



**EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA ON
BASOTHO EMPLOYEES IN TWO MULTICULTURAL WORKPLACES
IN MASERU LESOTHO**

BY

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DECLARATION

This serves as a declaration that the study entitled ‘Effectiveness of English as a Lingua Franca on Basotho Employees in two Multicultural Workplaces in Maseru, Lesotho’ is my own work and all the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that this work has not been previously submitted, either as a whole, or part of it, for any qualification at another university or any other institution of higher education.

‘Matlokoeng Grace Letšohla

.....

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca (ELF) on Basotho employees in a multicultural workplace, using UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd as case studies. This study was conducted in Maseru, Lesotho. The study's research objectives were to investigate the effectiveness of ELF in a multicultural workplace, to examine the factors which contribute to this effectiveness, and to identify barriers to effective communication that are caused or removed by ELF in a multicultural work setting. A mixed-method approach was found suitable for the study, and data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Using convenience sampling, this study's sample was 37 employees from UNICEF and EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd. Generally, the study proved that, to a larger extent, English as a lingua franca is effective in a multicultural workplace. By adopting English in a multicultural workplace, as a common language of communication, ELF enables communication effectiveness in diverse professional contexts. Results revealed that ELF breaks communication barriers between Basotho employees and non-native speakers in a workplace that is characterised by diversity. The study also showed that education plays a vital role in communication. In fact, it is a factor which contributes to this effectiveness. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the participants with higher education qualifications have good language competence to communicate effectively in the English language. However, the minority of the research participants considered ELF ineffective mainly because some expatriates and some semi-skilled Basotho employees are not so fluent in English and cannot articulate well, which may cause communication breakdown.

Key Words: Communication, Effectiveness, Lingua Franca, English as a Lingua Franca, Multicultural Workplace.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BELF:	Business English as a Lingua Franca/ English as a Business Lingua Franca
CAT:	Communication Accommodation Theory
ELF:	English as Lingua Franca
ELT:	English Language Teaching
ESL:	English as a Second Language
HE:	Higher Education
HR:	Human Resources
ME:	Maritime English
PGD:	Post Graduate Diploma
PhD:	Doctor of Philosophy
TESOL:	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Fund
USA:	United States of America
WE:	World Englishes
WELF:	Workplace English as a Lingua Franca
WHO:	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

In Lesotho, a country located in Southern Africa, English is the second official language. It was first recognised as an official and second language by the National and Official Languages Bill, which was approved by the Lesotho National assembly on September 12th, 1966 (Rosenberg et al., 2005). Lesotho's language policy promotes bilingualism as stated in the Constitution of Lesotho (1993). The policy stated that Lesotho's official languages are Sesotho and English, and that no instrument or transaction is invalid by reason when it is expressed or conducted in one of these two languages.

English in Lesotho is learned from primary school, and it becomes a medium of instruction from Grade four (MoET, 2009). Efforts are made to ensure that Basotho children learn to read, speak and write English. Proficiency in English is helpful for securing jobs globally, for educational, political, social, and economic transactions in the subcontinent (Legère et al., 2002). English is associated with employment opportunities. It is the language of government and administration and international communication.

This research intends to investigate the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca, ELF henceforth, on Basotho employees at United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd, as multicultural workplaces in Maseru, Lesotho. This area of research is considered as particularly significant because ELF plays an important role in the effectiveness of communication, especially in a work setting where employees are from different linguistic backgrounds. This study is set out to provide some evidence based on research about ELF effectiveness on communication among workers in one organisation and one company in Maseru, where English is the corporate language.

A lingua franca, according to Fiedler (2011), is a common language that is used as a form of communication between people who do not have the same native language. It is defined by Jenkins (2007) as a contact language that is spoken by people with different mother tongues, in other words, people who do not share a first language. A multicultural workplace can therefore be explained as an environment that is characterised by diversity. It is a workplace where employees are from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This includes ethnicity, race and religion.

There are two different levels at which ELF operates; it functions on a local level and a global level. On a local level, ELF functions as a language that unites people of the same country, whose population speaks various languages. The local role of ELF can be seen in Nigerian English. Pidgin English is a lingua franca that serves as a contact language between people of some major languages such as Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa. On a global level, ELF is a tool of communication among people from different countries. ELF unites people who do not have the same mother tongue (Seidelhofer, 2011).

English has emerged as the dominant lingua franca in global business and international workplaces. As a result, employees from diverse linguistic backgrounds often communicate in English, even though it is not their first language. This shift raises intriguing questions about the effectiveness of ELF in a multicultural work setting. Due to globalisation, multinational corporations and international partnerships, it has spread more widely by improving effective communication and promoting understanding between diverse cultures and languages.

1.1.1 English as a Global Language

English holds a significant position in the world today. Although it may not have the highest number of its native speakers, it is a language that holds a dominant position, and has far reaching influence around the globe. Unquestionably, English is used by a lot of people as a second or foreign language, putting the number of English-speaking people over one billion, globally (Dyvik, 2024).

For thousands of years, translation has been a crucial part of human communication on the international stage; interpreters were always present when monarchs or ambassadors met, but there are limitations to what can be achieved in this manner. The more the community is linguistically diverse, the less it can depend on individuals to ensure communication between different groups (Crystal, 2003). Finding a language that serves as a lingua franca has been a solution to this problem.

Crystal (2003) further states that with the founding of multinational organisations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization in the 1950's, the need for universal language that functions on a global level appeared. An official language was established in order to minimise the costs of translation within these organisations. The development of new communication tools like computers and telegraphs,

and eventually the launch of the internet in the 1990s, offered a free pathway for the language of the economic superpower.

1.1.2 English as a Lingua Franca

ELF, as proposed by Jenkins (2007), is a response to the growing globalisation and internationalisation of English. The world has become so interconnected that, as a result, there had to be a most common or shared means of communication. There was a need for a universal language, a lingua franca, and English took this role. For successful communication between speakers whose first language is different, a language that these speakers can master is necessary. In a situation like that, a language used could either be a native language or a language acquired as a foreign language by both parties, a “Lingua Franca”.

Currently, English is becoming a global Lingua Franca that helps a growing number of professionals to deal with their day-to-day activities. According to Al-Mutairi (2020), the fact that English has become a global lingua franca cannot be denied. In a multicultural workplace, communication is centred on achieving goals like reaching agreements. Interactions are in the form of negotiations, presentations, meetings and socialising. For these reasons, effective communication abilities are essential for running a successful organisation or company.

ELF at work refers to the use of English as a common language of communication in a professional setting by people from various linguistic backgrounds. UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd use English as a lingua franca on a daily basis. Hence, they are chosen as a case study for this research. UNICEF employees are from different linguistic backgrounds. Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd is also a company that is characterised by diversity. As a result, a means of communication in work environments such as these requires a lingua franca, and in this case, English is used.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

English is now so widely used on a worldwide scale. For a well-known reason, English as a lingua franca is an advantage to many international organisations and multicultural companies. This is because having a common language in a multicultural workplace fosters greater communication and productivity. With this obvious advantage to any multicultural work setting, the question is: how effective is ELF on Basotho employees in their working environments?

Nowadays, people from different countries, with different native languages, have jobs in the same organisations and companies. English is used as a means of communication because of their different mother tongues. In today's globalised world and, of course, in a multicultural work context, becoming proficient and professional in a second language is a challenging experience that many individuals go through on a daily basis in their working environment.

Different studies have been carried out on English as a Lingua Franca in diverse contexts. One overriding factor appears to be perceptions or opinions on the role of English as a lingua franca in everyday interactions all over the world. While some studies have been conducted on ELF, the researcher found that looking into its effectiveness on Basotho employees in a multicultural work environment in Maseru, Lesotho, is worthwhile. The aim is, therefore, to investigate the effectiveness of English as a day-to-day means of communication at work. This area of study has been found interesting; hence, the researcher looked into the effectiveness of ELF at UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd.

In order to address this, the current research is set out to explore the effectiveness of English lingua franca on Basotho employees in a multicultural work setting. UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd are suitable for this research as workers in this organisation and company are from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This study sought to understand how ELF users experience communication at their workplace.

The purpose of this research was to explore and comprehend the impact of the adoption of English as the primary means of communication and to find out its effectiveness in a multicultural workplace. Thus, the study intended to investigate how Basotho employees working with people from different linguistic origins perceive the use of English and its effectiveness on their communication and job performance in general. In the process, potential benefits associated with the use of English as a lingua franca will be revealed.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca in multicultural workplaces.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the above-stated aim, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How effective is English as a lingua franca at UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd multicultural workplaces?
2. What are the factors that contribute to the level of its effectiveness?
3. Does ELF cause any barriers to effective communication, or remove such barriers in a multicultural work setting?

This study pursued the following objectives in order to address the research questions outlined above.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the effectiveness of ELF at UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd multicultural workplaces;
2. To examine the factors which contribute to the level of effectiveness;
3. To identify barriers to effective communication that are caused or removed by ELF in a multicultural work setting.

1.6 Significance of the Study

With the growth of English around the world and its impact and usage in multicultural workplaces, ELF has become part of human life, especially in areas where people from different sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds meet. Looking into the effectiveness of ELF at work is important for several reasons. It may help in understanding the influence of English as a global communication tool in diverse workplace settings. The study may shed light on potential language barriers and its effects on productivity, collaboration, and job satisfaction, and this may help to find ways of improving the situation. This way, the study may contribute to fostering inclusive work environments and improving cross-cultural interactions in the increasingly interconnected world of business.

It is questionable whether the use of ELF is effective in a multilingual environment. It is also questionable whether ELF solves any language barriers in a multicultural workplace. Thus, this research was set out to study the effectiveness of English as a Lingua Franca on Basotho employees in multicultural workplaces. The findings of this study may be of great importance to multicultural workplaces with a diverse workforce that speaks a variety of languages and belongs to different cultures.

The results that reveal the effectiveness of ELF may help organisations and multicultural companies to be aware of the benefits English brings in an international work environment.

Thus, the purpose of this research was to find how effective ELF is on Basotho employees in their day-to-day work. By undertaking this study, the researcher sought to gain knowledge of how a multilingual workplace is experienced by its participants and not as an end in itself so that this becomes the basis for extrapolation, application, and conceptualisation in similar oriented spheres thus contributing to best practice.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study was limited to the investigation of the effectiveness of ELF on Basotho workers at two multicultural workplaces: UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd. These two were chosen as case studies because the job responsibilities of their employees require the use of English as a lingua franca. That is, communication at work with colleagues requires the use of ELF.

1.8 Research Hypothesis

H1: English as a lingua franca is effective on Basotho employees in a multicultural workplace.

H2: There are factors that contribute to this effectiveness.

H3: There are barriers that ELF either solves or causes in a multicultural environment.

1.9 Overview of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, aim of the study, research questions, objectives, significance of the study, delimitation, and research hypothesis. Chapter 2 reviews the literature that is in line with the research questions and the objectives. Chapter 3 covers the methodology and the methods that were used to carry out the study in order to obtain results. It discusses the research approach, design, population and sample, sampling technique, data collection methods, data analysis and lastly, ethical considerations. Chapter 4 entails data presentation and analysis of the findings. Chapter 5 discusses the summary of the major findings, conclusions, recommendations, and limitations of the study, as well as suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Gordon Brown, once stated that English does not make people all the same and it should not, because individuals honour who they distinctively are. But it makes it possible for people to interact and understand each other. For that reason, it is a powerful force, not just for economics, business, and trade but for mutual respect and progress (Chakravarti, 2008).

This study focuses on knowing whether English as a lingua franca facilitates effective communication between Basotho employees and their expatriate colleagues in two multicultural work-places in Maseru. Thus, the literature reviewed in this chapter focused on the following aspects: English historical overview, English as a global language, the term lingua franca, English as a lingua franca (ELF), ELF in a multicultural workplace, ELF in Africa, its significance and conceptualisation of ELF in Lesotho. This chapter also outlined the theory that guided this study. Moreover, previous related studies conducted by other scholars are reviewed.

2.1 Historical overview of English

According to Usmonovna (2021), Anglo-Saxon invasions and the beginning of the English story date back to the fifth century. A new era in English language and history began with the arrival of Germanic tribes, including the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, from what are now Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands. English language's etymology is a result of the Germanic tribes' migration and settlement. The languages that were spoken by these tribes blended and formed Old English. The true goal of these tribes, despite their invitation to fight for Britain, was to enslave the nation.

The battle lasted for many years, but Anglo-Saxon dominance was always unquestionable. With the exception of the northern and western highlands, Anglo-Saxon villages grew throughout the course of roughly a century as new waves of immigrants kept coming. This era was crucial; it shaped the early English identity and the establishment of the Old English language. As these tribes became dominant, they set the foundation for this development and culture. The foundation for the establishment of the English language emerged by the end of the fifth century (Crystal, 1995).

Before the Anglo-Saxon arrival, Celtic languages dominated in Britain. Latin served as the official language because of the Roman authority. The influence of Latin waned outside of religious contexts as the Anglo-Saxon gained power, and Celtic languages retreated to the northern and western regions, such as Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall. It has been a lengthy journey from Old English to the English of the 21st century. There have been some significant alterations to the language. One of the things that led to the transition to modern English was the loss of inflections and their replacement by word order. Grammatical genders and declensions disappeared, tenses eased, and the list of irregular verbs became more stable, idiomatic expressions began to flourish in the language (Graddol, 2003).

These features of English, including the way conjugation and declension are done, sometimes seem to be taken as one of the reasons or a contributing factor to why English has become so widely used all around the world. A common argument would be that these features make English easier to learn and use. Crystal (2003) adds that the cosmopolitan character created by the fact that English has borrowed so many words from other languages has made this language more appealing.

2.2 English as a global language

English has been widely spread throughout the world as a result of the extensive influence of Great Britain and the United Kingdom from the 17th century to the middle of the 20th century, becoming the dominant language of international discourse and the lingua franca in many regions (Gohil, 2013).

English has unquestionably established itself as the universal language. It has come to represent our era with the internet, globalisation, networking, and economic integration. Numerous concerns have been expressed and it has been the topic of significant discussion. Majidi (2013) mention that one way to look at English's global use is as a threat to Standard English, or as a threat to regional languages and cultures. In hot debates over the global spread of English, an issue is that English is a threat to other languages, especially those of less known communities, as well as minority languages. Majidi (2013) further avers that minority languages carry a wealth of linguistic, historical, social, cultural, and anthropological information and are a rich reflection of multi-ethnic cultures and societies. Given the constant threat of marginalisation and extinction that these languages face, any effort to preserve and revitalise them would help to ensure that linguistic diversity exists for future generations.

However, these unfavourable attitudes, even hostility, towards the English language are comparatively recent, entwined with the present globalisation trend, more comprehensive than anything previously encountered, and more strongly linked to a single language. English has also been embraced as a new medium of communication for globally emerging localities in a variety of non-mainstream subcultures, as well as an efficient means of communication in fields like science and business (Mauranen and Ranta, 2008).

English has been accepted as the global language among the speakers of different languages. The world has become a global village and people maintain good relations with one another. Trade, business, and commerce have become international and most businesses have offices across different countries. Therefore, English serves as a common and a global language in order to maintain international relationships in the fields of science, technology, business, education, travel, and tourism among others (Rao, 2019).

Han (2019) clarifies that English has been spoken around the world for a very long time. It originated in what is now the British-Isles and took on various forms depending on the region. New native varieties, such as those spoken in Australia and North America, occasionally emerged and are today recognized as "core varieties" or "inner circle varieties," alongside British English.

In other instances, English was also adopted as a second language, mostly in Asia and Africa. The resulting dialects are commonly referred to as "outer circle," "New Englishes", or "World Englishes." Although the latter have not become as well-known as the "core" variants, quite a bit of descriptive research has been done on both their unique and similar characteristics. Since the 1980s, Kachru's work (for example, Kachru 1982, 1985) has brought attention to the problems surrounding World Englishes (WE). A significant amount of research has been done to describe these varieties, most notably collected in Al-Mutairi (2020), Crystal (2003), Kortmann and Schneider (2004) and Platt et al. (1984).

English is now a universal language, and it is spoken by a lot of different groups of people around the world (Dyvik, 2024). As a globalising force, English is a powerful, universal and a present language. It has been expanding exponentially and it has become the fast-growing language in human history and no other language has as much influence as English in terms of its power around the globe. Crystal (2019) avers that non-native speakers outweigh native speakers because of the use of ELF in intercultural communication.

English is a global language and there are two crucial events that made possible for it to gain international recognition. The first was through colonisation, when the language was being spread by its native speakers. And secondly, for reasons such as business communication, individuals from all over the globe chose to study English as a second and a foreign language.

The British Empire spread out to every continent and had control over a quarter of the world's population (Hlavačka, 2006). The British Empire had a significant influence in the spread of English by using its military power to spread the language to all of its territories. Although the Empire started to decline after World War 1, English managed to stay relevant and achieved the status it now holds because of the power of the United States and its rise in the population (Roy, 2015).

Walters (2014) avers that the United States of America played a vital role in the process of keeping English as the most widely used language. Since the USA has long been a leader in scientific research and technical progress, when a new product was developed, it had to be named, and the new term “entering” the language had to be in English. This situation was similar to the period of industrial revolution, when Britain led the globe in innovation and industry. Similar conditions in the USA in the 20th century gave the language the same support and assistance through new inventions, products, and innovations as did Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the USA's dominant position continues to support it today.

Currently, English is the most extensively spoken language in the world. The majority of people in several independent states speak it as their first language; these are countries such as the United Kingdom, United States and Australia. It is widely learned as a second language in countries such as Lesotho, and is used in many international organisations such as UNICEF, UNESCO and many commonwealth nations.

Crystal (2003: 3) explains that “A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognised in every country.” A language needs to be adopted by other countries for it to reach this status. Even though they may already speak their mother tongue, these countries must take a decision of giving it a special place in their communities.

Mohamadaid and Rasheed (2019) indicate that there are two ways in which a language can achieve such a prominent role. Firstly, a language can be declared the country's official language, making it a medium of communication in areas such as the government, courts, media, and the educational system. It is important to learn the official language as early as

possible in life in order to get on in these societies. As a complement to a person's mother tongue, such a language is often referred to as a second language. An official language's role is best illustrated by English, which has some sort of special status in over seventy countries, including African countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Rwanda and Nigeria.

Lesotho is one of these countries where English was declared as the second official language. Rosenberg et al. (2005) state that English was first recognised as an official and second language by the National and Official Languages Bill, which was approved by the Lesotho National assembly in 1966, on September 12th. Lesotho's language policy promotes bilingualism; as stated in the Constitution of Lesotho (1993), the official languages of Lesotho are Sesotho and English.

Even if a language lacks an official status, it can be given a priority in a country's foreign language teaching. It turns into a language that students are most likely to learn when they first start school and the language that adults who, for whatever reason, never learned it or learned it poorly in their early educational years, have the most access to. For example, in Southern Asia, Mandarin continues to play a vital role, and in more than hundred countries, English is the language most widely taught as a foreign language because it has become an indispensable tool for global communication (Vonkova et al., 2021). As a result, English as a foreign language (EFL) education in schools has become priority across the world.

Since English has been globally used, it has frequently been called a "world language" and the lingua franca of the modern era. Although it is not an official language in other nations such as Japan, English is currently the language that is taught as a foreign language. It occupies a special and significant place in the world today. It holds a dominant position and has a major global influence and impact. There is a high demand for learning English as a foreign language that has been realised in different parts of the world.

2.3 Lingua Franca

Kirkpatrick (2010) states that the term 'lingua franca' first appeared when Germanic Franks settled in Gaul in the fifth century and began speaking the local language which became known as the language of the Franks, or lingua franca. Kirkpatrick further asserts that a lingua franca is a language widely spoken by people who do not share a native language. From this perspective, both historically and currently, a lingua franca refers to a language that speakers of different languages have adopted and used to facilitate communication.

Pennycock (2012) relates that the middle age saw the emergence of the phrase ‘lingua franca’ among traders and crusaders from numerous linguistic backgrounds in the Mediterranean region. While historically, lingua franca originated for trading purposes, presently English has become the most used lingua franca around the world. It is a language that is adopted for international communication.

Buyyurt et al. (2019) define a lingua franca, in its simplest terms, as a common language of people who have different native languages. Similarly, Lewandowska (2019) defines a lingua franca as any language that is used as a form of communication among various groups of speakers of different languages. A lingua franca is therefore an internationally used language of communication. A broad understanding of a lingua franca is provided by Ostler (2010: 36-37), who suggests that a language that is “deliberately acquired outside the home environment is a kind of contact language, consciously learned for social or pragmatic reasons”.

In simpler words, Ostler (2010) explains that a lingua franca is any language that is acquired outside home. On one hand, there is a “mother tongue”, a language that is acquired as a first language at home. On the other hand, there is a lingua franca, which is any language that is learned outside that environment (for example, at school). Ostler’s position suggests that any language can serve as a lingua franca. For instance, French is a lingua franca to a person who learns Arabic at home in Paris; Arabic is a lingua franca to someone that is learning Berber or Tamazight at home in Rabat, etc. This implies that a lingua franca may be spoken among those who speak it as a language that is learned outside of home.

Joshi (2015) defines a lingua franca as a language that is commonly understood during communication, regardless of one’s mother tongue. A lingua franca is also known as a linking language. It has a significant impact in multilingual settings. A lingua franca plays a role between people, their ideas, views, cultures, and traditions. It is referred to as a chain between countries because it chains countries.

The term lingua franca usually means “any lingual medium of communication between people of different mother tongues, for whom it is a second language” (Leong & Dodge ,2015: 50). A lingua franca is a contact language between people who do not share either a common language or the common culture, and for whom a lingua franca is selected as a language of communication. Speakers accommodate or take into consideration one another’s cultural backgrounds, and therefore use a common language that is understandable to all of

them. Nasir (2017) is also in agreement with other scholars that a lingua franca is a bridging language and a common language that is used between people who do not speak the same native language to make communication possible.

Although the various sources discussed above define a lingua franca differently, they are all in agreement that the purpose of such a language is to achieve communication among speakers from different linguistic backgrounds. Informed by the several definitions, this study describes a lingua franca as a common language of communication or a contact language between people from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Since ancient times, there have been languages recognised as lingua franca, and the remaining part of this section discusses examples of such languages.

Latin was considered the dominant language when the Roman Empire extended from the Mediterranean, throughout Europe, and into Africa and Asia. It was widely employed in European culture, law, science, philosophy and religion by the Roman Catholic Church. Latin continues to be the root of many phrases used in English, philosophy and medicine even to this day, for example, *post-mortem*, *et cetera*, *status quo*, *verbatim* (Zikmundová, 2016).

Zikmundová (2016) identifies Portuguese as another language that has served as a lingua franca historically and currently. Portuguese served as a lingua franca in several regions of Africa and Asia during the Age of Exploration, which took place in the 15th through the 18th century, when Portugal was one of the main European colonists. Portuguese was used for trade and diplomatic purposes in these regions.

In the past, languages like Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, French, Greek, Latin or Egyptian all held a status of a lingua franca, facilitating communication between speakers of different first languages. A language could become such by military expansion, economic power (which is thought to have played a significant role in English becoming a universal lingua franca), or religious influence, such as Hebrew with Judaism (Ostler, 2016). Focusing on Arabic, it played a vital role because the vast Islamic empire needed a common language. China, India, portions of Central Asia, the Middle East, Northern Africa, and parts of Southern Europe were all reached by Arabic as it extended with the Empire. Arabic was the primary language of writing in the 1200s, and as such, it was also the common language of science and diplomacy (Briney, 2014).

Pidgin English is used in West Africa as a lingua franca due to the diversity of tribes and dialects. For example, Nigerians speak numerous languages; therefore, Pidgin English is used as a language of communication. Swahili is used as a lingua franca in East Africa. It developed as a contact language between several Bantu-speaking tribal groups on the east coast of Africa (Elega, 2016). As demonstrated, a number of languages have served as a lingua franca throughout history. However, the majority of these languages experienced a similar fate, with their significance steadily fading, their status gradually being lost, and in certain cases, their entire disappearance. The English language has, nevertheless, remained dominant, and it is the focus of the next section.

2.4 English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

Bayyurt et al. (2019) explain that, presently, English has become a lingua franca or a common language of numerous people, regardless of their first language around the world. They further state that ELF has become a complex phenomenon with a lot of non-native speakers of English with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. While explaining the complexity of the definition of ELF, a list of frequently used definitions of ELF is provided below:

1. People from different first language backgrounds use English as a contact language.
2. The use of ELF is not only a preferred means of communication between people with different native language backgrounds, but it is also the only choice for such people to communicate effectively.

In these two definitions provided above, the common point is the fact that English is used between people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. More recently, Seidlhofer (2020) defined ELF as a worldwide means of communication rather than solely as a linguistic or multilingual phenomenon.

Jenkins (2019) states that it is a well-known fact that English has emerged as the primary lingua franca among speakers, of which the majority are not native English speakers. Jenkins adds that, as research on the phenomenon has been demonstrating for more than 20 years, the kinds of English that are used as a lingua franca frequently differ from those that are used by native English speakers. Leyi (2020) relates that, owing to English's current global popularity, speakers of various native languages frequently use it as a worldwide lingua

franca to facilitate effective communication. Since English is used so widely, many dialects have developed and promoted the growth of World Englishes (WE).

Zikmundová (2016) explains that, in order to analyse English as a lingua franca from a linguistic perspective, determining ELF speakers is necessary. There are now more non-native English speakers than ever before since English has been spreading at a rapid speed throughout the world. Al-Mutairi (2020) mentions that Kachru's three circle model was introduced to World Englishes in 1985. English speakers and English varieties can be categorised globally using this three-circle model of World Englishes: Inner circle, Outer circle and Expanding circle.

“Inner Circle” is made up of English-speaking natives. The United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada are among the countries that use English as their primary language. The “Outer Circle” is composed of speakers who learned English as a second language and as a complement to their native language. Countries that were affected by colonisation and gave the English language an official and predominant status belong in this circle. Countries such as Lesotho, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Kenya and Singapore fall here (Al-Mutairi, 2020). The “Expanding Circle” also comprises speakers who learned English as a foreign language and originate from countries where English has no official status but is widely used for international communication. These countries, among many others, include China, Russia, Turkey, The Emirates, and Saudi Arabia (Al-Mutairi, 2020).

In order to facilitate communication between speakers of different first languages, English is employed as a lingua franca. As a result, speakers from the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle, or non-native English speakers make up the majority of ELF speakers. Both native English speakers and people for whom English is a second language participate in ELF. The latter are, nevertheless, in the minority in any sample used for ELF linguistic reference. In this interconnected world, English is the language that is used for communication in various contexts (Marlina and Xu, 2018).

The decision to use a language as a lingua franca or the language of communication between people who do not have a common native language of communication is always associated with numerous socio-cultural and arguably more significantly, political considerations (Lewandowska, 2019). There are various economic, cultural, and social reasons for the global marketing of English that led to English being the new lingua franca, but it is a reality that “English has been successfully promoted, and has been eagerly adopted in the global

linguistic marketplace” (Phillipson, 1992:7). Since ELF’s main feature is to promote communication among speakers of various native languages in an international or multicultural setting, it involves sociolinguistic modifications (Seidlhofer, 2001).

The demand of ELF increases and continues as more people use it as their basic global communication tool. Nasir (2017: 10) points out that “this shows just how deeply affected English has already been through its unprecedented spread and the unique fraction it has as the world language.” English is an important language for the purpose of effective communication.

The claim that is often made in discussions about the spread of English around the world is that English is the most frequently spoken language in the world as a second language, but Chinese is the most generally spoken first language. Despite having a basis of only a few hundred million “native speakers”, English is numerically superior due to the great majority of “non-native speakers” who now outnumber the former (Pennycook, 2012).

As a second or foreign language, English is unquestionably used by more people, putting the total number of English speakers at over one billion worldwide (Dyvik, 2024). Approximately a quarter of the world’s population is now fluent or competent in English, and this figure is continuously increasing, with non-native speakers outnumbering native speakers by a considerable margin (Jenkins, 2015). No other language has experienced such expansion.

Moore et al. (2010) asserts that there is nothing to be learned from these figures, percentages, and league tables because counting languages and the number of speakers of those languages is such a complex endeavour. From this point of view, attempts to quantify the number of languages or language users, for example, comparing the proportion of people who speak English to those who speak Chinese are illogical. Moore et al. (2010) further suggest that people need to consider what ideologies underpin these specific dialects of languages as native tongues or lingua francas at another level. In my view, it is necessary to quantify the number of English language users. In this way, the increasing statistics of people using English as a lingua franca and the importance of ELF itself can be known as years go by.

As illustrated in the next section, English as a lingua franca is used in different areas. For example, it is used in education, international trade, information technology, media, air and sea transportation, and in international organisations.

2.4.1 ELF in Education

Jenkins (2019) Observed that the domain of Higher Education (HE) is an example that is notable, of the spread and use of English as a lingua franca. In order to internationalise English, various universities switched to teaching in English to recruit more learners and staff from across national borders. Universities are getting more internationalised, and they are using more English. As a result, campuses are becoming increasingly linguistically diverse and more focused on English.

Leyi (2020) noted that in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), World Englishes received very little attention while English as a lingua franca had not yet existed three decades ago. However, in recent years, they have developed rapidly and numerous scholars have studied them. This had significant implications for the teaching and learning of English language because, as relatively new terms in the field, their emergence and development have challenged some traditional educational concepts, which have emphasised the goal of achieving native speaker competence and having a good command of English cultures with native teachers highly preferred.

Lerotholi (2019) avers that in an English-dominated educational environment, proficiency in the language is necessary for a workable education context. The development of linguistic proficiency in language users is an important requirement for successfully learning the English language. English communication knowledge is becoming increasingly essential in the classroom as a result of globalisation, particularly in cultures where a medium of instruction is English. Presently, there are numerous opportunities for students to gain an abroad experience while they are still studying. An increase in collaborations between schools or universities allows students to engage in various programmes that take place abroad. For example, internships, conferences, study exchange programmes, or language courses.

It can be observed from the discussions that nowadays non-native speakers of English exceed native speakers. As a result, it is clear that English is a language that is widely used outside its own countries, and the majority of people have chosen to learn it so that they can converse in a language other than their mother tongue. Additionally, the influence of English in media, cinema, technology, science, and many other fields is one of the reasons people decided to choose English as their foreign or second language. Rao (2019) relates that English is the medium of a great deal of the world's knowledge.

To conclude the discussion of English as a lingua franca, when it comes to ELF, a definition alone is not sufficient to describe the phenomena. Its features could be summarised in the following manner:

- Regarding ELF, it is mostly individuals from the Outer and Expanding Circles who have a significant effect on what English will be like. It is not only the native speakers who shape or dictate the future of English; millions of people from the Outer and Expanding Circles also contribute (Crystal, 2003).
- Since ELF speakers do not always adhere to English Native speakers' language norms, they should not be judged for it. These differences from the native norm should not be considered as mistakes, but rather as distinctive characteristics of ELF (Seidlhofer, 2011).
- Since communication is the primary goal of using ELF, speakers of this language are very flexible in how they adjust their language to the current situation, their speaking partners, and their proficiency in the language. They do not always adhere to the English native speaker linguistic norm and have even been known to establish their own (Jenkins, 2011).
- The cultural and historical background of Inner Circle countries is not connected to ELF. Speakers of ELF do not need to have knowledge of the literature, art or history of Great Britain or the United States of America as their interest is purely communicative and they mostly speak with non-native speakers (Seidlhofer, 2011).

2.4.2 ELF in International Trade

Hundreds of business transactions take place every day in the globalised world of today. Products are shipped across continents, and businesses that hire workers with diverse mother tongues tend to be the norm rather than the exception. It is clear that a common language is required. English is the language used for communication outside of Europe, despite the fact that German and French continue to play significant roles in Europe (Graddol, 2014). Foreign trade plays a key role in the economy of Lesotho. For example, Lesotho mainly exports diamonds, and water. Therefore, in the case of international trade, ELF is used for effective communication.

2.4.3 ELF in Information Technology

One of the contributing factors to the global adoption of English is the invention of the computer and internet. People from all over the world were able to communicate faster and

affordably starting from the 1970s, all thanks to the increase of new communication technologies (Goodman & Graddol, 1996). Companies like Microsoft and Apple made significant contributions to the field of information technology in the USA, where hardware and software were produced.

TALK International (2017) shared that over eighty percent of the information currently saved electronically is in English. Thus, having knowledge of the English language gives the speaker a great advantage when accessing this information and using the internet to its maximum potential. The fastest method of expanding the English language is definitely online. Millions of people search for information on Google every day. They watch major broadcasting networks like CNN, or send an email to their business associates. This shows that English has gained the ability to serve as a lingua franca on the internet due to information technology.

2.4.4 ELF in Media

English has a huge amount of media influence. The top five most influential newspapers worldwide namely: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The Times, and The Sunday Times, are written in English in the press, where English has been a major medium for about 400 years. English was the first language to be transmitted by radio in 1906. It was the first language of a commercial radio (in Pittsburgh in 1920), and it was also the language of the first television broadcasting (BBC in 1936). However, in the field of broadcasting, it is much more difficult to make some estimates (Crystal, 2003). English has also taken over as the language of advertising due to its use in foreign markets and its association with well-known American brands such as McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and Kodak.

Crystal (2003) further noted that English became the dominant language in the film industry when sound was introduced to technology, which had its origins in Britain and France, showing how dominant the language is in this field. Feature films first appeared in this country, and Hollywood film studios were established. These days, the majority of feature films are produced in English, and it is rare to discover a blockbuster movie that would not be in English.

As reported by the University of Mpumalanga, in Africa English language dominates media space. It argued that the status and use of indigenous languages in the media show that

cultural wealth is dissolving at a worrying rate because of the widespread use of the English language (UoM, 2022).

2.4.5 ELF in Air and Sea Transportation

English is now the most widely used language in the world for managing both air and sea transportation. A uniting language, a lingua franca, was required due to an increase in international travel in order to protect lives and guarantee that international ships and aeroplanes operate smoothly. English has been the official language for air transportation since 1951, after the “International Civil Aviation Organisation” was established. From that point on, English continues to play a significant role since it makes it possible for pilots of various language backgrounds to communicate (Seiler, 2009).

English is used in air transportation. Airlines in Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, and Ethiopia to mention a few, use English as a lingua franca. Therefore, ELF plays a significant role. It is a requirement that pilots and air hostesses are proficient in English. In order to minimise miscommunication in aviation, English is used. Shawcross (2008) reveals that reliability and accuracy in the use of language are important where situations have the potential to become critical, which is possible in aviation.

With regard to sea transportation, it is crucial to have a common language that every person on a vessel can use, a standard language that can be understood by all crew members on board in an industry that has a significant global presence. The “Essential English for International Maritime Use” plan was the first official language proposal. The term “Sea speak” was also used to describe this form of English, which includes simplified vocabulary and phrases like “Say again” (Dissanayake, 2017).

Maritime English (ME) is the lingua franca of the seas. Within the international shipping community, Maritime English is defined as a communication device. It facilitates seaborne business and enhances navigation safety. When it comes to communication between ships and the shore, English is used on the bridge as the working language for bridge-to-bridge and bridge-to-shore safety communication. Many dialects of English are spoken in the ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore, and on-board domains because of the multicultural and multilingual nature of offshore personnel and ships’ crew (Dissanayake, 2017).

In Africa, English is used in sea transportation. This is because miscommunication or misunderstanding can lead to terrible consequences, which can endanger lives and the

environment. English is widely used, it is a language of international communication and its significance is evident in so many different areas in life. A lot of people have learned it either as a second or a foreign language in order to bridge communication barriers, and understand one another.

2.4.6 English in International Organisations

One of the many areas where a common language is greatly needed is international organisations. As Crystal (2003) emphasises, the League of Nations was the first international organisation to have English as one of its official languages when it was established just after World War I. English maintained its position until the United Nations took its place in 1945. Crystal (2003) estimates that over 85% of international organisations worldwide use English as one of their official languages. For example, the United Nations, of which Lesotho is a member, is one of the international organisations which use English as one of their official languages. Such organisations use English as a lingua franca, and their communication is in English, with documents written in English.

2.5 English as a Lingua Franca in a Multicultural Workplace

In a multicultural or international workplace, which is an ELF context, non-native English speakers may dominate, and communication frequently occurs even in the absence of native speakers. The ability to adapt to interlocutors from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and the development of strategies for achieving clarity in content and intent are more important for successful communication in multicultural workplaces than native-like fluency or accuracy (Angouri, 2012; Kankaanranta et al., 2015; Pitzl, 2015; Planken 2005).

Workplace English as a lingua franca (WELF) can operate in a variety of organisational environments. These can include multinational corporations with branches abroad, multinational corporations employing people from other countries, and mergers and acquisitions involving companies from several nations. Depending on the circumstances, WELF settings can differ significantly as well. These can be informal, more personal discussions among co-workers as well as exchanges pertaining to work-related emails and conversations that ELF mediates. These can include professional conferences where speakers address international audiences throughout the world and business meetings where international partners negotiate trade and financial transactions.

Gerritsen and Nickerson (2009) assert that similar concepts have also been developed, such as English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF). However, a "workplace" encompasses a far broader and more complex social context than the kinds of transactional situations captured in the BELF concept. Workplace English as a lingua franca may be a better representation of the WELF than BELF.

In professional settings, WELF differs from native speaker competency and cannot be associated with it. There is a model that illustrates how English is used in various situations throughout the world and shows how ELF competency varies from native speaker competency. Prodrômou (2008) created this model, which is named "Successful Users of English as a Lingua Franca". This model rejects the idea that decontextualized language knowledge and usage is the key to success in cross-cultural communication. Instead, the model places more emphasis on the user's capacity to comprehend and adjust to the dynamics of international communication. Prodrômou's model distinguishes between users and learners and suggests that a proficient command of the English language is important for one to be a successful user. In addition, it entails considering one's own proficiency level in handling communication.

Hülmbauer et al. (2008) explain that finding ways to communicate in the globally connected world, where people travel for work, learn and share experiences, is a key component of the new linguistic reality. Therefore, finding a common language in order to bridge language barriers is very significant. Finding means to facilitate communication amongst those with various mother tongues and cultures therefore seems salient. Seidlhofer (2001) explains that ELF includes the sociolinguist changes as its primary goal is promoting communication between speakers of different native languages in a multicultural workplace. This goal does not always entail attaining a native-like proficiency.

A multicultural workplace is characterised by diversity and is an environment where ELF performs at its best. For effective communication in a work environment that consists of people from different linguistic backgrounds, ELF plays a vital role. Meetings and presentations in an international organisation or in a multicultural workplace are conducted in a language that everyone understands. In this case, English is that contact language. Even emails are written in English in such environments. In an international work setting, a language holding a role of a lingua franca is highly required.

Effectiveness in ELF is characterised by the achievement of mutual understanding through co-creating meaning (Hülmbauer, 2007). Effectiveness might be explained as the degree to which people believe they have accomplished specific communicative goals. With the growth of multicultural workplaces worldwide, and as organisations internationalise, a number of different speech communities has emerged (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010).

Language differences are known to cause two types of issues. First, comprehension is generally reduced among speakers of different languages, meaning that there will be a language barrier and lack of understanding between people from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Secondly, dissimilarities in language are often used to form group membership and social classes; including some while excluding others. This could decrease an organisation or company efficacy. Introducing a common language in a multicultural workplace, usually English, has been a solution in numerous cases (Selmer & Lauring, 2013).

Use of ELF provides a common ground and is therefore used to avoid the two problems mentioned above. Introduction of ELF initiates positive feedback. Nickerson (2005), states that whenever a team has employees which speak a variety of mother tongues, its members need to choose a common working language. In most cases, English is selected for this purpose because it has reached a status of “lingua franca in business communication”. This is where the effectiveness of ELF will be seen.

The remaining part of this section discusses the importance of ELF in a multicultural workplace, focussing on comprehensibility and cultural differences.

Comprehensibility is very important when it comes to ELF in a workplace. The term comprehensibility indicates that the message is understood by the recipient in the manner in which the sender intended. Studies have indicated that the majority of comprehension issues arise from lexical and grammatical errors (Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009). According to Tajima (2004), for example, the crash of two Boeing 747 Jumbo Jets in Tenerife in 1977, which was caused by a communication breakdown in the workplace ELF or Business ELF (BELF) situation, was the most terrible aviation accident in history.

The Spanish controller misunderstood the Dutch captain’s English statement; “We are now at take-off,” for “We are now at the take-off position.” What the Dutch captain was trying to communicate meant “We are now taking off.” Because of interference from his native Dutch language, the captain’s English sentence was uncommon in the context of English aviation

language. This example shows how important English as a lingua franca is in multicultural workplaces. ELF breaks communication barriers. Had there been comprehensibility, the accident could have been avoided. A bridging language between two parties that are from different linguistic backgrounds is very vital.

Cultural differences between involved parties may cause communication barriers and ELF plays a significant role in such cases. This is because when communication is in a language other than their first language, speakers still use the communication strategies associated with their own cultural background since they are speaking from that perspective. People often interact in accordance with the socio-cultural norms which govern the use of their own mother tongue. Even though they may need to ‘speak the same language’ in such multilingual contexts, they may not necessarily ‘speak the same way’ (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). Full comprehension of the English language helps smoothen communication between people from different cultures. Use of ELF helps break communication barriers, mostly if it is not influenced by a mother tongue accent.

2.6 ELF in Africa

Africa is thought to be the most multilingual continent in the world today, with more languages spoken there per person than anywhere else. In Africa today, it is estimated that 1,140 different languages are spoken (Khokhlova, 2007). Even though there are about 3 million native English speakers, English has a disproportionately large impact since it is used as a second or foreign language by millions of speakers, serving as their lingua franca. As a result, there are many different degrees of proficiency in the language, ranging from natural English speakers to people who only use the most basic form of the language for communication. Many black South Africans believe that learning English is highly desirable because of its status as an international language, the liberation movements' adoption of it, its widespread use in business and industry, and the apartheid era's nearly exclusively Afrikaans character of the government, police, and civil service (Khokhlova, 2011).

A lot of countries currently use English as a lingua franca. Nigeria is one of them. It is a multilingual country, with the current population of approximately two hundred and twenty-nine (229) million based on projections of the latest United Nations data and over five hundred languages, accounting for about twenty-five percent of all languages in Africa. English is an official language in Nigeria, in addition to it, there are three chosen official

regional languages; Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo. There are at least five hundred other languages spoken by minorities in Nigeria (Udoh & Emmanuel, 2020).

These languages are made up of hundreds of dialects, sociolects, styles, and registers. What this means is that Nigerians do not share one single language, so they need ELF, besides their Pidgin English. English has also expanded functionally in the majority of domains as the official language since its establishment during colonisation and subsequent measures elevating it above the indigenous languages, particularly in the sphere of education (Adegbija, 2003). Together with the official roles that English is perceived to fulfil, these language policies have helped to foster a positive view of the language over time, particularly in the field of education. Since Nigeria was once a British colony, it shares, depending on one's perspective, a unique blessing or burden with other African nations, which is the adoption of English as the official language, or *lingua franca*.

Namibia is another country that has English as an official language and it is used as a *lingua franca*. Namibia is known for being a multicultural country with a linguistically diverse population of slightly over two million. Ten to thirty languages have been estimated to be spoken in Namibia, while it is possible that some of these are dialects of other languages (Frydman, 2011). Melchers and Shaw (2011) noted that the Oshiwambo language, which belongs to the Bantu family of languages, is spoken by the majority of the small population. Nonetheless, English functions as the only official language in the nation due to a "policy of monolingualism" (Frydman, 2011). Currently, English is still the sole official language in Namibia; however, only three percent speak it as a home language. The most commonly spoken language is Oshiwambo (Nyqvist, 2016).

Although English is not widely spoken in the nation, it is used as an official language in all governmental sectors and as a medium of instruction in schools (Frydman, 2011). Melchers and Shaw (2011) shared that English holds the highest position in the linguistic hierarchy of Namibia, as it is the main European language spoken globally. English continues to be used as the official language despite having no historical connection to Namibia and only being completely understood by a small percentage of people (Frydman, 2011). English has full functions in schools, religion, and government uses in Namibia, as defined by Melchers and Shaw (2011) in their definition of the language's purposes in African nations.

In Lesotho, Sesotho is Basotho's native tongue, but there are other minority languages that are spoken, and these are isiXhosa, siPhuthi, and Ndebele. Sesotho is spoken by the majority

of the population and the other three languages are spoken by minority groups (Kolobe & Matsoso, 2020). Lesotho as a multilingual country has Sesotho and English as its official languages. English is frequently used, particularly in official and formal settings such as legal systems, government and education. In Lesotho's educational establishments, English is a major language of instruction. It is used in schools and in higher education, and this helps people become more fluent in English. English language also facilitates communication among local and expatriate teachers, and local and international students.

English in Lesotho is widely used in economic and administrative settings. Ability to communicate in English is considered to be valuable for participation in international affairs and for employment opportunities. English competence tends to be higher in urban areas, which reflects the language's significance in social and professional contexts. Sesotho may dominate in everyday conversation in rural settings. The use of English in Lesotho has been impacted by globalisation, which has made people more connected to opportunities and networks throughout the world.

Since Lesotho has English as a second language (ESL), English is learned from primary level and it becomes a medium of instruction from Grade four (Kolobe & Matsoso, 2020). Efforts are made to ensure that Basotho children learn to read, speak and write English. Proficiency in English is helpful for securing jobs in this country. In a multicultural or an international working environment, Basotho employees use English as a lingua franca. Hence this study sought to investigate the effectiveness of ELF on Basotho workers in multicultural workplaces in Maseru, Lesotho.

The literature that has been reviewed shows that different studies have been carried out on English as a Lingua Franca in diverse contexts. However, the current researcher found looking into its effectiveness on Basotho employees in a multicultural work environment in Maseru, Lesotho, worthwhile because there seems to be scarcity of such studies. The study investigated the effectiveness of ELF at UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd workplaces.

2.7 Theoretical framework

The current study is guided by the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). This is a theory that examines how speakers adjust their language in order to facilitate communication in diverse linguistics contexts. This theory was proposed by Howard Giles and his colleagues in the 1970s. Giles had an interest in how people communicate with one another. His theory

of accommodation has evolved and has been applied to a variety of contexts, including English as a lingua franca (ELF). CAT was introduced with the aim of exploring how individuals adjust their communication styles and use of language.

Giles (1997) states that one of his partners had a temporary condition several years ago that prevented her from speaking louder than a whisper. It was shocking to learn that other people, despite not having that condition themselves, would whisper back to her when she spoke. The question was: “why?” In a simpler explanation, in interaction, people adjust and adapt to fellow speakers. In a communicative encounter, people immediately and often unconsciously start to synchronise aspects of their verbal and nonverbal behaviour. These modifications are at the core of CAT.

The broad framework of CAT aims to predict and clarify numerous modifications that people make in order to create, maintain, or reduce social distance in interactions. It examines various methods in which people adapt their communication, the reasons behind it, and the outcomes. CAT addresses interpersonal communication issues, yet also links it with the larger context of the intergroup stakes of an encounter (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

CAT is particularly relevant when it comes to ELF, because people who use ELF frequently converse with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As a result, there is a higher need for mutual understanding, and the Communication Accommodation Theory explains how people modify their language use to satisfy this requirement. This theory suggests that during an interaction between people, they adapt their communication, making it more similar to the other person’s style of communication (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

As explained earlier, English as a lingua franca is a contact language between people who do not share a mother tongue. It can be linked to CAT in a multicultural work setting by considering how speakers adapt their communication to fit a particular context and other people involved. When speaking in an ELF context, speakers may use a simplified language, for example. This sort of accommodation can help people understand one another and have effective communication in a multicultural environment (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

In an ELF setting, there are a few factors that influence how much people accommodate their communication. According to Giles and Ogay (2007), these factors include their personal communication style, the cultural norms of people involved, as well as the proficiency level of the people involved. The extent to which people modify their speech in an ELF situation

depends on their personal communication style. While some people are rigid and reluctant to modify their communication style, certain people are naturally more flexible and adaptive. Turner and West (2010) suggest that people's cultural norms also play a role. Adjusting one's communication style to fit the context may be considered polite or impolite in certain cultures. The degree of accommodation can also be influenced by the level of proficiency of those involved.

The researcher chose this theory because CAT's focus is on how people adjust their communication styles in interactions. In a multicultural workplace where English is used as a common language of communication, employees often adjust their communication to bridge linguistic differences. A multicultural work setting comprises people with different accents; of which, at other times, these accents influence the way they speak English. It also comprises some employees who are less educated and are less proficient in English, which means that, for better interactions, adjustments are made by the employees. This makes CAT highly relevant for this study.

2.8 Relevant Empirical Studies on ELF

This section reviews literature on empirical studies that were conducted on the topic of English as a lingua franca at multicultural workplaces. In Thailand, Rajprasit (2015) investigated the role of English language within the frame of international workplace communication. The purpose of the study was to find out how Thai computer engineers felt about using English as a lingua in international communication. The study employed a mixed-method approach, with 40 Thai computer engineers working in a medium-sized international company in Bangkok as respondents. The findings showed that their job performance was negatively affected by lack of English communication skills because they were required to interact with foreign colleagues and clients. Some of the respondents expressed that technical language only was insufficient for careers in engineering. Thus, Rajprasit proposed that English for specific purpose courses should be developed in order to prepare future engineers to be competent in English. Rajprasit's study is relevant to this research because it shows how English is experienced by employees whose native language is not English, and further reveals the importance of ELF in international working workplaces.

In China, Yao and Babcock (2020) investigated English as a lingua franca in China-based workplace communication. The study examined the communication requirements for using

English as a business lingua franca (BELF), in three types of Mainland Chinese companies: state-owned, privately owned, and multinational. Online surveys and semi-structured interviews with Chinese business professionals provided the data for this study. The findings indicated that, particularly in multinational corporations, English has become a more significant language in a workplace in Mainland China. The use of English has become standard practice in multinational companies, although how much is used depends on a variety of contextual factors, the main ones being a professional's responsibilities and English language competency. The results also show that culture plays a vital part in BELF communication at work.

Leyi (2020) conducted a study on "World Englishes and English as a lingua franca and their implications on English teaching and learning", and discovered that WE and ELF have challenged the native speaker model, which is not achievable and enough for most language learners because of numerous varieties of English that have emerged and developed globally. Leyi (2020) came to a conclusion that in order to communicate effectively, language users must adapt to many forms of the language rather than insisting on one type. To put it another way, the aim of teaching and studying English should be intelligibility rather than traditional native speaker competence.

Bayyurt et al. (2019) carried out a study on "English language teachers' awareness of English as a lingua franca in multilingual and multicultural contexts" using the quantitative method. Questionnaires were used in an attempt to reveal in-service teachers' beliefs on ELF pedagogical practice in three countries being: Portugal, Turkey and Poland. They investigated the involvement of culture in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Expanding Circles contexts. The findings of the study demonstrated that even though teachers in these contexts are aware of the importance of the inclusion of an ELF-aware perspective in ELT, they are still not sure of how it would work in their particular teaching environment. The results of this study may help English language teachers to better comprehend the possibilities for applying an ELF-aware educational approach in a multilingual or a multicultural setting.

Lewandowska (2019) carried out a study on the topic: "English as a lingua franca: An overview of communicative strategies". The study discussed the significance of communicative strategies in the introduction of English as a lingua franca. According to a brief meta-analysis of pragmatics research, the ability of users to conduct meaningful exchanges using a lot of communicative strategies is one of the most salient characteristics of

using ELF. The findings of this case study revealed that particular strategies are less favoured by the ELF users. For example, those that seem to require the modification of language forms and manipulation of language content in order to achieve communication goals.

The study also revealed that, in contrast to the meta-analysis's results, the study's participants employed a variety of strategies, including compensation, stalling and avoidance with no observable variations in the data collected. Based on the analysis of data, a conclusion could be that the integration of communicative strategies should be taken into consideration when making a decision whether to teach ELF or, at the very least, when allowing learners of English language to explore different strategies that may be proved as beneficial for their language use in a global marketplace.

Lerotholi (2019) conducted a study: "A critical analysis of teaching English in English as a lingua franca context: A case study of Lesotho". In order to improve the state of education in Lesotho, this study investigated the probability of involving language skills. The study looked into the reasons behind the concern of lack of skills and knowledge of English by junior secondary school students in Maseru. The research was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Cluster random sampling was used and it allowed the researcher to divide the secondary schools into clusters. A questionnaire was the primary instrument for collection of data, and it was used to gather qualitative data from students in schools. Quantitative data analysis was done with the help of MoonStats statistical programme. Collection of qualitative data was also through face-to-face interviews and analysed using content analysis. The results showed that English language knowledge in secondary schools was lacking.

English as a lingua franca is seen as a helpful tool for cross-cultural communication, facilitating collaboration and removing language barriers. Participants of ELF frequently value the chances it offers for international networking and job progress. ELF works well to promote communication between speakers of different first languages in a variety of settings, including workplaces.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed a wide range of literature, from theoretical to empirical, in order to gain a better understanding of the topic under study. It is apparent from the literature reviewed in this chapter that not much research has been done to investigate the effectiveness

of ELF at specific multicultural workplaces, particularly in Lesotho. The current study was therefore meant to contribute knowledge to this lacking area.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods that were used, research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sample techniques, data collection methods, data analysis, validity and reliability, as well as ethical considerations when conducting this study. The objective was to give an explanation and justification of the methodology used in the research process, and to provide a summary of how the conclusions and answers to the research question were reached.

3.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is defined as people's way of understanding the world's reality and studying it. It is a combination of ontology, epistemology, as well as methodology. Ontology and epistemology is about how a person views the world. According to Grix (2004), to research, ontology and epistemology are the foundation of a house. Ontology is referred to as the nature of people's beliefs about reality (Richards, 2003).

Epistemology refers to the study of the nature of knowledge and the process of knowledge acquisition and validation (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Epistemology concerns itself with the nature and forms of knowledge, its acquisition and how it can be communicated to other people. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) state that a methodology is an articulated, theoretically informed approach to data's production.

Methodology guides the researcher in deciding the type of data required for a study and the tools of data collection that will be appropriate for the purpose of the researcher's study. It is the methodological question that drives the researcher to ask how the work will be studied. There are three approaches to educational research, and these are positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. Since this study used a mixed-methods research approach, it therefore adopted dual paradigm; interpretivism and positivism paradigm. The interpretivism paradigm is associated with qualitative studies, and the positivism paradigm is associated with quantitative studies.

3.1.1 Interpretivism Paradigm

Interpretivism rejects the idea that there is a single, verifiable reality that exists apart from our senses. In order for the truth to be widely recognised, it declines the adoption of any

permanent, unvarying (or foundational) standards (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). Interpretivists believe that there are a lot of realities that are socially created. Realities and truths are not found; they are created. Since reality is always mediated by our senses, it is impossible to know reality as it actually is. The epistemology of interpretivism is subjective. Observers cannot directly access the external reality without allowing their worldviews, concepts and backgrounds to influence it.

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) define the interpretivist paradigm's central endeavour as to comprehend the subjective world of human experiences. In a multicultural workplace where English is used as a lingua franca, workers bring their own cultural backgrounds, competencies in language, and interpretations to communication situations. The interpretivist paradigm, therefore, points out that people's subjective experiences shape how they perceive and understand the world. In the context of this study, employees bring their own cultural backgrounds, language skills, and perceptions to communication situations in a multicultural workplace where ELF is employed. Interpretivism is interested in figuring out how people make sense of the use of English as a lingua franca, negotiation of meaning and the influence of their cultural backgrounds on interpretations of communication events.

The interpretivist paradigm's central claim is that reality is socially constructed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Interpretivism acknowledges the influence of the social environment on how people behave and interact. Communication dynamics in a multicultural workplace are impacted by societal norms, company culture, and power relations. In the case of this study, interpretivism looks at how people use ELF in different contexts, how they deal with language and cultural barriers, and how communication styles change over time in an organisation. Instead of focusing on the observer's perspective, every attempt is made to comprehend the subject's point of view. Emphasis is on understanding the individual and how they interpret the environment around them.

In order to understand the depth of the phenomenon, interpretivism was chosen for this research because it is interested in figuring out how people make sense of the use of English as a lingua franca; in the case of this research, the “effectiveness” of ELF. It is often associated with qualitative research methods to obtain a comprehensive understanding of social issues. When employing an interpretivist methodology, researchers investigate the nuances of ELF communication in multicultural workplaces through observation and interviews. They can learn more about the cultural dynamics, and individual perspectives that

influence communication practices in these kinds of settings by conducting qualitative research.

3.1.2 Positivism Paradigm

Positivism paradigm is associated with quantitative research methods. It emphasises objectivity, measurability, and the use of statistical methods to collect and analyse data. Positivism assumes that reality is objective and that it can be observed and measured. Positivism is defined by Ryan (2018) as a form of or a progression of empiricism. Empiricism believes that knowledge should be objective and free from any bias that stems from the values and beliefs of the researcher.

Ontologically, Ryan (2018) avers that positivists believe that there are facts that can be proven, and that reality is the same for each individual. For example, the weight of a child is the same regardless of who measured it. Observation and measurement relate to what reality is. Maksimović and Evtimov (2023) assert that positivism is based on universal laws and it emphasises the existence of a common reality. This is why it accepts experience and verified knowledge, but rejects all that is subjective, abstract and metaphysical. This paradigm informs that there is one reality and it can be objectively measured and determined.

In the context of studying the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca in multicultural workplaces, positivism seeks to measure the findings objectively, such as communication efficacy, team collaboration and productivity using quantifiable metrics. By employing standardised data collection methods and analysis, positivism assists in ensuring that the findings are based on solid empirical evidence instead of interpretations that are subjective. It ensures that the findings of the study reflect the realities of the use of ELF in a multicultural environment. This paradigm allows the researcher to quantify variables such as levels of proficiency and frequency of English use. Statistical analysis helps comprehend how effectively English functions as a lingua franca in diverse workplace settings.

3.2 Research Approach

Creswell (2009) explains that there are three research approaches that can be used as a guide in collecting and analysing data: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. This study adopted a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews) methods. This allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca in a multicultural workplace.

Firstly, qualitative research is a method for investigating and comprehending the meaning that individuals or groups assign to a social or human situation. The research process involves generating new questions and methods, gathering data, usually in the participant's environment, analysing the data inductively to go from specifics to broad themes, and interpreting the results. The final written report has a flexible format. People who do this kind of study are in favour of an approach to research that respects an inductive method, focuses on personal meaning, and emphasises the significance of conveying the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2007).

Secondly, quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories through the analysis of the relationship between variables. In turn, these variables can be measured, usually with instruments, allowing for the statistical analysis of numbered data. Lastly, mixed methods research is an approach that associates or integrates both qualitative and quantitative elements. It entails making philosophical assumptions, applying both qualitative and quantitative methods, and combining the two methods in one study. Accordingly, it involves more than just gathering and evaluating both types of data; it also includes the use of both methodologies simultaneously so that a study's overall strength is greater than that of either qualitative research or quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The researcher chose to use a mixed method research approach because a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches is effective. Mixed methods can provide a better understanding of the problem and give more evidence; the researcher gains both breadth and depth. The quantitative research approach seeks to gain comprehension of accurate and reliable measures of statistical data on the effectiveness of ELF on Basotho employees, which was collected from UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd. The researcher believed this approach is the best because it allows for necessary collection techniques of data; quantifying the findings towards the effectiveness of ELF assists in dodging generalisation.

The researcher also used a qualitative research approach because interviews regarding the effectiveness of ELF on Basotho employees in multicultural workplaces offer some kind of flexibility for participants to express themselves fully and freely. Interviews were used to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of ELF on Basotho employees in a multicultural workplace. However, the quantitative research approach was dominant in this study since questionnaires were the primary means of data collection.

3.3 Research Design

Research designs are the plans and processes for conducting research that range from general hypotheses to specific techniques for gathering and analysing data. The choice of a research design should be based on the researcher's worldview assumptions, the techniques of inquiry or strategies, and the particular approaches used for data gathering, analysis, and interpretation. The choice of a research design is also influenced by the audience for the study, the nature of the research topic or issue being addressed, and the experiences of the researchers themselves (Creswell, 2009).

A research design, according to Thakur (2021: 53), is defined as “the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy and procedure.” In other words, it is the glue that holds all aspects of a research project together. In order to address the study’s research questions, making decisions about the methodology was necessary.

This research adopted a case study design as it intended to understand the effectiveness of ELF in two multicultural workplaces, namely UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd in Maseru, Lesotho. A proposed definition of a case study by Gerring (2004: 342) is an “intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units.” Case study, according to Bergen and While (2000), is defined as a detailed collection of unstructured information from a variety of sources about something, either about a certain individual, group or institution. This usually includes the accounts of subjects themselves.

Baxter and Jack (2008) describe a case study as a research design that explores the phenomenon in its contexts using different sources of data. This ensures that the problem being studied is not explored through a single lens, but a range of lenses which enables for a variety facet of the phenomena to be seen and comprehended. Case study is based on interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivists claim that the truth is relative and that it depends on one’s perspective. One of the advantages of case study is that it allows the researcher and the participant to closely collaborate, and it also enables participants to tell their stories. Through the information that is provided by the participants, they are able to describe their views of reality and the researcher becomes able to understand the participants’ responses better (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

An investigation into the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca in a multicultural workplace required the use of this design, in order to try and understand the depth of ELF. Creswell (2009) explains that it is through the use of case studies that a researcher is able to dig deeply into a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more people. Cases are limited by time and activity, and researchers gather comprehensive data over a sustained period of time through various procedures of collection.

3.4 Population and Sampling

Shukla (2020) explicates that the study population is a set or group that consists of all the units on which the findings of the research are applied to. This set may include individuals, groups, and others. By this definition, a population is a collection of all units with the variable characteristics under study and for whom the researcher's conclusions can be applied generally. The sample is a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population and from which data will be gathered by the researcher. Shukla (2020) further explains that gathering data for research under sampling is simpler because it can be faster and at a lower cost.

The current study had targeted a diverse sample of 50 employees in two multicultural workplaces, with varying linguistic backgrounds and proficiency levels in English. Due to the sampling technique that the researcher used, only 45 employees were available to take part in the study. However, the researcher settled for 37 employees because other questionnaires were not answered correctly and therefore discarded. The respondents were the Basotho employees at UNICEF and EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd in Maseru, Lesotho. They are exposed to English language daily at work. With no age restriction, both genders were considered as participants in this research.

The study was conducted in Lesotho, in the capital town called Maseru. EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd is a company located in Maseru at 20/22 Moshoeshoe Road Industrial Area. It is a company that prints different types of documents. It is a multicultural work environment that has Filipinos and Basotho as employees. Therefore, English is used for communication. UNICEF is an international organisation that aims to protect the rights of all children, everywhere, and to reach the most disadvantaged children and adolescents in the world's toughest places. UNICEF offices are located at 13 UN Road, UN House, in Maseru, Lesotho. It is an organisation with employees from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds; these

include the Basotho, Japanese, Spanish, Kenyans, Malawian, German, Zimbabwean, French, Pakistani, and Indians. Hence, English is used as a lingua franca.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The sampling method plays an important role in carrying out quality research by supporting the researchers to choose more representative samples and generalise the findings of research. Sampling is the process of choosing a number of participants for a study in a way that ensures the participants represent the larger population from which they were chosen. An essential component of any research undertaking is selecting an appropriate sample (Cooper & Schindler, 2016).

The sampling method the researcher used for this study is convenience sampling, which falls under non-probability sampling. Rahi (2017) states that convenience sampling describes the collection of data from a research population that is reachable to the researcher. Convenience sampling means that the researcher uses a sample that is readily available and has access to. The researcher chose to use this sampling technique because it is effective and is easier to gather data in a busy workplace, meaning whoever is available in the target group can be part of the sample. Since the sample is drawn from an easily available target group, the researcher invests less time.

Convenience sampling allows the researcher to approach any Mosotho employee at UNICEF and Epic Printer (Pty) Ltd who is available at that moment and who meets the criteria. This technique permits the researcher to ask available participants to take part in the study. If they give consent, they are chosen and added to the sample. The number of employees at UNICEF was unspecified by the human resources officer. Epic Printer (Pty) Ltd has 43 employees.

3.6 Data Collection

Given that the current study is designed to be a case study of a multicultural workplace, it seemed reasonable to use a quantitative tool, a questionnaire, in the beginning, to gain a general understanding of the field and the backgrounds of the respondents of the study. A questionnaire is described by Quinlan et al. (2019) as a list of questions put together by the researcher for a particular investigation. To enable respondents to answer the questionnaire with ease, its contents must be clear, brief and straightforward. This will motivate participants to give quick and sincere answers. Questionnaires are regarded as suitable for their ability to gather data from a larger population, ease of analysis and affordability.

In addition, in relation to the use of questionnaires, participants can remain anonymous, which decreases the possibility of providing inaccurate information (Tourangeau, 2018). For the purposes of this study, a questionnaire in English language related to the effectiveness of ELF in a multicultural workplace became a tool of data collection.

There are three types of questionnaires that are distinguished by Dörnyei (2007).

1. Factual questions: to clarify particular aspects such as demographic traits, place of residence, employment, history of language acquisition, duration of time spent in L2 context etc.
2. Behavioural questions: focuses on actions, personal history, lifestyles, and habits.
3. Attitudinal questions: covers attitudes, perceptions, opinions, interests, values and beliefs.

The questionnaire for this study consisted of close-ended and open-ended questions. It was distributed to the target group of respondents (37), which are the employees of UNICEF and EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd. The researcher divided the questionnaire into two sections. The first section contained close-ended questions designed to put together the participants' demographic information, which included their gender, age, job position, company, educational background and frequency of using English or ELF as a form of communication at their workplace. The second section consisted of open-ended questions, and the respondents were free to express their thoughts regarding the effectiveness of ELF. Before the actual distribution of the questionnaires, the researcher conducted a pilot survey with three respondents to verify the quality and correctness of the questionnaire. Changes were made where there were biases and unclear answers.

Qualitative methods are helpful in making sense of complexity and were chosen in this current study, which aimed to investigate the experience of a multicultural workplace and the perceived benefits of using a second language at work. For this reason, four interviews were also conducted with the employees to gain a deeper understanding of this effectiveness. Qualitative method was suitable for this present study because it focuses on the insider meaning. The goal of qualitative research is to investigate the respondent's perspectives of the study; it is concerned with the subjective opinions, feelings and experiences of the respondent (Dörnyei, 2007).

The perspective of an insider holds a special place in the qualitative 'credo' given that human behaviour is based upon meanings which people attribute to and bring to situations and it is

actual respondents, only, who can reveal the meanings and interpretations of their experiences and actions. Therefore, in line with this reasoning, conducting interviews was seen as an effective method of gathering data for the current study because it is a basic and essential part of qualitative research (Dörnyei, 2007).

For the present study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most suitable interview format. The rationale behind this decision is that it allows for enough flexibility. Participants are able to express themselves fully. In addition, they have the ability to incorporate narrative passages, should the respondents feel the need to express their experiences in this manner. This is regarded as a significant aspect of learning about personal experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four participants (two from UNICEF and another two from Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd. Only four interviewees were chosen because qualitative method seeks to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perceptions towards the effectiveness of ELF in a multicultural workplace. Considering the size of the organisations involved, conducting interviews with only four participants seemed reasonable. Before the main study, a pilot interview was conducted with two employees.

3.7 Data Analysis

The study employed descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages to analyse and interpret the findings. Data analysis was done with the help of Microsoft Office Excel, and the results are presented in tables and figures to help the reader easily follow. Qualitative data was thematically analysed to extract key themes and narratives. The established patterns were interpreted and discussed, relating to the previous studies where applicable.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of the study and its findings are very significant elements to provide evidence of the research quality. Validity is characterised by Hayashi Jr et al. (2019: 99) as “the confidence with which conclusions can be drawn from an analysis”, and reliability is defined as “the consistency with which a research procedure will evaluate a phenomenon in the same way over several attempts.”

The validity and reliability of this research were ensured through careful planning, pilot testing, and analysis. In order to provide valuable insights into the role of English in multicultural workplace communication, these measures help guarantee that the findings are accurate and consistent. The study also capitalised on the advantages of both quantitative and

qualitative data by using a mixed-method approach, which increased the reliability and validity of the findings. In this study, validity ensures that the effectiveness of ELF on Basotho employees in a multicultural working environment is accurately assessed while reliability ensures that the findings can be replicated consistently.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are moral standards that define what behaviour is and is not acceptable. Resnik (2015) clarifies that moral principles regulate interpersonal relationships with mutual respect, ensuring that the needs of all involved parties are satisfied. People's decisions about how to live their lives are influenced by their adherence to ethical principles. Ethics is concerned with what is best for people as individuals and as a society, and their implications fall within the domain of moral philosophy.

Polit and Hungler (1999) observe that it is necessary to consider the potential feelings of human subjects regarding the consequences of the prospective outcomes of any research study in question in order to uphold the ethical rules that apply to all professional research studies. Research involving human subjects must always respect the dignity of participants, and great care must be taken to ensure that those who participate in the study are not offended or suffer any physical, psychological, or emotional harm (Dunn, 2012).

It is important for researchers to have a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities in research studies in order to avoid the possibility of unethical research practices that could have unfavourable effects on participants in research studies. This research adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring participant anonymity, informed consent, and data confidentiality. The researcher made the respondents aware that their participation in this research was voluntary.

The researcher made the participants understand what the study was about before they participated. This means that they were given a brief description of the nature and purpose of the study. They were made aware that they were free to withdraw from the study without any fear of retaliation. Consent forms were provided. Lastly, the researcher made respondents aware that the information that they provided was confidential. All the data collected was protected and used only for the intended purpose of this research.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter provided a thorough overview of the research methodology that was used to carry out the study and explained why questionnaires and interviews were used to gather data. Furthermore, the chapter provided procedures that were followed in order to analyse the data gathered from the questionnaires administered and the interviews conducted on Basotho employees at the two multicultural workplaces in the district of Maseru, Lesotho. The study was then conducted under the guidance of the methodology presented in this chapter, and its findings will be presented and analysed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the research objectives in Chapter 1, which were to investigate the effectiveness of ELF in a multicultural workplace, to examine the factors which contribute to this effectiveness, and to identify barriers to effective communication that are caused or removed by ELF in a multicultural work setting. The chapter further discusses, in detail, the findings that were obtained from Basotho employees in two multicultural workplaces, UNICEF and EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd in Maseru, Lesotho. The presented findings allow the researcher to draw reasonable conclusions.

The findings are presented in two sections, A and B since the data was collected in two stages. The first stage of data collection was the issuing of questionnaires; this was the primary means of data collection. The first few questions in the questionnaire solicited demographic information. The remaining questions were about the participants' use of English as a lingua franca at work, as well as its effectiveness. The second stage was interviews. Participants were interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of English as a medium of communication between Basotho employees and their colleagues from different linguistic backgrounds in a multicultural workplace.

SECTION A

4.1 Questionnaire Responses

This section presents the participants' responses to the questionnaire. It is divided into the following subsections: response rate, employee questionnaire and human resources questionnaire.

4.1.1 Response Rate

A questionnaire was created using SurveyMonkey, and the link was sent to 19 participants who are the employees at the two selected workplaces, and the return rate was 100%. However, 20 other employees could not access the electronic questionnaire; therefore, printed questionnaires were distributed to them. Out of 20 hard copies, 12 were completed correctly; five were not correctly answered, and were of no use, and the remaining three were discarded because only the demographic information part was filled, while the rest of the questionnaire was left unanswered. Another questionnaire was created for the human resources personnel,

and the link was sent to the Human Resources office at UNICEF and to the Human Resources office at EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd. The response was satisfying; those two questionnaires were completed correctly.

Tables, pie charts, and bar charts are used to present quantitative data processed with Microsoft Excel.

4.1.2 Data presentation from Employee Questionnaires

In this section, responses are presented according to the questions being responded to.

Questions 1, 2 and 3: Demographic Information

The table below shows the respondents' general demographic data. The demographic and characteristics that were observed in this study comprised the gender, age, qualification, as well as job position of respondents.

Table 1: Demographic information of the respondents

Demographic information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Gender		
Male	17	55%
Female	14	45%
Total	31	100%
2. Age		
21-30 Years	9	29%
31-40 Years	12	39%
41-50 Years	7	22%
51-60 Years	3	10%
Total	31	100%
3. Highest Qualification		
COSC	12	39%
Diploma	1	3%
Bachelor's Degree	10	32%
Master's Degree	4	13%
Other (specify)	4	13%
Total	31	100%

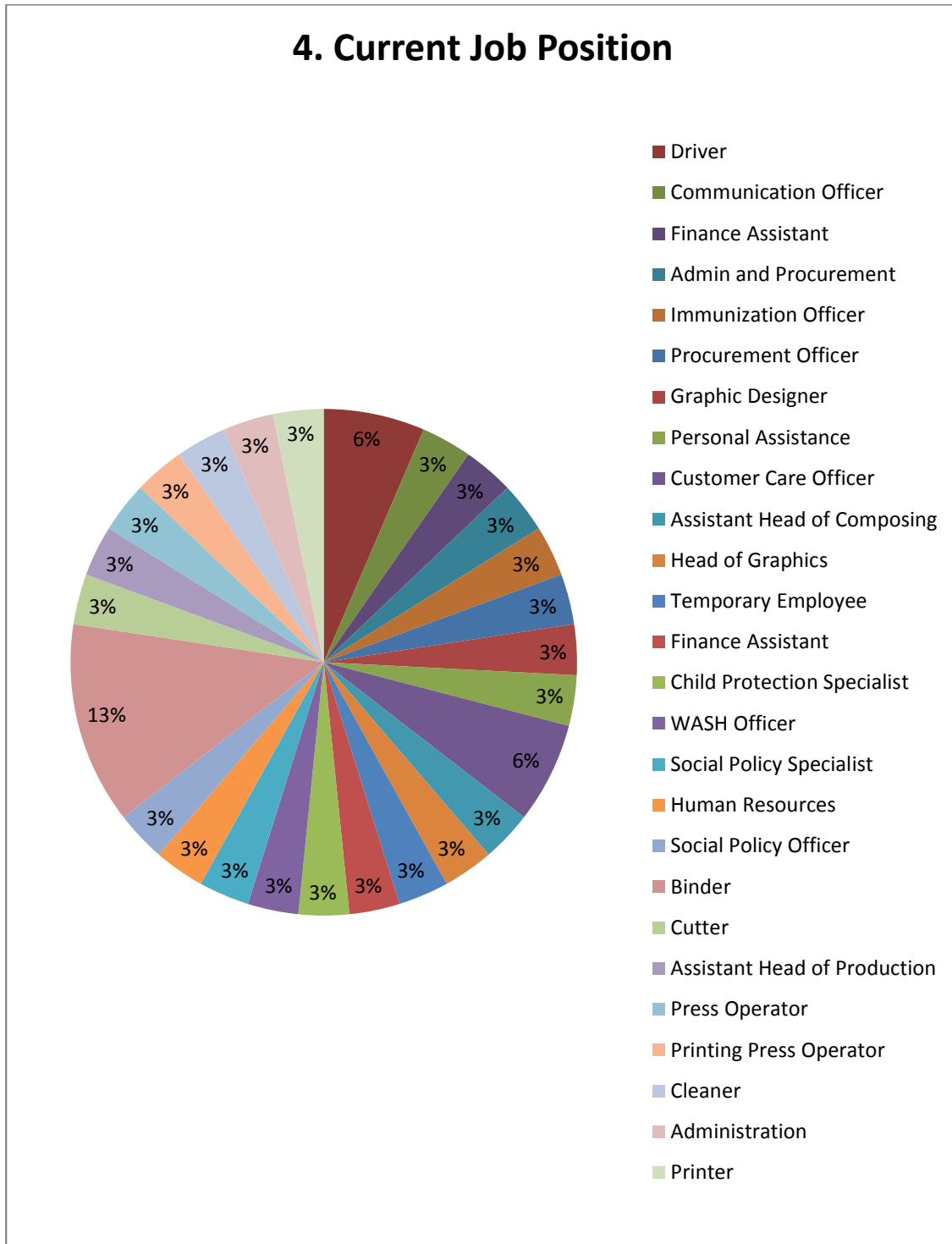
Table 1 indicates that 31 employees responded to the questionnaire. The researcher found that representation among the respondents in terms of gender reveals that the number of males exceeds that of females. There were 17 males and 14 females; therefore, the majority were males, with 55%, while 45% were female respondents, but the imbalance is not that much. In regard to age, findings in Table 1 show that nine respondents (Respondents 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 22, and 29) were between the age of 21-30 years (29%), 12 respondents (1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 13, 14, 16, 19, 23, 28, and 31) were between the age of 31-40 years (39%), seven respondents (6, 15, 20, 24, 26, 27, and 30) were between 41-50 years (22%), and three respondents (8, 21, and 25) were between the age of 51-60 years (10%). The wide age range is good for this study because it enables the researcher to get views on the use of ELF at work from different generations, which enriches the findings.

Regarding the respondents' educational background, 12 respondents (20 to 31) reported having obtained COSC, 10 respondents (7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 19) have Bachelor's Degrees, four respondents (2, 4, 6, and 8) have Master's Degrees and Respondent 13 has a Diploma. For the remaining four, Respondent 3 reported having a certificate in Computer Literacy, and Respondent 1 has a Postgraduate Diploma (PGD). Respondent 5 is a PhD candidate, while Respondent 17 obtained first class (she did not mention in what). With this level of education, which ranges from COSC to PhD, it can be assumed that the participants have a good level of language competence to communicate effectively in the English language. These education qualifications also show how education can contribute to the effectiveness of the use of English in a workplace.

4. Employee Current Job Position

Figure 1 below presents the respondents' job positions.

Figure 1: Respondents' Job Positions



Respondents 3 and 24 are Drivers. Respondent 2 is a Communication Officer; Respondents 9 and 12 are Finance Assistants; Respondent 19 works as an Admin and Procurement officer; Respondent 1 is an Immunization Officer; Respondent 11 is a Procurement Officer; Respondent 18 is a Graphic Designer; Respondent 17 is a Personal Assistant; Respondents 15

and 16 are Customer Care Officers; Respondent 14 works as an Assistant Head of Composing; Respondent 13 is a Head of Graphics.

Respondent 10 is a Temporary Employee; Respondent 8 is a Child Protection Specialist; Respondent 7 is a WASH Officer; Respondent 6 is a Social Policy Specialist; Respondent 5 works as Human Resources manager; Respondent 4 is a Social Policy Officer; four respondents (21, 23, 28, and 29) are Binders; Respondent 31 works as a Cutter; Respondent 25 is an Assistant Head of Production; Respondent 27 is a Press Operator; Respondent 26 is a Printing Press Operator; Respondent 22 is a Cleaner; Respondent 20 works as an Administrator; and Respondent 30 a Printer.

The researcher observed that the higher the position acquired by Basotho employees in the multicultural workplaces, the more their frequency in using English as a lingua franca increases. On the other hand, employees with lower job positions did not use English as a lingua franca frequently at work.

5. How often do you use English at work?

Table 2 below represents the frequency of English use at work.

Table 2: Frequency of English use at work

English Usage	Frequency	Percentage
All the time	4	13%
Almost always	11	36%
Frequently	4	13%
Sometimes	10	32%
Rarely	1	3%
Hardly ever	1	3%
Never	-	-
Total	31	100%

Table 2 reveals that four respondents (13%) used English all the time at work; these are Respondents 1, 6, 8, and 13. Eleven respondents (36%) said they used English almost always; these are Respondents 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19 and 27. Another four respondents (13%) said that they used English frequently; these are Respondents 3, 11, 18, and 29. Ten respondents (32%) said that they used English 50% of the time (they use English at other

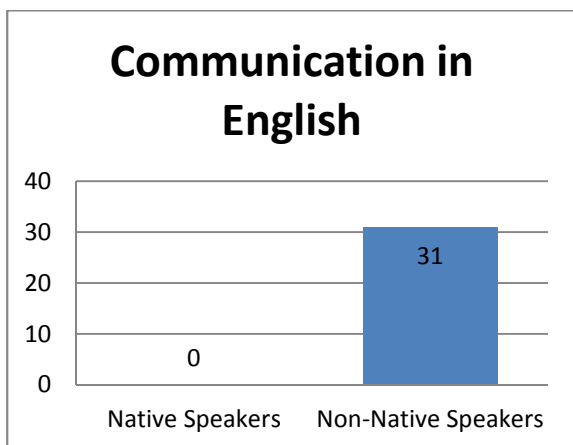
times, not always) at their workplace; these are respondents 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, and 31. Respondent 9 (3%) reported rarely using English at work, and Respondent 30 (3%) also reported that he hardly uses English at work.

These findings indicate that the use of English as a lingua franca at the two multicultural workplaces in Maseru is mostly frequent. Therefore, the researcher regards ELF as effective to a greater extent. Nonetheless, there are still respondents who stated that they hardly use English at work. A study by Jenkins (2007) investigated the attitudes and identities of people using ELF. It sheds light on how ELF works in multicultural settings as well as its impact on communication effectiveness.

6. With whom do you mostly communicate in English at work?

The bar chart below presents the findings on the responses to the above-stated question.

Figure 2: Communication in English



For this question, all 31 respondents (100%) said they mostly use English as a form of communication (ELF) with non-native speakers at work. This shows the significance of English in such an environment. Without English as a lingua franca, communication with non-native speakers at work would be impossible. Leyi (2020) relates that, owing to English's current global popularity, speakers of various native languages frequently use it as a worldwide lingua franca to facilitate effective communication. Bayyurt et al. (2019) also state that the use of ELF is not only a preferred means of communication between people with different native languages, but it is also the only choice for such people to communicate effectively.

7. Does English make communication easier between Basotho and Non-native Speakers?

Table 3 below provides a summary of the responses from the participants. The respondents were asked if English makes communication easier between Basotho employees and non-native speakers at work.

Table 3: Easier English Communication

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	90%
No	2	7%
Sometimes	1	3%
Total	31	100%

Twenty-eight respondents (90%), which is the majority, stated that English makes communication easier between them and non-native co-workers. Out of the 28 who answered positively, 15 just answered “Yes” to the question without providing an explanation. Respondents 1, 5, and 13 explained that English is a common language outside different native languages, meaning it makes communication easy because it is an international language.

Respondent 2 noted that English is a medium of instruction. If Sesotho was spoken in a conversation with a non-native speaker, they would not understand each other; therefore, there would not be any effective communication unless a communication language was used. Respondent 3’s response was: “Yes, it helps better understand what’s required of me in achieving my daily roles.” Respondent 6 said that English is a business language. It connects and facilitates communication among colleagues. Respondent 14 stated that English has become a go-to language for international communication. Six Respondents (20, 22, 24, 27, 28, and 30) said that they are able to understand each other if communication is in English.

On another note, Respondent 7 (3%) said that English does make communication easier although, sometimes, communication is not smooth due to an accent that is not clear. Contrarily, Respondents 21 and 26 (7%) said that English does not make communication easier. Respondent 21 explained that English does not make communication easier because, personally, she does not understand the language. Respondent 26 stated that, because he communicates in English with an Asian, communication is not easy due to the Asian accent.

To a greater extent, the responses confirm that English as a lingua franca makes communication easier between Basotho employees and their non-native colleagues.

However, it is clear that if one does not understand English, communication does not become any easier at work. It is also evident that accent plays a role in hindering smooth communication, and this makes it hard to comprehend what is said. Seidlhofer (2001) explains that ELF encompasses the sociolinguistic changes as its primary goal is promoting communication between speakers of different native languages in a multicultural workplace. This goal does not always entail attaining a native-like proficiency but making communication easier between people from diverse linguistic backgrounds. What Seidlhofer says implies that communication can still take place through ELF despite hitches like accents.

8. Does English break any communication barriers?

Table 4 below presents the findings on the question that asked if English breaks any communication barriers.

Table 4: English as a communication barrier breaker

Response	Frequenc y	Percentag e
Yes	23	74%
No	5	16%
Sometimes	3	10%
Total	31	100%

Twenty-three respondents (74%) agreed that English breaks communication barriers between them and non-native speakers at work; these are Respondents 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, Respondents 13 to 17, Respondents 19 to 29 and Respondent 31. For example, Respondent 1 said that English breaks communication barriers because it allows people to express themselves and be understood when communicating with speakers of a different mother tongue.

Respondent 5 said that English is an official language in many countries and is spoken by a lot of people across the globe, which is why it breaks communication barriers. Crystal (2006) asserts that English is now a universal language, and it is spoken by a lot of different groups of people around the world. Over a billion people use English and the number is still increasing (Dyvik, 2024). As a globalising force, it is a powerful, universal and a present language. It cannot be denied that it has been expanding exponentially. It has become the fast-growing language in human history and no other language has as much influence as English in terms of its power around the globe.

Respondent 14's explanation was: "English is not just a language, it's a communication tool." Respondent 16 said it makes work production run smoothly. Respondents 19, 22, 24, 25 and 27 stated that it does break communication barriers because they understand each other when communicating in English; it makes communication easier. Respondents 13 and 15's response was: "Yes it does", with no further explanation. Respondent 21's response was "A lot." Respondent 28 said "yes" to the question, and the explanation was that it connects people and culture.

Five respondents (16%) disagreed; these are Respondents 3, 10, 12, 18, and 30. They indicated that it does not break any communication barrier. They did not explain why they said English does not break communication barriers. For example, Respondent 3's response was "No, it does not" and Respondent 10's response was "No at all."

Three respondents (10%) stated that English does break communication barriers, but sometimes it does not; these are Respondents 2, 6, and 7. Respondent 2 said that to her, saying "ke a leboha" in a native language shows deep appreciation, and also said that "thank you" is just mild. She further said "...so, I normally explain this to them so that they understand that at times I can use my native language to genuinely express myself." This response means that English breaks communication barriers, but sometimes, if a native language (Sesotho) was understood, it would convey a better message. The response also implies that, even when workers use ELF at work, non-native speakers should make an effort to learn the basics of the local languages such as greetings and gratitude expressions because there are cases where such knowledge enhances communication. In fact, those few local language expressions will complement ELF to achieve effective communication.

Respondent 6 explained that English breaks communication barriers but due to different levels of proficiency among communicators, it sometimes becomes a barrier. In her exact words: "sometimes yes, the proficiency of people is at varying levels, sometimes it becomes a barrier." Respondent 7 agreed that English breaks communication barriers if it is a common language between two people, but further explained that it does not break any barrier if communication is between her and a French native speaker, who does not communicate in English. These responses point to the fact that EFL can only be effective if both the communicating parties have a certain level of proficiency in English language.

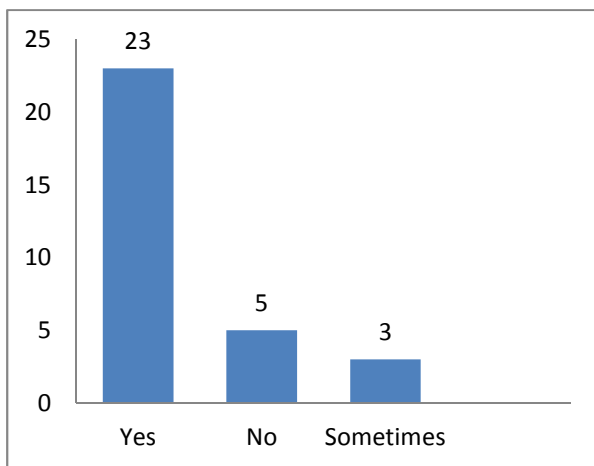
From the findings, a very small percentage indicated that English does not break any communication barriers. Nonetheless, a bigger percentage stated that English breaks

communication barriers, and this was satisfactory. According to Hülmbauer et al. (2008), finding ways to communicate in the globally connected world, where people travel for work, learn and share experiences, is a key component of the new linguistic reality. Therefore, finding a common language in a multicultural workplace in order to bridge language barriers is very significant.

9. Are meetings, presentations, and reports in English? If yes, please elaborate your answer?

Figure 3 below discloses findings on the question that asked if meetings, presentations, and reports are in English.

Figure 3: Use of English at work



Twenty-three respondents (74%) answered “Yes” to the question; these are Respondents 1 to 20, Respondent 24, Respondent 27 and Respondent 29. Respondent 1 said that it is because English is the most preferred medium of communication due to the diversity of their organisation. Respondent 2 said: “Yes, the reports are in English because it is the only official language at work. Sesotho is allowed when talking to other Basotho; it is also official but not when writing reports.”

Respondents 3, 5, and 18 indicated that English is used during meetings, presentations, and when writing reports because they have international colleagues whom they communicate with in English. They stated that English is used because they work full time with international professionals. Respondent 6 stated that English is used because it is one of the recognised languages of the UN. Respondent 7’s explanation was that English is used because it is a common language in their office.

Respondent 8 remarked that English is used because it is a requirement. Respondents 11 and 27 explained that English is used because some of their colleagues understand English only; they are from different linguistic backgrounds. In other words, English is used because they work with non-native speakers. Respondents 13 and 14 revealed that working with a different race requires the use of English. Respondents 13 and 19 said that it is used because it is a multicultural environment. Effectiveness in ELF is characterised by the achievement of mutual understanding (Hülmbauer, 2007). In a multicultural workplace, it is necessary for employees to use a language that they can all understand, especially during presentations, or in meetings or when writing reports.

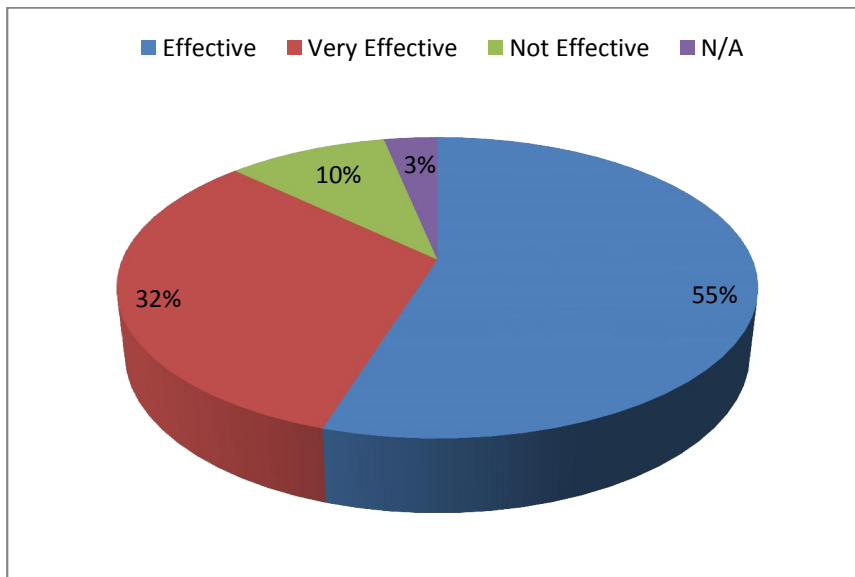
Five respondents (16%) answered “No” to the question; these are Respondents 21, 22, 28, 30 and 31. Three respondents (10%) said that English was used at other times during meetings, presentations and in reports; these are Respondents 23, 25, and 26. Respondent 25 stated that it is used when it is needed. Respondents 23 and 26’s responses said that it is used at other times.

From the information above, it can be concluded that English proves its effectiveness in a multicultural workplace, especially if all workers are proficient in English language. Without the use of English during meetings, presentations, and in report writings, there would be a lot of misunderstandings and no progress. On the other hand, some respondents said they do not use English at all the time, while some said they do not use it at all. To them, this means that English is not that effective. This is possibly because the respondents are not that competent to use the language in their work activities.

10. How effective would you consider English as a form of communication (ELF) during work hours?

In figure 4 below, the results depict how effective English is considered as a form of communication by the respondents and why.

Figure 4: Effectiveness of ELF during working hours



The findings show that 17 respondents (55%) considered English to be effective; these are Respondents 1 to 4, Respondents 6 to 8, Respondents 12 to 16, Respondent 22, Respondents 27 to 29, and Respondent 31. Respondent 1 said: “The more we use English as a medium of communication, we become more confident in the language and it becomes easier to use it in every interaction.”

Respondent 2 revealed that English is effective because it is used at all times at work, especially when they are around international colleagues. Respondent 3 also mentioned that English is effective and that fluency in English can help make communication easier. Respondent 6 added that it is effective because it facilitates communication amongst people from different countries. Also, Respondent 7 pointed out that it is quite effective because it helps to get a message across to non-native speakers.

Respondent 8 noted that it is moderately effective and further stated that “it is important to balance between all official languages”. Respondent 12 revealed that it is effective because English is a commonly used business language across the globe; therefore, it makes communication easy when communicating with foreigners. Respondent 14 stated that it is effective, although it depends on the department one is working in. If a person works with a different race, that’s when English becomes effective. Respondent 15 said that it is effective but it depends on the working environment.

Ten respondents (32%) found English very effective; these are Respondents 5, 10, 11, 17 to 20, 24 to 26. Respondent 5’s response was that English is “highly effective, it eases

communication with most people.” Respondent 10 stated that it is very effective since there are people who only speak English. Respondent 11 specified that it is 90% effective. Respondents 17 and 19 stated that it is very effective because it eases communication and collaboration between colleagues. Also, by adopting English as a common language, individuals and organisations can enhance communication effectiveness and productivity in diverse professional contexts.

Respondents 9, 21, and 23 (10%) stated that English is not effective. For instance, Respondent 21’s answer was that she did not consider English at all, but she did not say why she did not consider it. Similarly, Respondent 23’s answer was that English is “not effective” but he did not give any reasoning for that.

From these findings, the researcher concluded that, to a larger extent, English is effective in a workplace that consists of workers from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. However, the minority of the respondents mentioned that they did not find English effective. Nickerson (2005) avers that whenever a team has employees which speak a variety of mother tongues, its members need to choose a common working language. In most cases, English is selected for this purpose because it has reached a status of “lingua franca”. Nickerson further says, this is where the effectiveness of ELF will be seen.

4.1.3 Human Resource Questionnaire

An analysis of a questionnaire that was directed to HR at UNICEF and EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd is presented in this section.

1. How many employees does this organisation/ company have?

The table below presents the responses to the question that requested the HR offices to provide the number of employees working in their organisation/ company. The HR at UNICEF did not provide an answer to this question possibly because of restrictions by the organisation’s policies. HR at EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd said there are 43 employees.

Table 5: Number of Employees in the company/organisation

Human Resources	Response	Frequency	Percentage
UNICEF	N/A	1	50%
EPIC Printers	43	1	50%
Total		2	100%

2. Which nationalities are represented?

Table 6 below presents the responses to a question about the nationalities that are represented at UNICEF and at EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd. UNICEF HR said that they had Basotho, Japanese, Indians, Kenyans, Malawian, German, Zimbabwean, French, Pakistani, and Spanish represented. EPIC Printers HR said that they had Basotho and the Filipinos. This shows that the organisation and the company are multicultural workplaces.

Table 6: Nationalities Represented

Human Resources	Response	Frequenc y	Percentag e
UNICEF	Basotho, Japanese, Indians, Kenyans, Malawian, German, Zimbabwean, French, Pakistani, Spanish	1	50%
EPIC Printers	Basotho and Filipinos	1	50%
Total		2	100%

3. How many employees of each nationality are there?

Table 7 below summaries responses from the two HR offices regarding the number of employees of each nationality at UNICEF and EPIC Printers. While UNICEF had 10 nationalities, with about one or two employees per nationality, EPIC Printers had 39 Basotho and 4 Filipinos. The presence of many nationalities at UNICEF is expected because it is a much bigger and more international organisation compared to Epic Printers. This implies that ELF has to be used at the two workplaces because all these nationalities present have different native languages; therefore, a lingua franca is needed.

Table 7: Employees Number of Each Nationality

Human Resources	Response	Frequenc y	Percentag e
UNICEF	10 nationalities, about 1 or 2 per nationality	1	50%
EPIC Printers	39 Basotho and 4 Filipinos	1	50%

Total		2	100%
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4. Does this organisation/ company have a written corporate language policy?

Table 8 shows responses on the question that enquired if there was a written corporate language policy - a document that regulates language use within UNICEF and EPIC Printers. The response from UNICEF HR was that there is a corporate language policy which specifies language requirements every time depending on the context in which one is to be employed. The other response from EPIC Printers HR just indicated that there is a corporate language policy and the language in the policy is English.

Table 8: Written Corporate Language Policy

Human Resources	Response	Frequency	Percentage
UNICEF	It specifies language requirements every time depending on context that one is to be employed at/for	1	50%
EPIC Printers	Yes	1	50%
Total		2	100%

5. Is English used as a Medium of Communication (as a Lingua Franca) between employees with different linguistic backgrounds?

The response to this question from both HR offices at UNICEF and EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd was the same. Both HR offices agreed that English is used as a lingua franca. This reveals that English is used as a mode of communication in the organisation and the company.

6. Is there any other language that is used for corporate communication? If yes, in which situations is the language used?

The response from UNICEF HR on the question that enquired whether there were other languages that were used for corporate communication except English was that other languages are used for corporate communication when need arises. Those languages are

French, Russian, Spanish, British, Arabic, and Chinese. The response from the EPIC Printers HR stated that Sesotho is used as another language for corporate communication. Sesotho is used when there are presentations from different companies where deep clarity is needed. Two separate presentations are done to accommodate all; one is in English, and another one in Sesotho.

7. How effective would you consider the use of English as a medium of Communication (a Lingua Franca) in this organisation/ company?

The response from UNICEF HR on how effective English as a lingua franca is was that English as a medium of communication is very effective. The officer said that English is used by over 400 million people across the globe. EPIC Printers HR said that English is not totally effective as some expatriates and some semi-skilled Basotho are not so fluent in English and cannot articulate well, which causes confusion in communication. This response is understood because, as indicated earlier, EPIC Printers is not as big and international as UNICEF, and the majority of its employees are Basotho. More so, the semi-skilled employees are said to be not very fluent in the English language; hence, ELF is less effective at the company than UNICEF.

SECTION B: Data presentation

4.2 Interview Responses

This section presents the participants' responses to the interview questions. As for interviews, a voice recorder was used to record the discussions. Four interviews were facilitated by the researcher, and the responses were later transcribed. Themes were identified during analysis, as will be presented here. Participants were interviewed to get a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca between Basotho employees and other employees from different linguistic backgrounds in a multicultural workplace. Seven questions were prepared for the interview. The first two questions required participants' personal details (age, gender, languages, and job position) and their work background; therefore, there were no themes to be identified in this part. However, a summary of the information is provided in the next paragraph.

Interviewee A, who works as a procurement officer, is a male aged 30. He speaks Sesotho and English and has been working at the company since 2020. Interviewee B, who works in the composing department as a Graphic Designer, is a male aged 25. He speaks Sesotho and

English and has been working in the company for a year now. Interviewee C, who works as a Graphic Designer, is a male aged 27. He speaks Sesotho and English and has been working in the company since 2022 until now. Interviewee D, working as a customer care officer, is a male aged 32. He speaks Sesotho and English and has been employed in the company since 2022.

4.2.1 Themes

This section presents the themes that were identified from the participants' responses to interview questions three to seven.

4.2.1.1 Comfortability when using a second language

All four interviewees said they were comfortable using a second language at work. Three interviewees (interviewee A, C, and D) gave an explanation why they were comfortable with speaking English at work, but Interviewee B just said he was comfortable without any detailed explanation. The given explanations were as follows:

Interviewee A:

"I am comfortable, eer... because even my suppliers are from South Africa, so, English is the language I have to use mostly."

Interviewee C:

"I can say I am very comfortable because most of the software we use in the composing department are in English, so when we explain the graphics to a client, we communicate in English."

Interviewee D:

"I feel very comfortable... eer, because English makes it easier for me...uhm... to understand my clients, and also for my clients to understand me, since I am working most of the time with people from outside the country or abroad, sometimes locally, but they are a different race, so the only language we can communicate with is English."

4.2.1.2 Advantages of English as a Lingua franca in a Multicultural Workplace

From the responses given by the interviewees, the researcher observed that English makes communication easier. It breaks communication barriers, increases one's knowledge, and it makes it easier for people to understand each other.

The first advantage that was identified from the responses of the interviewee was that ELF breaks communication barriers. Interviewees A and D said that this is the advantage of using ELF in a multicultural workplace.

Interviewee A:

“eer, English language is an international language that most of us use to break communication barriers. Like, here where we work, we have Filipinos. It is an advantage to have knowledge of English because we can understand each other. The Filipinos use their own language, but when it comes to work, we need to sit down with them and communicate in English.”

Interviewee D:

“English breaks barriers in communication, eer... It speeds up our production in the company since we are able to understand each other yet we are a different race.”

The second advantage was identified from the response of Interviewee B, which is that ELF increases one’s knowledge and facilitates cultural integration.

Interviewee B: *“...It helps increase one’s knowledge, and of course, one will be able to explore and get to know new things about this English language. It makes one to be effective and be able to interact with different people from different countries.”*

The third advantage mentioned is that of easy communication as indicated by the response from interviewee C. The response was that ELF helps by making communication easy between Basotho employees and other colleagues that are from different linguistic backgrounds.

Interviewee C: *“It shortens the job. For example, when a client comes to my office and I have to elaborate things like graphics, everything becomes easier.”*

From this response, the researcher concluded that English helps employees in a multicultural workplace to clearly and better express themselves, be able to be part of a meaningful conversation, and also to be able to comprehend what their co-workers are saying.

4.2.1.3 Link between Languages and Career Opportunities

The four interviewees revealed that there is a link between languages (specifically English language) and career opportunities. In other words, English language facilitates career advancement and enhances career opportunities.

From the responses provided by the interviewees, the researcher concluded that when it comes to career opportunities, English plays a major role. Proficiency in English has become very significant for job opportunities. These sentiments are reflected by the responses from interviewees A and C responding to the question that asked whether there is a link between languages and career opportunities.

Interviewee A:

“Yah, there is a link, because most of the time, English is used. Everywhere you apply; it’s English, Job advertisements; it’s English...there is a huge link.”

Interviewee C:

“Yes, of course I agree, there is a link between languages and career opportunities. In most cases; communication, procedures... like, in this company, from customer care to delivery, English is used, either in a written form or spoken.”

4.2.1.4 Effectiveness of ELF at Work

The four interviewees stated that English as a lingua franca or as a medium of communication at work is very effective. However, two of the participants only stated that it is very effective with no explanation.

Communication efficacy is a theme that was identified from the responses. ELF helps in making communication effective between co-workers who have different native languages. For example, Interviewees A and B found English as very effective in a multicultural work environment and gave reasons to support their views as shown below:

Interviewee A:

“It is very effective. Maybe I can give it up to 70%. In most departments that handle serious and major activities in the company, those people use English. For the company to run smoothly, then we need to learn to communicate using English in order for everything to fall

into place. If ever English is not used, communication wouldn't be effective. Once communication is not effective, there is a problem."

Interviewee B:

"It is very effective. Judging from our department, our supervisor is always speaking English. I am saying this because there is never a day I would go without speaking English. "

From these responses, it is evident that English is very effective in a workplace that is characterised by diversity.

4.2.1.5 Factors that Contribute to the Effectiveness of ELF

The interviewees were asked to mention the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of ELF. The responses were that education is one of the biggest factors that contribute to the effectiveness of ELF. For example, Interviewee A said:

"Education is one of the most important factors that contribute to the effectiveness of English...eer, in a multicultural workplace. Here at work, there are people who are educated and are fluent in English. There are also semi-skilled employees, who speak English at times because they work hand in hand with the Filipino's, they struggle a bit. So, education is an important factor."

Interviewees B and C stated that the other factor is acceptance and willingness to speak English. To quote the exact words, interviewee B explained:

"Factors that can contribute to the effectiveness of English at work are acceptance and willingness to communicate in English. Accepting that English is a global language, and it has to be used as a medium of communication for mutual understanding. The sooner we accept that English is an important tool of communication in a multicultural workplace, the better."

In addition, interviewee D stated that other factors contributing to the effectiveness of ELF are comfortability and confidence. He said,

"Being comfortable when communicating in English is a factor that contributes to the effectiveness of English. Being confident when speaking English also contributes to the effectiveness of the use of English at work."

The last question asked if the interviewees had anything else they would like to add. They remarked that they found this study very important because it made them understand the importance of English at work even though it is not their mother tongue. The other response recommended that the researcher should also interview more of an older generation, because the “now” generation is, most of the time, if not always, speaking in English. This meant that if the researcher would only interview the younger generation, only positive information towards the study would be gathered. The last comment advised the researcher to engage with people who are not too educated to get their views on the topic and how lacking the knowledge of English has affected them.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca on Basotho employees in a multicultural workplace focusing on UNICEF and EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd in Maseru, Lesotho.

Information that was provided in the literature review shows that ELF is a recognised phenomenon. The literature shows that different studies have been carried out on this linguistic field in diverse contexts. One overriding factor appeared to be perceptions or opinions on the role of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in everyday interactions all over the world. While some studies have been conducted on ELF, the researcher found looking into its effectiveness on Basotho employees in a multicultural work environment worthwhile. In order to achieve this aim, three objectives were pursued, and the outcomes for each are presented and discussed below.

Objective 1: To investigate the effectiveness of ELF in a multicultural workplace

Based on the findings, ELF was found to be mostly effective. It was discovered that:

- Generally, ELF was found effective because it helps Basotho employees communicate better in workplaces with employee diversity. It facilitates communication between employees from different linguistic backgrounds.
- By adopting English in a multicultural workplace as a common language of communication, employees can enhance communication effectiveness, collaboration and productivity in diverse professional contexts.
- Fluency and accent help to make communication in English even better.

- The more English is used as a medium of communication, the more employees become confident in the language and it becomes easier to use it in every interaction.
- However, to a lesser extent, ELF was considered ineffective. It was less effective because some semi-skilled Basotho were not so fluent in English and could not articulate well, and some expatriates had a different accent, which sometimes caused confusion in communication.

Objective 2: To examine the factors which contribute to the effectiveness of ELF

From the findings of the study, the factors which contribute to the effectiveness of ELF were:

- Education is a factor which contributes to the effectiveness of ELF. Based on the findings regarding the level of education, which ranged from COSC to PhD, it was discovered that the respondents with higher education qualifications had a good language competence level to communicate effectively in the English language at a multicultural workplace.
- Acceptance and willingness to speak English is another factor. Accepting that English is an international language, and having no negative attitude towards it as a medium of communication helps employees to have mutual understanding, and this will cause employees to make an effort to improve their fluency.
- Another factor is being comfortable communicating in English and also being confident when using it since the ability to communicate effectively in an international working environment is important.

Objective 3: To identify barriers to effective communication that are removed or caused by ELF in a multicultural work setting

Based on the findings, the researcher discovered that:

On the one hand,

- ELF breaks barriers in multicultural workplaces and connects people and cultures.
- Since English is an official language in Lesotho, and a second or foreign language in many other countries, it is therefore spoken by a lot of people, which is why it helps to break communication barriers in a linguistically diverse working environment.
- It allows employees to express themselves and to be understood.

On the other hand,

- Sometimes the varying levels of proficiency of people and their different accents may hinder effective communication through ELF.
- There are some cases where some Basotho employees felt that they would not express themselves well in English language, for instance, expressing gratitude would sound better in their native language.
- English can break communication barriers only if it is a common language between employees. Among the participants, there were some Basotho and non-native speakers who could not communicate well in English, and this proves that ELF breaks barriers only if it is a common language amongst all employees.

Having presented the results obtained from the questionnaires and interviews, the analysis that was made allowed the researcher to draw conclusions from it. Generally, the study proved that English as a lingua franca is effective in a multicultural workplace. Education was found as a bigger factor that contributes to this effectiveness, playing a vital role in the effectiveness of ELF. This was concluded from the difference that was seen in responses between skilled and semi-skilled employees.

Results depicted that, to a larger extent, ELF breaks communication barriers between Basotho employees and non-native speakers in a workplace that is characterised by diversity. As mentioned in the review of the literature, English is a global language. Crystal (2006) relates that English is a universal language, and it is spoken by a lot of different groups of people around the world. As a globalising force, English is a powerful, universal and present language. It cannot be denied that it has been expanding exponentially. It has become the fastest-growing language in human history, and no other language has as much influence as English in terms of its power around the globe.

English currently holds a significant position in the world. Although it may not have the highest number of native speakers, it is a language that holds a dominant position and has far-reaching influence around the globe. Unquestionably, English is used by a lot of people as a second or foreign language, putting the number of English-speaking people over one billion globally (Dyvik, 2024). This makes it a perfect language to be used as a lingua franca. The findings confirmed that, indeed, ELF is useful and it is effective in a multicultural workplace.

However, the conclusions that were drawn do not disregard the small percentage of respondents which did not find ELF totally effective. The researcher is aware that some employees still find ELF ineffective in a multicultural working environment. One of the reasons it was found ineffective is because one respondent personally did not understand the language. It was also found ineffective in a situation where accent hinders smooth communication. For example, the Asian accent was mentioned as one of the accents which hindered easy communication.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter presented the findings of the study from which the researcher concludes that, to a greater extent, ELF is effective as a means of communication at the two investigated workplaces. However, in the case of EPIC Printers, the effectiveness of ELF is compromised by some of the employees' lower English language competence levels. Regardless of this, the fact still remains that ELF is the only way to achieve communication at multicultural workplaces such as UNICEF and EPIC Printers.

The conclusions drawn from this analysis align with what the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Gordon Brown, who stated that English does not make people all the same and it should not, because individuals honour who they distinctively are. But it makes it possible for people to interact and understand each other. For that reason, it is a powerful force, not just for economics, business, and trade, but for mutual respect and progress (Chakravarti, 2008). Therefore, even if English is not a mother tongue to Basotho employees, it surely plays a significant role in helping with easier communication between two people or parties with different mother tongues in a multicultural workplace.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca on Basotho employees in multicultural workplaces in Maseru, Lesotho. The research only targeted a diverse sample of employees in two multicultural workplaces, with varying linguistic backgrounds and proficiency levels in English. The sample size was 37 employees from UNICEF and Epic Printers (Pty) Ltd.

This chapter summarises the major findings related to the objectives of the study which were to investigate the effectiveness of ELF in a multicultural workplace, to examine the factors which contribute to this level of effectiveness, and to identify barriers to effective communication that are removed or caused by ELF in a multicultural work setting. The chapter also draws conclusions, provides some recommendations regarding the findings that were discussed in the preceding chapter, outlines the limitations of the study, and suggests further studies for future researchers.

5.1 Summary of the major findings

The main findings of the study were as follows:

English as a lingua franca was found effective in the two multicultural workplaces. The responses explained that ELF is effective because it makes communication and collaboration easier between Basotho employees and their non-native colleagues, and it helps Basotho employees to communicate better in a diverse workplace. On the contrary, to a lesser extent, ELF was found ineffective. The study also revealed that education, acceptance and willingness to communicate in English are factors that contribute to communication efficacy.

Furthermore, it was discovered that ELF breaks communication barriers; however, it only breaks the barriers if it is a common language between the employees. Based on the findings, there were other Basotho and non-native speakers who could not communicate well in English. This proved that ELF breaks barriers only if it is a common language spoken to a certain level of fluency amongst all employees in a linguistically diverse working environment.

The study had three research hypotheses:

H1: English as a lingua franca has some effectiveness on Basotho employees in a multicultural workplace.

The research confirmed the hypothesis that ELF is effective on Basotho employees in a multicultural setting to a larger extent. The research revealed, however, that other Basotho employees considered ELF ineffective and that was because they were less educated and not proficient in English. Thus, they were unable to interact well with their colleagues who were from different linguistic backgrounds. The conclusion from this was that English can be an effective lingua franca, only if its users are able to communicate in English.

H2: There are factors that contribute to ELF effectiveness.

The findings of the study confirmed the above hypothesis. The research showed that there are some factors which contribute to the effectiveness of ELF. The two major factors are Education, acceptance and willingness to communicate in English. Regarding education, the study revealed that it is an important factor because the participants with higher education qualifications were competent, while those who did not have higher qualifications were not as competent. This means that education is a major factor which contributes to the effectiveness of ELF.

In relation to acceptance and willingness to communicate in English, the study showed that these factors contribute to the effectiveness of ELF. Accepting that English is now a global lingua franca and that it has to be used in a linguistically diverse working environment for mutual understanding, is what contributes to ELF efficacy. Willingness to interact with other non-native colleagues in a multicultural workplace also contributes to the effectiveness of ELF. The more Basotho employees are willing to use English as a lingua franca, the more confident they become in the language.

H3: There are barriers that ELF removes or causes in a multicultural environment.

The study also confirmed this hypothesis. It revealed that ELF both removes and causes communication barriers. To a larger extent, ELF breaks communication barriers in a multicultural workplace; it allows Basotho employees to communicate better with their non-native colleagues. However, due to different levels of proficiency among communicators in a multicultural work setting, English as a lingua franca sometimes becomes a barrier. However, it should be noted that removing barriers has more impact than causing barriers.

5.2 Conclusions

English continues to spread widely in international organisations as well as in multicultural workplaces in many different countries, Lesotho included. The language barriers between different native language speakers are fading gradually as English as a lingua franca is being used. People from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds now use ELF to communicate effectively, either in work settings, in higher education, in teaching, or in other contexts. There is a huge implication that ELF has in the field of linguistics and in the world in general. The English language is one of the most significant mediums of communication, and it plays a critical role in numerous intercultural interactions.

This research has, therefore, highlighted the importance of the role of English as a lingua franca in terms of communication in multicultural workplaces. ELF plays a vital role in communication efficacy, and this study has indicated that ELF is effective in a diverse workplace. This is because it facilitates communication between employees from different linguistic backgrounds. It was also concluded that Fluency and accent helps make communication in English even better in multicultural workplaces.

The findings of the study further pointed out that ELF breaks communication barriers. Nonetheless, the researcher does not neglect that, to a certain extent, ELF was found ineffective in this study. The reason was that some of the Basotho employees are not very fluent in English and, therefore, find it hard to hold conversations in English. It was also concluded that Education plays a vital role in this matter. Comprehension and proficiency in English will lead to its effectiveness in a multicultural working environment.

In all, ELF is a fruitful area of research and the present study has added to the knowledge existing in this relatively under researched field. Hopefully, ELF becomes a meaningful notion to those it is designed for, not just a code to follow.

5.3 Recommendations

Effective workplace communication through the use of ELF is key to the success of many multicultural organisations and companies. Lack of effective skills in communication may have a negative influence on Basotho employees' job performance especially because they work with international colleagues and clients. In order to improve the communication efficacy in multicultural workplaces which have less educated employees who are not proficient in English, it is recommended that short courses in business English or workplace

English are offered by organisations and companies. In that way, English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF) and Workplace English as a lingua franca (WELF) can be used for effective communication in such working environments. This will help international organisations and multicultural companies which strive to foster effective communication in their diverse workplaces.

If such courses are not offered at work, employees can take the initiative to learn the basics of the English language outside of work. English language learning would go a long way and would be beneficial. Taking short courses in English will equip Basotho employees with necessary language skills which are required in their professional lives. English will allow them to communicate better when they are at work and it may contribute to the development of inclusive work environments, which will improve cross-cultural interactions in the increasingly interconnected world of business.

Lastly, the practice of listening to a variety of accents is recommended to Basotho employees. This practice of listening to how their fellow non-native colleagues articulate will be beneficial. Getting used to these accents will help in making communication effective, as some of the accents are a result of the influence of the first language.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The major limitation of this study is that it was conducted only in Maseru district, in Lesotho, as a result, the findings may not be generalised because the remaining nine districts were not part of the study. Furthermore, this study only investigated one organisation and one company; as a result, the limitation was that the findings of the study do not represent all multicultural workplaces in Maseru, Lesotho. The other limitation was that of a few poorly answered questionnaires, which were of no use to this study.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The present study was carried out only on two multicultural workplaces in Maseru and was conducted with a small number of participants. Therefore, further research would be even more reliable if several other multicultural workplaces in Maseru, with a lot of employees, were used. Maseru is the capital town of Lesotho and is in Maseru District. It is thus recommended that further research be carried out in nine other districts of Lesotho. A comparison of the effectiveness of ELF in multicultural companies or organisations in both urban areas and in peri-urban or rural areas would also be more valid.

Further in-depth investigation with the use of one research approach; a qualitative research method, to gain deeper understanding of the effectiveness of ELF in multicultural workplaces in Lesotho is also recommended, since the method offers some kind of flexibility that allows the participants to fully express themselves on the topic.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Request for Data Collection Letter from the Supervisor



APPENDIX B: Employees Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is ‘Matlokoeng Grace Letšohla. I am conducting research on “The effectiveness of English as a lingua franca on Basotho employees in a multicultural workplace”, -that will be submitted to the National University of Lesotho in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master’s Degree in English Language and Linguistics.

Please provide an answer to each of the questions below.

Section 1: Please provide an answer to each of the questions below.

1. Gender

Male Female

2. Age

21-30 Years 31-40 Years

41-50 Years 51- 60 Years

3. Highest Qualification

COSC Diploma

Bachelor’s Degree Master’s Degree

Other (Please specify):

4. Current Job Position:

Section 2:

1. How often do you use English at work?

100% All the time 90% Almost Always

70% Frequently often 50% Sometimes

20% Rarely 5% Hardly ever 0% Never

2. Who do you communicate in English with at work?

Sesotho Native Speakers

Non-Native Speakers

3. Does English make communication easier between you and a non-native speaker? Please explain:

4. Does English break any communication barriers? Please explain:

.....

5. Are meetings, presentations, and reports in English? If yes, please explain. Elaborate your answer.

.....

6. How effective would you consider English as a form of communication (ELF) during work hours, and why?

.....

APPENDIX C: HR Questionnaire

HUMAN RESOURCES

My name is ‘Matlokoeng Grace Letšohla. I am conducting research on “The effectiveness of English as a lingua franca on Basotho employees in a multicultural workplace which will be submitted to the National University of Lesotho in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master’s Degree in English Language and Linguistics.

Please provide an answer to each of the questions below.

1. How many employees does this organisation/company have?

.....

2. Which nationalities are represented?

.....

3. How many employees of each nationality are there?

.....

4. Does this organisation/company have a written corporate language policy (a document that regulates language use within the organisation/ company)?

.....

5. Is English used as a medium of communication (lingua franca) between employees with different linguistic backgrounds?

.....

6. Is there any other language that is used for corporate communication? If yes, in which situations is the language used?

.....

7. How effective would you consider the use of English as a medium of communication in this organisation/company, and why?

.....

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please provide your personal details (Gender, Age, Languages, Job position).
2. Please provide your work background (how long have you been working in this organisation/company)?
3. How comfortable do you feel when you work using a second language?
4. What are the advantages of using English as a medium of communication (ELF) in a multicultural workplace? What do you feel most positive about?
5. Is there any link between languages and career opportunities?
6. How effective would you consider English as a means of communication at work, and why?
7. What are the factors that you think contribute to the effectiveness of English as a lingua franca at work?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX E: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Title of Dissertation: Effectiveness of English as a Lingua Franca on Basotho Employees in Two Multicultural Workplaces in Maseru, Lesotho.

Researcher: Miss ‘Matlokoeng Grace Letšohla, Master’s student, National University of Lesotho.

I have read the information sheet and I am aware of the purpose of the study. I am willing to be part of this research project and have been given the researcher’s contact details in case I need any further information. My signature certifies that I have decided to participate.

I (Name and Surname) give my permission for my data to be used as part of this study, and understand that I can withdraw at any time if I wish to.

Signature..... Date.....

APPENDIX F: Request for Data Collection Letters from the Researcher

‘Matlokoeng Grace Letšohla

Ha Matala

Box 642

Maseru 100, Lesotho

24 April 2024

EPIC Printers (Pty) Ltd

Box 7461

Maseru 100

Lesotho

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I am an MA student in the faculty of Humanities majoring in English Language and Linguistics and I wish to ask for your participation in my research.

The title of my study is “The effectiveness of English as a lingua franca on Basotho employees in a multicultural workplace.” A lingua franca is a language that is used as a form of communication between people who do not share a native language. English as a lingua franca is, therefore, the use of English as a medium of communication by people with different mother tongues. The primary objective of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of English as a means of communication between people from various linguistic backgrounds in a professional setting.

Ethical consideration and confidentiality of data collected will be observed. Your response will be used only for the purpose of this study and your participation will be highly appreciated. I hope you will give my request your best consideration.

Yours faithfully

‘Matlokoeng Grace Letšohla

matlokoengletsohla@gmail.com

Cell: +266 59409533

‘Matlokoeng Grace Letšohla

Ha Matala

Box 642

Maseru 100, Lesotho

24 April 2024

UNICEF

13 UN Road

UN House

Maseru, Lesotho

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