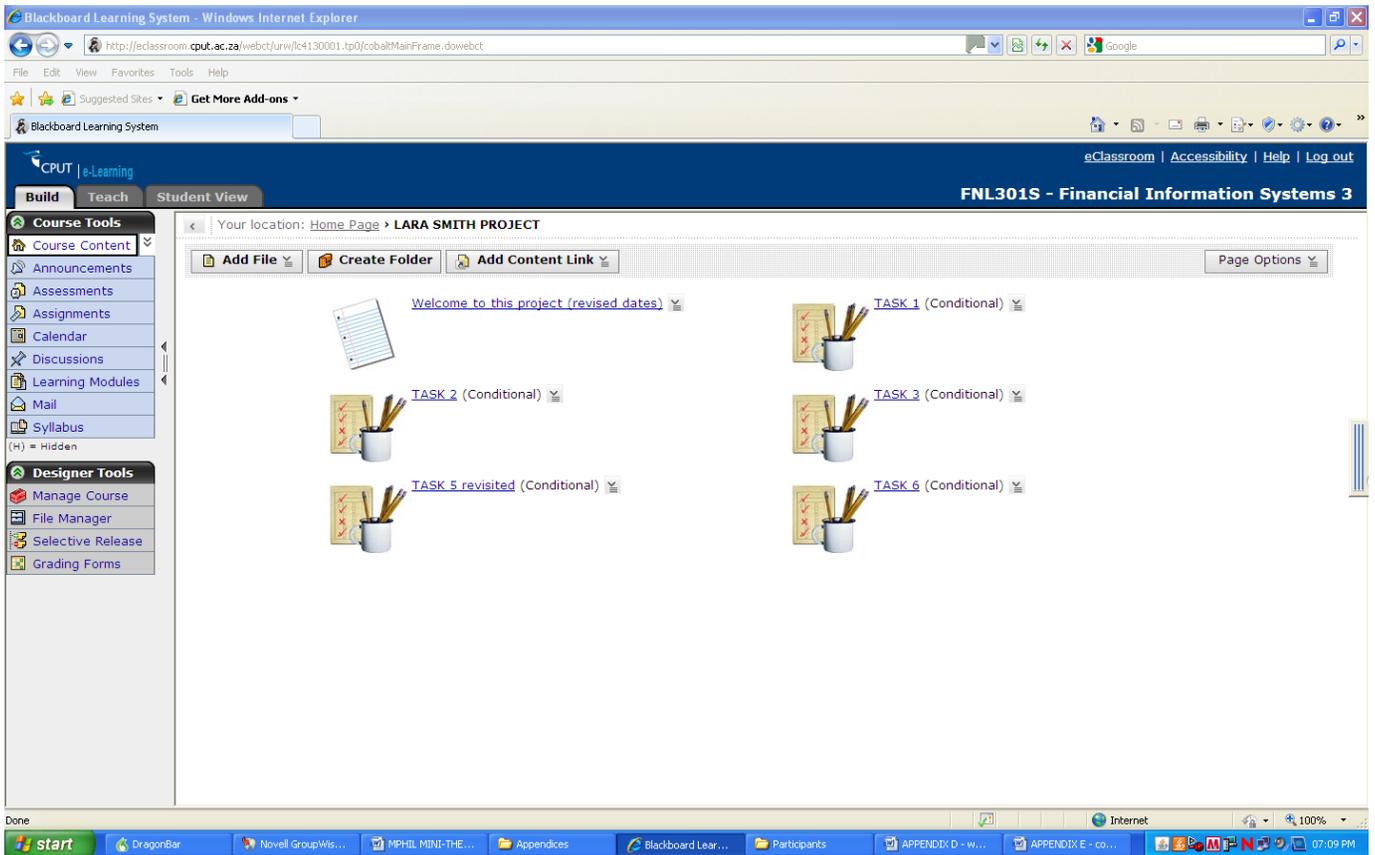
### TASKS 5 & 6

These will be available from Fri 13 August (12 noon) until Tuesday 17 August (midnight).

Again, please keep your answers to both of these tasks to yourself! 😊

# APPENDIX E

Screenshot of the WebCT Course Contents page displaying links to some of the tasks:



## **APPENDIX F**

### **TASK 1 (students' details)**

1. Participant Number (for Ms Smith to insert)
2. My name (first name/s and then surname)
3. My student number
4. My birthday (including year)
5. Where I was born (town/city and province)
6. My mother's first language / languages
7. My father's first language / languages
8. Language / languages spoken to me at home while I was growing up
9. What I consider my first language to be
10. The language that I am most comfortable speaking now
11. How old I was when I first started hearing and speaking English
12. Where I first started hearing and speaking English (including who taught me)
13. How old I was when I first started reading and writing English
14. Where I first started reading and writing English (including who taught me)
15. What percentage I got for English in Matric
16. What percentage I got for Communications in my 1st year at Varsity
17. What percentage I'm getting for Communications so far in this my 3rd year at Varsity  
(average of 1st and 2nd semesters)

## APPENDIX G

### TASK 2 (and original TASK 5)

#### (Survey of attitudes towards English / motivation to improve English)

Multiple choice questions with the following choice of answers:

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

1. I enjoyed learning how to **SPEAK** English as a child.
2. I enjoyed learning how to **READ** English as a child.
3. I enjoyed learning how to **WRITE** English as a child.
4. I enjoyed **LISTENING** to English as a child.
5. I liked English lessons in **HIGH SCHOOL**.
6. I like(d) English/Communication lessons at **VARSAITY**.
7. I like reading English **BOOKS** and/or **MAGAZINES**.
8. I like listening to English **RADIO PROGRAMMES**.
9. I like watching English **TV PROGRAMMES**.
10. I like watching English **MOVIES**.
11. I am interested in the **CUSTOMS** of other cultures.
12. I would like to visit other **COUNTRIES**.
13. I have friends from other **CULTURES**.
14. I would like to have **MORE** friends from other **CULTURES**.
15. I have **ENGLISH-SPEAKING** friends.
16. I would like to have **MORE ENGLISH-SPEAKING** friends.
17. I like most of the **ENGLISH-SPEAKING** people that I know.
18. I like the **ENGLISH LANGUAGE** and its **CULTURE**.
19. Most of my friends and family like the **ENGLISH LANGUAGE** and its **CULTURE**.
20. I think it is important to be able to communicate well in English in the **WORK PLACE** in South Africa.

## APPENDIX H

### TASK 3 (and TASK 6)

#### (English proficiency test)

*(The \* indicates the correct answer)*

1. Dear Bea

My problem is a serious one. My family is not close. We all fight a lot among ourselves (especially Mom and Dad). We have tried counselling, but it only works for a few days and then we are back to our normal selves.

From Sam (age 16)

**Question -**

The situation in Sam's family is **NOT**:

- a. disheartening
- b. disruptive
- \*c. distinguished
- d. disturbing

2. Dear Bea

My problem is a serious one. My family is not close. We all fight a lot among ourselves (especially Mom and Dad). We have tried counselling, but it only works for a few days and then we are back to our normal selves.

From Sam (age 16)

**Question -**

Which sentence would **BEST** serve as a conclusion to Sam's letter?

- a. I'm not kidding! I need help.
- b. I'm serious about this situation.
- c. Do you think Mom and Dad will stop fighting?
- \*d. I really need your help and advice.

3. Dear Bea

My problem is a serious one. My family is not close. We all fight a lot among ourselves (especially Mom and Dad). We have tried counselling, but it only works for a few days and then we are back to our normal selves.

From Sam (age 16)

**Question -**

Which would be the **LEAST POSITIVE** reply to this letter?

- a. Facing this problem now can help you overcome other obstacles in your life.
- \*b. Lots and lots of teenagers have had bad family experiences - they should work on their immature attitude.
- c. Use this bad experience as a springboard to success rather than as an obstacle in your life.
- d. Do your part. If your family will not change themselves, you can change yourself.

4. HOFFMAN'S CHOCOLATE  
NEW MOUTH SENSATION  
GUARANTEED TO RING YOUR TILL

**Question -**

Which is the advertiser's **MOST LIKELY** target group?

- a. The general public
- b. Chocolate lovers
- c. Dentists
- \*d. Retail salesmen

5. Which is the **BEST** completion for this sentence?

*Scientists have not yet managed to solve the ..... mystery of a strange white light in the sky above Porterville.*

- a. bewildering
- \*b. baffling
- c. amazing
- d. incredible

6. Which is the **BEST** completion for this sentence?

*..... you can prove that you were ill, I cannot believe it.*

- a. If
- b. As soon as
- c. However
- \*d. Unless

7. Which is the **BEST** completion for this sentence?

*Derick was punished because he had ..... in class.*

- a. unbehaved
- b. malbehaved
- c. disbehaved
- \*d. misbehaved

8. Which is the **BEST** completion for this sentence?

*If a man is tired of the **daily grind**, it means he is tired of .....*

- \*a. monotonous, hard work.
- b. daily bread.
- c. daily quarrels.
- d. uninteresting, boring days.

9. Which sentence is the **CORRECT** rewritten version of the underlined one?

Bystanders watched while the police were taking the burglar away.

- a. The burglar was watched while the bystanders were being taken away.
- \*b. Bystanders watched while the burglar was being taken away.
- c. While the police were taking away the burglar, the bystanders were watched.
- d. Bystanders watched while the burglar was been taken away.

10. You have recently spent a week at a holiday resort. It turned out to be a disappointment because of poor facilities. Which is the **PROPER** way to lodge your complaint in a letter?

- a. You will appreciate that it is incumbent upon me to convey the magnitude of things amiss at your resort, to you.
- b. You can be described as nothing better than downright dishonest. How do you explain the following?
- c. I would like to thank you for a wonderful holiday. Where else would I have seen the sun rising while scratching my fleabites?
- \*d. As I believe that you take a personal pride in living up to the reputation of your resort, I know that you will appreciate constructive criticism.

11. Which sentence is the **MOST STRONGLY** expressed?

- a. It was a humorous story.
- b. That was quite an amusing experience.
- \*c. It was a hilarious celebration.
- d. It was a rather funny incident.

12. What does the underlined sentence mean?

Queen Victoria accused Mr Gladstone of addressing her as if she were a public meeting.

- a. Queen Victoria thought that Mr Gladstone should rather have addressed her in private.
- b. Mr Gladstone spoke to Queen Victoria in a conspiratory way which was not to her liking.
- c. Queen Victoria was disturbed because Mr Gladstone had made her address known at a public meeting.
- \*d. When Mr Gladstone spoke to Queen Victoria, he did it in a declamatory fashion which offended her.

13. Which sentence contains **UNNECESSARY REPETITION**?

- \*a. The man sustained minor injuries that aren't serious.
- b. You know as well as I do that they let me down.
- c. When I was a boy, it was study, study, study all the time.
- d. I never boxed, I never rowed, I never did anything to develop my physique.

14. Which would be the **CORRECT** way to ask the police if you wanted to know if they caught the thief red-handed yesterday?

..... *the thief red-handed yesterday?*

- a. Do you catch
- b. Did you caught
- c. Have you caught
- \*d. Did you catch

15. Which sentence should come **FIRST** if the following sentences were to be arranged to form a paragraph?

- a. The hare said that the tortoise was as slow as a snail.
- b. The tortoise challenged the hare to a race.
- \*c. A hare mocked a tortoise.
- d. The hare was confident that he would win.

16. Which is the **MOST LIKELY** explanation for the following headline?

**MOST DETAINEES LIKELY TO BE FREED**

- \*a. Most of the people in temporary custody will probably be freed.
- b. Most of the people in prison would like to be freed.
- c. Most of the people in detention long for freedom.
- d. Most of the people awaiting trial would like to be freed.

17. Which is the **BEST** way of joining these sentences?

He did as much as he could. He left the rest of the work. He was due at rugby practice.

- a. He did as much as he could because he left the rest of the work for he was due at rugby practice.
- b. Before he left the rest of the work, he did as much as he could because he was due at rugby practice.
- c. He did as much as he could when he left the rest of the work although he was due at rugby practice.
- \*d. Having done as much as he could, he left the rest of the work because he was due at rugby practice.

18. Which completion of the sentence is **WRONG**?

*If Mr Monsa had been there .....*

- \*a. we did not have this trouble we're having now.
- b. he would have supplied the information.
- c. he might have influenced the decision taken.
- d. we would have been properly informed.

19. Which sentence is **WRONG**?

- a. Mrs Taylor consulted a doctor who was an excellent physician.
- \*b. The doctor was an excellent physician whom Mrs Taylor consulted.
- c. The doctor, who was an excellent physician, was consulted by Mrs Taylor.
- d. The doctor whom Mrs Taylor consulted, was an excellent physician.

20. Which sentence is **WRONG**?

- \*a. He was very depressed, but I didn't thought he had reason to be.
- b. None of us were consulted on this important matter.
- c. In a restaurant I never know where to put my handbag.
- d. Neither the dog nor the cat had an injection.

## APPENDIX I

### Instructions given to the four journalling groups

#### Green group – factual Journal written in Xhosa:

- \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week)
- \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in Xhosa on each day
- \* State what has happened during the day; please state facts only, with no emotions (i.e. don't say if the happening was a good or bad thing, don't say if it made you feel happy or sad)
- \* Example:
  1. Isidlo sam sasemva kwemini sibe yintlanzi namazambane.
  2. Mna nomhlobo wam u Lulu sibukele ibali ethi "Invictus" ngalenjikalanga.

#### Blue group – factual Journal written in English:

- \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week)
- \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in English on each day
- \* State what has happened during the day; please state facts only, with no emotions (i.e. don't say if the happening was a good or bad thing, don't say if it made you feel happy or sad)
- \* Example:
  1. I had fish and chips for lunch.
  2. Lulu and I watched the film Invictus on DVD this afternoon.

#### Red group – gratitude Journal written in Xhosa:

- \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week)
- \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in Xhosa on each day
- \* Write about things that have happened during the day that you are thankful for
- \* Example:
  1. Ndiyabulela ngesidlo esimnandi sasemva kwemini (intlanzi namazambane).
  2. Ndiyabulela ngomhlobo wam u Lulu. Mna naye sikonwabele ubukela ibali elithi "Invictus" kumabonakude.

#### Yellow group – gratitude Journal written in English:

- \* Please make journal entries on 5 days of each week (i.e. 5 out of 7 days per week)
- \* Please write 2 or 3 full sentences in English on each day
- \* Write about things that have happened during the day that you are thankful for
- \* Example:
  1. I'm thankful for the delicious lunch I had today (fish and chips).
  2. I'm thankful for my friend Lulu. She and I enjoyed watching Invictus on DVD this afternoon.

## APPENDIX J

### TASK 5 Revisited

#### (Survey of attitude towards English / motivation to improve English)

##### Instructions

Please try your very best to answer these questions in **exactly the same way** as you answered them when you'd just finished your journaling task. **THANK YOU!**

1. My surname
2. My first name(s)
3. I'm in the \_\_\_\_\_ group
  - a. GREEN
  - b. BLUE
  - c. RED
  - d. YELLOW
4. *I promise to try my very best to answer these questions in exactly the same way as I answered them straight after I'd finished the journaling task*
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

Questions 5 to 24 are multiple choice with the following choice of answers:

- a. Strongly Agree
  - b. Somewhat Agree
  - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
  - d. Somewhat Disagree
  - e. Strongly Disagree
- 
5. I enjoyed learning how to SPEAK English as a child.
  6. I enjoyed learning how to READ English as a child.
  7. I enjoyed learning how to WRITE English as a child.
  8. I enjoyed LISTENING to English as a child.
  9. I liked English lessons in HIGH SCHOOL.
  10. I like(d) English/Communication lessons at VARSITY.
  11. I like reading English BOOKS and/or MAGAZINES.

12. I like listening to English RADIO PROGRAMMES.
13. I like watching English TV PROGRAMMES.
14. I like watching English MOVIES.
15. I am interested in the CUSTOMS of other cultures.
16. I would like to visit other COUNTRIES.
17. I have friends from other CULTURES.
18. I would like to have MORE friends from other CULTURES.
19. I have ENGLISH-SPEAKING friends.
20. I would like to have MORE ENGLISH-SPEAKING friends.
21. I like most of the ENGLISH-SPEAKING people that I know.
22. I like the ENGLISH LANGUAGE and its CULTURE.
23. Most of my friends and family like the ENGLISH LANGUAGE and its CULTURE.
24. I think it is important to be able to communicate well in English in the WORK PLACE in South Africa.

*(End of that section of multiple choice)*

25. I use English to communicate in the following settings:

26. *About this task:*

- \* I first did this task BEFORE the journalling (as Task 2, in JULY)
- \* Then I did it again AFTER the journalling (as Task 5, in AUGUST)

My AUGUST (and now) answers to this task are \_\_\_\_\_

*(please try very hard to remember)*

- a. a lot more POSITIVE than in July
  - b. a lot more POSITIVE than in July
  - c. almost exactly THE SAME as in July
  - d. a little bit more NEGATIVE than in July
  - e. a lot more NEGATIVE than in July
27. Why do you think you answered Question 26 the way you did?
28. Do you have anything you wish to say regarding this study and/or your participation in it?

## APPENDIX K

### **What some well-known contemporary and historical personalities have had to say about gratitude:**

There is not a more pleasing exercise of the mind than gratitude. It is accompanied with such an inward satisfaction that the duty is sufficiently rewarded by the performance. (Joseph Addison)

Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul. (Henry Ward Beecher)

The unthankful heart... discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings! (Henry Ward Beecher)

Gratitude changes the pangs of memory into a tranquil joy. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

In ordinary life we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we give, and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful. (Buddha)

Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others. (Cicero)

Gratitude is something of which none of us can give too much. For on the smiles, the thanks we give, our little gestures of appreciation, our neighbours build their philosophy of life. (AJ Cronin)

Gratitude is riches. Complaint is poverty. (Doris Day)

So often we dwell on the things that seem impossible rather than on the things that are possible. So often we are depressed by what remains to be done and forget to be thankful for all that has been done. (Marian Wright Edelman)

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle. (Albert Einstein)

Gratitude is a quality similar to electricity: it must be produced and discharged and used up in order to exist at all. (William Faulkner)

Wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving. (Kahil Gibran)

If you want to turn your life around, try thankfulness. It will change your life mightily. (Gerald Good)

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. (John F Kennedy)

When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around. (Willie Nelson)

We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude. (Cynthia Ozick)

Saying thank you is more than good manners. It is good spirituality. (Alfred Painter)

Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom. (Marcel Proust)

When you are grateful fear disappears and abundance appears. (Anthony Robbins)

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. (Albert Schweitzer)

To educate yourself for the feeling of gratitude means to take nothing for granted, but to always seek out and value the kind that will stand behind the action. Nothing that is done for you is a matter of course.

Everything originates in a will for the good, which is directed at you. Train yourself never to put off the word or action for the expression of gratitude. (Albert Schweitzer)

Gratefulness is the key to a happy life that we hold in our hands, because if we are not grateful, then no matter how much we have we will not be happy – because we will always want to have something else or something more. (Brother David Steindl-Rast)

Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude. (Dennis Waitley)

When a person doesn't have gratitude, something is missing in his or her humanity. A person can almost be defined by his or her attitude toward gratitude. (Elie Wiesel)

Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough. (Oprah Winfrey)

We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures. (Thornton Wilder)

Source: *BetterWorld.net* <http://www.betterworld.net/quotes/gratitude-quotes.htm>. Retrieved 18 September 2010.