

University of the Western Cape

Department of Linguistics

MA Linguistics Programme (Full Thesis)

The transformation and reshaping of South African languages via cell-phone messaging: SMS speak as a local practice



A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a degree in Magister Artium in the Department of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape.

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May 2013

Abstract

South Africa is a diverse, multilingual country with a majority of its youth owning or using cellular phone technologies. The cell phone interaction between multilingual individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds suggests that a range of multilingual styles are being developed in the electronic domain, particularly when sending SMSes (Short Message Service messages). This study uses the Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective (SFL) to analyse how English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa are being transformed through the medium of text messaging at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). In using methods such as thematic analysis and SFL this research is interested in the linguistic choices individuals make when engaging in SMS/Mxit messages to express themselves. The study aims to look at the effects of concepts such as globalization, stylization, polylingual languaging and transidiomatic practices on text messaging itself; and in turn to see how these text messages are typified by the mixing and blending of languages and their multimodal aspects are then considered to be a coherent and cohesive social practice among the youth.

In addition, considering new developments in language studies, particularly the notions of language as social practice and hybrid languaging practices, it also looks at SMS/Mxit messages and examines them against the ‘traditional’ monolingual concepts of code-switching and code-mixing. The linguistic analysis of this text based data presents a framework for exploring how members of the youth portray their identities as it allows the researcher to deal with interpersonal dimensions of language in texts in a systematic manner. These interpersonal dimensions view the relationships between participants in relation to their performance of identity. Drawing on SMS/Mxit data from 60 third year university students, the focus of this thesis is to investigate if the languages used during SMS/Mxit interactions are being modified and transformed by this medium of communication. It simultaneously looks at these student communicators performing a range of identity options.

The study concludes that English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa are not used as separate language entities but are instead used as one language resource. It highlights how speakers use features of any language as linguistic options for a communicative event. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that SMS speak is not seen as an alternative language used within a third space but has instead become a norm in terms of language practices among the youth.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Linguistics, SMS/Mxit messages, University of the Western Cape, Mxit, globalization, stylization, polylingual languaging, transidiomatic practices, social practice, identities, multimodal, code-switching, code-mixing, hybrid language practices, interpersonal relationships, alternative languages, third space.



Declaration

I declare that this *Research Study* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full Name: Gaironesa Davids

Date: May 2013

Signed:



Acknowledgements

I would like to thank a few people who contributed and assisted me throughout the process of this thesis.

Firstly, I would like to thank God (Allah) for allowing me the opportunity to pursue my MA and seeing me through this process with His infinite mercy by guiding me abundantly throughout my studies and research.

Thank you to Professor Felix Banda and Professor Charlyn Dyers for their guidance, constant motivation and honest feedback in assisting and encouraging me with this research study. Thank you for pushing me beyond my limit and allowing me to develop the necessary skills to complete this thesis. Thank you for your on-going input, which has taught me plenty and equipped and shaped me to carry out this research in the best possible manner. Thank you!

To my wonderful parents – Thank you (Shukran) for your endless support and encouragement. Thank you for setting such superb examples which has taught me to be disciplined, to work hard consistently and for always being the driving force in motivating me to continue my studies.

To my loving husband – Thank you for your ever present enthusiasm, humour and understanding. Thank you for always managing to make me smile throughout this process and constantly providing and surrounding me with positivity.

Thank you to Dr Ntombizodwa Gxowa – Dlayedwa and Ms Nobuhle Lumphondo from the Linguistics Department for assisting me in the translation of the isiXhosa messages. Much appreciated!

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Historical background of text messaging.....	2
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	3
1.3 Rationale.....	3
1.4 Research Questions.....	4
1.5 Aims and Objectives.....	4
1.6 Research Design and Methodology.....	5
1.7 Chapter Outline.....	5

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.0 Introduction.....	8
2.1 SMS and Mxit Messages.....	8
2.2 Globalization.....	10
2.3 Transidiomatic Practices.....	13
2.4 Polylingual Linguaging.....	15
2.5 Code-switching and Code-mixing.....	18
2.6 Stylization.....	19
2.7 Language as a Local Practice.....	22
2.8 Hybrid Language Practices.....	24
2.9 Lingua Franca English (LFE).....	27
2.10 Multimodality.....	30
2.11 Conclusion.....	32

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework

3.0 Introduction.....	33
3.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL elements).....	33
3.2 Cohesion and Coherence as a form of SFL.....	35
3.3 The Poststructuralist Theory of Identity.....	38
3.4 Identity and Role Structure.....	43
3.5 Conclusion.....	44

Chapter 4 – Research Design and Methodology

4.0 Introduction.....	45
4.1 Thematic Analysis.....	45
4.2 Defining the concepts of Code and Theme.....	49
4.3 The process of conducting a Thematic Analysis.....	50
4.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Thematic Analysis.....	51
4.5 Research Design.....	52
4.6 Research Subjects.....	53
4.7 Sampling.....	54
4.8 Data Collection.....	54
4.9 Data Analysis.....	55
4.10 Description of data.....	56
4.11 Ethical Considerations.....	57
4.12 Conclusion.....	57

Chapter 5 – Thematic Analysis

5.0 Introduction.....	58
5.1 Demographic Details.....	58
5.2 Thematic Analysis.....	62
5.2.1 Socialising Interactions.....	62
5.2.2 Managing University Responsibility.....	68
5.2.3 Intimate Relations.....	74
5.2.4 Family Ties.....	80
5.2.5 Birthday Wishes.....	85
5.2.6 Messages of Gratitude.....	89
5.2.7 Promotional Messages.....	93
5.3 Theme or No Theme?.....	96
5.4 Summary.....	98
5.5 Conclusion.....	101

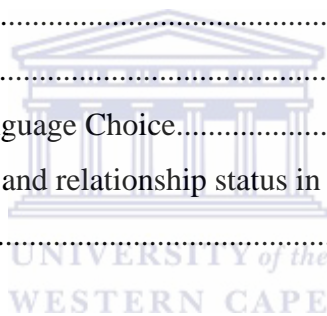
Chapter 6 – Linguistic Analysis

6.0 Introduction.....	103
6.1 Tabulated Messages.....	103
6.1.1 A demonstration of hybridity and polylingual languaging in SMS speak.....	105

6.2.1 The use of SMS speak as a space and time saving strategy.....	110
6.3.1 An illustration of the mobility of SMS speak.....	114
6.4 SMSing as stylization.....	119
6.5 Language as a Local Practice.....	123
6.6 Transidiomatic Practices vs. Language as a Local Practice.....	125
6.7 Conclusion.....	126

Chapter 7 – Identity Analysis

7.0 Introduction.....	127
7.1 Motivations for sending SMS/Mxit Messages.....	127
7.2 Identity Analysis.....	130
7.2.1 The student/learner.....	130
7.2.2 The family member.....	132
7.2.3 The girlfriend/boyfriend.....	135
7.2.4 The friend.....	137
7.3 Performative Identity vs. Language Choice.....	139
7.4 The creation of role structure and relationship status in SMS speak/discourse.....	141
7.5 Conclusion.....	149



Chapter 8 – Conclusions

8.1 Main Findings.....	150
8.2 Further Research.....	153

9. Bibliography..... 154

10. Appendices

10.1 Glossary.....	165
10.2 Essay Instructions.....	169
10.3 Consent Form.....	171

Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, cell phone usage in South Africa has risen dramatically especially among the youth. In addition to making voice calls and sending short written messages, internet chat services like Mxit and Whatsapp are immensely popular among many young South Africans. The terms text messaging or texting refer to the brief typed messages sent using the short message service (SMS) of mobile cell phones (Thurlow and Poff, 2011). Mxit pronounced as 'mix it' stands for 'message exchange'. The Mxit and SMS messages provide users with a convenient and user friendly service that embodies its own unique style of writing. Accordingly, texting enhances communication in ways which allow for an attractive combination of mobility, discretion, intimacy and play to maximize sociality.

Text messages are communicative events thus, the defining feature of text messages is their sociable function which lies primarily in their discursive content and communicative intent (Thurlow and Poff, 2011). Texting is also generally an emotionally loaded form of communication. The sending and receiving of text messages is often used as a conversational channel and adheres more to conversational norms rather than a more prescriptive form of written communication. Thurlow and Poff (2011: 7) explain that "texters almost always recognize that language is context specific". 'SMS speak' is highly interactive, dynamic and spontaneous allowing people to be in contact with their friends, family and other individuals whom they wish to be in contact with (Thurlow and Poff, 2007).

Consequently, as cell phones become more accessible and affordable to the public, more people are gaining contact not only to cell phones but also to the SMS service that comes along with owning a mobile cell phone. This allows for people to share information with one another on subject matter including entertainment and socialization purposes, enquiring about the well being of family members and in this case managing university responsibilities in terms of home work and assignments. The new telecommunications technologies are changing the way humanity lives, learns and works and the proliferation of social networks and other online means of expression and communication have resulted in a landscape where people are able to freely send messages through a variety of means of application.

1.1 Historical background of text messaging

Texting was initially developed and released commercially in the early 1990s and has since seen a huge rise in popularity around the world (Thurlow and Poff, 2011). Since the 1990's cell phones have become a fundamental part of most people's lives, and according to Thurlow (2003) there were almost one billion cell phone users worldwide, compared to the estimated 600 million people who use the internet. With the instant messaging service known as Mxit, which costs substantially lower than a regular SMS, it is not surprising that the service itself reported more than 2 million users.

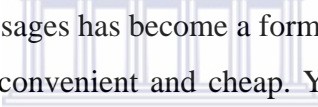
Text messages can be up to 160 characters in length and sent from any mobile to any other wireless phone on the wireless network. A limited space of 160 characters has motivated users to invent space saving as well as time saving strategies to make SMSing quicker and more cost effective. These strategies include a significant amount of abbreviation and creative use of punctuation and symbols to convey messages. Freudenberg (2009) emphasizes that due to the cost efficiency and ease of SMSing young people are spending a more substantial amount of time sending SMS and Mxit messages, thus using SMS speak regularly and for an increased period of time.

Since typing is much slower than speaking, the length of typed messages is kept short and space savings strategies become imperative. The use of abbreviations is one way in which time and space is saved in these online conversations, commonly involving acronyms and symbols, shortening of words and even the exclusion of pronouns. SMS speak can be described as writing that looks like speech or "talking in writing" (Callot and Belmore, 1996: 14). Mxit and SMSing help fulfill the essential need for constant contact because it is cost effective, easy to use and readily available across all age and language groups. This type of communication is applicable at an institution such as UWC due to its diverse dense population which consists of varying nationalities, cultures, linguistic ideologies and practices. Most importantly, this form of communication is applicable at UWC as the university hosts students as its clientele, thus the SMSing convention is seen as more affordable to students in comparison to making a phone call.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The purpose of the study is to explore how English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa are being transformed through SMS texting at UWC. The problem here relates to the impact of globalization, stylization, languaging and transidiomatic practices and resulting textual modifications in the writing practices as well as the ways in which SMS texting allows students to enact certain identity options in a globalizing world. Transnationally, the problem relates to the extent in which digital communication technologies are re-shaping communicative practices, social interaction and identities in South Africa. This raises questions such as: What types of mono- and bilingual literacies are currently developing in electronic domains? In particular, what versions and varieties of South Africa's languages are being localized and 'literalized' in these contexts, and for what purposes? How do users' social identities (class, race/ethnicity, gender, age) shape their engagement with these new media?

1.3 Rationale



Using a mobile phone to send messages has become a form of mass communication since it is viewed by many as quick, easy, convenient and cheap. Young people are creative and use text messaging for various reasons in multiple languages and with the development of popular networking services such as Mxit making the sending and receiving of SMS messages almost instant, different languages become available to different language speakers, encouraging mixing and merging of languages and its abbreviations. As one of the most recently developed forms of communication, other local studies have been conducted within this field of research such as Vosloo (2009) who wrote about the effect of texting on literacy, reviewing the negative response of educators and teachers regarding this form of communication, Freudenberg (2009), who investigated the impact of SMS speak on written work in high school learners and Deumert and Masinyana (2008), who looked at mobile language choices and the use of English and isiXhosa as a form of mobile communication.

The motivation for this research is thus to add to those studies that have already been conducted by investigating if SMS/Mxit messages are transforming our local languages through practices such as globalization, polylingual languaging, transidiomatic practices and stylization to mention but a few, and if so to try and determine the types of identities participants construct for themselves. Thus, proposing a study on text messaging of this

nature not only contributes to previous studies in this field but also provides insight as to why this form of communication with its own set of grammatical rules, spellings and abbreviations is seen as a normal social practice.

1.4 Research Questions

This thesis takes a closer look at how mobile communication such as SMS speak is used and remodelled as a local practice. The thesis is limited to the following questions:

- 1) Is the differential effect on the abbreviations and shorthand messages used in SMS and Mxit messages specific to English?
- 2) What do the differing themes reveal about the SMS/Mxit messages?
- 3) How is the text messaging interaction being utilised as a social and local practice?
- 4) How do factors such as globalization, stylization and polylingual languaging impact on SMSing?
- 5) What types of identities and role structures do senders construct and style for themselves when engaging in SMS interactions?

1.5 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this research is to investigate how English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa are being used as a single form of communication. This is achieved by exploring the concept of globalization in the late-modern era which has led to an increase in the usage of mobile communication. The key focus of this small-scale study is thus whether these languages are being transformed through this medium of mass communication to form one cohesive language known as SMS speak. It works from the premise that mobile communication is reshaping communicative practices, leading to space and time saving strategies and distinctive styles of language usage among today's youth.

The specific objectives are:

- 1) To examine the applicability of concepts such as code-switching and code-mixing considering recent theorization around polylingual languaging and hybrid language practices.
- 2) To explore the content and structure of the SMSes as themes by evaluating the occurrence of differences and similarities among the most common themes.
- 3) To analyse selected SMS and Mxit messages in terms of polylingual languaging, transidiomatic practices, language as a local and social practice, and stylization.
- 4) To analyse text messages in terms of interpersonal meaning and tenor by examining the types of relationships senders form with recipients.
- 5) To inspect the kind of identity options and role structures being performed through such text messages.



1.6 Research Design and Methodology

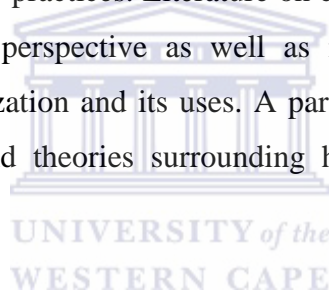
The study made use of essays written by students in the Linguistics Department at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) on their cell phone messages. The SMS and Mxit messages provided as examples in these essays were extracted and analysed for this study. The study therefore employed a text based research approach which entailed analysing written texts. Qualitatively speaking, this study is inductive in nature as it allows for in-depth, naturalistic evaluation of the text messages. This study also uses quantitative methods in terms of counting the number of essays collected as well as counting the amount of SMS examples extracted in conjunction with the tallying of recurring themes. Both the quantitative and qualitative methods employed assisted in serving and supporting the data analysis.

1.7 Chapter Outline

Chapter One provides an abridgment of the research including the introduction, historical background, statement of the problem, rationale for the study, the research questions and aims and objectives for the study. Firstly, the topic which in this case is SMS/Mxit messages is introduced with a brief discussion. Thereafter, a back grounding overview is provided indicating the historical dates and time periods of the rise of the SMS phenomenon in relation

to the rise of the Mxit application. The statement of the problem is then discussed, followed by the rationale for the study making apparent the purpose and motivation for conducting the study in terms of the context of UWC bearing in mind concepts such as globalization, stylization and transidiomatic practices. Thereafter, the research questions are presented clarifying the interests of the research topic which shape and guide the research. The main aims and objectives of the research is then listed which involves investigating and comparing the differences and similarities of how English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa are being used by this medium of communication. These aims and objectives also support the research questions. This chapter then continues with a brief outline of the research design and methodology.

Chapter Two concentrates on the literature review and focuses on literature surrounding SMS/Mxit messages which provides insight about text messages from a local perspective. This is followed by a critical discussion of literature on the concept of globalization with a particular focus on transidiomatic practices. Literature on code-switching and code-mixing is presented from a monolingual perspective as well as more recent theories centred on polylingual languaging and stylization and its uses. A particular emphasis in this chapter is language as a local practice and theories surrounding hybrid language practices, lingua francas and multimodality.



Chapter Three entails the theoretical framework. Firstly, an SFL perspective on language is provided which focuses on language use and language choice in relation to context. The SFL stance works on the premise of both interpersonal and textual organisation of messages hence the inclusion of literature on cohesion and coherence. This chapter continues with literature on theories of identity, and in particular the poststructuralist view on identity is highlighted as it allows for the larger sociohistorical, socio-political and socioeconomical processes which acknowledge the multiplicity of identities.

Chapter Four outlines the research design and methodology used throughout the research process. It begins with a detailed critical discussion on thematic analysis – its processes, advantages and disadvantages. This is followed by a discussion on the qualitative text-based method of data collection used in this study. The chapter continues with the history and details of the sampling procedure and the research subjects as well as the methods of data collection. Following this the data analysis is summarised with a brief explanation of the

various methods employed to analyse the data. The final section of this chapter deals with the ethical considerations underlying the research process.

Chapter Five explores the thematic analysis which is the beginning of the findings and analysis of the research study. Here the main themes arising from the data will be presented in conjunction with the use of hybridity and multimodality found in the SMS/Mxit messages.

Chapter Six contains the linguistic analysis and highlights and investigates the language use specific to SMS speak such as contracted and abbreviated word usage as well as letter-number words. Thereafter, concepts such as polylingual languaging, globalization, transidiomatic practices, stylization and language as a local practice are examined in relation to the SMS/Mxit messages.

Chapter Seven focuses on the identity analysis which works from the poststructuralist viewpoint and examines the performance of identity in SMS speak. This chapter highlights the linguistic and discursive practices used by participants' as well as the types of identities portrayed based on the language choices made. Participants' motivations for using SMS speak are also presented in this chapter. Thereafter, tenor, interpersonal meaning and role relationships in the text messages are examined.

In the final chapter, Chapter Eight conclusions elicited from the various methods of data analysis are presented. Along with this, concluding remarks are made about whether the research aims and objectives and research questions have been met by this research study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The literature review commences with literature surrounding SMS and Mxit messages, followed by literature highlighting polylingual languaging, transidiomatic practices, globalization, stylization and language as a local practice. Lastly, literature relating to code-switching and code-mixing, identity, multimodality, hybrid language practices and lingua franca English is discussed.

Many papers have been written about mobile communication focusing specifically on SMS and Mxit messages. However, this thesis is rooted in studies of late-modern communication and multilingual literacies, with special attention being given to the ways in which languages are increasingly being blended and transformed in language contact situations such as mobile messaging. Despite the fact that mobile communication is an emerging field of research, many papers have been written but these papers do not contain literature regarding how English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa are being transformed through this medium with concepts such as globalization, stylization, languaging and transidiomatic practices being used for analysis. In addition, this thesis considers how textual modifications allow students to enact certain identity options.

2.1 SMS and Mxit Messages

According to Vosloo (2009: 2) “texting-the written lingua franca of many youth today - refers to the use of abbreviations and other techniques to craft SMS and instant messages and texting does not always follow the standard rules of English grammar, nor usual word spellings”. It is so pervasive that some regard it as an emergent language register in its own right (Vosloo, 2009). In South Africa, Mxit is a popular mobile instant messaging service that claims 10 million registered users-many under the age of 18-who send over 250 million messages daily. Freudenberg (2009: 2) acknowledges that “this type of communication is appealing to young people, providing a new dimension for communication of their cell phones and due to the cost efficiency and ease of SMSing and particularly of Mxit, adolescents could be spending a substantial amount of time sending SMS and Mxit messages, thus using SMS speak regularly and for increased periods of time”. She further asserts that

‘SMSing’ gives adolescents a medium that encourages them to explore and play about with the use of their language.

For a number of years teachers and parents have blamed texting as it has provoked a very strong negative response from teachers, parents and language experts (Vosloo, 2009). Lee (2002) describes it as the ‘continuing assault of technology on formal written English’ and (Humphrys, 2007) describes it as ‘pillaging punctuation; savaging our sentences; raping our vocabulary’. However, Vosloo (2009), Crystal (2008) and Blommaert (2010) argue that the codes used in crafting mobile messages is actually highly normative (one does not write ‘L8er CU’ but CU L8er, for example) and, in Blommaert’s words, ‘...the result of complex learning processes of exactly the same nature as those of formal ortho-graphic literacy’. Blommaert (2010) argues that knowledge of how to use cell-phones is a new form of social and cultural capital which young people have, and many older people lack. In addition, Wood, Plester and Bowyer (2008) posit that ‘...children’s use of this technology appears to have a positive impact on their developing literacy, as it provides children with an additional resource for learning about and experimenting with letter-sound correspondences and language, and for reading and decoding text’.

Deumert (2009) states that mobile phones are central to many informal literacy activities of youth cultures across the globe, particular those associated with short message service (SMS) and mobile instant messaging. According to Deumert (2009: 3) “linguists have voiced strong concerns about the increasing dominance of English in public life in South Africa, even though a province like the Western Cape has a solid three-language ecology with over 98% of residents using Afrikaans, English or isiXhosa as a home language”. Deumert (2009) notes that there has been a growing research and policy interest in multilingualism and digital communication as languages other than English are beginning to occupy a small but important and growing niche in the digital domain. Hence, Information and Communication Technologies which carry lower cost implications than print have the potential to provide opportunities for the development of sustainable indigenous literacy practices.

“Mobile phone ownership is high even among youth in Cape Town’s low-income areas, with 90% of the youth being phone owners” (Deumert, 2009: 5). It was also noted that the network interaction data shows a highly multilingual group of teenagers who interact with one another using a variety of communication forms and language varieties. Afrikaans, isiXhosa and

English are all used in the digital domain, whereas face-to-face communication remains isiXhosa/Afrikaans dominant with slang varieties of these languages showing high levels of borrowing from English (Deumert, 2009; McCormick 2000). In her study, Deumert (2009: 8) shows that “the motivations given for preferring English were consistent across Xhosa participants as English was perceived as being easy, simple, and understandable and consisting of short words, whereas isiXhosa was seen as difficult, complicated and deep with long complex words”. Deumert (2009) acknowledges that motivation for using English in text messaging is instrumental in comparison to isiXhosa where motivations are ethno-cultural or integrative. English is described as the language with which individuals are more comfortable when it comes to reading and writing because of exposure and regular practice. “In late modernity, languages are no longer compartmentalized, but overlap, intersect and interconnect and that a fusion of languages, dialects, scripts, register and semiotic systems characterise how people communicate today” (Deumert, 2009:19). Consequently, the discussion regarding SMS/Mxit messages brings about questions such as the reasoning behind the formation of the language known as SMS speak? Many theorists attribute the concept of globalization to try and explain and answer such questions.

2.2 Globalization

Giddens (1994) and Waters (2001) state that globalisation is commonly used as a short hand to describe the spread of connectedness of production, communication and technologies around the world. Da Silva, McLaughlin and Richards (2007: 184) define globalization as a ‘big word’ that is meant to account for a multiplicity of processes and practices, namely an increase in quantity and rapidity of the circulation of people, identities, imaginations and products across borders. Harvey (1990) argues that we are witnessing faster movements of capital, products and people across the globe, just as the networks sustaining these movements are morphing and multiplying, thus reducing spatial and temporal distances in an increasingly smaller, yet still unequal interconnected world. Adding to this, Fairclough (2006) believes that we should be looking at discourse rather than language use when we consider sociolinguistic globalization processes, and should focus on genres, registers and styles. This view is supported to some extent by Pennycook (2007), who argues that global culture needs to be seen in terms of circles of flow, large networks in which highly diverse forms circulate and are exchanged, overlap and blend together.

Da Silva *et al* (2007) add that in addition, language has also been considered a bounded entity and they adopt the view that language can be viewed as a social action. Hence, their approach focuses on language as a social practice embedded in processes of social structuration. “In this light, languages do not necessarily need to be part of the individual’s ethnolinguistic background, which means that they can be commodified by people who stake no claim to identity” (Da Silva *et al*, 2007: 187). Further, Da Silva *et al* (2007) state that with the use of the internet and web on the rise as communicational exchanges, we need to build linguistic bridges between languages, and this contradicts the view of languages being seen as something concrete. Thus, language is being redefined from a ‘right’ to a ‘resource’ (Da Silva *et al*, 2007: 187).

Bruthiax (2008) emphasises that since societies are impacted by globalization so is culture and therefore language is also impacted. Bruthiax (2008: 21) writes that “many assume that globalization and the spread of English are closely connected”. Many welcome the impact of globalization as it offers a chance of greater hybridity and it also allows for new identities to emerge and disappear continuously and that identity is increasingly difficult to tie to location of nationality (Bruthiax, 2008). He further acknowledges (2008: 21) that there is a fear of the linguistic hegemony of English and the subsequent downgrading of local vernaculars, yet contends that this may in fact generate resistance and work towards revitalising cultures and languages considered to be ‘at risk’.

Like Bruthiax (2008), Blommaert (2010) describes globalization as a sociolinguistic subject matter, and language as something intrinsically connected to processes of globalization. Furthermore, Blommaert (2010) claims that language itself is seen as essentially unaffected by globalization, and globalization is seen as another context in which language is practised. This, according to Blommaert (2010) precludes the possibility that the modes of occurrence of language themselves change, and that the traditional concept of language is dislodged and destabilized by globalization. He (2010) uses an approach that considers language as organized not just in a linguistic system but in a sociolinguistic system, the rules and dynamics of which cannot be automatically derived from considering their linguistic features and one that so examines language in an attempt to understand society. Thus, the movement of people across space is therefore never a move across empty spaces as these spaces are always someone’s space, and they are filled with norms, exceptions, conceptions of what counts as proper and normal language use and what does not count as such (Blommaert,

2010). Blommaert (2010) also notes that the particular varieties of English spoken in such transactions will be very different, that is none will be standard, and each variety will reflect informal patterns of acquisition and uneasiness in use.

As a consequence, we see very fragmented and incomplete-truncated-language repertoires, most of which consist of spoken vernacular and non-native varieties of different languages with an overlay of differentially developed literacy skills in one or some languages (Blommaert, 2010). Blommaert (2010: 13) writes that “the term globalization is most commonly used as shorthand for the intensified flows of capital, goods, people, images and discourses around the globe driven by technologic innovations mainly in the field of media and information and communication technology, and resulting in new patterns of global activity, community and culture”. Contrastingly, Fairclough (2006) locates the process of globalization to be considered at the level of discourse, not language. Therefore, linguistic ecosystems are in constant flux, as creoles and dialect continua exemplify, and changes in the ecosystem will trigger changes in languages and in their relative position to one another (Blommaert, 2010).

In contrast, Pennycook (2007) argues that global culture needs to be seen in terms of circles of flow, large networks in which in which highly diverse forms circulate and are exchanged, and which can overlap and blend together. Whereas, Fairclough (2006) draws our attention to the fact that we should not look at language but at discourse when we consider sociolinguistic globalization processes and we should focus on genres, registers and styles rather than on languages. Blommaert (2010) mentions that mobility affects the nature and function of the conventional conception of language in linguistics; calling for a different vocabulary to describe the way in which it is lived and practiced presently. For Blommaert (2010) language needs to be seen as a phenomenon that functions at different scale-levels. Mobility across these different scales involves important shifts in function, structure and meaning and since globalization introduces the global as a relevant level of context, we can expect such shifts to occur generally (Blommaert, 2010).

Blommaert (2010: 23) mentions that we never know all of a language, we always know specific bits and pieces of it such ‘truncated repertoire’s are a better diagnostic of what real multilingual competence means in an age of globalization as they explain the unfinished character of communication as well as the numerous problems that can occur in the processes

of mobility. According to Blommaert (2010) they are placed resources, some of which will allow mobility while others will not, and repertoire analysis can explain what goes on when people, carrying their language luggage move around or when their messages move around. “Mobility is something that has spatial as well as temporal features and mobile text is text that has the capacity to travel through time and space” (Blommaert, 2010:24). For Blommaert (2007) globalization compels us to take multilingualism and multiculturalism as a rule rather than as an exception, and address the phenomenology of non-nativeness in language usage as something that crucially connects with social, political and ideological processes characterising late modernity.

2.3 Transidiomatic Practices

The concept of globalization is in line with earlier research conducted by Jacquemet (2005), who noted that sophisticated technologies for rapid human mobility and global communication is transforming the communicative environment of late modernity. Through electronic media, people confront new rules and resources for the construction of social identity and cultural belonging. When the rapid, mass mediated flow of images, scenarios and emotions merges with the deterritorialised audiences, the result is a recombination in the production of modern subjectivity (Jacquemet, 2005). Jacquemet (2005: 264) uses the term ‘transidiomatic practices’ to explain and define ‘the communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes simultaneously present in a range of communicative channels, both local and distant’.

Jacquemet (2005: 265) states that “transidiomatic practices are the results of the co-presence of multilingual talk and electronic media, in contexts heavily structured by social indexicalities and semiotic codes”. Thus the combination of multiple languages and simultaneous local and distant interaction is the production of a transidiomatic environment. Transidiomatic practices usually produce linguistic innovations with heavy borrowing from English, but any number of other languages could be involved in these communicative recombinations, depending on the reterritorialization needs and wants of the speakers.

How are these transidiomatic practices affecting local South African languages, in particular isiXhosa and Afrikaans? Deumert and Masinyana (2008: 117) found that “the isiXhosa messages differ from English language messages in that they contain no abbreviated material, non-standard spelling or paralinguistic restitutions and therefore they violate the

sociolinguistic maxims of SMS/texting”. Abbreviations, phonological approximations and non-standard spellings are common in English, Thus, while English is the preferred code for most of these writers and conforms largely to what one might call a globalised SMS English norm, the messages also display local features both in terms of form and content (Deumert and Masinyana, 2008).

In their study (Deumert and Masinyana, 2009: 132) found that “choosing isiXhosa and not abbreviating it comes at a direct cost (around 80 cents per message) to the bilingual user, and generally isiXhosa speakers reacted with puzzlement to the very idea of abbreviated SMSing in isiXhosa”. Their findings show that young isiXhosa home language speakers themselves prefer using English in SMS communication since the senders of these messages themselves feel that one cannot abbreviate isiXhosa. However, this might not necessarily be the case. Concerns about linguistic change in isiXhosa centre by and large on issues of language contact, as well as the loss of traditional registers and ways of speaking. Mixing and borrowing are generally seen as features of the ‘shallow’ and ‘watered-down’ urban varieties of languages which are associated with modernity and upward mobility and are granted considerable covert prestige, whereas the rural varieties on which the standard norm is based, are considered to be ‘exact’, ‘pure’, ‘original’ and ‘real’, the “carrier of the Xhosa culture and traditions” and an icon of cultural identity (Deumert and Masinyana, 2008:136).

Deumert and Masinyana (2008:137) mention that “isiXhosa occurs most commonly in mixed messages characterised by English-isiXhosa code-mixing and code-switching thus emulating the non-standard mixed language practices which are a common feature of vernacular usage of South Africa’s youth”. Therefore, there are clear tendencies towards linguistic non-standardness in isiXhosa SMS language, yet unlike English; non-standardness is rarely signalled by the modification of spelling, but rather by the combination of linguistic material. The data presented by Deumert and Masinyana (2008) demonstrate that the use of English and isiXhosa in mobile text messaging is in line with what one might call a global SMS standard, characterised by the use of well-established spelling abbreviations, phonological approximations, non-standard spellings and paralinguistic restitutions.

In comparison, Weimers (2008) found that Afrikaans speaking adolescents were not rigid when it came to language preference for SMSing; they reported that they preferred to SMS in a language of the person they were contacting. Mxit and SMSing help fulfil this fundamental

need for constant contact, because it is cost effective, easy to use and readily available across all age groups and keeping in touch with family proved to be a priority (Freudenberg, 2009). In a recent study by Weimers (2008: 21), it was suggested that “Afrikaans-speaking users of SMS were not able to make use of the same features of SMS speak as English speakers; in particular, the Afrikaans-speaking users were less likely to use rebus writing, as very few letter/number words in Afrikaans have a similar phonetic sound”. For instance, in English, the pronunciation of ‘four’ is the same as that of ‘for’, and therefore the number 4 can be used to replace the word *for* when trying to save space in an SMS. However, in Afrikaans, the pronunciation of ‘vier’ differs significantly from that of ‘vir’ (for), and therefore the number 4 cannot be used instead of the Afrikaans word for (Freudenberg, 2009). The language usage resulting from Jacquemet’s (2005) ‘transidiomatic practices’ as well as Blommaert’s (2010) ‘truncated repertoires’ are very closely allied to Jørgensen’s (2008) concept of ‘polylingual languaging’, which is discussed in the next section.

2.4 Polylingual Languaging

According to Jørgensen (2008: 161) “language is often described as the phenomenon that distinguishes humankind from other species because with language human beings can transfer ideas over large distances in time and space”. Jørgensen (2008) claims that while some speakers think that languages should be kept apart, others combine three or four, or more different sets of features in their linguistic production. For Jørgensen (2008:162) “we do not have language until an intended message is understood and as humans we use arbitrary sign systems with intentions”. This has however been downplayed by Labovian sociolinguistics which emphasises the effect of social structures on the linguistic choices made by individuals (Jørgensen, 2008). Further, they argue that language is social and it is something that happens between people. In the larger context it is impossible to understand language as independent of human beings as language is the means with which we form and change our social structures (Jørgensen, 2008).

According to Jørgensen (2008) language as a human phenomenon is not just a social construction as language users are also actors, and they act upon, and sometimes against norms and standards. Makoni and Pennycook (2006) point out that the concept of a language is a European invention, whereas, Heller (2007:1) explicitly argues “against the notion that languages are objectively speaking whole, bounded, systems’, and she prefers to understand language use as the phenomenon that speakers’ draw on linguistic resources which are

organised in ways that make sense under specific social circumstances”. Thus, languages are ideologically defined, not defined by use or users. With these viewpoints established, the concept of a language is thus bound in time and space and is not part of our understanding of the human concept of language; therefore, speakers use features and not languages (Jørgensen, 2008).

Jørgensen (2008: 168) says that “young urban language users have contact with speakers of a wide range of different languages, and these young speakers become acquainted with many different features from these languages as they use some of them in their speech without learning all the other parts of the languages involved”. Thus, the use of features from several different languages in the same production has become frequent, especially in in-group interaction, even when the speakers apparently know very little of several of the languages involved (Jørgensen, 2008). Jørgensen (2008: 169) explains that “the term languaging is used for this behaviour, meaning language users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal with the intention of achieving their communicative aims”. Language users use language with all their skills and knowledge which may involve detailed knowledge about the language or the speakers may know very little about each feature, except what to use it for under given circumstances (Jørgensen, 2008).

Therefore, we have language, and that is important. “It is less important that some of us have languages as we all use language intentionally in order to achieve our aims” (Jørgensen 2008: 170). Jørgensen (2008) affirms that polylingual languaging is one type of languaging, but basically it is not different from other types of linguistic behaviour. Further, it is important to understand that polylingual behaviour is not random. Speakers do not choose words or features completely arbitrary from the different sets of features at their disposal because when choosing, speakers are just as rational as they are when they otherwise choose words and features (Jørgensen, 2008).

Added to this, Møller and Jørgensen (2009) state that language is a phenomenon with which we can attempt to reach some of our goals, thus language is intentional. Language is a tool for the exchange of ideas and concepts so language must be structured and systematic, and language is structured in order to be acquired by new individuals (Møller and Jørgensen, 2009). Languages are treated by speakers as coherent and stable structures in everyday language use. The mixing of features which are ideologically ascribed to “different

languages”, including the mixing which happens in creole language has been viewed as exceptional compared to “monolingual” use of language (Møller and Jørgensen, 2009: 145).

Møller and Jørgensen (2009: 145) write that “in most parts of the world speakers relate to constructs they refer to as languages, but in their linguistic practices they use linguistic features”. Linguistic features are categorised differently by individuals in different contexts and social settings and the same goes for different norms regarding the appropriateness of juxtaposition of different sets of linguistic features and negotiations on the boundaries of these sets (Møller and Jørgensen, 2009). Møller and Jørgensen (2009: 14) use the term ‘code’ to account for the concept of language and say that codes are ideologically constructed sets of features with corresponding norms of their use, and corresponding assigned values linked to the set as a whole and to features individually. Møller and Jørgensen (2009: 145) proclaim that all of us have access to language, but with the concept of “a language” it becomes possible to think of language as inaccessible to certain individuals. Along with the norms of how “a language” can be used we find norms about who can use it, and to whom it belongs.

The term language crossing or code crossing refers to the use of a language which is not generally thought to belong to the speaker, this leads to the concept of polylingualism. This concept is based on the practices of the individual and not on abstract sets of features. Møller and Jørgensen (2009:147) differentiate “between polylingualism and multilingualism, clarifying that in multilingualism a speaker is considered to have access to three or more varieties, and these varieties can be specified”. However, if a feature is used by a multilingual speaker which is not considered to belong to any of the varieties which are specified as the speaker’s languages, it is considered a deviation, an aberration, and the event is described as a loan. In polylingualism on the other hand, such behaviour is mainstream language use (Møller and Jørgensen, 2009: 147). Møller and Jørgensen (2009: 148) describe “human linguistic behaviour in this perspective as languaging and for the speakers the term languagers are used”. There is no reason to believe that people who share access to two or more “languages” were unwilling or unable to use features from both or more languages in the same interaction (Møller and Jørgensen, 2009). “As languagers we may involve the ascription of values and assignation of language label to the features we use, so consequently, features meet each other in the utterances of the speakers, not languages” (Møller and Jørgensen, 2009: 148).

2.5 Code-switching and Code-mixing

Heller (1988) defines code-switching as the use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode. When members of a community are proficient in more than one language, they must choose which of those languages to use every time they speak or write. They may choose to speak only one language (code) in a single conversation. There is usually purpose and logic in changing languages. It entails using the full language resources that are available to a bilingual, usually knowing that the listener fully understands the code-switching (Baker, 2006). Intersentential code-switching is when code-switching happens between different sentences, this means that full sentences are in different languages that the speaker knows. Intrasentential code-switching is when mainly one language is used such as the matrix language but words are inserted from other languages also commonly known as code-mixing (Heller, 1988).

In his book on bilingual speech, Muysken (2000: 2) writes that “many bilinguals produce mixed sentences in ordinary conversations and such sentences are produced with great ease and complete fluidity’. Muysken (2000) also notes that this does not reflect limited proficiency in either of the languages involved, instead speakers who code-mix fluently and easily tends to be quite proficient bilinguals.

Patterns of intrasentential code-mixing found are often rather different from one another (Muysken, 2000). Muysken (2000) explains that much of the confusion in the field arises from the fact that several distinctions can be made:

- The first of such distinctions being insertion of material be it lexical items or entire constituents from one language into a structure from the other language;
- The second distinction is alteration between structures from languages and lastly,
- Congruent lexicalization of material from different lexical inventories into a shared grammatical structure.

In addition, Muysken (2000: 4) asserts that “the term code-switching is less neutral in two ways, as a term it already suggests something like alternation as opposed to insertion, and it separates code-mixing too strongly from phenomenon of borrowing and interference”.

Myers-Scotton (1993a:4) defines code-switching as the selection by bilinguals or multilinguals of forms from an embedded language or languages in utterances of a matrix language during the same conversation, consequently, it makes it necessary, however, to assume a going back and forth between different matrix languages. Muysken (2000: 40) remarks “that many people cherish the image of a language as closely guarded separate units”. As a result languages are perceived by their speakers as separate and expressive of a particular identity. For this reason many speech communities have developed mechanisms to maintain the boundaries between themselves and others. Speakers often keep different languages they know separate when speaking, correcting themselves when they accidentally mix (Muysken, 2000). Therefore, code-mixing provides bilingual speakers with a means to drastically extend their verbal repertoire, and there is evidence that many bilingual speakers take the opportunity (Muysken, 2000).

Androutsopoulos (2007) writes that code-switching and language mixing have been at best displayed and narrated as private practices, good enough for the fictional representation of everyday life worlds but naturally unsuited as legitimate voices. The transnational flow of information provides recipients with linguistic and semiotic resources that are appropriated and recontextualized in local practices of cultural bricolage (Androutsopoulos, 2007). Androutsopoulos (2007: 13) believes that “cases of rich code-switching and or language mixing are attested for various media genres, in settings of both societal and interpersonal bilingualism”. This illustrates that the relationship of bilingualism and identity in media discourse may extend beyond the performer’s own ethnolinguistic background to practices of language crossing in which speakers appropriate languages that are significant in the local context without necessarily having full command of them (Androutsopoulos, 2007:215). Rather than valuing the bilingual speech of everyday life, their producers and audiences support a separation of languages in the public sphere, and perpetuate the stigmatization of language mixing as a problem of competence. Therefore, the internet extends the media of diaspora in various ways allowing interactants to style their utterances in various ways.

2.6 Stylization

People differ in the ways they talk and write, yet this is hardly a novel observation, and even when the content of the message is the same, individuals express themselves verbally with their own distinctive styles (Pennebaker and King, 1999). Pennebaker and King (1999: 1296) state that “as with spoken languages, written languages is also unique from person to person,

thus, at least to some extent the ways people talk and write have been recognised as stamps of individual identity". Pennebaker and King (1999) also declare that despite the assumption that people verbally express themselves in stable, unique ways, language use has rarely been considered to be a bona fide individual difference and certainly language and word use have been shown to vary tremendously from topic to topic and from one social context to another. One of the most daunting problems in assessing linguistic styles is in deciding on the appropriate dimensions of language and once selected determining the best unit of analysis Pennebaker and King (1999). For this reason the purpose of Pennebaker and King's (1999) investigation was to examine whether individual differences in languages are stable across writing contexts and to explore whether such differences might relate to other, more established individual difference characteristics.

Coupland (2001) explains that stylization is a concept originally associated with the literary and cultural criticism of Bakhtin. Thus, for Bakhtin stylization has a broad remit, identifying a general quality of language use contemporary to the era in which he wrote. Therefore, Bakhtinian stylization is a subversive form of multi-voiced utterances, one that discredits hegemonic, monologic discourses by appropriating the voices of the powerful and reworking them for new purposes (Coupland, 2001). For Bakhtin, stylization is a core instance of his much-cited dictum that "our speech...is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness', varying degrees of awareness and detachment" (Bakhtin 1986: 89). According to Coupland (2001) single utterances can be stylized, when speakers are being studiedly "artificial" or "putting on a voice". The concept of "styling" is also increasingly common in discussions of dialect variation, implying that dialect style needs to be viewed as a form of discursive social action as "stylization" denotes a more specific set of discursive constructions than does styling in general (Coupland 2001: 346).

According to Coupland (2001) to restate two basic contrasts, invoking the idea of stylization in relation to dialect implies seeing dialect as performance rather than as behaviour and as social practice rather than as variation. Further, stylization can be described as a "subterfuge" in the sense that speakers are projecting hypothetical identities. Coupland (2001: 349) suggested that in stylizing, we speak "as if this is me", or "as if I owned this voice", or "as if I endorsed what this voice says". He declares that stylized utterances project personas, identities and genres other than those that are presumably current in the speech event;

projected personas and genres have well-formed socio-cultural profiles and derive from known repertoires. Stylization is creative and performed and therefore requires aptitude and learning; some speakers will be more adept at stylization than others; while style variation is part of a universal communicative competence, stylization is more restricted, either by preference or by competence; some communities will be more prone than others to stylized utterances (Coupland, 2001).

Styling, Coupland (2007) claims is part of the process of genre-making, but also part of the process of genre-breaking and through their active use of styles in situation, speakers create social meaning. In contrast Coupland (2007) quotes Fairclough (1995: 28) who says that ‘public discourse is in many ways being conversationalised, and everyday talk is taking on qualities of performance and reflexivity that we would formerly have associated with mass media rather than interpersonal domains’. The period of late-modernity ‘makes social life more contingent and unpredictable’ and hence ‘more obviously amenable to being socially constructed’ and language is known as one major resource for constructing social worlds (Fairclough, 1995: 28).

Additionally, Eckert (2000) explains that variation does not simply reflect a ready-made social meaning; it is part of the means by which that meaning emerges. Coupland (2007) states that Bourdieu’s sociolinguistic determinism is undermined by the metalingual function of language, which enables speaker’s to adopt a certain critical distance with regard to their own use of language, reshaping meanings in their speech performances. Identities are not to be seen as fixed categories as individuals display identities rather than one essential identity (Coupland, 2007). He defines a number of processes which he considers particularly important in social contextualisation, including targeting (ascribing identity) and framing (making certain linguistic features more or less relevant). Coupland (2007) distinguishes between socio-cultural framing, genre framing and interpersonal framing, voicing (the issue here is of how speakers impose ownership of an utterance or a way of speaking), keying (relating to the tone, manner or spirit of the act) and loading (the level of a speaker’s investment in an identity being negotiated).

“Speakers perform identities”, Coupland (2007: 146) claims when they have some awareness of how the relevant personas constructed are likely to be perceived through their designs. “Style has outgrown its conceptual origins as it has to encompass the whole field of making

social meaning through deploying and recontextualising linguistic resources” (Coupland, 2007: 177). Correspondingly, he rejects the idea that the styling of discourse makes it less authentic and introduces the sophisticated idea that in late modernity, authenticity needs to be earned discursively rather than automatically credited (Coupland, 2007). Coupland *et al* (2003: 167) note that “tiny amounts of a second language can be positioned at the margins of text and talk units, and thereby evoke social identities and relationships associated with minimally used language”. Further Coupland (2001) writes that rather than always speaking in their own voice media performers use language to stylize an array of social identities relying for this purpose on the cultural and sociolinguistic knowledge they assume to share with their audience. These identities may be claimed by the performers themselves, projected to their audience or ascribed to social types in the bilingual community. This then relates to what Pennycook (2010) describes as language as a local practice. These stylized utterances are then perceived as a localised language practice.

2.7 Language as a Local Practice

Pennycook (2010: 2) states that “looking at language as a practice is to view language as an activity rather than a structure, as something we do rather than a system we draw on, as a material part of social and cultural life rather than an abstract entity”. According to Pennycook (2010) globalization needs to be understood not only in terms of reactions to global movements from above, made possible by new media, institutions and technologies, but also in terms of local movements being made global. Pennycook (2010) insists that when we speak about language as a local practice, then, this refers not only to the ways in which language use must always be related to place, must always be understood in terms of its embeddedness in locality, but also to the ways in which any understanding of the locality of language must also encompass an appreciation of the locality of perspective, of the different ways in which language, locality and practice are conceived in different contexts. Similarly, Nakata (2007) explains that understanding the locality of language, therefore is not merely about accurate descriptions of language systems from the social context in which the speech is being uttered, but about people and places.

For Blommaert (2008: 7), who also looks at texts, particularly handwritten, from the same region, grassroots literacy refers to “a wide variety of ‘non-elite’ forms of writing. It is writing performed by people who are not fully inserted into elite economies of information, language and literacy”. Therefore, when looking at language ideologies and the ways in

which languages are understood locally, it does not mean that languages are only used in small areas and understood within narrowly circumscribed domains (Pennycook, 2010). Further, “what counts as local requires an understanding in relational terms, thus, something is only local in relation to some other concept of space and place and the argument here is that doing things locally cannot rest on a pre-given account of what is local; rather, local practices construct locality” (Pennycook 2010: 7). Pennycook (2010) asserts that language practices are a product of repeated social activity, and yet they are also always being rewritten and they are always under change. Therefore, this is not a question of difference as straying from the norm but of difference as the norm and thus language is constantly relocalized through repetition.

Pennycook (2007) explains that the notion of the local is not confined to the non-global and the local as the term global refers to the apparent co-occurrence in different times and places of local practices. “At one level, the local is just here and now, acknowledging that language always happens in relation to space and time as being local is not only about the perspectives, the language ideologies, the local ways of knowing, through which languages are viewed” (Pennycook, 2007: 128). He stresses that locality is thus far more than context, and language as a local practice is very different from language use in context, which rests on the questionable assumption that languages are akin to tools employed in predefined spaces. Looking at language is part of social and local activity that both locality and language emerge from the activities engaged in. Pennycook (2007) notes that once we accept that language is a social practice it becomes clear that it is not language form that governs the speakers of the language but rather the speakers that negotiate what possible language forms they want to use for what purposes.

According to Pennycook (2007) the notion of discrete, bounded languages becomes very dubious, since languages are always mixed, hybrid and drawing on multiple resources, thus languages, like subjects are always a work in progress and we cannot understand language without taking particular language practices in particular locations into account. Further, languages are defined by their coherence as a system rather than by locality or by their speakers (Pennycook, 2007). Pennycook (2007: 131) says that “global Englishes are not what they are because English has spread and been adapted but because they share different histories”. Therefore, English according to Pennycook (2007) has always been local which

implies a shift from looking at languages and texts as bounded entities and focusing instead on language as a hybrid local practice.

2.8 Hybrid Language Practices

Gutiérrez, Baquendano-Lopez, Alvarez and Chiu (1999) state that language and literacy as mediating tools are inseparable parts of the sociocultural context of development, thus literacy development should not only be a learning goal, but it should also be a central means of sharing and appropriate knowledge. Hybridity in learning contexts is ubiquitous, for Gutiérrez *et al* (1999:6) “hybrid literacy practices are not simply code-switching as the alternation between two language codes”. They are more a systematic, strategic, affiliative, and sense-making process among those who share the code, as they strive to achieve mutual understanding. Bakhtin (1981) sees hybridity as the increase of the possibility of dialogue and thus the possibility of collaborating and learning, however, Gutiérrez *et al* (1999) referred to these productive spaces for learning as the third space. This relates to the SMS/Mxit data as within this setting biliteracy is promoted in this setting and this requires not only shared linguistic knowledge but also sociocultural knowledge (Gutiérrez *et al*, 1999). Further, Gutiérrez *et al* (1999) acknowledges that by examining hybridity in practice, one is able to see hybridity as a resource for literacy learning where alternative, competing and even shared discourses and positioning or roles mediate literacy for experts and novices. Therefore, they reinforce that diversity can serve as a resource for learning.

For Bayer (1998), hybridity may not only be a surface phenomenon, but that certain forms of it may well be a phenomenon of the base of a given language. In contrast Blackburn and Seligman (1995) note that hybrid languages are more tolerant, and indeed, it is their sortal tolerance that gives hybrid languages much of their technical and philosophical interest. According to Tan and Rubdy (2008) languages are being evaluated as commodities that command an exchange value. Linguistically, language also appears to be moving into the postmodern age when multilingualism is the norm as opposed to the modernist norm of a single language identified with the nation state. These earlier established notions and ideologies surrounding language such as national identity through language give way to complex identities through the notion of globalization because never before have there been more options in linguistic choices (Tan and Rubdy, 2008). This means that the monolingual model, where a single language is deemed as sufficient for all functions, is

giving way to a multilinguistic model, where speakers need to be able to switch languages (Tan and Rubdy, 2008).

Tan and Rubdy (2008: 3) explain that “there is a need to balance the positions of various languages in multilingual contexts and to decide whether to encourage, ignore or attempt to limit the encroachment of a language into the traditional sphere of another language”. As a consequence treating languages as commodities comes to a head in the context of linguistic rights and language in education debates. Colonial languages, in particular English, have continued to be emphasized as a key element of modernity and have retained high exchange value (Tan and Rubdy, 2008). Thus, the value profiles of languages and language varieties often reflect how they are positioned in global as well as local markets. Further, English is seen as an instrument of modernization, economic progress and social, educational and occupational success, the local indigenous languages, as a repository of cultural identity and social solidarity (Tan and Rubdy, 2008).

Tan and Rubdy (2008) write that the spread of English and its increasing socioeconomic importance in the world have made it a precious commodity hugely in demand globally. The high status accorded to English, especially Standard English, has been reinforced by the significance it has assumed in the global cultural economy. According to Tan and Rubdy (2008) English now represents the preferred language medium in which most transactions take place within transnational business organization. One view is that while English undoubtedly is in the ascendance as a pre-eminent ‘world’ language, it does not mean the situation necessarily will remain static and that its hegemony will not be contested in the future by other international languages, particularly across geopolitical regions (Tan and Rubdy, 2008). “In conjunction to this, local languages are more likely to appear in less formal contexts such as chat rooms and in contexts where everyone shares a first language and presents a challenge to globalization and to the supremacy of English and raises the question of whether power is inherently located in languages or in the people who use them” (Tan and Rubdy, 2008: 8). They also say that as English becomes more widely used as a global language, it will become expected that people will signal their nationality and other aspects of their identity.

Blommaert (2007) adds to this stating that sociolinguistics have demonstrated that language is a repertoire: a culturally sensitive ordered complex of genres, styles, registers, with lots of

hybrid forms, and occurring in a wide variety of ways. For Blommaert (2007: 115) “they function as powerful sources of indexical meanings that connect discourses in context and include categories, similarities and differences within frames, and thus suggest identities, tones, styles and genres that appear to belong or to deviate from expected types”. According to Blommaert (2007) indexicality connects language to cultural patterns, and considerations of multilingualism thus also become considerations of multiculturalism. The only exception is when varieties become overtly visible or audible and are recognisable as essential in structuring the text. In his paper, Blommaert (2007: 116) argues that whenever we say ‘this text is in English’, we should address that text through the sociolinguistic spectre of variation: what do we mean ‘in by French’? For Blommaert (2007), we should all strive towards a better discourse analysis, one that keeps abreast of developments in related branches of language studies.

Indexicality though largely operating at the implicit level of linguistic structuring is not unstructured but ordered. The fact that indexical meanings occur in patterns offering perceptions of similarity and stability that can be perceived as types of semiotic practice with predictable directions (Blommaert, 2007). Register focuses on clustered and patterned language forms that index specific social personae and roles, and can be invoked to organise interactional practices. Thus, indexical order is the metapragmatic organising principle behind what is widely understood as the pragmatics of language (Blommaert, 2007). Blommaert (2007: 118) proposes that “the concept invites different sociolinguistic questions on indexicality and should open empirical analyses of indexicality to higher-level considerations about relations within sociolinguistic repertoires, the exchangeability of linguistic or semiotic resources across places, situations and groups”.

One speaks differently about different things in one instance and such patterns are called patterns shifts in footing, where delicate changes in speaker position that were accompanied by shifts in linguistic and semiotic mode and redefined the participant roles in interaction (Blommaert, 2007). According to Blommaert (2007: 120) “polycentricity is a key feature of interactional regimes in human environments, even though many interaction events look stable, there are always a rule multiple-though never unlimited-batteries of norms to which one can orient and according which to behave”. Both concepts, orders of indexicality and polycentricity, thus suggest a less innocent world of linguistic, social and cultural variation and diversity, one in which difference is quickly turned into inequality, and in which complex

patterns of potential-versus-actual behaviour occur (Blommaert, 2007). This according to Blommaert (2007) enables us to move beyond the usual sociolinguistic units of homogeneous speech communities and consider situations in which various big sociolinguistic systems enter the picture, as when people migrate in the context of globalization, or when in the same context messages start moving across large spaces. Thus, people do not just move across space, they move across different orders of indexicality and sociolinguistics in the age of globalization needs to look beyond the speech community, to sociolinguistics systems and how they connect and relate to one another (Blommaert, 2007).

2.9 Lingua Franca English (LFE)

A literature review on mobile messaging, particularly in the context of South Africa, would be incomplete without a discussion on Lingua Franca English (LFE), which many theorists are using to replace what they regard as the more negative and limiting concept of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). An earlier prediction by Graddol (1997: 57) prophesied that “in the future English will be a language used mainly in multilingual contexts as a second language and for communication between non-native speakers”. Canagarajah (2007) suggests that this prediction is arguably already a reality as English is used most often as a contact language by speakers of other languages in the new contexts of transnational communication. Canagarajah (2007) expresses that the competence of LFE speakers is of course distinct, and this competence for cross- language contact and hybrid codes derives from their multilingual life.

According to Canagarajah (2007) matters are complicated even further because lingua franca English’s form is hybrid in nature so as a result the language features words, grammatical patterns, and discourse conventions from diverse languages and English varieties that speakers bring to the interaction. In addition the rules, schema and conventions developed by LFE users come loaded with significant social information thus the variable and hybrid grammar of LFE cannot be acquired outside the contexts and social milieu that help select them and give meaning. For this reason Canagarajah (2007: 928) argues that “in the case of LFE, there is no meaning for form, grammar, or language ability outside the realm of practice, therefore, LFE is not a product located in the mind of the speaker as it is a form social action”.

Linguistic diversity is at the heart of multilingual communities. There is constant interaction between language groups, and they overlap interpenetrate and mesh in fascinating ways (Canagarajah, 2007). He explains that language identity is relative to the communities and languages one considers salient in different contexts, in this sense meaning is socially constructed, not pre-existing and meaning does not reside in the language it is produced in practice. Multilingual communication works because competence does not constitute a form of knowledge, but rather, encompasses interaction strategies. If grammar or rules for this mode of communication is needed, it will be a grammar of multimodality-that is, it will contain rules that account for how language meshes with diverse symbol systems, modalities of communication, and ecological resources to create meaning (Canagarajah, 2007). Participants have to adopt communicative strategies relevant to each situation and one cannot predict the mix of languages and participants in each context of language use and practice, therefore Canagarajah (2007: 933) suggests that “we have to think of competence as finding equilibrium between different modalities, hierarchies, and dimensions of communication”. Diversity, hybridity and fluidity are at the heart of language and identity and subsequently language acquisition is based on performance strategies, purposive uses of the language, and interpersonal negotiation in fluid communicative contexts (Canagarajah, 2007).

A study by House (2003) questions the widespread assumption that English in its role as a lingua franca is a serious threat to multilingualism and developed an argument against it. The meaning of the word lingua franca has been extended to describe a language of commerce, a rather stable variety with little room for individual variation. This meaning, according to House (2003) is clearly not applicable to today’s global English, whose major characteristics are its functional flexibility and its spread across many different domains. These two features have led to another new, remarkable feature: that the number of non-native speakers is substantially larger than its native speakers (House, 2003). House (2003: 557) states that “English is no longer owned by its native speakers, and there is a strong tendency towards more rapid de-owning, not least because of the increasing frequency with which non-native speakers’ use”. House (2003) declares EFL is neither a language for specific purposes nor a pidgin, because it is not a restricted code, but a language showing full linguistic and functional range and serving as a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a national culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication.

This means that multilingual speakers possess what Cook (1993) called multicompetence as the focus here is on the possession of more than one set of linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge in one and the same individual. House (2003: 558) says that ‘lingua franca talk turns out to be in fact basically meaningful and ordinary’. In sum then, EFL appears to be neither a restricted language for special purposes, nor a pidgin, nor an interlanguage, but one of a repertoire of different communicative instruments an individual has at his/her disposal, a useful and versatile tool, and a language for communication. House (2003) explains that EFL can be regarded as a language for communication, which is a useful instrument for making oneself understood in international encounters. It is instrumental in enabling communication with others who do not speak one’s own first language. Linguistically determined identity need not be unitary and fixed, but can be multi-faceted, non-unitary and contradictory, when an individual speaks more than one language (House, 2003).

House (2003) brings the argument down to the to the fact that EFL is not a national language, but a mere tool bereft of collective cultural capital, it is a language usable neither for identity marking nor for a positive disposition toward a second language group. English performs a useful function in this multilingual society, and it is no longer perceived as an imperial language to be learnt at all costs (House, 2003). House (2003: 562) argues “that EFL need not be a threat; it can be seen as strengthening the complementary need for native local languages that are rooted in their speakers’ shared history, cultural tradition, practices, conventions, and values as identificatory potential”. EFL should be seen as an additional language or a co-language functioning not against, but in conjunction with local languages, thus accepting hybridity and using English creatively for one’s own communicative purposes seems to be a third way of communicating (House, 2003). Therefore, hybridity should be taken as a linguistic-cultural norm as it would seem that English as a lingua franca is not for the present time a threat to multilingualism.

Androutsopoulos (2007: 221) writes that English is the single most favoured language selected for global mixing in advertising and what sets apart English is the range of values it can be associated with, and the range of commodities it promotes. It has been attributed symbolic value such as novelty, modernity, internationalism, technological excellence, hedonisms and fun as opposed to stereotype restrictions (Androutsopoulos, 2007). Androutsopoulos (2007: 222) explains that Englishization is the infiltration of host societies and cultures by Anglophone-in particular American technology and lifestyle. Yet current uses

of English in national language mass media also include one word code switching (nonce-borrowing), chunks, formulae, phrases or utterances, as well as English headlines and subtitles. In the same breath Androutsopoulos (2007) also notes that less attention has been paid to the relationship of Englishization and globalization, the process by which globally circulating cultural resources are recontextualized in local settings. However, spaces of transnational communication are emerging on the internet, in which the choice of linguistic resources is evaluated against the norms and practices of the virtual community. Many linguistic encounters in the public sphere are clearly framed by a dominant language, restricting other languages to spectacular fragments that are intricately interwoven with other expressive modalities (Androutsopoulos 2007: 226). Thus, the idea of language being used in conjunction with other expressive means gives rise to the thought of SMS speak being multimodal.

This notion of language being used in conjunction with other expressive means leads us to consider ‘SMS-speak’/mobile messaging as being multimodal in nature and this is the final concept to be considered in this chapter.

2.10 Multimodality

New literacies do not only make it possible to communicate meanings in new ways, they also make it possible to make new kinds of meanings (Unsworth, 2008). Electronic media are not simply changing the way we tell stories; they are changing the very nature of story, of what we understand to be narratives. In addition there needs to be an acknowledgement that textual practices surrounding literacy texts are being affected by information communication technologies (ICT) and that ICT based technologies of production are impacting on the character of literacy texts themselves (Unsworth, 2008). Unsworth (2008: 3) stipulates that “there seems to be broad agreement that literacy can no longer be thought of as involving language alone and that images, in paper media texts, and also sound movement and gesture in digital multimedia texts, need to be considered along with language as fundamental meaning-making resources in constructing texts”. It is now a very routine matter for personal users to be able to integrate with language in the digital texts they compose and then share via electronic or paper media.

Additionally, the role of images relative to print in the communication of meanings in paper media is assuming greater prominence in texts of popular culture and professional, civic and

social life and in school curriculum and educational materials more generally (Unsworth 2008). Kress (2003) has also argued that the contemporary integrative use of the visual and the verbal has produced a new code of writing and image, in which information is carried differentially by the two modes. Therefore, although the fundamental principles of reading and writing have not changed, the process has shifted from the serial cognitive processing of linear print text to parallel processing of multimodal text-image information (Unsworth, 2008). Lemke (2006: 11) has emphasized “the importance of understanding the meaning-making practices people employ in complex virtual environments including how linguistic and visual graphic meaning-making are integrated”.

Unsworth (2008:11) states that “this kind of metalanguage gives participants a means of comparing texts, of determining what semiotic choices were made in constructing particular meanings, what alternatives might have been chosen, and the effects therefore, of particular choices rather than others”. This then provides students with options for meaning making in language, image, sound and movement which gives them access to multimodal text analysis as a tool for critical multimedia literacy (Unsworth, 2008). Comprehending multimodal texts is different from comprehending texts consisting of language only because meanings expressed through more than one mode can become multiplicative with word and image meanings modifying each other, making a whole far greater than the simple sum of its parts (Unsworth, 2008).

Following Halliday (1978: 123) “semiotic resources are systems of meanings that constitute the reality of the culture. The medium is the means through which the multimodal phenomenon materialises”. O’Halloran (2011) adds that there are several reasons for the paradigmatic shift away from the study of language alone to the study of the integration of language with other resources. O’Halloran (2011) explains that images differ in that parts are perceived as organised patterns in relation to the whole. Language is a symbolic sign system which has no relation to what is being represented, while images are iconic because they represent something through similarity (O’Halloran, 2011).

O’Halloran (2011) lists three fundamental principles to the social semiotic approach which grounds social practices:

- The first being tri-stratal conceptualisation of meaning which relates low level features in the text such as sound and images to higher-order semantics through sets

of inter-related lexicogrammatical systems, and ultimately to social contexts of situation and culture;

- The metafunctional theory which models the meaning potential of semiotic resource can be divided into three distinct metafunctions. The first being ideational meaning which involves experiential meaning and represents experiences in the world and logical meaning which involves construction of logical relations in the world (O' Halloran, 2011). O' Halloran (2011:5) asserts that "interpersonal meaning involves the enactment of social relations and textual meaning involves the organization of the meaning as coherent texts and units".
- Instantiation models of actual choices in text to the systemic potential, with intermediate subpotentials-registers-appearing as patterns of choice in text-types.

Thus, O' Halloran (2011) argues that there was an explicit acknowledgement that communication is inherently multimodal and that literacy is not confined to language.

2.11 Conclusion

The literature dealt with in this chapter included concepts such as SMS/Mxit messages, globalization, transidiomatic practices, polylingual languaging, code-switching and code-mixing, stylization, language as a local practice, hybrid language practices, lingua franca English and multimodality. These concepts were the focal point of the literature review and showcased different authors' views and opinions. It simultaneously highlighted some of the latest research works in the field of mobile communication. The literature displayed focused not only on SMS/Mxit messages but also took into consideration the types of language practices that arise from mobile communication and aimed to emphasise how languages such as English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa are being transformed by this medium of communication. This literature review allowed for a new means in which to view SMS/Mxit messages and SMS speak as it was foregrounded in multilingual literacies. The chapter that will follow focuses on the theoretical analytical framework.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the theoretical analytical framework that is used in the analysis of the data. Firstly, the study is informed by components of SFL such as the functional-semantic approach to language as cited by Eggins (2004) and Halliday (1989), which for the purpose of this analysis focuses on two metafunctions in the form of interpersonal and textual meaning. It also uses the concept of tenor to assess the relationship status between participants. Furthermore, the theory of cohesion and coherence is discussed with the aim of understanding the structure SMS speak. Finally, the chapter looks at the different theories of identity, with a particular focus on the post-structuralist, performative view of identity as held by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004).

3.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL elements)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a useful descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic, meaning-making resource. For Halliday (1994), the aim was to construct a grammar for purposes of text analysis that would make it possible to say sensible and useful things about any text, spoken or written, in modern English. Therefore, the systemic approach to language is functional in two main respects; firstly because it asks functional questions about language, e.g. systemicists ask “How do people use language?” Secondly, because SFL interprets the linguistic system functionally, systemicists ask “How language is structured for use?” (Eggins, 2004). According to Eggins (2004) our ability to deduce context from text is one way in which language and context are interrelated. Thus, the overall purpose of language is described as a semantic one and each text we participate in is in a record of meanings that have been made in a particular context. For Eggins (2004), common to all systemic linguistics is an interest in language and social semiotics, that is, how people use language with each other in everyday social life.

The four main theoretical claims about language as cited by Eggins (2004) are:

- 1) That language is functional;
- 2) That its function is to make meaning;
- 3) That these meanings are influenced by the social and cultural context in which they are exchanged;

- 4) That the process of using language is a semiotic process, a process of making meaning by choosing.

A text can express more than one meaning at a time. A common concept in SFL is exploring the types of meaning within grammatical structures such as experiential meaning, interpersonal meaning and textual meaning. Halliday (1989) claims that a text can make these different meanings because units of language such as texts, sentences and clauses can simultaneously produce three kinds of meaning. Lock (1996: 9) explains that “experiential meaning has to do with the ways language represents our experience of the world as well as the inner world of our thoughts and feelings”. Thus, it is concerned with how we talk about actions, happenings, feelings, beliefs, situations, states, the people and things involved in them and the relevant circumstances of time, place and manner (Lock, 1996). Interpersonal meaning (tenor) runs throughout the text which expresses the writer’s role relationship with the reader, and the writer’s attitude toward the reader. As a result, “we use interpersonal meaning to make meanings about our role relationships with other people and our attitudes towards each other” (Egins, 2004:12). Furthermore, interpersonal meaning can also be used to tell whether something is a declarative (statement), interrogative (question) or an imperative (demand). Textual meaning has to do with the ways in which a stretch of language is organized in relation to its context. Textual meaning is important in the “creation of coherence in spoken and written text” (Halliday, 1989: 6).

Egins (2004) explains that systems of lexical choice are not the only kind of systems we find in language as systems of grammatical choice can also be found. Therefore, SFL has been described as a functional-semantic approach to language which explores both how people use different language in different context, and how language is structured for use as a semantic system. Egins (2004) asserts that in a functional-semantic approach two dimensions of language use can be described. Firstly, what are the possible choices people make? In doing this we describe the linguistic system. Secondly, what is the function of the choice they made? In doing this we describe how language is used in different social contexts, to achieve various cultural goals.

Jacobs (1985: 314) notes that “language is systematically organized in a variety of ways beyond the units of the word and sentence, all of which contribute to the information

conveyed in a message”. Jacobs (1985) writes that with regard to meaning making in messages somehow people are able to refer to events and to describe states of affairs and they can convey their attitudes, beliefs and desires. Thus, they are able to communicate information about their relation to the addressee and to the social setting. According to Jacobs (1985) all natural language users show great facility in finding the ways in which the elements of language “hang together” and in seeing to it that their own contributions do so, such impressions of the sense of orderliness, meaningfulness, and appropriateness are found in language structure and use. Natural language users according to Jacobs (1985) know how to encode and decode topically coherent prose as they know how to make and hear topically relevant contributions to conversations, they know how to reply to questions and offers and they know how to build stories (Jacobs, 1985).

Adding to this Chomsky (1959: 11) noted that “any natural language user is able to spontaneously and effortlessly produce and understand a potentially infinite number of sentences that are completely novel”. The goal of linguistic analysis is to specify those rules that comprise the grammar of language; therefore put simply a grammar describes the logical structure of relations between meanings and signals that are created by a code (Jacobs, 1985). The rules of grammar are computational procedures that combine the elements of a language so as to specify the forms in which a message may acceptably appear. Chomsky (1965) argued that a theory of grammar should be taken as describing the linguistic competence of an idealized speaker-hearer of the language, that is, a grammar describes an isolatable system of knowledge restricted to the grammatical properties of sentences (Jacobs, 1985). Furthermore, Jacobs (1985: 324) states that “the focus on linguistic competence-knowledge required to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable sentences has shaped the course of discourse studies in subtle ways”. Consequently, communication breakdowns will occur to the degree that sender and receiver fail to share the same code rules. The kind of linguistic knowledge discussed here brings our attention to understanding how cohesion and coherence is maintained when engaging in SMS speak.

3.2 Coherence and Cohesion as a form of SFL

Egins (2004) explains cohesion as the glue that sticks the elements and therefore meanings together in a text. What cohesion really does is that once the choice of one lexical item has been made, it creates a context within which certain other words become more likely to occur than others. “This probability of co-occurrence is experienced by readers as expectancy” and

in this way the text can move forward, gradually expanding and shifting its meanings, without ‘losing us’ along the way (Eggs, 2004: 52). For Halliday and Hasan (1976) cohesion expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another. As links are created through the use of cohesive resources the texts ongoingly recalibrates its context, making both continuity and change the defining characteristics of text. Therefore, cohesion is not an optional add on to the process of creating texts but an essential element in the process of meaningful communication. For Eggs (2004) not only must a text create its own cohesion but also a text must relate in relatively stable coherent ways to the context in which it is functioning to mean.

Gernsbacher and Givón (1995) define coherence as a mental phenomenon. Coherence is not an inherent property of a written or spoken text. Readers or listeners can indeed judge with high agreement that one text is more coherent than another, but neither the words on the page nor the words in the speech stream of themselves confer coherence, although a less coherent text impedes comprehension, neither the printed sentences nor the spoken utterances cause those impediments (Gernsbacher and Givón, 1995). Gernsbacher and Givón (1995) explain that coherence is a property of what emerges during speech production and comprehension—the mental represented text, and in particular the mental process that partakes in constructing that mental representation. A coherently produced text, spoken or written, allows the receiver to form roughly the same text representation as the sender had in mind (Gernsbacher and Givón, 1995). During writing, revision and editing, the negotiation occurs cognitively between the writer’s own mental representation and his mental representation of what he/she assumes the reader knows (Gernsbacher and Givón, 1995).

Sanford and Moxey (1995: 162) contend that “coherence has been used in relation to texts and in relation to mental representation of a text”. There is a tradition in text linguistics that claims that coherence is a property of an ideal text: pieces of writing that do not conform to the ideals of coherence are supposed to be either suboptimal texts or not texts at all and thus without the notion of structure there would be nothing to distinguish a text from a non-text.

Within this tradition Reinhart (1980) specifies a coherent or ideal text as having three properties:

- 1) Connectedness: meaning the clauses of a text should be formally connected, in that each adjacent part is either referentially linked, or linked by a semantic connector.
- 2) Consistency: each sentence has to be logically consistent with the previous sentence, and
- 3) Relevance: each sentence of the discourse must be relevant to an underlying discourse topic and to the context of utterance (Reinhart, 1980).

Traxler and Gernsbacher (1995: 219) write “that speakers or senders in this case do not always accurately envision how listeners interpret their utterances or messages and receiving feedback from listeners causes speakers to understand better how listeners interpret their utterances”. Further, Traxler and Gernsbacher (1995) state that readers or receivers in this case are typically absent when writers or senders encode their messages and senders are absent when receivers decode those messages, yet coherence is still obtained.

For Witte and Faigley (1981) a text is a semantic unit, the patterns of which are linked together by explicit cohesive ties. Thus, cohesion defines a text as text and a cohesive tie is a semantic relation between an element in a text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it. In contrast, for Halliday and Hassan (1976), cohesion depends upon lexical and grammatical relationships that allow sentence sequences to be understood as connected discourse rather than as autonomous sentences. Even though within sentence cohesive ties do occur, the cohesive ties across sentence boundaries are those which allow sequences of sentences to be understood as a text (Halliday and Hassan, 1976). Halliday and Hassan’s (1976) concept of textuality, defined with reference to relationships that obtain across sentence boundaries, suggests a number of possibilities for extending composition research beyond its frequent moorings in sentence level operations and features. Witte and Faigley’s (1981) analysis of cohesion suggests that cohesion is an important property of writing quality. Therefore, “all discourse is context bound-to the demands of the subject matter, occasion, medium, and audience of the text as cohesion defines those mechanisms that hold a text together, while coherence defines those underlying semantic relations that allow a text to be understood and used” (Witte and Faigley, 1981: 202).

Graesser, Mcnamara, Louwse and Cai (2004) confer that cohesion is a characteristic of the text, whereas coherence is a characteristic of the reader's mental representation of the text content, thus, cohesion is an objective property of the explicit language and text. "Cohesive devices such as words, phrases or sentences cue the reader on how to form a coherent representation" (Graesser *et al*, 2004: 193). The coherence relations on the other hand are constructed in the mind of the reader and depend on the skills and knowledge that the reader brings to the situation. Therefore, if the reader has adequate knowledge about the subject matter and if there are adequate discourse cues, then the readers are likely to form a coherent mental representation of the text (Graesser *et al*, 2004). According to Graesser *et al* (2004) coherence is a psychological construct, whereas cohesion is a textual construct. Graesser *et al* (2004: 194) explicate that "readers with less prior knowledge about the subject domain are helped by texts with better cohesion, whereas readers with greater subject domain knowledge can benefit from cohesion gaps because cohesion gaps require the reader to make inferences using their world knowledge or previous textual information". When inferences are generated, the reader makes more connections between ideas in the text and knowledge and this process results in a more coherent mental representation (Graesser *et al*, 2004).

Graesser *et al* (2004: 194) argues that texts are more difficult to read when they contain longer words and lengthier sentences as longer words tend to be less frequent in the language, and infrequent words take more time to access and interpret during reading. Longer sentences also tend to place more demands on working memory and are therefore more difficult. Graesser *et al* (2004) also make mention that textbook writers are known to shorten sentences in basal readers for the purpose of downsizing grade levels of their texts. However, the unfortunate liability of shortening sentences is that the texts end up having lower cohesion and coherence (Graesser *et al*, 2004).

3.3 The Post-structuralist theory of identity

The poststructuralist framework on identity as propounded by Pavlenko & Blackledge (2004: 3) allows for the negotiation of identities to be examined and explained as situated within the larger 'sociohistorical, sociopolitical and socioeconomical processes' and acknowledges the hybridity and multiplicity of identities. Heller (1992) laid the foundation of the poststructuralist study of negotiation of identities, showing that languages can no longer be seen solely as unproblematic markers of particular ethnic identities. Recent poststructuralist thought points to split and fissures in categories previously seen as bounded or dichotomous

and brings into focus hybrid, transgendered, and multiracial identities that have previously been ignored.

This study takes a performative stance on identity. As language or rather communication is viewed as an activity, identity should also be viewed in this active sense. Identities are viewed as performed for language is not only viewed as a “marker of identity” but an active performer of identity. Identity is thus analysed from the perspective that identities are “created and designated during interaction and used as a resource’ as is noted by Banda (2005: 218).

A theoretical framework was developed by Heller (1992, 1995a, b) for exploring ways in which language practices and negotiation of identities are bound in power relations. This framework links language and power in two important ways. On the one hand, language is seen as part of processes of social action and interaction and in particular as a way in which people influence others. On the other hand, it is a symbolic resource which may be tied to the ability to gain access to, and exercise, power (Heller, 1992). Pavlenko and Blackledge’s (2004) framework combines aspects of both approaches, appealing to the social constructionist focus in discursive construction of identities and to the poststructuralist emphasis on the role of power relations. For Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) identity options are constructed, validated, and offered through discourses available to individuals at a particular point in time and place. The discursive approach views the relationship between language and identity as mutually constitutive in two ways. The first being that languages, or rather particular discourses within them, supply the terms and other linguistic means with which identities are constructed and negotiated and secondly, that ideologies of language and identity guide ways in which individuals use linguistic resources to index their identities and to evaluate the use of linguistic resources by others (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004).

Another important aspect of identities in the present framework is their multiplicity. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 16) believe that “poststructuralist inquiry highlights the fact that identities are constructed at the interstices of multiple axes such as age, race, class, ethnicity, gender, generation, sexual orientation, geopolitical locale, institutional affiliation, and social status, whereby each aspect of identity redefines and modifies all others”. Since individuals often shift and adjust ways in which they identify and position themselves in distinct contexts, identities are best understood when approached in their entirety, rather than through

consideration of a single aspect or subject position. According to Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) identities are susceptible to fashion and individuals and institutions reform themselves according to identity options that dominate at certain times and places. The recognition of the emerging nature of identity, and of identity fragmentation, de-centering, multiplicity, and shifts often times exacerbated by transnational migration, led poststructuralist philosophers to posit the notion of hybridity as the 'third space' that enables the appearances of new and alternative identity options (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 17).

The process of imaginative production of identity is often aided by new linguistic terms, by visual art, and by literary narratives, in which together create new practices of self-representation and thus new imagined communities (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). Consequently, for Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) identities are no longer just discursive options – they are also the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past, as well as the narratives of the present and future. “This perspective privileges a dynamic view of identities, with individuals continuously involved in production of selves, positioning of others, revision of identity narratives, and creation of new ones which valorise new modes of being and belonging” (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 19). With this in mind, identity is viewed as a social, discursive, and narrative option offered by a particular society in a specific time and place to which individuals and groups of individuals appeal in an attempt to self-name, to self-characterise, and to claim social spaces and social prerogatives (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). For Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) identity becomes interesting, relevant, and visible when it is contested or in crisis as they see identity as particularly salient in contexts where multiple interpretations or meanings collide, resulting in a power struggle as to whose interpretation prevails.

Therefore, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) suggest that to analyze how identities are shaped, produced and negotiated, a positioning theory should be adopted which allows to bring together the views of identities as located in discourses and as situated in narratives. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 20) explain that “positioning is the process by which selves are located in conversation as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines, informed by particular discourses”. Thus, interactive positioning assumes one individual positioning while reflective positioning is the process of positioning oneself (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). Therefore the negotiation of identities is

understood as interplay between reflective positioning such as self-representation and interactive positioning, whereby others attempt to position or reposition individuals or groups (Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2004).

A framework of three types of identity has been proposed:

- 1) Imposed identities (which are not negotiated in a particular time and place),
- 2) Assumed identities (which are accepted and not negotiated), and
- 3) Negotiable identities (which are contested by groups and individuals).

This thesis will draw on notions of interactive and reflective positioning (Davies and Harre', 1990) in establishing how identities are positioned and negotiated through SMS/Mxit messages.

Cameron (2001: 170) writes that using language is an act of identity thus, traditionally what that axiom was most often taken to mean was that language-users' ways of speaking 'reflected' or 'marked' the identities they already had. According to Cameron (2001) these theories suggest that a person's identity is not something fixed, stable and unitary that they acquire early in life and possess forever afterwards. Rather, identity is shifting and multiple, something people are continually constructing and reconstructing in their encounters with each other and the world. She goes on to say that "if identity is something you do rather than something you are, then there is nothing to stop people appropriating ways of behaving and speaking from a variety of different sources including social groups to which they do not belong" (Cameron 2001: 174). Blommaert (2005) acknowledges what Cameron (2001) says by arguing that people do not have an identity but that identities are constructed in practices that produce, enact, or perform identity. Further, identity categories have to be enacted and performed in order to be socially salient. People construct identities out of specific configurations of semiotic resources, and, consequently, just as linguistic and semiotic repertoires are conditioned by dynamics of access, identity repertoires will likewise be conditioned by unequal forms of access to particular identity building resources (Blommaert, 2005).

Hall (2003) suggests that identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. He says that instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead of identity as a 'production', which is never

complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation (Hall, 2003: 222). Language is therefore central to the production of identity (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004). Bucholtz and Hall (2004: 370) state that “the term identity refers to sameness therefore one might expect that identity would be most salient when people are most similar”. Social grouping is a process not merely of discovering or acknowledging a similarity that precedes and establishes identity but, more fundamentally, of inventing similarity by downplaying difference (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004). Bucholtz and Hall (2004) assert that one of the greatest weaknesses of previous research on identity, in fact, is the assumption that identities are attributes of individuals or groups rather than of situations, and the semiotics of language concerns not identity as a set of fixed categories but identification as an ongoing social and political process.

Bucholtz and Hall (2004) state that there are four interrelated and overlapping processes that contribute to the study of language and identity and these are: practice, indexicality, ideology and performance. However, as has already been noted that the focus of this research is on identity as a performance. Bucholtz and Hall (2004) proclaim that for linguistic anthropologists, one of the most important practice theorists is Bourdieu, not only because he considers language a practice rather than merely an abstract system of rules, as many theoretical linguists maintain, but also he recognises that linguistic practices is not distinct from other forms of everyday social activity. Thus, through sheer repetition language, along with other social practices, shape the social actor’s way of being in the world (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004). Furthermore, linguistic structures become associated with social categories not directly but indirectly through a chain of semiotic associations. This issue is also closely tied to identity for beliefs about language are also often beliefs about speakers (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004).

Bucholtz and Hall (2004: 380) claim that “whereas practice is habitual and often less than fully intentional, performance is highly deliberate and self-aware social display”. In this sense performances are marked speech events that are more or less sharply differentiated from more mundane interaction. Performance is therefore a way of bringing identities to the fore, often in subversive or resistant ways (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004). Bucholtz and Hall (2004: 382) stress that “just as important as understanding how identities are formed is understanding why they are formed, the purposes for which particular semiotic processes are put to use”. With this view in mind, identity can also be linked to role structure.

3.4 Identity and role structure

Banda (2005:217) asserts that “role structure is an active ingredient in conversation and is strategically used to construct different identities of self or other”. Banda (2005) expands on this by saying that in a conversation in which more than one language is in use, strategic code-switching provides interactants with an additional avenue, unavailable to monolingual speakers, in which to subtly construct and encode role structure. In addition, Banda (2005) adds that casual conversationalists in a multilingual context have at their disposal register and genre in more than one code, thus giving them a wide scope in which to construct different roles and identities.

Banda’s (2005) study demonstrates how multilingual conversationalists utilise the grammatical resources of the different languages at their disposal to make interpersonal meaning in casual talk. Social discourses rarely consist of just single clauses, rather social contexts develop as sequences of meanings comprising texts since each text is produced interactively between speakers, and between writers and readers, we can use it to interpret aspects of the culture it manifests (Banda, 2005). Identity is not a predictable social category assigned a ‘priori’, it is created and designated during interaction and used as a resource (Banda, 2005: 217). Banda (2005) relates that a speaker may choose to signal or not signal particular identities, depending on the dynamics of a particular conversation. Hence, “identities are locally occasioned, interactively constructed and are resources used in talk” (Wodak, 2002: 3).

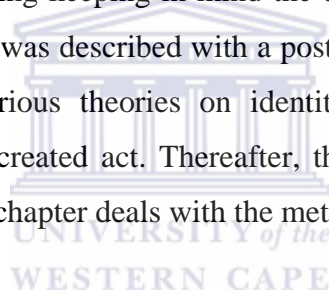
Using a systemic functional linguistic framework based on language as social semiotics Eggins and Slade (1997: 47) point out two benefits for conversational analysis, “firstly, it offers an integrated, comprehensive and systematic model of language, which enables conversation patterns to be described and quantified at different degrees of detail, and secondly, it theorises the link between language and social life so that conversation can be approached as a way of doing social life”. More specifically, casual conversation can be analysed as involving different linguistic patterns, which both enact and construct dimensions of social identity and interpersonal relationships (Eggins and Slade, 1997).

Banda (2005: 219) describes the term ‘casual’ in his paper as “the variety that is the least self-conscious and the least monitored by speakers and which is used in the most informal situations”. Eggins and Slade (1997) state that different social roles can be found in the

linguistic choices interactants make. According to Eggins and Slade (1997) when speakers produce more declaratives in their conversation this suggest that they get to initiate exchanges by giving information more often than the other interactants. Furthermore, interrogatives which are also known as yes/no questions are typically fashioned to request information from other speakers in a conversation (Eggins and Slade, 1997). Eggins and Slade (1997) explain that wh-interrogatives which comprise of a wh-question word such as who, when; how and which is typically meant to elicit circumstantial information. Lakoff (1975) claims that when women use tag questions to avoid asserting their opinions it invites someone else to offer confirmation. Thus, by studying the grammatical patterns of interactants, it is possible to construct their identities and social roles (Banda, 2005).

3.5 Conclusion

This first half of this chapter looked at SFL elements in the form of the interpersonal meaning, tenor and textual meaning keeping in mind the theory of cohesion and coherence. Thereafter, the theory of identity was described with a poststructuralist view as the basis of a performative identity. Thus, various theories on identity were emphasised by multiple theorists who saw identity as a created act. Thereafter, the importance of role structure in identity was explained. The next chapter deals with the methodology of the research study.



Chapter 4

Research Design and Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses and explains the research design and methodology in relation to the research at hand. The research design is presented first in terms of its qualitative and quantitative nature. Thereafter, an elaboration of the research subjects is provided, followed by the sampling procedure and methods of data collection. The data analysis is then discussed, followed by a description of the data. Thereafter, ethical considerations involving the research are examined.

4.1 Thematic Analysis

Pavlenko (2007:166) states that “the main analytical step in a thematic analysis is the coding of narratives according to emerging themes, trends, patterns, or conceptual categories”. Pavlenko (2007) argues that content analysis cannot be analysed in separation from context and form, and that thematization is a preliminary analytical step and cannot be confused with analysis. Therefore, Pavlenko (2007) suggests that to provide analysis that goes beyond a list-making activity researchers need to adopt a specific theoretical framework that would allow them to clarify the nature of their conceptual categories and to pinpoint the links between the recurrent themes and conceptual constructs.

Stemler (2001) elaborates on content analysis by defining it as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. Further, he states that content analysis enables researchers to shift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion. According to Stemler (2001) this method can also be a useful technique for allowing us to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention and it further allows for inferences to be made which can be corroborated using other methods of data collection. The most common notion in qualitative research is that a content analysis simply means doing a word frequency count and thus the assumption is made that the words that are mentioned most often are the words that reflect the greatest concerns (Stemler, 2001). For Stemler (2001) content analysis extends far beyond simple word counts and what makes the technique particularly rich and meaningful is its reliance on coding and categorising of the data. When used properly,

content analysis is a powerful data reduction technique and it has the feature of being unobtrusive, and being useful in dealing with large volumes of data.

Tying in with Stemler's (2001) research, Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1278) define content analysis as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns". They regard content analysis as a flexible method for analyzing text data and they further state that research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text. Qualitative content analysis goes beyond counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings. These categories can represent either explicit communication or inferred communication as the goal of content analysis is "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Hsieh and Shannon 2005: 1278). Furthermore, the success of a content analysis depends greatly on the coding process which involves organizing large quantities of text into much fewer content categories, and categories are patterns or themes that are directly expressed in the text or are derived from them through analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

Braun and Clarke (2006) asserts that thematic analysis is a poorly demarcated, rarely-acknowledged, yet widely -used qualitative analytic method, however, it offers an accessible and theoretical-flexible approach to analysing qualitative data. Thematic analysis should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis and identifying thematizing meanings as one of a few shared generic skills across qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thus, Boyatzis (1998) characterises it not as a specific method but as a tool to use across different methods. Braun and Clarke (2006: 4-5) acknowledges that "one of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility and through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data". A clear demarcation of this method will be useful to ensure that those who use thematic analysis can make active choices about the particular form of analysis they are engaged in and that researchers make their assumption explicit (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

In addition Braun and Clarke (2006: 6) define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. It minimally organises and describes your data set in rich detail, however, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topics (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) declare that clarity around process and practice of methods is vital because if we do not know how people went about analysing their data, or what assumptions informed their analysis, it is difficult to evaluate their research and to compare or synthesise it with other studies on that topic, and it can impede other researchers carrying out related projects in the future.

Thematic analysis does not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of approaches such as grounded theory, but it can offer a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in a qualitative research career (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, a thematic analysis is not wed to any pre-existing theoretical framework, and it can be used within different theoretical frameworks, and can be used to do different things within them (Braun and Clarke, 2006). “Thematic analysis can be an essential or realist method, which experiences, meanings and the reality of participants, or it can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society”, were claims made by Braun and Clarke (2006: 9).

Braun and Clarke (2006: 10) write that “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set”. An alternative use of thematic analysis is to provide a more detailed and nuanced account of one particular theme, or group of themes, within the data. This might relate to a specific question or area of interest within the data, or to a particular latent theme across the whole or majority of the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) affirm that a thematic analysis typically focus exclusively or primarily on one level and with a semantic approach, the themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written. In contrast, a thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations and ideologies that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) stress that the process of thematic analysis starts when the analyst begins to notice, and look for patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data which may be during data collection. The endpoint is the reporting of the content and meaning of patterns in the data, where themes are abstract constructs the investigators identify before, during and after analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thus, analysis involves a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that you are analysing and the analysis of the data that you are producing and writing is an integral part of analysis, not something that takes place at the end, as it does with statistical analyses (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Some theorists argue that early reading can narrow your analytic field of vision, leading you to focus on some aspects of the data at the expense of other potential crucial aspects, while, others argue that engagement with the literature can enhance your analysis by sensitising you to more subtle features of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, there is no one right way to proceed with reading for the thematic analysis, although a more inductive approach would be enhanced by not engaging with literature in the early stages of analysis, whereas a theoretical approach with the literature prior to analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Moreover, analysis is not a linear process where you simply move from one phase to the next; instead, it is a more recursive process, where you move back and forth as needed throughout the phases.

Braun and Clarke (2006: 16) note that “it is vital to immerse yourself in the data to the extent that you are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content as immersion usually involves repeated reading of the data and reading the data in an active way, searching for meanings and patterns”. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst, and refer to the most basic segment of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon. Thus, the process of coding is part of analysis as you are organising your data into meaningful groups making the themes the interpretative analysis of the data in which arguments about the phenomenon being examined are made. Braun and Clarke (2006) also make clear that a common criticism of coding is that the context is lost.

In conjunction to this view, Aronson (1994) explains thematic analysis as focusing on identifiable themes and patterns of living and behaving. Part of the process of thematic analysis is to identify all data that relate to the already classified patterns, the identified patterns are then expounded on and all of the talk that fits under the specific pattern is

identified and placed with the corresponding pattern (Aronson, 1994). Following this procedure, the next step is to combine and catalogue related patterns into sub themes as themes are identified as units derived from patterns such as conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs (Aronson, 1994). Aronson (1994) asserts that themes are identified by bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences which often are meaningless when viewed alone. Themes that emerge from the informants' stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience. Further, the coherence of ideas rests with the analyst who has rigorously studied how different ideas or components fit together in a meaningful way when linked together (Aronson, 1994).

Aronson (1994) emphasises that the next step is to build a valid argument for choosing the themes. This is done by reading related literature and by referring back to the literature, the interviewer gains information that allows him or her to make inferences from the interview or therapy session (Aronson, 1994). Aronson (1994) acknowledges that once the themes have been collected and the literature has been studied, the researcher is ready to formulate theme statements to develop a story line and when the literature is interwoven with the findings the story that the interviewer constructs is one that stands with merit, as a developed story line helps the reader to comprehend the process, understanding, and motivation of the interviewer (Aronson, 1994).

4.2 Defining the concepts of Code and Theme.

The two main concepts that are used in the analysis of the SMS/Mxit data include codes and themes. Terre Blanche *et al* (2006) state that themes should ideally arise naturally from the data whereas Graneheim and Lundman (2004: 107) write that “the concept of theme has multiple meanings and categories. Polit and Hungler (1999) describe a theme as a recurring regularity developed within categories or cutting across categories in comparison to Baxter (1991) who defines themes as threads of meaning that recur in domain after domain. Furthermore, themes are seen as expressions of the latent content, that is, what the text is talking about. Coding entails breaking up the data in analytically relevant ways which entails marking different sections of the data as being instances of, or relevant to, one or more theme (Terre Blanche *et al*, 2006). They further state that one might code a phrase, a line, a sentence, or a paragraph, identifying these textual bits by virtue of their containing material that pertains to the themes under consideration. In contrast to Terre Blanche *et al* (2006),

Graneheim and Lundman (2004: 106) write that “a meaning unit is the constellation of words that relate to the same central meaning which has been referred to as a content or coding unit.

According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004) meaning units can be words, sentences or paragraphs containing aspects related to each other through their content and context and the label of a meaning unit has been referred to as a code. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) define codes as tools to think with and heuristic devices since labelling a condensed meaning unit with a code allows the data to be thought about in new and different ways. Furthermore, a code can be assigned to discrete objects, events and other phenomena and should be understood in relation to the context (Terre Blanche *et al*, 2006). Graneheim and Lundman (2004) also explains that a category is a group of content that shares a commonality and can be identified as a thread throughout the codes hence the manifest content, that is, what the text says, is often presented in categories.

4.3 The process of conducting a Thematic Analysis

When comparing the two articles I noted that Terre Blanche *et al* (2006) had five steps pertaining to interpretive data analysis. These include firstly, familiarisation and immersion which pertains to the fact that by the time you have finished going through your data you should know your data well enough to know more or less what kinds of things can be found where, as well as what kinds of interpretation are likely to be supported by the data and what are not (Terre Blanche *et al*, 2006). This is followed by step two inducing of themes, here induction means inferring general rules or classes from specific instances and requires you to look at your material and try and work out what the organising principles are that naturally underlie the material. “During the activity of developing themes you should also be coding your data” hence step three deals with coding (Terre Blanche *et al*, 2006). The fourth step involves elaboration of codes and the purpose is to capture the finer nuances of meaning not captured by your original coding system, while the last step relates to interpretation and checking of themes, this is a written account of the phenomenon studied using thematic categories from your analysis as sub-headings (Terre Blanche *et al*, 2006).

However, Graneheim and Lundman (2004) suggest that one first needs to find the relevant meaning units or codes within the data before moving on to the next step which is the identification of themes. This is the method I decided to apply while working with the SMS/Mxit data. I first attempted to identify codes from the SMS/Mxit data which I then

utilised to derive the relevant themes regarding the SMS/Mxit data. This method made it easier to classify the data under relevant themes. I conclude this in-depth discussion of thematic analysis with an overview of advantages and disadvantages of using this method.

4.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) identify potential pitfalls involving thematic analysis and the first of these is a failure to actually analyse the data at all as thematic analysis is not just a collection of extras strung together with little or no analytic narrative. The extracts in thematic analysis are illustrative of the analytic points the researcher makes about the data and should be used to illustrate or support an analysis that goes beyond their specific content, to make sense data, and tell the reader what it does or might mean (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006: 25) explain that “a second pitfall is the using of the data collection question as the themes that are reported”. The third pitfall is a weak analysis, where the themes do not appear to work, where there is too much overlap between themes or where themes are not internally coherent and consistent as all aspects of the theme should cohere around a central idea or concept (Braun and Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the fourth pitfall is a mismatch between the data and the analytic claims that are made about it and the last pitfall involves a mismatch between theory and analytic claims, or between the research questions and the form of thematic analysis used.

Many of the disadvantages depend more on poorly conducted analyses or inappropriate research questions, than on the method itself, further, the flexibility of the method which allows for a wide range of analytic options means that the potential range of things that can be said about the data is broad (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006: 27) expand on this by saying that “while, this is an advantage, it can also be a disadvantage in that it makes developing specific guidelines for higher phase analysis difficult, and can be potentially paralysing to the researcher trying to decide what aspects of their data to focus on”. Another issue to consider is that a thematic analysis has limited interpretative power beyond mere description if it is not used within an existing theoretical framework that anchors the analytic claims that are made (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) distinguish between content analysis another method that can be used to identify patterns across qualitative data, and is sometimes treated as similar to thematic approaches. Content analysis tends to focus at a more micro level and allows for quantitative analyses of initially qualitative data, whereas, thematic analysis differs from this in that themes tend not to be

quantified suggests thematic analysis can be used to transform qualitative data into a quantitative form (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4.5 Research Design

The principle methodology for this study is a qualitative text based method of data collection. The study uses a text-based research approach which entails analysing written or spoken texts thus it falls into the category of secondary research as opposed to primary research, which involves field investigations (Burns, 2000). It is considered qualitative because it aims to analyse the research subjects' examples of text messages as well as their demographical details such as age, gender and dominant home language. Qualitative research is inductive in nature and it is concerned with interpreting the SMS/Mxit messages from the participants' point of view rather than imposing an understanding and interpretation of the text messages. Qualitative research concerns itself with human beings, interpersonal relationships, personal values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts and feelings (Leedy, 1993:143). Further, qualitative research is also naturalistic as in this case it occurs in a real social or natural environment such as UWC. Following other SFL studies that have used a text-based design such as (Bock 2008) and (Blommaert 2005), this research design is appropriate for the proposed study as the researcher is interested in doing in-depth analyses pertaining to SMS messages. The data collected through this research methodology is used to investigate, discover and reach new findings and conclusions relating to the field of study.

This study incorporates both qualitative and quantitative inquiry to enhance and complement the research. The qualitative stance is considered the primary approach for this research because it allows for a different view on what is being studied and denotes that the qualities, characteristics and properties of the SMS/Mxit messages for better understanding and explanation. The qualitative means of analysis allowed me to convert the raw empirical information of SMS/Mxit messages from its 'thin description' to a 'thick description'. Following Henning, Rensburg and Smit (2004), a thick description gives an account of the phenomenon in this case the SMS/Mxit messages that is coherent, that gives more facts and empirical content and also interprets the information in the light of other empirical information in the same study as well as from the basis of a theoretical framework that locates the study. The thick description is the most distinguishing factor in progressive qualitative research as the research remains contextualized, exploratory and descriptive. With qualitative research there is no single fixed method or methodology that dares to be refined,

but there is a wide range of methods and techniques that can be used in various combinations (Henning *et al*, 2004). The freedom and natural development of the SMS/Mxit messages and what they represent is what I wished to capture and employing a qualitative method allows not only for this to be done, but it also allows for an understanding of these messages by developing an argument and explaining the proposed argument by using evidence from the data and from the literature in broadening our understanding of what the phenomenon is about.

The research also contains a quantitative aspect because an essay count as well as an analysis of recurring themes is done to obtain an indication of the number of recurrent themes and the prominence of certain elements within the SMSes such as which themes were more popular and why. Although, the primary principle approach is qualitative, the quantitative approach is useful in accessing the ratio between male and female students, as well as the demographic data. In relation to this participants demographical details are tabulated which consists of categories that specify their age, gender, social class, ethnicity and dominant/first home language. This quantitative method proved to be insightful as it afforded the researcher with insight to the type of information available and extracted from the participants. This descriptive statistics merely describes the characteristics of the sample participants under investigation and is useful for the purpose of comparison between categories of data with differing first language speakers. This research is systematic and logical as the research will engage in careful planned processes to describe and explain phenomena before making predictions. For this reason, both research design methods proved to be appropriate for this study.

4.6 Research Subjects

The subjects selected for this research study were 60 third year students at The University of the Western Cape (UWC). A total of 60 research subjects only were selected based on the premise that for every one research subject 5 text messages were collected. All of the students were registered for the third year Language and Communication Studies (LCS) module called Multilingualism. The participants had different dominant home languages such as English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. As a result, 3 categories of data were formed, the first being participants who had English as their first language, second were those participants who had Afrikaans as their first language and the last category consisted of participants who had isiXhosa as their first language. Thus, each category contained 20 participants who were

named E1-E20, A1-A20 and X1-X20 based on what their dominant/first home languages were. The research subjects were a mixture of males and females with the females as the dominating ratio. They also belonged to varying social classes ranging between the middle class and the working class. The research subjects had different ethnic backgrounds including the coloured and Xhosa ethnicity which contributed to the richness of the study.

4.7 Sampling

The students were handed an assignment/essay by their lecturer (the researcher's co-supervisor) in which they were instructed to analyse 5 sent and 5 received SMS/Mxit messages of which only the sent messages were used as it is the sender's consent that was requested. The 5 messages these participants listed as their received messages were not utilised for ethical purposes because of the risk that the receivers of the SMSes were not students of UWC, thus attaining their permission would be difficult. In essence, only the sent examples of the SMS/Mxit messages provided formed part of the research study conducted. The essays were then selected based on the SMS examples provided by the participants bearing in mind the aim of the research. The researcher was assisted by her co-supervisor who marked the essays and helped with the sampling process of SMS/Mxit messages found in the essay/assignment and this was based on purpose, function and also on the notion of theoretical sampling in which the theory and the emergent data indicated a stronger focus on something. This type of sampling provided for a rich in-depth analysis and study.

4.8 Data Collection

The data used in this study was collected between March and April 2010 and then again in March and May of 2011. The data collected during the period of 2010 consisted of 20 essays/assignments written by third year students and was extended and added to in 2011 where an additional 40 essays were collected, tallying the total amount of essays to its current amount of 60. Thus, between the researcher and the co-supervisor 60 essays were collected. From these 60 students, the researcher had access to 60 essays which consisted of at least 300 extracts of SMS/Mxit messages. Therefore, from the 20 students with English as their first language 100 SMS/Mxit messages were extracted, from the 20 students who had Afrikaans as their first language 100 SMS/Mxit messages was extracted and from the 20 students who had isiXhosa as their first language 100 SMS/Mxit messages were extracted. The collection of the essays assumed a valuable position within the study as the focus on the SMS/Mxit messages related to the research questions.

4.9 Data Analysis

Taking into consideration all the recommendations regarding thematic analysis and elements of SFL such as cohesion and coherence, a combined approach of these two methods were used to analyse the text messages provided by the students of UWC. This is more commonly known as triangulation and is described by Henning *et al* (2004) as the use of different approaches to working with the data or building the interpretative text that the strength of an inquiry is built upon. This means of triangulation enhanced the validity and reliability of the study. A thematic analysis was completed in which a process of thematization occurred as the most prominent themes that emerged out of the data were categorised and analysed. A qualitative analyses of the SMS/Mxit messages was also done to obtain insight into the nature of the content of SMS/Mxit messages in terms of the arising themes found as well as the role of identity options portrayed within these messages. The purpose of interpretive analysis is to provide a thick or thorough description of the characteristics, processes, transactions, and contexts that constitute the phenomenon being studied (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006). A thematic content analysis is situated within the qualitative research paradigm as Terre Blanche *et al* (2006) explains that there are many different qualitative analytic traditions that come under the umbrella of interpretive analysis such as a thematic content analysis. Thus, this type of analysis provides the opportunity to extract the richness and characteristics of the SMS/Mxit data in a manner that allows for in-depth interpretation and analysis. It also assisted the researcher by providing insight as to what type of information is achieved.

A linguistic analysis was then conducted focusing on the language interaction of the SMS/Mxit messages with the specific aim of looking at the ways in which local languages are being transformed through this medium. The linguistic analysis was complemented by a conceptual analysis where concepts such as globalization, stylization, polylingual languaging, transidiomatic practices, and language as a local practice, hybrid language practices and English as a lingua Franca were analysed in the SMS/Mxit messages to inspect how it is that these text messages are developing and surviving in its context. This is supported by Henning *et al* (2004) who explains that the principle of knowledge organisation blends with the notion of argumentative writing thus, these concepts were dealt with a theoretical knowledge in mind in relation to the knowledge claims that have come out of the SMS/Mxit data and presented from a particular standpoint of inquiry and then argued against with evidence. This process of representation was utilised by the researcher where an explanation of the inquiry

of SMS/Mxit messages were given and illustrates the narrative with ample examples from the data and further explained and analysed by the theory.

With regard to SFL, Halliday (1984) explains that the main function of this approach is that it offers an extensive list of applications of grammar. These applications range from merely enabling one to understand the nature and functions of language, its use in a range of educational settings, understanding the quality of valued texts and to help people learn their mother tongue and foreign languages more effectively (Halliday, 1984). Martin (1992:2) writes that the most prominent application of this approach is that “it is very effectively organised as a tool” for the analysis and interpretation of both written and spoken texts. Thus, when texts spoken or written are produced, conscious and subconscious choices are made with regards to the choice of words and lexicogrammatical patterning used to produce a certain kind of meaning. With this stance of SFL in mind, the theory of identity was viewed in terms of analysing an array of identity option, role structure, role relationships and power relations portrayed by the participants through their text messages. Here, identity was viewed as a performance highlighting the linguistic and discursive choices made by the participants.

4.10 Description of data

The data collected consisted of SMS/Mxit messages with the same font type (times new roman) due to the limit of their essay instructions. However, the font size varied where the majority of the messages were written in one font size with the exception of some messages containing words written in capital letters for emphasis. Most of the SMSes contained shorthand text where words and phrases were abbreviated or contracted to form shorter sentences, but there is also evidence of some SMSes containing full words and sentences where abbreviations and contractions did not occur. This was more commonly found by participants who sent text messages to older persons such as a parent, aunt or grandparent. The messages contained a mixture of language usage where English, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa were used in the same SMS but as one language. However, there were a few SMSes identified as being written in English only, Afrikaans only and Xhosa only. These examples contained no blended forms of differing language usage. A vast amount of data also included multimodality where emoticons such as smiley faces (☺ and ☹) were evident portraying visual images as well as iconic symbols such as cyber kisses (*mwah*) and the sound of laughter (*haha*). This type of multidimensional approach assumes that participants use multimodality as an act of identity.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in a way that was not harmful to the research subjects in that the principle of anonymity was applied, omitting all personal details. The nature of the research as well as the letter of consent was explained to the participants by their lecturer in class. They were then informed that with their permission, their SMS/Mxit extracts rather than their essays will form part of a larger research project. It was explained that the participants who allowed the researcher to use their extracts will remain anonymous and that all personal details will be omitted. Hence, the research subjects were informed about their right to confidentiality and anonymity as well as the researcher's intentions regarding the reasons for the investigation. They were also informed that no extra marks will be awarded to them in their assignment for allowing their text messages to be used as part of the research project. The research subjects were informed that they have the right to withdraw their data from the study at anytime. Further, they were informed that they will have access to the report once the research study has been completed.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter explained the contents of a thematic analysis as viewed by various theorists. It provided details on the research design, research subjects, sampling procedure data collection method and data analysis. Thereafter, a description of the data was provided followed by the ethical considerations involving the research.

The chapter to follow deals with the data analysis of the SMS/Mxit messages incorporating the theories as are mentioned above to the SMS/Mxit data.

Chapter 5

Thematic Analysis – Exploring the most common themes through hybridity and multimodality

5.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to outline the approach of the thematic analysis using the SMS/Mxit messages by indicating the purpose of such an analysis and placing it within the qualitative research paradigm. It outlines the process used when conducting this type of analysis and indicates how the concept of coding is used to derive at the various themes. Background information is provided on each theme to contextualise the SMSes. Attention is paid to the most important themes, with an emphasis on the presence of hybridity and multimodality. It is vital to remember that the purpose of interpretive analysis as used in this study is to provide a thorough description of the characteristics, processes, transactions, and contexts that constitute the phenomenon being studied, which in this case, the phenomenon refers to SMS/Mxit messages (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly, 2006).

5.1 Demographic details

The following three tables provide a demographic breakdown of the participants involved in the study.

Table 1

Participants	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Social class	Home language
E1	M	20	Coloured	Middle class	English
E2	F	22	Coloured	Working class	English
E3	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	English
E4	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	English
E5	F	20	Coloured	Middle class	English
E6	F	20	Coloured	Middle class	English
E7	F	20	Coloured	Middle class	English
E8	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	English
E9	F	21	Coloured	Working class	English
E10	F	21	Coloured	Working class	English
E11	F	23	Coloured	Working class	English

E12	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	English
E13	M	27	Coloured	Middle class	English
E14	F	20	Coloured	Working class	English
E15	F	20	Coloured	Middle class	English
E16	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	English
E17	F	22	Coloured	Middle class	English
E18	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	English
E19	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	English
E20	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	English

From the above table, we can see the demographical details of the participants which focus on five categories namely, gender, age, ethnicity, social class and their home dominant language. It is also important to note that these participants were randomly selected. Therefore, of the 20 participants who provided English SMS/Mxit data, 18 were female and the other 2 participants were male. In this category of data the age factor did not vary much as the majority of the participants were between the ages of 20 and 21 years old. Therefore, based on this table 6 participants were 20 years old, 10 participants were 21 years old, 2 were 22 years old, 1 was 23 years old and the eldest participant was 27 years of age. All the participants identify themselves as belonging to the coloured ethnic group and according to Edwards (1995: 21), ‘...ethnic identity is allegiance to a group-large or small, socially dominant or subordinate-with which one has ancestral links, and which can be clearly distinguished from other groups by clear boundaries which have objective characteristics like language’. With regard to social class, 15 participants identified themselves as belonging to the middle class whilst the remaining 5 participants see themselves as working class citizens, and Bernstein (1972) states that different social groups employ different types of language as a result of the social structures operating in a society. These participants were grouped according to their dominant home language which is English.

Table 2

Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Social class	Home language
A1	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A2	F	20	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans

A3	M	22	Coloured	Working class	Afrikaans
A4	F	27	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A5	F	22	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A6	F	19	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A7	F	19	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A8	M	21	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A9	M	22	Coloured	Working class	Afrikaans
A10	F	20	Coloured	Working class	Afrikaans
A11	F	34	Coloured	Working class	Afrikaans
A12	M	27	Coloured	Working class	Afrikaans
A13	F	20	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A14	M	22	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A15	F	20	Coloured	Working class	Afrikaans
A16	F	25	Coloured	Working class	Afrikaans
A17	F	21	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A18	M	20	Coloured	Working class	Afrikaans
A19	F	22	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans
A20	F	20	Coloured	Middle class	Afrikaans

This table provides us with the demographical details of the 20 participants who had Afrikaans as their home/first language. Of these 20 participants, 6 were male and the other 14 were female. The age category for this table varies from the first category of data as the 2 youngest participants were 19 years old, 6 participants were 20 years old, 3 participants were 21 years old, 5 participants were 22 years old, 1 was 25 years old, 2 were 27 and the eldest was 34 years of age. Consequently, this category of data contained the eldest participant in comparison to the other two categories. Once again, as is seen in the previous table all the participants identify themselves as belonging to the coloured ethnic group. In terms of social class, more participants belonged to the working class (a total of 7) in this category in comparison to the previous category of data and the other 13 participants belonged to the middle class.

Table 3

Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Social class	Home language
X1	F	25	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X2	M	26	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X3	F	22	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X4	F	21	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X5	M	22	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X6	F	22	Xhosa	Middle class	isiXhosa
X7	F	21	Xhosa	Middle class	isiXhosa
X8	F	21	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X9	F	22	Xhosa	Middle class	isiXhosa
X10	F	20	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X11	M	23	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X12	F	20	Xhosa	Middle class	isiXhosa
X13	F	24	Xhosa	Middle class	isiXhosa
X14	M	23	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X15	F	21	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X16	F	20	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X17	F	21	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa
X18	F	21	Xhosa	Middle class	isiXhosa
X19	M	20	Xhosa	Middle class	isiXhosa
X20	F	22	Xhosa	Working class	isiXhosa

Table 3 provides the demographical details for the 20 participants who had isiXhosa as their mother tongue. From the 20 participants, 5 were male and 15 were female. The age category for this group differed with 4 participants at the age of 20, 6 participants were 21 years old, 5 were 22 years old, 2 were 23 years old, 1 was 24 years old another was 25 and the eldest participant in this category was 26 years old. All of these participants identified themselves as belonging to the Xhosa ethnic group. In terms of social status, more than half of the participants (a total of 12) identified themselves as belonging to the working class, while the rest (a total of 8) identified themselves as belonging to the middle class. In this category of data all the participants had isiXhosa as their home language. These 3 tables were useful in

providing the participants details and allowed for comparisons to be made between the different categories of data in terms of their age, gender, ethnicity, social class and home language. It is also important to note that all the participants were randomly selected hence the ratio of males to females differs in each category with the majority of the participants being female.

5.2 Thematic Analysis

The main task I undertook to arrive at this thematic analysis was the coding of SMS/Mxit messages according to emerging themes, trends and patterns. However, this was not done in isolation from the context and form of the messages, which provided the background information about the SMS so that a clear representation of the message can be understood whilst reading and decoding the message. The thematic analysis works on the premise that it not only highlights the most common themes arising from the SMS data but also looks at the manner in which participants use language when sending messages. This is problematic for the concept of first/home language as participants tend to use any language to communicate messages regardless of what they claim their first languages are. This also demonstrates that participants do not use three distinctive languages (English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa) when SMSing, instead these languages are used as one language known as SMS speak.

The following themes identified were consistent throughout the data:

- Socialising Interactions
- Managing University Responsibilities
- Intimate Relationships
- Family Ties
- Birthday Wishes
- Messages of Gratitude
- Promotional Messages

5.2.1 Socialising Interactions

This theme was identified across all three categories of data, that is, participants with English, Afrikaans or Xhosa as their first language had messages regarding socialising in common. There were various codes throughout the three groups of data that lead to the current theme these included party invitations, reminder messages, informative messages, enquiring

messages as well as general messages regarding well being. Thus, all these messages or meaning units had a central meaning and was categorised under a broader theme named socialising interactions.

Extract 1

“Hey mr b...hwa u doin? sori 4textn so l8-i juz wana no wot tyms da match 2mrw n wer xactly in k/fontein r u guys playn?”(Hey mr b...how are you doing? sorry for texting so late-i just want to know what time is the game tomorrow and where exactly in Kraaifontein are you guys playing?) - E14.

This SMS was sent by participant E14 to her friend to enquire about a social event in the form of a game of soccer. The participant wanted to know where in Kraaifontein the match was going to take place and what time the game was meant to commence. In this example, only one type of language is visible but two different types of language codes were used, standard and non-standard English. For this reason this example was classified as a hybrid language practice because the SMS used varying codes. This type of hybrid language practice displays knowledge of register (Eggins 2004; Eggins and Slade 1997) since this kind of setting requires shared knowledge between the sender and receiver as well as sociocultural knowledge relating formal and informal language use in order for the exchange of information and messages to occur.

Similarly the extract below requires shared knowledge and register for it to be deciphered correctly.

Extract 2

“Hey lady so didu get home safely Friday afta we droppdyOo?? N didu work pOrsche function? I worked a 17 hour wedding in Stellies!”* (He lady* so did you get home safely Friday after we dropped you? And did you work Porsche function? I worked a 17 hour wedding in Stellenbosch!) – E10.

This message was sent by Participant E10 and the receiver was a work colleague. Participant E10 explained that they worked at an events company together. This SMS served the purpose of enquiring whether or not the receiver got home safely and it simultaneously informs the

receiver about the long hour shift the participant had worked by exploiting the contrasts between formal and informal English phrases.

There is no doubt that E6 below is conversant with ‘standard’ English. But the use of informalities enables E6 to achieve levels of closeness and hence reduce social distance which is not possible if formal English was used in the same context.

Extract 3

“Yes Bru! Ther is no way we arnt goin out later! you keen for drinks and dancing? Wil call ya when im on my way” (Yes Brother! There is no way we aren’t going out later! You keen for drinks and dancing? Will call you when I am on my way) - E6.

Participant E6 sent this SMS to her colleague and the informal language use confirm their plans for the evening, but critically their closeness and social bond. Thus, this SMS was classified under the current theme as it dealt with matters other than work for the participant and the receiver and hence narrowing down the topic of conversation to socialising activities. The hybridity within the language use depicted the use of Standard English and non-standard English and enabled the writer to demonstrate intimacy. In this case, the Standard English comprises of phrases such as *‘there is no way’* and the non-standard English comprises of words such as *‘bru’* (brother), *‘arent’* (are not) and *‘ya’* (you). Therefore, looking closely at these examples allowed me to surmise that within this category the language use was abbreviated which is a typical characteristic of SMS speak. These extracts also contain a combination of standard and non-standard language use showcasing that participants use which ever means of a language available to them in order to communicate.

The use of formal and informal language as a way to socialise is also evident in the extract below.

Extract 4

“Leka!!!! Ek smaak self v n shoppin spree!!!! Mt ma sterk wies lol!!!!” [Lekker!!!! Ek smaak self vir ‘n shopping spree!!!! Moet maar sterk wees lol!!!!] (Nice!!!! I feel like a shopping spree myself!!!! Have to be strong laugh out loud!!!!) – A17.

This message was sent by participant A17 to her friend informing her that she feels like going on a shopping spree. However, like the other extracts discussed above this SMS is hybrid and contains mixed forms of language usage designed to serve the socialising purpose of informing.

The extract below displays formal and informal register to convey a message as is seen in the extract above.

Extract 5

“ek ht gecheck os kan mayb n dop maak l8r” [ek het gecheck ons kan maybe ‘n dop maak later] (I checked maybe we can get a drink later) – A12.

The message sent by participant A12 serves as confirmation to his friend that they can meet for drinks later on. The meeting of friends for drinks is considered a social activity thus it falls under the theme of socialising interactions. The Afrikaans used in this SMS was of a non-standard variety blending formal and informal registers of the language. An example of formal words is ‘*ek*’ (I) and ‘*kan*’ (can). An example of informal words is ‘*dop*’ (drink) and ‘*gecheck*’ (checked). The use of these types of informal language not only creates closeness between the sender and receiver but reveals familiarity among the participants.

According to the demographics as tabulated above, participant A4 claimed to have Afrikaans as her first/home language. This is contradictory as the SMS the participant sent contained more than her first language. This is problematic and questions the concept of first or home language and proves that participants use whatever means of language available to them to send an SMS despite what they claim to be their first language. Thus, the use of Afrikaans and English here is seen as one language which is what SMS speak comprises of. This demonstrates how different linguistic options and registers are used and embedded as one repertoire. Consider extract 6.

Extract 6

“Im goin clubbin, gaan bietji my lyf ‘n leke tyd gee lol” [Im going clubbing, gaan bietjie my lyf ‘n lekker tyd gee lol] (I’m going clubbing, going to give my body a bit of a good time laugh out loud) – A4.

This SMS was sent by participant A4 to her friend informing her of her plans for the weekend ahead. As a result, this SMS has an informative function that is common to the theme of socialising. When examining this example from the point of view that languages are separate entities two languages can be identified, namely English and Afrikaans. However, this example is hybrid as it works beyond the traditional approach of simple code-switching as the alternation of two language codes (as will be discussed in more detail throughout the chapter). Instead hybridity is a more systematic, strategic and sense-making process among those who share a code as they strive to achieve mutual understanding as suggested by Gutiérrez *et al* (1999). Therefore, this example of hybrid language usage functions beyond the traditional definition and level of common code-switching as the participant and receiver of this particular message share a common code thus reaching a mutual understanding of the intended message. This makes the concepts of code-switching and code-mixing problematic because it means viewing the English and Afrikaans used in the SMS as separate language entities, whereas from this SMS, we can see that two languages are used as one. This is the basis of SMS speak where English and Afrikaans are used as one language in order to communicate.

The extract below shows two languages being used as one much like what can be seen in extract 6 above.

Extract 7

“Bin tryin 2 cal bt ingena kwi voicemail. 2moro is wmen’s breakfast n wanted 2 rmind u. Gudnyt” (Been trying to call but it goes to voicemail. Tomorrow is women’s breakfast and wanted to remind you. Goodnight) – X8.

This SMS sent by Participant X8 is to remind the receiver of the message about a woman’s breakfast which was set to occur the following morning. The SMS consists of English and Xhosa; however, these languages were not used as separate entities. Instead, they were combined and used as one language, that being SMS speak and yet the message is coherent. The language was used in this manner combining formal and informal register despite the fact that participant X8 claimed to have isiXhosa as her first language proving that sender’s do not necessarily send messages in their first/home language.

This extract highlights how aspects of different languages are used as one for socialising purposes and creates intimacy and closeness. See extract 8 below.

Extract 8

“Hi, hop u having a g8t tym dar. I ws askin how early you going 2 pick me up ngomso so tht I prepare myself wabo?” (Hi, hope you having a great time there. I was asking how early you going to pick me up tomorrow so that I prepare myself you see?) – X9.

This SMS was sent by participant X9 to her friend to enquire what time her friend was going to pick her up the following day. The message comprises of English, Xhosa and Afrikaans used as one language. The use of the word ‘*dar*’ is interesting as it is derived from the Afrikaans word ‘*daar*’ meaning ‘there’. Therefore, even though the participant claims that isiXhosa is her first language as is seen in the demographics, this SMS undermines the use of the traditional first language usage and consists of a range of features of language. This type of informal language use creates an intimacy between the participants that would not have been present had a formal variety of a language been used to convey the same message.

The use of various features of a language as a manner in which to socialise is also evident in the extract to follow.

Extract 9

“Hey chomy, Unjani? I haven’t heard 4rm U in a while. Listen! I am having a braai nxt wk Saturday, nothing big wethu, but I’ll phone u nxt wk 4 further update. C u deh” (Hey friend, How are you? I haven’t heard from you in a while. Listen! I am having a braai next week Saturday, nothing big, but I’ll phone you next week for further update. See you there) – X15.

Participant X15 sent this SMS to her friend informing her that she is having a braai. The SMS contains English and Xhosa which is used and combined as one language. Therefore, not only does this message encompass SMS speak; it simultaneously informs and invites the receiver of the message to the social event. The use of letter-number words such as ‘*4rm*’ instead of ‘*from*’ and ‘*4*’ instead of ‘*for*’ showcases the multimodality of the SMS as will be further discussed later in the chapter.

What does this theme reveal about the topic? Firstly, different themes will highlight different impressions of concepts that will be explored in this study. For instance, this theme contained examples of mixed language usage and highlights the fact that the social nature of the SMSes discussed above are also characterised by its hybrid language use. This means that the SMSes are a form of hybridity as it displays more than one variety of a language being used in an attempt to communicate the intended message. This hybridity proved that SMS speak as is used here by the participants exceeds the traditional first/home language approach as participants used features of any language as well as formal and informal register to formulate a message creating a kind of intimacy and closeness among themselves. This contradicts the use of what participants claim to be/have as their first or dominant home language since English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa is used as one language, namely SMS speak.

As is previously established, the SMS/Mxit messages categorised under this theme shared a common ground with text messages referring to socialising activities and events. Here the term 'work related' referred to anything that involved the University, that being assignments, tests, exams, presentations and practical's. Thus, within the context of the university anything that is spoken about that is not work related would be regarded as a socialising conversation despite the language it is being spoken in. This theme proved to be useful as it allowed me to make inferences that participants had a social life outside of the university context based on the text messages extracted. Consequently, the theme of socialising interactions was broad as it included a variety of text messages across all three categories of data which were central in meaning.

5.2.2 Managing University Responsibilities

This theme was common amongst all three categories of data as the text messages grouped under this theme all had a similar meaning unit which either related to assignments or to the context of university related matters. The theme was deemed important as it provided insight into the lives of participants as students managing their university responsibilities.

The use of a formal register confirms the social distance and unfamiliarity between the participants as the extract below contains minimal abbreviations associated with SMS speak.

Extract 10

“Mine was a page long lol. I think its okay for you to do direct quoting but just put the references and page number at the bottom of the quote. I don’t think this thing is so much of a big deal as far as marks go so don’t think u must stress too much about it” (Mine was a page long laugh out loud. I think it is okay for you to do direct quoting but just put the references and page number at the bottom of the quote. I don’t think this thing is so much of a big deal as far as marks go so don’t think you must stress too much about it) – E6.

Participant E6 sent this message to a fellow student who is at university with her in which she explains referencing in terms of direct referencing and quoting. In this text message no mention is made of the actual word assignment but because of the content of the message it is clear that the message relates to university as the meaning units ‘referencing’ and ‘quoting’ are an indication that the SMS deals with university responsibilities. This SMS is appealing as it does not conform to the typical space saving, time saving strategies known to SMS speak. The entire SMS contains Standard English with the exception of the abbreviation of the word ‘you’ to ‘u’ and the use of the frequent term ‘lol’ (laugh out loud) which is common in SMS speak. Based on the formal manner in which the SMS was constructed, it can be deduced that this was done because the recipient of the message is not someone E6 is familiar with. E6 acknowledges the recipients as an acquaintance and not a friend hence the formal wording of the message since a social distance exists between the participants. The social distance identified here does not allow for the use of informal register through which closeness and intimacy can be created.

Unlike the previous SMS the use of informal language as a way to communicate university responsibility is evident in the extract below.

Extract 11

“Nah man nid sum notes 4rm u – Tou 222. Ima write a special exam nxt wk en they jst told me yester abt ds. Plz help out” (Nah man need some notes from you – Tou 222. I am going to write a special exam next week and they just told me yesterday about this. Please help out) – E15.

This message was sent by participant E15 to a friend to ask for tourism lecture notes as the sender was due to write a special exam and only recently found out about it. In this case the

codes '*special exam*' elicited from this SMS tell us that the SMS relates to university. Thus, the participant used SMS speak to formulate this message and even used multimodality in the form of the number '4' to replace the 'f' in the word '4rm' (from) exposing the hybridity of the SMS. Here participant E15 acknowledges the recipient as her friend hence the use of informal register generating closeness and familiarity among the participants. The fact that E15 asked the recipient to lend her lecture notes also speaks to their familiarity with one another showing that the sender felt comfortable enough to make such a request of the recipient. The use of the phrase '*plz help out*' (please help out) also depicts the desperation of E15 showing how in need the sender is of the recipient's help.

Formal and informal language use can also be used to represent feelings and emotions in the form of frustration. Consider extract 12.

Extract 12

"I hate doin assignments, if it wasn't for marks then I wouldn't do it, took me 3 hours" (I hate doing assignments, if it was not for marks then I would not do it, took me 3 hours) –E18.

This message was sent by participant E18 expressing her frustration with doing assignments. Some of the words in the SMS have taken on abbreviated forms such as '*doin*' instead of '*doing*' which is a characteristic of SMS speak. This participant also used the word '*hate*' which is a strong emotion loaded word to heighten and describe the extent of her frustration with doing assignments. All these linguistic options combined contribute to the emotion present in the SMS. Therefore, this SMS was selected for this theme as it related to university responsibilities. Extracts 10, 11 and 12 are also examples of hybrid language practices as certain forms of this hybridity and the manner in which it is used is a phenomenon of the base of the given language (Bayer, 1998).

The use of how different features of a language are used as one repertoire is present in the extract below despite A4 claiming that her home/first language is Afrikaans.

Extract 13

"Eish vrou j praat van assignments! I've got 2 due 4 Friday" [Eish vrou jy praat van assignments! I've got 2 due 4 Friday] (Eish lady you talking about assignments! I've got 2 due for Friday) - A4.

The second category of data had similar patterns in comparison to the first category, for example, participant A4 sent this SMS to a friend in which she informs her friend that she had two assignments due. When working from a traditional perspective in linguistics this message can be classified as an example of code-switching where full sentences were switched between English and Afrikaans. Moreover, based on this perspective it could be said that the reason for code-switching was to emphasise that participant A4 had two assignments due. However, this approach can be criticised for viewing language as autonomous separate entities, whereas the manner in which language was used here appears to be a continuous flow from one language into the next without separation. This is the bases of SMS speak where as seen in this example the English and Afrikaans languages are used as one. In this SMS the code ‘*assignment*’ was identified and thus the SMS was categorised under the current theme. The SMS also contains numeric’s to replace words in the form of ‘2’ instead of ‘*two*’ and ‘4’ instead of ‘*for*’ which is a space and time saving strategy common to SMS speak. As a result, this highlights the hybridity and multimodality present in the extract.

This extract like the previous one depicts how features of various languages are used as one.

Extract 14

“Hey guess wat hy sit hul tyd in sy kantoor. Now he say he cnt help me, I must ask da lecturer if she can change it” (Hey guess what he was sitting in his office the whole time. Now he say he can’t help me, I must ask the lecturer if she can change it) – A18.

Participant A18 sent this SMS to his friend. The code ‘*kantoor*’ (office) and ‘*lecturer*’ categorises this SMS under the current theme. This message is an example of SMS speak as it uses English and Afrikaans as one language. Again as is seen in previous examples, this extract was sent combining different linguistic options even though according to the demographics A18 declared Afrikaans as his first language.

This extract combines formal and informal language and requires shared knowledge and register for it to be decoded correctly. See extract 15.

Extract 15

“*Ai wiet jy! I started with my s.a. Eish dnt smaak ma nou ja!*” [Ai weet jy! I started with my essay. Eish don't feel like it maar nou ja!] (Ai you know! I started with my essay. Eish don't feel like it but now yes!) – A19.

This SMS was sent by participant A19 to a friend in which she explains that she started her assignment but really does not feel like doing it. This SMS is also an example of the hybridity of SMS speak because English and Afrikaans form one language. According to the demographics participant A16 has Afrikaans as her first language yet her SMS did not only contain the Afrikaans language, instead as a replacement she formulated her message in SMS speak unifying the two languages. Here the code ‘*essays*’ is an indication that the message relates to the theme of managing university responsibilities. The use of the abbreviation ‘*s.a*’ (essay) is interesting since the mere pronunciation of the letters provides the impression and understanding that A19 is referring to the term essay. Examples of informal language include ‘*smaak*’ (feel) and the expressive exclamations ‘*ai*’ and ‘*eish*’. Therefore, in order to understand this SMS shared knowledge of the content of the message as well as shared knowledge of register is needed for the message to be accurately comprehended.

This extract proves that senders do not always formulate SMSes in their acclaimed first language, instead X14 uses the convenience of SMS speak to convey his message.

Extract 16

“*Iv bin around, just bizi with assignments*” (I've been around, just busy with assignments) – X14.

This example was sent by participant X14 to a friend to inform her that he has been busy with assignments. Hence the code in this instance is ‘*assignments*’. The SMS was sent in English even though the participant's first language according to the demographics tabulated is isiXhosa. Participant X14 states that this was done to accommodate the recipient of the message. The sender also makes use of characteristics of SMS speak such as abbreviations in the form of ‘*bizi*’ (busy) and ‘*bin*’ (been).

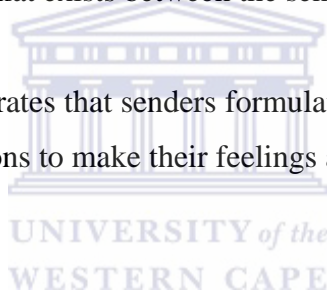
The formal language used in the SMS below creates awareness of the social distance between the participants involved in the communicative event.

Extract 17

“Can we meet in front of the library, thanx” (Can we meet in front of the library, thanks) – X15.

This SMS sent by participant X15 informs the receiver (a group member) to meet her in front of the library at university. The coding unit drawn on in this instance was *‘library’*. The SMS was also sent in English as participant X15 explained that there was a social distance between the sender and the receiver leading to an unequal relationship as they were only acquainted because of a group assignment. This example as well as extract 16 works against the first language approach because even though these participants expressed that isiXhosa is their first language, their SMSes were sent in English working against the assumption that participants will send messages in their first language as they provided their own personal reasons for the way in which the SMSes were constructed such as to accommodate a recipient or because of the social distance that exists between the sender and receiver.

Similarly, the extract below illustrates that senders formulate messages in any given language available to them and use emoticons to make their feelings and emotions realistically felt.



Extract 18

“I arrived safely at rez. I feel guilty about the way I left, I was angry, that flash had all my work and now I have to do it all over again ☹goodnight” (I arrived safely at residence. I feel guilty about the way I left, I was angry, that flash had all my work and now I have to do it all over again ☹ goodnight) – X17.

This SMS sent by participant X17 was sent in English, despite the participant’s claims that her first language is isiXhosa. Here X17 explained her behaviour and the manner in which she left home. This SMS is also multimodal as the sad face (☹) emphasises and makes the participant’s emotion more realistic when reading the SMS. Therefore, even though this SMS was sent in full sentences in Standard English, it still conforms to the norms of SMS speak because of the multimodal aspect within the message. The combinations of SMS speak and multimodality forms a hybrid language practice which participant X17 used to convey her intended message. The codes drawn out of this SMS include *‘flash’* as in flash drive and *‘work’* such as assignments and presentations and for this reason the SMS was categorised under the theme of managing university responsibilities.

The above text messages are all examples of SMSes that were categorised under the theme of managing university responsibilities with codes such as assignments, lecturer and essay leading to the identification of messages under this theme. When comparing this theme to the previous one of socialising activities, it proved that participants are responsible regarding their university related work and in the same breath they know how to enjoy themselves socially.

5.2.3 Intimate Relationships

The theme of intimate relationships was prevalent amongst the three categories of data. Data extracted from this theme include intimate messages to either a boyfriend or girlfriend in which various terms of endearment were used by the participants to create intimacy.

'Lol' is one of the most popular terms used in SMS speak globally. However, the most significant aspect of the extract below is the use of words originally from Afrikaans to appraise and modify its meaning as well as the use of numeracy as a form of multimodality to express emotion.

Extract 19

"LOL dik funny haha...Ima get done now liefie. C u l8a k? 43 lots" (Laugh out loud very funny haha (laughs)...I'm going to get done now love. See you later okay? Love you lots) – E4.

Participant E4 sent the above message to her boyfriend informing him that she was going to get ready for him to come and pick her up. The word '*dik*' (very) is of Afrikaans origin and was used for the purpose of emphasising how funny participant E4 found the recipient's message. As a result '*dik funny*' or (very funny) modifies the term '*lol*' (laugh out loud) by placing emphasis on the extent of humour in the recipient's response. Additionally, the word '*liefie*' meaning '*love*' which is also of Afrikaans origin was used as a term of endearment referring to the receiver of the message. Thus, the participant made use of SMS speak utilising her acclaimed first language English as well as Afrikaans as one language and means of communication. She also ends the SMS with the number '*43*' which means '*love you*' in SMS speak as the word '*love*' when counted has four letters and the word '*you*' when counted consists of three letters, thus the phrase '*love you*' is reduced to its numerical

equivalent '43'. This example not only encompasses SMS speak but also provides signs of multimodality as in this case writing and numeracy were combined forming one message.

Similar to extract 19, the use of multimodality in the form of emoticons is apparent in the extract below highlighting E20's feelings and creating intimacy between the participants involved.

Extract 20

"Hi hun, will you be coming over later?? I made supper☺Miss you" (Hi honey, will you be coming over later?? I made supper☺ Miss you) – E6.

The first way intimacy is created between the participants here is by the use of terms of endearment. This SMS was sent by participant E6 to her boyfriend in which she was trying to enquire if he was planning to visit her as she had prepared supper. The term of endearment 'hun' which is short for 'honey' was used and she ended the SMS by telling him that she misses him acknowledging her feelings of longing. Secondly, this SMS is also a form of multimodal communication as it combines words and imagery such as a smiley face (☺) to emphasise the participant's feelings and emotions of being happy to create intimacy. This multimodal SMS is multiplicative with word and image meaning modifying each other, making a whole far greater than the simple sum of its parts (Unsworth, 2008). Thus, despite the common characteristic of SMS speak which combines word and imagery the message is still effective as a whole unit.

The next example encompasses both numeracy as seen in extract 19 and emoticons as seen in extract 20 as a form of multimodality to create intimacy by relaying feelings and emotions. Consider extract 21.

Extract 21

"Hey luv wud? I just gt home nw, i had a hectic day @ work. im goin 2church 2nyt. prob chat l8r. miss u☺" (Hey love what you doing? I just got home now, I had a hectic day at work. I'm going to church tonight. Probably chat later. Miss you☺) – E14.

This message was sent by participant E14 to her boyfriend asking him what he was doing and informing him that she had a hectic day at work and was going to church that evening and because of this would only speak to him thereafter. She addressed the SMS to her 'love' and ended the SMS by telling him that she misses him. In this case, the coding units 'love' and 'miss you' differentiates this SMS classifying it under the theme of intimate relationships but more so simultaneously recognizes terms of endearment as well as feelings of longing. As a result, the theme also revealed that the SMS/Mxit messages are multimodal. In this message multimodality can be identified making it possible to communicate meanings in new kinds of ways (Unsworth, 2008). Here, two modes of communication can be identified, the first being written language and the other being imagery. The participant wrote that that she misses her boyfriend and added a sad face (☹) at the end of her SMS. This is a new means of making meaning as the insertion of the sad face (☹) emphasises to her boyfriend just how much she misses and longs for him. Therefore, if the phrase 'miss u' is not clear enough, the idea is further emphasised by the sad face giving her boyfriend as well as the researcher an idea on how the sender feels because it focuses directly on her emotions, feelings and the fact that she misses him so much she feels sad. In essence, these two features of writing and imagery have complemented each other, modifying the SMS into something that goes beyond the written message and displays emotion allowing the message to create intimacy and to feel more realistic for the recipient

A3 formulated and sent this message in English contradicting his claim to his mother tongue Afrikaans and uses multimodal aspects to enhance the intimacy between the participants.

Extract 22

"Hey babe, not sure how much longer I'm gonna be but shouldn't be much longer. See you later baba mmmwah xxx" (Hey babe, not sure how much longer I'm going to be but shouldn't be much longer. See you later baby mwah xxx) – A3.

Within this category of data participant A3 sent a message to his girlfriend informing her that he is almost finished sorting out his university related matters and that he would see her later. He also refers to her as 'babe' and ends the SMS with a cyber kiss 'mwah' creating intimacy. The text message was sent in English which is contradictory as the participant stated that Afrikaans is his first language, however, he justifies this by explaining that he feels more comfortable SMSing in English. Multimodality can again be identified because this SMS

contains alternative modes for meaning making. In this instance, the cyber kiss is depicted by the word *'mwah'* which provides a mental image of participant A3 giving his girlfriend a kiss. Along with the cyber kiss the symbol *'xxx'* was also used and like the previous example this symbol is synonymous for emphasising the kiss since in SMS speak the symbol is recognized as a kiss. Therefore, the word *'mwah'* permits the recipient of the message to sound out the kiss which is reinforced with the *'xxx'* symbol meaning many kisses. However, this symbol is exclusive to SMS speak because if it were to be used in a different mode of communication, it would not have the same meaning. This simultaneously means that participants need to have schemata as well as an understanding of the SMS lingo in order to contextualise and comprehend the message. Here the coding unit *'baba'* (baby) and *'babe'* allows for the categorisation of this message under the current theme of intimate relationships.

Contrasting the previous SMSes under this theme, the example below contains no emoticons or numeracy yet intimacy is still created through the use of informal register.

Extract 23

"Haha – gedog jy ganiti like ni? Mwa. Love u" [Haha – gedog jy gaan dit nie lyk nie? Mwa. Love u] (Haha (laughs) – thought you wouldn't like it? Mwah. Love you) – A8.

Participant A8 sent this SMS to his girlfriend in which he explains that he thought that she might not like his gift. In the SMS he also gives her a kiss *'mwa'* and ends the message by telling her that he loves her hence this SMS was categorised under this theme since A8 openly acknowledges and expresses his love for his girlfriend. This message was written in SMS speak combining English and Afrikaans in the formation of the message. However, when reading the SMS two separate languages are not identified, instead SMS speak is used in such a way that the two languages come across as one. The SMS is also multimodal as it combines writing with sound in the form of a laugh *'haha'* and *'mwah'* in the form of a kiss. This process of multimodality foresees and enables linguistic, visual and auditory graphic meaning making to be integrated. Thus, these types of messages provide participants options for meaning making in language, image and sound giving them access to multimodal texts. Therefore, intimacy was created not only by auditory options such as a laugh or a kiss, or even the fact that A8 expresses feelings of love but also by the use of informal register indicating familiarity and closeness.

Intimacy is created in the SMS below through the use of kind words to accentuate to the receiver feelings of specialty and appreciation.

Extract 24

“As ek jo mut wegsteek wa sit ek jo? Ini blompot want j’s pragtig, ini yskas want j’s cool, of ini chocol8 box want j’s sweet? Nee! In my harki want j’s special!!!”[As ek jo moet wegsteek waar sit ek jo? In die blompot want jy is pragtig, in die yskas want jy is cool, of in die sjokalade box want jy is sweet? Nee! In my hartjie want jy is special!!!] (If I should hide you where do I put you? In the flower pot because you’re beautiful, in the fridge because you cool, or in the chocolate box because you’re sweet? No! In my heart because you’re special) – A15.

This message was sent by participant A15 to her boyfriend and it was meant to cheer him up because he was going through a tough time. The SMS functions to remind him how special he is to her. Although, the SMS does not contain any terms of endearment as is seen in the previous extracts the content of the message reinforces the idea that the message was sent to a person the sender holds close to her heart and participant A15 also provided contextual details confirming that the SMS was sent to her boyfriend. This message includes one of many characteristics of SMS speak as many abbreviations and contractions such as ‘*ini*’ (in die-in the) and ‘*wa*’ (waar-where) can be identified.

The next SMS contains various linguistic options and generates intimacy through informal register by exhibiting feelings of concern X3 has toward her boyfriend.

Extract 25

“Tjoo hayi shame u dnt sleep wena, thought ud be resting by now...Mamela baby, I dnt have air only this free sms. il call u xandiyifumene va” (Tjoo shame you don’t sleep you, thought you’d be resting by now...Listen baby, I don’t have airtime only this free sms. I’ll call you when I get it) – X3.

This message was sent by participant X3 to her boyfriend who had been out partying/clubbing all night. In the SMS she tells him that she does not have airtime but will call him when she gets airtime. She also refers to him by a term of endearment known as ‘*baby*’. This message contains features of English and isiXhosa but it is used in such a way that it forms

one language. X3 creates intimacy and closeness not only through informal register but also when she says *'thought you'd be resting by now'* because this affirms that she is caring and concerned about her partner's well being.

As is seen in the previous SMS, X4 similarly uses her feelings of longing and love to create intimacy through the use of different languages embedded as one repertoire.

Extract 26

"We Jc wtchn a mvie apha eLounge. Dude I mis u. Njoy urself, b safe. I love u" (We just watching a movie in the lounge. Dude I miss you. Enjoy yourself, be safe. I love you) – X4.

Participant X4 sent this SMS to her boyfriend while she was home in Eastern Cape visiting her parents. The SMS was sent in English regardless of her first language as she explained that it is easier to type a message in English than in Xhosa in her opinion. Therefore, the languages were used as one and this highlights the hybridity of the SMS and criticises the monolingual model where a single language is deemed as sufficient for all functions. As an alternative it is giving way to a multilingual model, where speakers are able to use these varying linguistic options as one (Tan and Rubdy, 2008). She also ends the SMS by stating that she loves him. The phrases *'I miss you'* and *'I love you'* are the coding units that lead to the classification of this message under this theme.

In the same way the example that follows also downplays the monolingual view and acknowledges the multilingual view by expressing feelings and emotion in more than one linguistic option.

Extract 27

"Ey ma luv, andisakukhumbuli nje I cant wait to c u, ingathi u satadae ukude! Anywu...I lv u so much n tyk care of ur self. Bye." (Hey my love, I miss you so much I can't wait to see you, it feels like Saturday is far away! Anyway... I love you so much and take care of yourself. Bye) – X16.

Participant X16 sent this SMS to her boyfriend in which she wished to inform him that she really missed him and that she could not wait to see him over the weekend. She also made use of common SMS formatting when speaking to a significant other by telling him that she

loves him and by referring to him as *'my love'*. As is seen in the previous extract the participant used both features of English and isiXhosa as one language incorporating the multilingual perspective of using different features of a language forming one. This SMS is also an example of a hybrid language practice which according to Blackburn and Seligman (1995) are more tolerant and it is this tolerance that gives hybrid languages much of its technical interest. Thus, the text messages categorised under this theme were done so by the familiarisation of codes such as *'love you'*, *'miss you'* and terms of endearment such as *'hun'*, *'love'* and *'babe'*.

What conditions are likely to have given rise to the theme? Here the word conditions is understood as which terms have given rise to the theme. This question takes us back to the concept of coding, as messages were classified under specific themes by the identification of codes that linked to the theme. With the theme of intimate relations for example, the most frequent coding units arising out of this theme were the fact that senders addressed the receivers of their messages with terms of endearment such as *'my love'*, *'babe'* or *'honey'*. Therefore, this coding unit lead to the categorisation of the above SMS examples under the theme of intimate relationships and displays the affection of the senders toward their recipients. This in turn was the condition that gave rise to the existing theme.

Why then do people talk about this thing in this particular way? When looking at the theme of intimate relationships for example, senders adopt a specific manner when messaging who they consider their significant other. Thus, to answer this question many things can be taken into consideration like the fact that because the recipients are the sender's girlfriends or boyfriends and because they are in love they SMS each other in a loving manner which includes addressing one another in a style that is specific to that of addressing a girlfriend or boyfriend. This also reveals their affection, familiarity and level of intimacy for the recipient of the SMS. With this in mind, given the content of the SMS, the reader is also able to see the reasoning behind why participants construct and talk about a particular subject in a specific way and this can be applied to all the themes identified above.

5.2.4 Family Ties

The theme of family ties was identified across all three categories of data in which participants with various first languages sent SMSes to their family members covering

varying topics. One of the highlights of this theme was the fact that participants sent text messages to family members in other provinces such as the Eastern Cape and this was more commonly identified in the isiXhosa category of data.

The following extracts highlight feelings of thoughtfulness, concern and care the participants display toward their parents and vice versa.

Extract 28

“Yes mommy, I’ve got enough money” (Yes mommy, I’ve got enough money) – E5.

Participant E5 sent this SMS to her mother informing her that she does have enough money as she was due to go out with her friends for the evening. Even though we do not have access to the received message sent by E5’s mother, judging by the response and content of this SMS, it shows that the participant’s mother was concerned about her daughter having enough money in order to enjoy her evening. Through this process of feeling concerned the intimacy between the sender and receiver is immediately detected. The coding unit ‘*mommy*’ allowed for the categorization of this message under this specific theme.

Likewise, feelings of thoughtfulness and care are evident in this message between a daughter and her mother. Consider extract 29.

Extract 29

“Mummy are you home yet? I want to know if u needs anything from the shops, Im at the mall now. Lief vir jou” (Mummy are you home yet? I want to know if you need anything from the shops, I’m at the mall now. Love you) – E10.

Participant E10 sent this SMS to her mother asking her if she needed anything from the shops since she was at the shopping mall. Sending a message of this nature demonstrates that E10 is caring because even though she was at the shopping centre for her own needs she still thought about assisting her mother. The message comprises of SMS speak in which English and Afrikaans are used as one language and simultaneously displays E10’s level of intimacy given that she acknowledges and expresses her love for her mother.

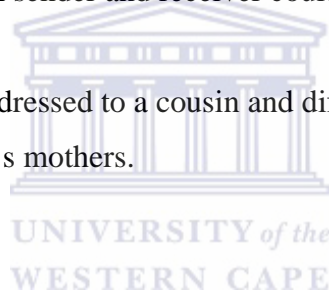
The next extract consists of a formal register and E15's feelings of thoughtfulness and consideration are exhibited toward her mother.

Extract 30

"Okay, I will be waiting for mommy outside the library in the parking lot" (Okay, I will be waiting for you outside the library parking lot) – E15.

This message sent by participant E15 serves the function of informing her mother that once she was done with classes for the day she would wait for her mother to pick her up in the parking lot outside of the library. The SMS was typed out in Standard English as the participant explained that her mother does not understand messages written in SMS speak. Therefore, extract 28, 29 and 30 all had a common coding unit as all these SMSes were addressed to the participant's mothers. All three these examples were sent in a formal register yet intimacy and feelings between sender and receiver could still be identified.

The examples to follow are all addressed to a cousin and differ to the previous three examples that were addressed to the sender's mothers.



Extract 31

"Mis u nig, ek hoop ek sien jou in die volgende vakansie. Mwah, lief vir jou" [Miss you niggie, ek hoop ek sien jou in die volgende vakansie. Mwah, lief vir jou] (Miss you cousin, I hope I see you the next holiday. Mwah, love you) – A10.

Taking a closer look at the second category of data participant A10 sent this message to her cousin in which she says that she hopes to see her in the upcoming holidays as she misses her. The coding unit 'nig' (niggie-cousin) led to the classification of this SMS under the current theme. The use of SMS speak is prevalent in this message as the word 'nig' (niggie-cousin) has also taken on an abbreviated form. This also displays the hybridity of the SMS as the participant wrote 'mis u' (miss you) instead of 'mis jou' (miss you). Therefore, despite the first language of the participant, she used the English abbreviation 'u' (you) instead of the Afrikaans word 'jou' (you). However, it is used in a manner in which the two languages flow together and makes sense as one language repertoire that being SMS speak.

This extract like the previous one was sent in a fairly formal register but still contained characteristics of SMS speak such as abbreviations.

Extract 32

“Hi nig sal seker eers so een uur da wees, vlug was uitgestel” [Hi niggie sal seker eers so een uur daar wees, vlug was uitgestel] (Hi cousin, will only be there at about 13h00, flight was delayed) – A16.

The message was sent by participant A16 to her cousin informing her about the time she would arrive at her cousin’s house as her flight was delayed. This example like the previous extract is characterised by SMS speak as the abbreviations ‘*nig*’ (niggie-cousin) and ‘*da*’ (daar-there) are common features of SMS speak. This kind hybridity used throughout SMS speak creates a type of tolerance which allows for words to be shortened which might not have been possible and accepted by the monolingual view of seeing languages as separate entities.

As a result, this message sent by A20 differs in comparison to extract 31 and 32 because the register used is very informal and consists of far more abbreviations and contractions known to SMS speak.

Extract 33

“Awe nig as j trug km vi Candy km hal of wee hie draai km mak, mut nti vgiet va di kos wt j mut hys toe vati asp”[Awe niggie as jy terug kom vir Candice kom haal of weer hier ‘n draai kom maak, moet net nie vergeet van die kos wat jy moet huis toe vat nie asseblief] (Hello cousin when you come from Candice make a turn here, just don’t forget about the food that you must take home with you please) – A20.

This SMS was sent by participant A20 to her cousin reminding her to come around to her house and telling her not to forget the food parcel that she needed to take home with her. The entire message comprises of SMS speak as many abbreviations are present. Some of these include ‘*j*’ (jy-you) ‘*wt*’ (wat-what) and ‘*asp*’ (asseblief-please). As is seen in the previous examples, this example contained the coding unit ‘*nig*’ (niggie-cousin) thus it was

categorised under the present theme. The informality of the SMS in terms of space and time saving strategies breeds familiarity between the participants involved.

X4 sent this message in English despite her claim in the demographics tabulated that her first language is isiXhosa producing a SMS both evident of hybridity and multimodality.

Extract 34

“Aunty Lungi we arrived safe in Jozi nw we r abt 2 leave 4 Cpt. Twas gr8 being with u. c u soon” (Aunty Lungi we arrived safe in Johannesburg now we are about to leave for Cape Town. It was great being with you. see you soon) – X4.

This message was sent by participant X4 to her aunt informing her that she arrived safely in Johannesburg and was about to board a flight to Cape Town. The SMS was sent in English despite the first language of the participant being isiXhosa. This again proves that the concept of first languages are problematic in the realm of SMS speak and is based on a monolingual ideal. As a result participant X4 made use of SMS speak in this message incorporating characteristics such as abbreviations of words displaying the tolerance of hybrid language practices in SMS speak. Examples include ‘r’ instead of ‘are’, ‘c’ instead of ‘see’ and ‘abt’ instead of ‘about’. Multimodality is also identified here as X4 combined numeracy and writing forming ‘gr8’ instead of the full spelling of the word ‘great’. Here the coding unit ‘aunty’ allowed for the categorisation of this message under this theme.

In contrast to extract 34, the bulk of this message was sent in isiXhosa using features of English as one repertoire.

Extract 35

“Mama andizubuya, coz ku late, so ndizolala ku Norma” (Mama I am not going to sleep at home because it’s getting late, so I am sleeping over at Norma’s place) – X15.

Participant X15 sent this message to her mother informing her that she would not be sleeping at home because it was late instead she would sleep over at her friends place. The message is characterised by SMS speak where features of English words such as ‘coz’ for because, ‘late’ and ‘so’ and isiXhosa expressions were combined. This SMS is not only hybrid but allows

for SMS speak to be used in a systematic, strategic way where the features of the different languages flow as one.

The next message proves why SMSing is a convenient service for many as a means of keeping in touch with distant family members.

Extract 36

“Hi Ma, unjani? Hey I mc u shame, unqabeleni kangaka? Ugqibele kudala undi phonela. gudnyt.” (Hi! Ma, How are you? Hey! I miss you shame, why you so scarce? You haven’t been calling me. Good night) – X16.

Participant X16 sent this message to her mother asking how she is and why she is so scarce because her mother has not been making contact with her. The participant also explained that she is originally from Eastern Cape but studying at UWC hence she asked her mother why she is scarce. This highlights that SMSing is an easy, affordable means of keeping in contact with family members at any time and in any place. The use of the coding unit ‘*ma*’ (mother) led to the categorisation of this message under the present theme of family ties. Here like in the previous example English and isiXhosa were not used as distinctive separate languages but forms one language exposing the hybridity of the SMS.

When comparing the three categories of data it was prevalent that participants who had English as their first language mostly sent messages to their mothers and those who had Afrikaans as their first language mostly sent messages to their cousins. However, in the third category of data participants sent messages to their mothers and aunts. This theme also highlighted that SMSing is a means of long distant communication and that participants were using this medium of communication to stay in touch with family member in the Eastern Cape. Therefore, despite the differences among the varying categories of data all the SMSes were grouped under one common theme as it entailed messages that were sent to family members highlighting the theme of family ties.

5.2.5 Birthday Wishes

The theme of birthday wishes was a common theme that reoccurred throughout all three categories of data. Within these messages the most relevant coding unit was the phrase ‘*happy birthday*’.

What we see in the following extracts is that ‘happiness’ is expressed in various ways. In extract 37, for example, words are used to resemiotize the sound of a kiss, while extensive use of exclamation marks are designed to heighten agency and the intensity of the feelings of affection.

Extract 37

“Happy happy Birthday My Angel! Hope ur feelin fabulous 2day? Mayit b a great day, filled with al da lurv n happiness inda world! Hope da nurses giv u xtra special care 2day! Lol...njoy! Luv u huni! Mwwwah!” (Happy happy Birthday My Angel! Hope your feeling fabulous today? May it be a great day, filled with all the love and happiness in the world! Hope the nurses give you extra special care today! Laugh out loud...enjoy! Love you honey! Mwah!) – E4.

Participant E4 explained that she sent this SMS to her friend who was in hospital at the time he was celebrating his birthday. The message is consistent with SMS speak as abbreviations can be identified such as ‘ur’ (your), contractions such as ‘feelin’ (feeling), ‘xtra’ (extra) and letter-number words such as ‘2day’ (today). Thus, the SMS speak not only displays the hybridity of the message but also highlights its multimodal function with the cyber kiss ‘mwah’. This extract combines writing and sound adding depth to the message in conjunction with the use of exclamation marks and feelings of happiness to exhibit E4’s feelings of affection. It also serves to cheer up the recipient who had to celebrate his birthday in hospital.

Similarly, the extract below is peppered with word kisses ‘mwah’ as a sign of deep affection.

Extract 38

“Wat tym is it...party tym...wat tym is it party tym...o cum sing along...o cum sing along...say u dnt knw wat we been told supergal is gettn old dnt u worry dnt u fear it nly hpns once a year...say yo yo...yo yo...say yeah yeah...Its ur birthday!!! Mwah wat can i say...im back...mwah enjoy ur day bbz” (What time is it...party time...what time is it party time...o come sing along...o cum sing along...say you don’t know what we been told super girl is getting old don’t you worry don’t you fear it only happens once a year... say yo yo..yo yo...say yeah yeah...It’s your birthday!!! Mwah what can I say...I’m back...mwah enjoy your day babe) – E8.

This example is a message sent by participant E8 to her friend to wish her happy birthday. The message contains SMS speak and has an intertextual link to a birthday song that the waiters and waitresses sing at a popular South African restaurant called Spur when it is a customer's birthday. Here the cyber kiss 'mwah' portrays the affection E8 feels for the recipient along with feelings of being happy, cheerful and jolly which are commonly associated with singing a birthday song.

In the extract to follow feelings of enjoyment, well wishes and happiness are again evident and associated with wishing the recipient a happy birthday.

Extract 39

"Hallo!...Slammat!! met jou verjaarsdag...best wishes to you in everything that u want to accomplish en al swat mooi, hoep j 'n leke dag gehad en dat j di aand verder sal geniet met familie en vriende...keep smiling..." [Hallo!...Slammat!! met jou verjaarsdag...best wishes to you in everything that you want to accomplish en alles wat mooi is, hoep jy het 'n lekker dag gehad en dat jy die aand verder sal geniet met familie en vriende...keep smiling...] (Hello! Congratulations on your birthday...best wishes to you in everything that you want to accomplish and everything that is beautiful, hope you had a good day and that you will enjoy the rest of your evening with your family and friends...keep smiling...) – A7.

Within this category of data participant A7 sent this SMS to a friend to wish him a happy birthday. The message contains a mixture of English and Afrikaans used as one language and also contains a word of Arabic decent known as 'slammat' (congratulations). This word means congratulations in Arabic and the participant explained that she utilised this word as the recipient of the message is of the Islamic background. Thus, the participant made use of features of different languages in an attempt to communicate her message; however, these features were not used in isolation but instead combined and used as one language. This again counteracts the concept of participant A7's first/home language Afrikaans. Using features of different languages to convey her message highlighted her affection exposing the happiness and enjoyment she felt toward wishing the recipient a happy birthday.

As is seen in the previous extracts, extract 40 also presents deep affection with a cyber kiss and feelings of enjoyment and well wishes.

Extract 40

“Hapi hapi bday! Hpe tannie njoyd d day n may thr b many mor cnt wait to c u agen mwah mwah! (Happy happy birthday! Hope aunty enjoyed the day and may there be many more can’t wait to see you again mwah mwah!) – A20.

This message was sent by Participant A20 to her aunt (dad’s sister) who she explained is also her godmother. Here, once again because of the mixed variety of languages used, the concept of hybrid language practices is foregrounded and the use of multimodality is also present with the sounding out of the cyber kiss ‘mwah’. The message also displays popular characteristics of SMS speak such as abbreviations ‘b’ (be), ‘c’ (see) and ‘u’ (you) and the contraction of words ‘hapi bday’ instead of (happy birthday). The coding unit ‘hapi hapi bday’ (happy happy birthday) led to the classification of this message under the current theme. The use of exclamation marks for wishing the recipient intensifies and heightens A20’s feelings of affection and happiness in relation to the double kiss ‘mwa mwah’ she sounds out for her aunt.

The use of capitalization has been described as playing the role of appraisal in discourse (Ferris 2010). X5 in the extract below uses capitalization and a switch to isiXhosa to wish the recipient in a cheerful manner demonstrating his affection and the level of intimacy that exists between the sender and receiver.

Extract 41

“HAPPY BIRTHDAY mntase! I hpe u enjoyd yo day 2 its fullest, uyathandwa ngumntakwenu...” (HAPPY BIRTHDAY my brother! I hope you enjoyed your day to its fullest, you are loved by your brother...) – X5.

Within the third category of data participant X5 sent a message to his friend to wish him a happy birthday. The participant also used the term ‘mntase’ to refer to his friend as a brother indicating intimacy and the closeness of their relationship. He also ends the SMS by expressing his love and appreciation for the recipient. The message is characterised by SMS speak and is an example of a hybrid language practice as it incorporates capitalization and numeracy in the form of ‘2’ instead of (two). Based on the content of the SMS, it is clear that the message sets a cheerful tone with a sincere intention of wishing the recipient a happy birthday filled with enjoyment.

Like the previous extract, the role of playfulness and being cheerful is evident in extract 42.

Extract 42

“Happy birthday ntombi. Wanga uThixo woxolo angakusikelela akwandisele iminyaka yakho. Enjoy this day it comes one a year, happy 13th bef day LOL” (Happy birthday girl. May the God of peace bless you and increase your years. Enjoy this day it comes once a year, happy 13th birthday Laugh out loud) – X11.

This message was sent by participant X11 who explained that the last part of the message was meant to be humorous and playful as the recipient was not turning 13 but turning 20 instead hence the abbreviation ‘*LOL*’ which stands for ‘*laugh out loud*’. It is also noted that the isiXhosa used here is of a very deep formal nature excluding abbreviations and contractions. As a result, the hybridity present in the SMS allows for the tolerance of English and isiXhosa to be used as one language instead of separate language entities. Both extracts 41 and 42 are examples of messages that highlight the contradiction of the first/home language approach as these participants mixed their languages instead of replying solely in isiXhosa.

Therefore, all the messages grouped under this category had a common coding unit in the form of ‘*happy birthday*’. These birthday messages were also sent to various participants and had the familiar aim of wishing the recipients a happy birthday whilst simultaneously revealing feelings of deep affection through word kisses such as ‘*mwah*’ as well as feeling of happiness and cheerfulness associated with wishing someone happy birthday.

5.2.6 Messages of Gratitude

The theme of gratitude was apparent across all three categories of data where participants with various first languages as according to the demographics and language backgrounds sent messages of thanks to varying recipients. This is one of the themes that had fewer examples of SMSes in each category of data to choose from and included thank you messages for various reasons.

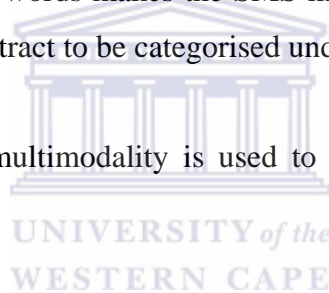
What we see in the following extracts is that the feeling of gratitude, appreciation and thanks is expressed in various ways. For example in extract 43, E3 uses multimodality and an informal register to convey her message.

Extract 43

“Hey I didn’t even get time 2 tel u thank u 4 dis morning. 4 da support and that u made time 2 go wit me and everything. Means a lot 2 me and I wont 4get what u gne 4me” (Hey I didn’t even get time to tell you thank you this morning. For the support and that you made time to go with me and everything. Means a lot to me and I won’t forget what you done for me) – E3.

Looking at the first category of data participant E3 sent a message to her friend to thank her for the support she provided. The SMS contains an informal use of English only and was aimed at displaying the sender’s gratitude. This message is also characterised by abbreviations such as ‘u’ (you) and contractions such as ‘gne’ (gone) and ‘dis’ (this) which are common to SMS speak. Another common characteristic of SMS speak displayed here is the use of numbers to replace words which have the same sound as the number used. These include ‘2’ instead of (two) and ‘4’ instead of (for). This very combination of informal register and numeracy to replace words makes the SMS multimodal. The coding unit ‘thank u’ (thank you) allowed for this extract to be categorised under this theme.

Likewise, in extract 44 below multimodality is used to express feelings of gratitude and appreciation.



Extract 44

“Thanks so much for a fab aftanoon. Have a gr8 weekend. mwa” (Thanks so much for a fabulous afternoon. Have a great weekend. mwa) – E16.

This SMS was sent by participant E16 to her friend thanking her for the wonderful afternoon they spent together at the cricket. Accordingly, by sending a thank you SMS the participant is displaying her sense of gratitude and appreciation to the recipient. The coding unit ‘thanks’ led to the categorisation of this message under this theme. The multimodal aspects present in this extract include a letter-numbered word in the form of ‘gr8’ (great) where letters and numbers sounding similar to a word are combined and used. The word kiss ‘mwa’ is also used at the end of the SMS heightening E16’s feelings of appreciation toward the recipient.

As is seen in extracts 43 and 44, extract 45 also uses multimodality in the form of emoticons to demonstrate gratitude.

Extract 45

“Hey...thnx 4da opportunity ☺u really kind...” (Hey...thanks for the opportunity☺ you really kind...) – E17.

This message was sent by participant E17 to someone she never really knew at the time but who gave her the opportunity to experience a complementary session at the gym without having to sign a gym contract and in return the SMS serves the purpose of displaying the sender’s gratitude. The SMS illustrates hybridity as well as multimodality as the smiley face (☺) allows for the combination of two modes of communication that being writing and imagery. The use of the smiley face also reinforces the sender’s appreciation of the kind act carried out by the recipient.

The use of capitalization in extract 46 as well as emoticons stresses A8’s appreciation toward his friend.

Extract 46

“Aaaww bje danki, ws rgtg ni ndg v so bje ni! Bje danki – owe u BIG time, hehe! ☺” [Aaaww baie dankie, was regtig nie nodig vir so baie ni! Baie dankie – owe u BIG time, hehe☺] (Aww thank you, really wasn’t necessary for so many! Thank you very much – owe you BIG time, hehe☺) – A8.

In the second category of data participant A8 sent a SMS to his friend thanking her for what she had done for him and simultaneously letting her know that he owes her for the favour she had done for him. This SMS combines the use of English and Afrikaans as one language regardless of the participant’s claim that Afrikaans is his first language. The multimodality used in this message showcases writing, imagery like the smiley face (☺) and auditory stimulation such as the sound of the laugh or giggle ‘hehe’. Thus, the mixed forms of language usage and its multimodal components of sound, imagery and writing combine and form one distinctive language known as SMS speak. Here the use of capitalization and exclamation marks contribute to the sender’s gratitude and cheerful nature by emphasising his appreciation.

Similarly, the extract below is infused with word kisses ‘mwah’ as a sign of deep appreciation.

Extract 47

“U such a angel, dankie vriendin! Mwah hav a lekker dag further, mis u loottsss xxx” (You such a angel, thank you friend! Mwah have a good day further, miss you lots xxx) – A10.

This message was sent by participant A10 to her friend to thank her for taking lecture notes on her behalf as per the contextual details provided by the participant as she did not attend class that particular day. The multimodal sign xxx in conjunction with the kiss ‘mwah’ displays her affection and appreciation that the recipient was able to carry out this act of kindness on her behalf.

The same trend can be seen in the extract below, where cyber kisses and emoticons are used to display appreciation.

Extract 48

“lol, thanx skat...nw me n u cn go cruising 2geda ☺...mwah” (laugh out loud, thanks darling...now me and you can go cruising together☺ ...mwah) – A18.

This SMS was sent by participant A18 to his friend informing her that he passed his licence which initially meant that they can now go out together. The SMS also contains contraction of words such as ‘nw’ for (now) and letter-number words such as ‘2geda’ instead of (together) and these are some of the concepts that will be investigated further in Chapter 6. This message is characterised by SMS speak despite the first language the participant claimed to have and includes the multimodal aspect of imagery in the form of a smile (☺) and sound in the form of a kiss ‘mwah’.

Extracts 49 contains no capitalization or imagery yet gratitude and appreciation is detected in other multimodal forms.

Extract 49

“Thanks a lot 4 the wise words, meant a lot. ndibhale kakuhle noko. Nid to take a short nap now. Later! Thanks again ur 2 sweet” (Thanks a lot for the wise words, meant a lot. Wrote well. Need to take a short nap now. Later! Thanks again your too sweet) – X3.

Within the last category of data participant X3 sent a message to a close friend thanking him for the well wishes for her exam. The SMS is a mixture of linguistic options used as one language which highlights the hybridity of the message. The abbreviation ‘*ur*’ instead of (your) can be identified as well as the replace of elongated vowel sounds such as ‘*need*’ to short sounding ones such as ‘*nid*’. Here multimodality in the form of numeracy such as ‘2’ for (to) and exclamation marks is evident. All of these aspects contribute to X3’s sense of appreciation.

Similar to extract 49, extract 50 contains the same kind of phenomenon in terms of exhibiting gratitude and appreciation.

Extract 50

“*Thank u bhuti, ooh! I did enjoy my day nakanjani, really hd a lekker day. Sharp*” (Thank you brother ooh! I did enjoy my day today, really had a nice day. Sharp) – X5.

This SMS was sent by participant X5 in which he thanks the recipient for the birthday message he received and informs the recipient that he enjoyed his day. Here again despite the participant’s claim that isiXhosa is his first language, the SMS is characterised by SMS speak highlighting its hybridity. The use of exclamation marks and abbreviation of words intensifies the participant’s feeling of gratitude.

For this reason all the messages identified in this theme pertain to gratitude and appreciation and the participants thanked their recipients for various reasons using multimodality in its multiple forms including emoticons, exclamation marks and sound. The coding unit elicited from this theme was ‘*thank you*’ which led to the classification of these SMSes under the current theme.

5.2.7 Promotional Messages

The final theme to undergo analysis was that of promotional messages. This theme was identifiable across all three categories of data and had the least number of SMSes as examples under each category of data. However, this theme differed from the previous six themes as it was the only theme that focused on messages participants received instead of focusing on messages participants produced. This was done merely to draw attention to the

fact that the senders of these SMSes used the mode of a cell phone as a marketing and advertising strategy.

Extract 51 below is proof that businesses are using SMSing not only as a means to communicate but as a means to market and advertise their specific product or company.

Extract 51

“Exercise your right to win an iPod! Planet Fitness wants to keep you up to date with electronic statements. Please reply via sms with your email address” (Exercise your right to win an iPod! Planet Fitness wants to keep you up to date with electronic statements. Please reply via sms with your email address).

This was an SMS participant E10 received from a popular gym called Planet Fitness. This SMS was classified as a promotional message because the business entices and attracts the participants to the company itself by promoting the winning of an iPod. The use of the word ‘exercise’ at the beginning of this message is ambiguous as it takes on the literal meaning of performing physical exercise activities as is done at the gym and it could also mean ‘put into practice’ your right to win an iPod. Thus, the fact that this message was sent by the company as an SMS, emphasises the modernity and high exchange value of the instant messaging service (Tan and Rubdy, 2008).

A similar trend is seen in example 52 below, where a business uses the convenience of SMSing to advertise to their clientele.

Extract 52

“You are a lucky winner of R250 000 from BT Mobile UK. Visit www.btmobileuk.com to get cash. For free mobi email go to webmail.co.za” (You are a lucky winner of R250 000 from BT Mobile UK. Visit www.btmobile.com to get cash. For free mobi email go to webmail.co.za).

This was a promotional message participant E13 received from a cellular company in the United Kingdom. This SMS was identified as a promotional message because the company is promoting itself by drawing the sender’s attention to the large sum of money that can be won.

This also confirms that businesses are making use of the time saving strategies known to SMSing in order to market their product to masses of people.

The following example shows that not only are businesses using SMSing as a means of advertising and communication but they are also making use of capitalization and abbreviations to convey their message. See extract 53.

Extract 53

“Hi Mr Davids, hope u remembered? It’s the IDENTITY extra 25% off SALE today, Wed 27 Jan @ 12 noon, all stores. Continues 28th, 4 days only!” (Hi Mr Davids, hope you remembered? It’s the IDENTITY extra 25% off SALE today, Wednesday 27 January at 12 noon, all stores. Continues 28th, 4 days only!).

In the second category of data participant A18 received a SMS from a clothing store named Identity. The purpose of the message is to promote the store and to lure customers to the store by giving them a 25% discount on their purchases. The manner in which the message is constructed plays on the idea that stock of the clothing is limited and the sale lasts for four days only, thus it renders the impression that if the customer does take advantage of the sale they would definitely be missing out. The company cleverly uses capitalization of words to place emphasise on their intended message such as ‘SALE’ and ‘IDENTITY’ in an attempt to stress the fact that the shop (identity) is having a sale. They also use characteristics of SMS speak in the form of the abbreviation ‘u’ (you) proving that businesses are up to date with modern times and technology.

The informal register used in extract 54 shows that businesses are trying to connect to their clients using informality as a trend.

Extract 54

“Get ready for YDE 25% sale. Major bucks off all clothing. So come get super sale stuff on Wednesday 2 Feb as doors open” (Get ready for YDE 25% sale. Major bucks off all clothing. So come get super sale stuff on Wednesday 2 February as doors open).

Within the third category of data a similar pattern was found where participant X3 received a SMS from a well known clothing store called Young Designer’s Emporium (YDE) and like

the previous example, this SMS is aimed at promoting the 25% sale the store would be having. This strategy employed by the company was aimed at attracting the recipient's attention so that the recipient can reap the benefits of the sale. The use of the colloquial word 'bucks' shows that the company not only employs modern modes of communication such as SMSing but that they employ modern means of language use. Both extracts 53 and 54 are messages received by participants who according to the demographic tables at the beginning of this chapter claim to have Afrikaans and isiXhosa as their first language respectively. However, both participants A18 and X3 received SMSes from different businesses in English. This ties in with what Tan and Rubdy (2008) state that English is seen as an instrument of modernization promoting economic and social power and solidarity.

Consequently, even though the theme has minimal SMSes identified for each category of data it still had the same purpose and was viable as the theme itself was a common theme across the data respectively. This was also the only theme that focused on received messages to highlight how various businesses promote and advertise themselves and to show how these businesses are keeping abreast with modern times and technology by sending their clients SMSes. This in turn has an effect on the recipient as it is seen as a personal attempt on behalf of the company to inform the receivers of the various promotions. Therefore, even though this theme has the least number of messages classified under it, it had the same amount of significance as the other themes. Another common factor highlighted under this theme was the fact that all the messages were sent to the various recipients in English regardless of the first language of the participants. This again sees the first/home language approach as problematic, proving that even businesses send messages to their clients in English with no consideration given to the first language of the client. This is done as a money saving technique as sending messages to various clients in their personalised home/first language would cost the company more money, therefore, they pick a communal language such as English to communicate their message. By doing so these businesses emphasise how universal and economically powerful the English language is and also highlights the fact that English is the preferred language medium in which most trans-actions take place within business organizations (Tan and Rubdy, 2008).

5.3 Theme or no theme?

All seven of the above themes could be easily identified as each category of data contained examples of text messages relating to it. However, there were a few text messages concerning

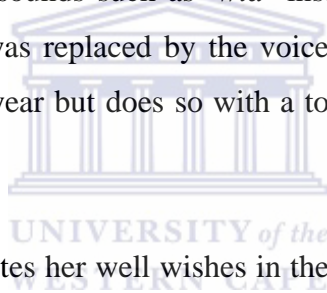
New Year's wishes, prayer messages, and messages bearing recipes that were also identified in the data that I could not classify under a theme and this was mainly due to the fact that even though they were identified, there was no common thread in all three categories of data; therefore, I could not use those examples and develop it into a theme.

The extract below is intended to wish the recipient well for the year ahead expressing feelings of happiness and joy.

Extract 55

"Blessed new year to you too. May this year b filled wid joy nd happiness" (Blessed new year to you too. May this year be filled with joy and happiness) – E3.

This message is characterised by SMS speak and includes the contraction of words such as 'b' (be) and the replacement of sounds such as 'wid' instead of 'with'. Here the voiceless fricative interdental 'th' sound was replaced by the voiced alveolar stop 'd'. E3 wishes the recipient well for the upcoming year but does so with a tone and intention of happiness and joy.



Similarly, A7 expresses and devotes her well wishes in the form of a prayer characterised by SMS speak.

Extract 56

"As u step out 2day, may u step into abundant blessings, unmatched favours, unexpected breakthrough, divine connection & overall success. This is my prey for u. Hope u have a great week" (As you step out today, may you step into abundant blessings, unmatched favours, unexpected breakthrough, divine connection and overall success. This is my prey for you. Hope you have a great week) – A7.

This message was formulated and sent in SMS speak despite the participant claiming to have Afrikaans as a first/home language. It contains letter-number words such as '2day' (today) and abbreviations in the form of 'u' (you). This is also seen as an act of kindness on behalf of the participant wishing the receiver well for the week ahead.

A mixture of formal and informal register of isiXhosa is identified below with the aim of sending the recipient a recipe.

Extract 57

“Makagalele iflour 2spoons ne teaspoon yeast, nesugar kwintwana yamanzi ayiyeke de ibile apheke isidudu singapholi ceke afake ubusuku bonke amane eshiya umlumiso ke” (She must add two spoons of flour with teaspoon with teaspoon of yeast, and sugar in a little water let it boil. Then cook porridge and don't let it cool completely. Make sure you leave a little prepared doe to start it off again) –X11

This message in the form of a recipe was sent to participant X11's friend providing details on how to cook porridge. The SMS contains both formal and informal register of Xhosa such as *'iflour'* (flour) and *'2spoons'* (two spoons). As a result, the message is hybrid since it displays various forms of register and multimodal as it contains numeracy.

The lack of common thread in these messages is a reminder of Pavlenko's (2007) acknowledgement of the weaknesses that stem from the thematic analyses such as the overreliance on repeated instances, which may lead analysts to overlook important events or themes that do not occur repeatedly or do not fit into pre-established schemes as well as an exclusive focus on what is in the text, whereas what is excluded may potentially be as or even more informative. Thus, the text messages identified here could not be placed into a theme, but should be seen as equally important as those that were identified and categorised into themes. Like the SMSes classified into themes these messages were also formulated in SMS speak and contained characteristics of SMS speak such as abbreviations and contractions, multimodality and highlighted the problematic notion of first/home language as is seen in extract 56.

5.4 Summary

The main step featured in this thematic analysis is the coding of SMS/Mxit messages according to emerging themes, trends and patterns which allowed me to arrive at the themes discussed above. However, this was not done in separation from context and form as throughout this process and after each set of examples of the different data categories and themes, the context of the SMSes was provided. This was done firstly to contextualise the messages and secondly, it supplies the reader with background information about the SMS so

that a clear representation of the message can be understood whilst reading and decoding the message. This course of action of arriving at assorted themes was merely an analytical step in the process of the thematic analysis in which I could sieve through the large amounts of data (SMSes) I collected and arrive at the most common themes while simultaneously trying to ascertain which themes were most common and why. It allowed me to determine the nature of multimodality and hybridity present in the messages. Furthermore, this chapter also enabled me to clarify the data collected and to place it into perspective in a manner that was easily understandable.

Further, this technique proved to be reputable as it allowed for the compression of many words of text or in this case SMSes into fewer categories or themes in a systematic function and it allowed for certain inferences to be made about the SMS/Mxit messages because once the different themes were developed the data became easier to work with. This method provided me with rich meaningful themes and it was a powerful way for me to reduce the 300 messages collected and seek out those messages that were deemed most useful to the themes at hand. This technique also endorsed flexibility and selectiveness regarding the text messages and focused on the characteristics of language through mobile communication as a medium with attention to content and context of the messages being highlighted. The themes captured here had an important quality and related to the research question at hand and was aimed at representing meanings within the data. This method also required me to move back and forth through the data while in the process of establishing themes. Once this was done, I could focus on ideas, assumptions and ideologies underpinning the content of the data or SMSes.

Recapping on what Braun and Clarke (2006) said, these are some of the question that I asked relating to the thematic analysis. Firstly, what was the most common theme and why? This question proved to be challenging to answer as all the themes identified were significant hence they were identified as themes. However, the four themes that were most prominent was that of socialising activities, intimate relationships, managing university responsibilities and family ties as these were the themes that had the most SMS/Mxit examples that could be classified under each theme. The remaining themes that being birthday wishes, messages of gratitude and promotional messages had fewer SMS/Mxit examples identified in comparison to the latter themes. As a consequence, the themes were only divided as those that were common and those that were less common. Nonetheless, all the themes provided rich data

that could be assessed in a meaningful way as it contributed to the phenomenon being studied; which was the social phenomenon of SMSing as different themes brought to light different impressions of concepts being explored.

This brings me to the final question, what is the overall story the different themes reveal? This thematic analysis has revealed that firstly, the social dimensions of SMSing is emphasised by hybrid language practices as the SMSes illustrated were characterised by hybridity. As a result, productive techniques for using language codes such as SMS speak were acknowledged. Although these productive techniques have been developed, linguistic knowledge of how to use SMS speak has to be present. Consequently, these themes in conjunction with the SMS/Mxit messages have illustrated how participants use SMS speak and multimodality to communicate with one another. Secondly, the rise of hybridity questions the more traditional approach of code-switching or using alternative languages for particular purposes as hybrid languages are more tolerant, allowing a participant to use mixed forms and codes of languages to suit their needs for any purpose, instead of using these features for a particular purpose such as is done with code-switching. Traditionally, code-switching and code-mixing were seen as a means for participants to extend their repertoire where, in comparison, hybridity promotes tolerance and reinforces that diversity can serve as a resource for learning and communicating and proves that participants repertoires are already extended hence the mixture of language use. The manner in which language is used here not only highlights hybridity but also undermines the traditional approach of code-switching and code-mixing as this is based on an autonomous system.

Thirdly, the thematic analysis also revealed that messages are characterised by multimodality in which participants make use of more than one mode when communicating. This multimodal method allows participants to create new meaning by employing written messages with sound such as that of laughing 'haha' or 'hehe', the cyber kiss 'mwah' and imagery such as smiles (☺ or ☹) intensifying the SMSes and making it appear more realistic. Further, language is a symbolic sign system, thus the SMS has no relation to what is being represented, while the images such as smiley faces and sounds like 'mwah' are iconic because they represent something through similarity. Therefore, these text messages proved that this style of communication is multimodal and showcased that literacy is not confined to language.

Finally, the process of this thematic analysis has proved that SMS speak is a language on its own characterised by its own rules and norms of which the sender and receiver need to be aware of. Thus, languages such as English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa are not seen as three distinctive languages but instead form and are used as one common language known as SMS speak. This rules out the concept of first/home language as participants proved that they use features of any language available to them in order to communicate and not necessarily their first language. For this reason access to SMS speak can only be allowed if the necessary background information exists with the participants engaging in this practice. Further, even though there were various themes the same type of language usage could be identified across all the data within the themes that being the language of SMS speak. Thus, even though there were different text types the same norms of SMSing were prevalent throughout these specific texts types.

This concluded that in the realm of SMSing the manner in which SMS/Mxit messages are formed, produced and sent is seen as conventional, in contrast formulating the SMS in standard English, Afrikaans or Xhosa would be regarded as unconventional. In conclusion, the current themes came about as I was able to identify codes in the SMS examples and then link it to the themes. I then identified the SMSes in each category of data that was classified under each theme. For this reason a comparison was completed between the themes and examples of the three categories of data which could not be done for the messages containing New Year's wishes, prayer messages and messages bearing recipes as it was not identifiable in each category.

5.5 Conclusion

This type of analysis provided the opportunity to extract the richness and characteristics of the SMS/Mxit data in a manner that allowed for in-depth interpretation and analysis. This method was also useful by providing insight as to what type of information was achieved throughout the thematic analysis. The division of the SMSes into various themes allowed us to see which themes were regarded more popular in comparison to those that were seen as less prominent. It also showcased the use of hybridity in SMS speak and through the analysis reached the conclusion that languages such as English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa and features of these languages are used as one language known as SMS speak regardless of what participants claimed their first languages were. This chapter also looked at the use of multimodality in SMS speak and highlighted the fact that the use of a hybrid language such

as SMS speak is more tolerant and allowed for mixed language codes to be executed by the participants in their messages. The chapter to follow is the linguistic analysis and aims to complement the thematic analysis.

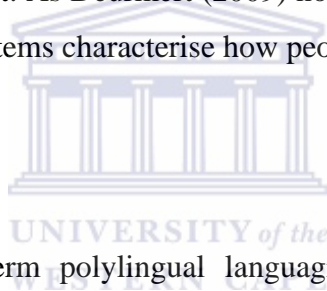


Chapter 6

Linguistic Analysis – An investigation of words and phrases used in SMS speak

6.0 Introduction

The spread of SMS speak and its increasing socioeconomic importance in the world today has made it a precious commodity among the youth. With this in mind, this chapter contains a detailed linguistic analysis which is aimed firstly, at focusing on the language usage in SMS speak like abbreviated and contracted words and secondly, it aims to complement the thematic analysis. Further, it looks at text messages from all three categories of data with the specific aim of looking at ways in which local languages are being used and transformed by this medium. This chapter investigates the intersect of language and digital communication and examines the role of languages other than English in the digital domain. Of particular interest is the fact that, in late modernity, languages are seen not as compartmentalized, but overlap, intersect and interconnect. As Deurmert (2009) notes a fusion of languages, dialects, scripts, registers and semiotic systems characterise how people communicate today.



6.1 Tabulated Messages

Jørgensen (2008) coined the term polylingual languaging with the understanding that language users employ whatever linguistic features at their disposal with the intention of achieving their communicative aims. Following this statement, I demonstrate how English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa were used, blended and modified by participants. In order to demonstrate the composition of the SMS messages, SMS speak and the linguistic resources used I have tabulated messages in order to see the difference more clearly. Each table deals with SMS speak or a combination of languages. The original SMS is placed in the first column, the transcription in the second column although this only applies to the second and third categories of data, the translation into Standard English in the third column and finally characteristics of SMS speak such as the abbreviation and contraction of words will be presented in the last column.

Table 6.1

SMS Extracts	Translation	Characteristics of SMS speak
1. <i>Hey reali sori 4 letn u knw so l8. I cn ply 2mro. At prac nw. hahaha. peace.</i>	Hey really sorry for letting you know so late. I can play tomorrow. At practice now. hahaha. peace.	Reali – really, sori – sorry, 4 – for, l8 – late, 2mro – tomorrow, letn – letting, prac – practice, cn – can, ply- play
2. <i>Ag, oryt just vrek hot! Ek het lis vr n ice cold krush nw at KFC. Wanna join?</i>	Ag, alright just very hot! I feel for an ice cold krush now at KFC. Want to join?	Oryt – alright nw – now wanna – want to
3. <i>Im in b block quick gna cum de now cause I need to mke copies</i>	I'm in B block quick going to come there now cause I need to make copies	Gna – going to cum – come de – there mke - make
4. <i>Morningz...lol wen u cum home bring my goetes man coz idk wat I left thr lol and if thrz any left, a cig n a piecy chocolate kanala.</i>	Mornings...laugh out loud when you come home bring my stuff man cause I don't know what I left there laugh out loud and if there's any left, a cigarette and a piece of chocolate please.	Wen – when, u – you, cum – come, coz – cause, idk – I don't know, wat – what, thr – there, thrz – there's, cig – cigarette, piecy – piece of, n - and
5. <i>Gudeveninz – hope im nt dsturbn...juz dropn in 2lt u no tht ur on my mind n tht i mis u. keep wel n njoy da rest of da wk. mwa***</i>	Good evening – hope I'm not disturbing...just dropping in to let you know that you on my mind and that I miss you. keep well and enjoy the rest of the week. mwa ***	Gudeveninz – good evening, nt – not, dstrbn – disturbing, juz – just, dropn – dropping, 2lt – to let, u – you, no – know, tht – that, ur – your, n – and, mis – miss, wel – well, njoy – enjoy, da – the , wk – week

6.1.1 A demonstration of hybridity and polylingual languaging in SMS speak.

In all of the above messages taken from the first category of data, a similar phenomenon can be identified which include characteristics of SMS speak such as word abbreviations, word contractions and letter-number words. I use the extracts in the table to highlight that the participants involved in this study all make use of texting, despite their claimed first language being English, Afrikaans or isiXhosa. Thus, it is regarded as a register in its own right and, simultaneously functions as a lingua franca as many participants use it as a shared means of communication regardless of their first language (Vosloo, 2009).

Table 6.1 contains extracts 1-5 on which the upcoming analysis is based.

In extract 1 the words '*reali*' and '*sori*' are examples of words one would normally consider unconventional spellings, however, in the context of SMS speak this is regarded as conventional spelling. An example of unconventional spelling here would be the word '*peace*' as it does not conform to the normal principle of SMS speak because the word was spelt out 'correctly' and contains no contractions or abbreviations. In both of these words the first characteristic of SMS speak is identified where consonants and semi-vowels are replaced by vowels. Here the letter 'y' was replaced with the letter 'i' yet these words never lost their meaning as the letters 'i' and 'y' are similar in sound and pronunciation hence, when replaced both words still sounded the same and contained its meaning despite the difference in spelling. The second characteristic of SMS speak is the use of letter-number words or homophones. Lutrin and Pincus (2002) explain that homophones are words that are pronounced the same way, but differ in spelling and meaning. Thus, the words '4', 'l8' and '2mro' can be classified as letter-number words and homophones respectively because these examples are pronounced the same way but differ in spelling and meaning. In this case the letter '4' spelt '*four*' replaces the preposition '*for*', 'l8' spelt '*late*' in this case the word '*eight*' is pronounced and sounds the same as the word '*ate*' hence the use of the homophonic equivalent 'l8' and lastly, the word '2mro' spelt '*tomorrow*' here the number '2' replaced the preposition '*to*'.

The third characteristic of SMS speak is the phenomenon of word contractions which were also identified in this example in which case the words '*letting*' and '*practice*' were contracted to form '*letn*' and '*prac*'. The fourth characteristic of SMS speak involves the omission of vowels as is seen in this example where the words '*ply*' and '*cn*' are both examples of words that have omitted vowels from the original spelling of the verbs '*play*' and

'can'. This demonstrates that with SMS speak being established as a language on its own, it is characterised by its own system of grammar and its own set of dynamic characteristics, that being letter-number words, omission of vowels and consonants and the contraction of words. Another common aspect of SMS speak is the extensive use of multimodal and iconic devices which in this case contains rules that account for how language meshes with diverse symbol systems, modalities of communication and resources to create meaning. Like in this example, the term 'hahaha' symbolises laughter not only through the written form of the word but through the sound of someone laughing and the image of someone laughing.

In extract 2 conventional spellings were also identified in the form of 'oryt'. This word was modified in spelling to form a complete new word but still contained its meaning which in this case if it were spelt 'alright' it would have formed part of unconventional spelling of SMS speak. Other characteristics of SMS speak include the omission of vowels like the word 'now' became 'nw' and another example of SMS characteristics includes the word 'wanna' which stands for 'want to' hence the two words were loosely combined to form one word with the same intended meaning. If working from a traditional perspective in linguistics this SMS would be an example of code-switching as the sender switched between English and Afrikaans to convey the intended message. This would mean that the Afrikaans word 'vrek' (very) emphasises how hot it is hence the craving for a krush (smoothie) drink at the named fast food outlet. However, based on the framework established in the previous chapter this example does not embody code-switching or code-mixing as these terminologies were designed from a monolingual perspective. Instead, it forms part of a hybrid language practice because the mixed codes used within this message are used as one language, thus SMS speak is used in a manner that no distinctions can be made between the languages used.

Extract 3 also embodied characteristics of SMS speak such as contracted words. In this SMS the word 'gna' was used to replace two words that being 'going to' and in the process was contracted to form one word which is a common characteristic of SMS speak. The words 'cum' and 'de' are typical examples of SMS speak in which 'cum' was used instead of 'come' and 'de' was used instead of 'the' thus, the voiced alveolar 'd' replaced the voiced interdental 'th' sound. The last example from extract 3 includes the characteristic of vowel omission where the word 'make' forms 'mke' as the vowel 'a' was omitted. This also highlights that the use of consonants and the avoidance of vowels is a space saving strategy used when

SMSing due to the character restriction when sending a message resulting in shorter words and messages.

In extract 4 many characteristics of SMS speak can again be identified, the first of that being the omission of consonants in the form of *'wen'*, *'cum'* and *'wat'* were identified. In this instance consonants were omitted such as the *'h'* in *'wat'* (what) and *'wen'* (when) and the omission of vowels occurs when the *'e'* in *'cum'* (come) is omitted. Another characteristic of SMS speak were the abbreviations identified in the SMS which include *'u'* which represents *'you'* and *'n'* which stands for *'and'*. The identified contracted words include *'coz'* (cause) in which letters were omitted forming a new spelling of the word, *'there'* in which the vowels were omitted forming *'thr'*, *'there's'* in which the vowels were omitted and the voiceless alveolar *'s'* sound was replaced by the voiced alveolar *'z'* sound forming *'thrz'* and *'cigarette'* in which the second half of the word was left out to form *'cig'*. Also the spelling of the word *'piece of'* was highlighted and condensed to form one word *'piecy'*. Here the replacement of sounds illustrates that participants are making phonological substitutions for words and these substitutions occur almost naturally.

In the last example, extract 5 the SMS speak identified include *'gudeveninz'* which replaced *'good evening'*, here the participant combined two English words forming a word on its own as is common to the grammar of SMS speak. Other characteristics of SMS speak include the word *'juz'* which replaced the word *'just'*. The characteristic of contracted words include *'dstrbn'* instead of *'disturbing'*, *'dropn'* replaced *'dropping'*, *'tht'* replaced *'that'*, *'nt'* instead of *'not'*, *'njoy'* replaced *'enjoy'* and the word *'wk'* replaced *'week'*. All of the above mentioned examples are examples of contracted words which have omitted vowels and in order to comprehend this message, knowledge of SMS speak needs to be present for the message to be attained and understood. Examples of contracted words which have consonants omitted include *'mis'* instead of *'miss'* and the word *'wel'* replaced *'well'*. A letter-number word was also identified in the form of *'2lt'* in which the number *'2'* replaced the preposition *'to'* hence the word is suppose to read *'to let'*. The homophone *'no'* was identified in place of *'know'* as in this case the words are pronounced the same but spelt differently and contain different meanings. However, despite the homophone being used the intended message was still conveyed. The abbreviations identified in this SMS include *'u'* for *'you'*, *'ur'* for *'your'* and *'n'* for *'and'*. The last word identified was *'da'* which replaced *'the'* thus the voiced

alveolar ‘d’ replaced the voiced interdental sound ‘th’ as seen in a previous example where phonological substitutions were made.

These examples show that SMS speak is used as a language practice (Pennycook 2010) by participants regardless of first languages in the new contexts of translocal and transnational communication. When comparing English as a lingua franca to SMS speak as lingua franca, Canagarajah (2007) suggests that matters are complicated because Lingua Franca English’s form is hybrid in nature by itself. However, my argument as established in the previous chapter of thematic analysis remains that SMS speak is hybrid in nature. This does not necessarily complicate matters as this very form of hybridity gives rise to language features, words, grammatical patterns and discourse conventions from diverse languages such as English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa which in this case the participants bring to the interaction when sending SMSes and use it as one and the same language of communication. Therefore, the rules and conventions developed by users of SMS speak come loaded with significant social information. The use of SMS speak is seen as a multiplicity of hybridity or super hybrid because these features of language is integrated in such a way that it makes sense to others even though it may seem complicated.

Extract 6 illustrates hybridity as features of different languages are combined under the circumstance of wishing the recipient happy birthday. This links with Heller’s (2007:1) argument ‘against the notion that languages are objectively speaking whole, bounded, systems’, and prefers to understand language use as the phenomenon that speakers draw on linguistic resources which are organised in ways that make sense under specific social circumstances as is illustrated below.

Extract 6

“Hallo!...Slammat!! met jou verjaarsdag...best wishes to you in everything that you want to accomplish en alles wat mooi is, hoep jy het ‘n lekker dag gehad en dat jy die aand verder sal geniet met familie en vriende...keep smiling...” (Hello! Congratulations on your birthday...best wishes to you in everything that you want to accomplish and everything that is beautiful, hope you had a good day and that you will enjoy the rest of your evening with your family and friends...keep smiling...).

Furthermore, language is social and is a phenomenon that occurs between people as some speakers combine three or four, or more different sets of features in their linguistic production as is seen in the examples above (extracts 1-5). Within extract 6, I noted that the sender of this SMS combined three languages, English, Afrikaans and Arabic in one message to form part of her linguistic production. This example is also in line with Heller's (2007) argument that languages are not whole bounded systems; instead these parts of languages were used interchangeably throughout the SMS showing that the participant drew on whatever linguistic resources necessary to communicate the intended message under the circumstance of wishing the receiver of the message a happy birthday. This also shows that the sender used features of these languages to formulate and communicate the message linking this SMS to the notion of hybridity as well as polylingual languaging. This example highlights the fact that the language usage here acts against the norms and standards of standardised language usage. The linguistic form conforms to the norms of SMS speak as the linguistic features drawn on above are organised in a way that makes sense under this specific social circumstance.



Table 6.2

Afrikaans	Transcription	Translation	Creative words
7. <i>Hi. J moet leke skryf. Ek dink aan jo, as j ni wiet wat om t skryf ni, just draw a rock...tel dem da ans is underneath. mooi ry.</i>	Hi. Jy moet lekker skryf. Ek dink aan jou, as jy nie weet wat om te skryf nie, just draw a rock...tell them the answer is underneath.drive safe.	Hi. You must write well. I'm thinking of you, if you don't know what to write, just draw a rock...tell them the answer is underneath.drive safe.	J – jy (you), leke – lekker (well), jo – jou (you), ni – nie (don't), wiet – weet (know), t – te (to)
8. <i>Jaaa flip – its about time hey! LOL – va di 5jr wt os sam is ht k ng nt 2 da gbly!</i>	Ja flip – it's about time hey! Lol – vir die 5 jaar wat ons saam is het ek nog net 2 daar gbly!	Yes flip – it's about time hey! Laugh out loud – for the 5 years we've been together I've only still lived there for 2!	Jaaa – ja (yes), va – vir (for), di – die (the), jr – jaar (year), wt – wat (what), os – ons (we), ht – het (have), k – ek (I), ng – nog (still), nt – net

			(only), da – daar (there), gbly – gebly (lived)
9. <i>Jy ok? Jy lat my wori or jo – jy klink bje down ☹</i>	Jy okay Jy laat my worry oor jou – jy klink baie down ☹	You okay? You letting me worry about you – you sound very down ☹	Lat – laat (let), or – oor (about), jo – jou (you), bje – baie (very)
10. <i>Ja bt ek mt fit bly man lol hoe gan ek sarag perform.</i>	Ja but ek moet fit bly man lol hoe gaan ek saterdag perform.	Yes but I must stay fit man laugh out loud how am I going to perform Saturday.	Mt – moet (must), gan – gaan (going), sarag – saterdag (Saturday)
11. <i>This was probably da last one Ima hav 4 da nxt few mnths!!! Ma wi j ek mis jou ngal!! lol!!!</i>	This was probably the last one I'm going to have for the next few months!!! Maar weet jy ek mis jou nogal!!! lol!!!	This was probably the last one I'm going to have for the next few months!!! But you know I actually miss you!!! laugh out loud!!!	Ma – maar (but), wi – weet (know), j – jy (you), ngal – nogal (actually)

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6.2.1 The use of SMS speak as a time and space saving strategy.

In comparison many of the conventions which occurred in the first category of data were found here in the second category of data with participants who claimed that their first/home language was Afrikaans. The extracts in this table aim to prove that the manner in which the language was used and abbreviated links to Cook's (1993) notion of multicompetence. Based on these examples I argue that within this category of data it is clear that more than one set of linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge is present in one and the same participant.

Table 6.2 contains extracts 7-11 on which the upcoming analysis is based.

Extract 7 is an example of a message that contains English and Afrikaans, thus from a traditionally monolingual perspective we would say that code-switching occurred because full sentences were switched between the two languages. The language used here contains words such as 'j' (*jy* – you) and 'jo' (*jou* – you) which can also mean 'your'. In the context of this sentence examples such as 'ni' (*nie* – don't) and 't' (*te* – to) are all examples of

contracted words, in which case letters have been omitted to form a shorter version of the same word without losing its meaning. The word *'wiet'* (*weet* – know) is also an example of a characteristic of SMS speak because even though no letters have been omitted in the word, the letter and vowel sound *'e'* was replaced with the letter *'i'* changing the elongated sound of the double *'ee'* to a short sound *'ie'*. This highlights the diversity and hybridity used in SMS speak as standard and non-standard language codes were used within the same SMS and appears to be used as one language.

Extract 8 is an example of SMS speak characterised by conventional spelling and contracted words respectively as these examples contain omitted letters. The first word of the SMS is *'Jaaa'* which is originally spelt *'ja'* (yes). In this case two extra letters *'a'* were added to the word which placed emphasises on what it is that the sender of the message would like to relate. The following examples function as contractions and conventional spellings *'va'* (*vir* – for), *'di'* (*die* – the), *'jr'* (*jaar* – year), *'wt'* (*wat* – what) and *'os'* (*ons* – us). Within these examples both vowels and consonants have been omitted shortening the original word and providing it with a different spelling resulting in time and space saving strategies as well as shorter words and messages. Similarly, the words *'sam'* (*saam* – together), *'ht'* (*het* – did), *'k'* (*ek* – I), *'ng'* (*nog* – still), *'nt'* (*net* – only), *'da'* (*daar* – there) and *'gbly'* (*gebly* – lived) are also examples of word spellings uniquely confined to SMS speak. This highlights the diversity as well as the hybrid nature of the language in use.

Extract 9 is a shorter SMS than the previous two messages yet it still contained the same phenomenon in which case the words *'lat'* (*laat* – let), *'or'* (*oor* – about), *'jo'* (*jou* – you) and *'bje'* (*baie* – very) are examples of the characteristics of SMS speak that are not only contractions as they contain omitted letters but are also examples of the spelling of words confined to SMS speak. In the case of SMS and Mxit messages words are contracted and used creatively because not only is it easier to type out for some participants but for others it is seen as convenient because SMSes are generally restricted to a certain amount of characters (160). Thus, typing messages in this manner uses less characters and allows participants to broadcast their intended message without paying more than what is suppose to be paid but at the same time complying with the character restriction. Therefore, participants use this mode of communication for their own convenience, benefit and gain.

In extract 10, examples of contracted words include 'mt' (*moet* – must) and 'gan' (*gaan* – going). In both these examples vowels have been omitted forming a shorter word but both words still contained its meaning. In order to recognise such changes participants need to have obtained the necessary schemata that is affiliated with SMS speak which will enable them to recognise when the language is being abbreviated and contracted to form part of SMS speak. The characteristic of SMS speak confined by its spelling in this instance would be the word 'sarag' (*saterdag* – Saturday). Here the word was spelt differently to its original spelling (Saturday) and I propose an argument that it was spelt according to how it is pronounced when using 'Kombuis Afrikaans' also known as 'Kaaps' which is a non-standard variety of the language. This highlights the hybridity of SMS speak as the same language patterns can be found throughout the data regardless of which language participants claim to have as their first language.

When analysing extract 11, the SMS contains various examples of the characteristics of SMS speak such as contracted words and spelling confined to SMS speak was again identified. These include 'ma' (*maar* – but) 'wi' (*weet* – know), 'j' (*jy* – you) and 'ngal' (*nogal* – actually). When looking at extracts 9 and 11, we can see that the word 'you' was abbreviated differently such as 'jo' and 'j' maintaining the same interpretation and exposing the universal use of symbols in SMS speak. Thus, even though there were variations in the abbreviations it still referred to the same word. In these examples vowels and consonants were omitted leading to the contraction of words, however, the intended message contained its meaning. For many participants this is seen as not only a time and space saving strategy concerning the formulation of messages but also a money saving strategy since incorporating these varying characteristics of SMS speak into messages saves airtime. The messages in this category were filled with emotion laden words and multimodality in which feelings were portrayed by images such as a sad face for emphasis (☹) showcasing that SMS speak can be communicated beyond words in the form of symbols and involves more than one mode of communication.

Table 6.3

Xhosa	Transcription	Translation	Creative words
12. <i>Eita my broer, adna moya waneleyo Jola kodwa ke ndlapha eMfuleni ngk bt remeba I'm nt yo friend my friend...LOL ;-)</i>	Eita my brother, andinamoya waneleyo Jola kodwa ke ndlapha eMfuleni ngoku but remember I'm not your friend my friend...LOL ;-)	Hello mt brother, I don't have enough airtime Jola but I am here at Mfuleni now but remember I'm not your friend mt friend... laugh out loud;-)	Adna moya – andinamoya (I don't have airtime) Ndlapha – ndilapha (I am here) Ngk – ngoku (now)
13. <i>Do u think ungakwaz ukundibna apha ekxen n thn sithethe later on I mic u, plz send a colbek if yes.</i>	Do u think ungakwaz ukundibona apha ekuseni and then sithethe later on I miss you, please send a call back if yes.	Do you think you can manage to see me here early morning then we can speak later on I miss you. please send a call back if yes.	Ukundibna – ukundibona (to be able to see me) Ekxen – ekuseni (early morning)
14. <i>Tera ndicela uchole foun yakho plz.</i>	Tera ndicela uchole ifowuni yakho please.	Tera answer your phone please.	Foun – ifowuni (your phone)
15. <i>Mtase this year ndidicider ukubuyela esikolweni coz asikho ispan esigrand and ndidikiwe kukuphangela kule ndawo ndiphangela kuyo.</i>	Mntase this year ndidicider ukubuyela esikolweni because asikho ispan esigrand and ndidikiwe kukuphangela kule ndawo ndiphangela kuyo.	Cousin this year I decided to go back to school because there are no good jobs and I am tired of working where I am working.	Mtase – mntase (cousin)
16. <i>Awuuu!</i>	Awuuu! Crouchino	Awuuu! Crouchino	Zthini – zithini

<i>Crouchino zthini mpints am? I'm on ma way bck 4rm hme bro, war is jy?</i>	zithini mpints yam? I'm on my way back from home brother, waar is jy?	what's up my friend? I'm on my way back from home brother, where are you?	(what's up?) Mpints – mpints (friend) am – yam (my)
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6.3.1 An illustration of the mobility of SMS speak.

In their study Deurmert and Masinyana (2008) found that isiXhosa messages differ from English language messages in that they contain no abbreviated material, non-standard spelling or paralinguistic restitutions and therefore they violate the sociolinguistic maxims of SMS/texting. This type of perspective is foregrounded by the view that isiXhosa is an autonomous bounded system. On the contrary, I have discovered the opposite with the isiXhosa data used here as SMS speak is restrictive and it is this very restrictive nature of the mode that allows for words to be characterised by SMS speak leading to contractions and abbreviations resulting in shorter words and messages regardless of language.

Table 6.3 contains extracts 12-16 on which the upcoming analysis is based.

In extract 12 characteristics of SMS speak such as word contractions can be identified. Here the terms '*andinamoya*' was contracted to form '*adna moyo*' omitting the letters '*n*' and '*i*', '*ndilapha*' was constricted to form '*ndapha*' omitting the letters '*i*' and '*l*' and lastly, the word '*ngoku*' was contracted to form '*ngk*' omitting the vowels '*o*' and '*u*'. This proves that abbreviations, phonological approximations and non-standard spellings are common to English as well as to isiXhosa. Deurmert and Masinyana's (2008) findings proved that isiXhosa speakers themselves prefer using English in SMS communication since the senders of these messages themselves feel that one cannot abbreviate isiXhosa, whereas the above tabulated data confirm that abbreviations can and do take place in the isiXhosa language. In fact, these abbreviations take place without the word losing its semantic meaning or becoming less significant within the language.

When analysing extract 13 as an example, I noted that the SMS consisted of features from the English and Xhosa languages used as a single linguistic practice. Thus, even though the participant claimed to have isiXhosa as a first/home language in the tabulated details participants X2 made use of any language means available to her in order to communicate her intended message. This SMS consists of characteristics of SMS speak such as word

contractions in this case *'ukundibna'* which is originally spelt *'ukundibona'* illustrates that the vowel *'o'* was omitted yet the word never lost its meaning as the recipient of the message was able to speak Xhosa and thus is familiar with the language and received the intended message. An example of a word spelling confined to SMS speak extracted from this message is the word *'eksen'* which should be spelt *'ekuseni'*, here the vowels *'u'* and *'i'* were omitted highlighting the restrictive nature of SMSing resulting in word contractions and omissions of vowels. Another interesting phenomenon highlighted is the fact that in the Xhosa language, one word when translated into English usually translates into a phrase of words in the English language. For example *'ukundibona'* is one word in Xhosa but when translated to English it means *'to be able to see me'*, similarly the Xhosa word *'ekuseni'* means *'early morning'* when translated to English and hence English phrases take on a one word Xhosa form when translated.

This arguably is and still does to a great extent factor as a motivation as to why participants prefer to SMS in a language other than their first language isiXhosa due to the 160 character restriction when SMSing. On the other hand, as is seen in many of the examples used here participants who do make use of their first language when SMSing use the character restriction to their advantage by contracting or abbreviating words and omitting vowels and consonants abiding to the character restriction.

Extract 14 is a short text message consisting of Xhosa and English used as one language resource. When working from a traditionally monolingual perspective in linguistics it could be argued that Xhosa forms the bases of the message and is the matrix language while English functions as the embedded language. It could also then be said that code-mixing can be identified in this SMS. This would mean that code-mixing occurred with the English word *'plz'* (please) being inserted into the Xhosa sentence. However, from a multilingual analysis viewpoint this message is hybrid as it allows for the mixture of features of language to be used as one. One such feature would be the word *'foun'* which has been characterised by SMS speak hence the original word is spelt and pronounced as *'ifowuni'*. Therefore, because the message is hybrid and displays features of a language we cannot say that a matrix and embedded language exists because it would mean viewing the language in the light of embodying separate entities. Whereas, here because of the manner in which the language is used a distinction cannot be made between where one language stops and the other begins as it serves to function as one language or a continuous flow of a language resource.

When looking at extract 15, it is clear that the message consists of two languages namely, isiXhosa and English used as one language. Again, from a traditional perspective we could say that code-mixing occurred as in this case the entire message is written in Xhosa except for the English phrase *'this year'*. Therefore, this is considered code-mixing because code-mixing is of such a definition that only words or phrases are inserted into the sentence in a different language. However, this was based solely on the definition of code-mixing as an autonomous system because this SMS is hybrid since the switching of codes identified here has no boundaries and it is not a bounded system. This message also contains word contractions in the form of the word *'mtase'* which is originally spelt *'mnatse'*. In this instance the letter *'n'* was omitted forming a contracted word. *'Mntase'* is known to mean family child or child of my house; however, because of the context of this message its intended meaning is *'cousin'*. This also shows why Deumert and Masinyana's (2008) findings could not prove true in this analysis as abbreviations and non-standard spellings were identified here.

In the final example, extract 16 the three languages identified were used as one. For example there is the Xhosa sentence *'Awuuu! Crouchino zithini mpints am?'* meaning – *'Awuuu! Crouchino zithini mpintsi yam?'* (Awuuu! Crouchino what's up my friend?), then there is the English sentence *'I'm on ma way bck 4frm hme bro'* or (I'm on my way back from home brother) and lastly the Afrikaans sentence *'waar is jy?'* meaning (where are you?) was identified. This displays the hybrid nature of the SMS as features of three language codes were used as one. The contracted words identified include *'zithini'* which should be spelt *'zithini'* in which the letter *'i'* was omitted and the word *'mpints'* which should be spelt *'mpintsi'* in which the last vowel *'i'* was omitted. Within this context *'zithini'* means *'what's up?'* and *'mpintsi'* means *'friend'*. The spelling identified includes the word *'am'* which should be *'yam'* meaning *'my'*. Here the consonant *'y'* was omitted forming the English verb *'am'*. However, if one is familiar with the Xhosa language and reads the SMS as sent the intended message will be delivered in which *'am'* or *'yam'* will be read as intended. If one is not familiar with the Xhosa language the term *'yam'* or *'am'* will come across as the auxiliary verb *'am'*. This showcases not only the hybridity of SMS speak but the flexibility associated with it, and it is clear that language grammar rules are not confined to this form of communication allowing participants to use SMS speak however best they wish.

Furthermore, extract 16 can also be seen as what Jørgensen (2008) termed languaging as it shows that the sender of the message used whatever linguistic features available at his disposal with the intention of achieving his communicative aim. This shows that young language users have contact with speakers of a range of different languages and thus become acquainted with many different features of these languages. This is true because in the context of the university students come from varying language backgrounds and as time passes they learn to acquaint themselves with different language speakers and features of these speakers' languages. This can be seen in the third category of data with students who according to the tabulated details claimed to have isiXhosa as their first language. Demographically the majority of these students come from the Eastern Cape and are now residing in the Western Cape for studying purposes and in such a way become acquainted with other language speakers as well as with the same language speakers who speak isiXhosa differently to them. In this example the participant shares access to more than one language and uses features of all three languages in the same interaction, making it an example of polylingual languaging.

In comparison to extract 16, the SMS below is an example of a standard variety of isiXhosa commonly used by residents in rural Eastern Cape.

Extract 17

“Zonke izino zisebenzela okulungileyo kwabo bamthandayo uThixo. Kuqala kube mnyama mpela xa kuzakukhanya makhi. Good night makhelwane” (Everything is working for the good to those who love God. It begins with darkness when it is going to be bright neighbour. Good night neighbour).

Extract 16 displayed above contains three languages, that being isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans used as one language which was subjected to characteristics of SMS speak such as abbreviations and contractions. Consequently, this SMS can be compared to extract 17 sent by participant X11. This SMS is an example of the isiXhosa commonly spoken in the Eastern Cape which is deeply rooted in the language itself. It contains no abbreviations and highlights the difference of dialects and variety between the isiXhosa spoken in the Western Cape in comparison to that spoken and used in the Eastern Cape. Accordingly, in this example the sender uses the isiXhosa language with skill and detailed knowledge about the language itself under the given circumstances of SMS speak. Thus, this example does not conform to the

conventions of SMS speak as it contains no abbreviations and contracted words like the previous example does.

Blommaert (2010) writes that human language has changed in the age of globalization as it is no longer tied to stable and resident communities but instead moves across the globe, and it changes in the process. The term globalization is most commonly used as shorthand for the intensified flows of capital, goods, people, images and discourses around the globe, driven by technology innovations mainly in the field of media and information and communication technology, and resulting in new patterns of global activity, community organization and culture (Appadurai, 1996). With this in mind, in the context of UWC there is a constant flow and mix of people and their languages. UWC is regarded as a melting pot as people from around the world meet at this institution for the purpose of studying. Therefore, it is considered a platform not only for international students but from a local perspective there is a constant movement and shifting of people who move not only from country to country, or from province to province but also of those who move from rural areas to urban areas. This was found in the third category of data where participants who had isiXhosa as their first language moved from the rural parts of the Eastern Cape to the city life in the Western Cape for studying purposes. This type of migration is responsible for the mixing of languages that can be seen in the given SMS examples as a result of a globalized world. Using the approach of globalization, language can no longer be seen as a bounded entity but rather as a social action or practice. Thus, the languages participants use when SMSing may not be part of their ethnolinguistic background as it can be commodified by these participants who stake no claim to the identity of the particular language in use (Da Silva, McLaughlin and Richards, 2007).

Therefore, the above examples were aimed at illustrating how polylingual languaging is used by the participants in order to achieve the purpose of communicating their intended messages with any linguistic resources available to them. This also demonstrates the mobility of language displaying the fact that language is ever changing and can be communicated in various ways and means without losing its meaning and value for the senders and receivers involved in the communicative event, regardless of whether participants are familiar or unfamiliar with these languages. Møller and Jørgensen (2009) assert that language must be structured and systematic in order to be acquired by new individuals. On the contrary, in the realm of SMS speak as is seen above, the language usage is known to have its own structure

yet it remains systematic and can be acquired by new individuals given that they understand and know how to use it with its abbreviations and contractions. As a result, SMS speak highlights polylingual languaging and the participants here are seen as languagers as this type of language use has its own features with corresponding norms for its use and corresponding values. Møller and Jørgensen (2009) state that everyone has access to language, however, this does not apply to SMS speak because knowledge of how to use and comprehend this type of language practice with its abbreviations, contractions, and omissions of vowels and consonants needs to exist with individuals in order for them to have access to it. For this reason the youth engage in this phenomenon more so than what their parents, the older generation would as many of them are not familiar with the characteristics of SMS speak because they find these abbreviations and contractions challenging to comprehend.

6.4 SMSing as stylization

Coupland (2001: 349) writes that when stylizing, we speak “as if this is me”, or “as if I owned this voice”, or “as if I endorsed what this voice says”. The examples that follow will prove if this statement is true or not since participants differ in the way they send messages and even when the content of the message is the same, participants express themselves verbally with their own distinctive styles. Thus, as with spoken languages, written languages in this case texting is unique from person to person (Pennebaker and King, 1999).

Higgins (2009: 6) defines multivocality as ‘a set of interlinked concepts ... on voice as well as the multiple perspectives, or speaking positions, articulated through language’. Consider extract 18.

Extract 18

“Slm boeta...i need a big favour...I got assignments up to my ears...can I borrow ur laptop kanala...mwah luv ya lots” (Hello brother...I need a big favour...I got assignments up to my ears...can I borrow your laptop please...mwah love you lots).

In this extract, multi-voiced utterances can be identified because the SMS is addressed to ‘*boeta*’ meaning eldest brother in Arabic. However, many Afrikaans speakers have also adopted the use of the term ‘*boeta*’ in their speech in particular when addressing someone older one is unfamiliar with as a sign of respect. Furthermore, based on Higgins (2009) the definition of double voicing can be identified here as the sender draws on an Islamic voice by

addressing her brother as well as an English or Western voice when she asks for a favour. This shows how the sender adopted different speaking positions articulated in one message. Additionally, it relates to Bakhtin's notion of multi-voiced utterances in the sense that the SMS itself is a link between the theme of university relations and that of family ties. This also relates to Bakhtin's (1986) concept of discrediting hegemonic discourses by appropriating the voices of the powerful and reworking them for new purposes. In this example the sender reworks the position of power her eldest brother has over her for a new purpose such as a favour by asking to borrow his laptop. Therefore, the sender uses her role as the younger sibling to her advantage by asking her brother a favour. The sender of the message can be seen as a student because she speaks about assignments and a sister because the SMS is addressed to her elder brother. This type of double voicing projects multiple identities of the sender and because of the discursive constructions contained in the message it is clear that the message was styled in this manner with the particular purpose in mind of borrowing a laptop.

However, Coupland (2001) declares that stylized utterances such as the example used here project identities other than those that are presumably current in the speech event. This means that other than the two obvious identities of sibling and student other identities can also be highlighted. These include the identity of the sender being modern and trendy because the sender requested a laptop which is a modern form of communication and the fact that the sender used a cell phone to convey her message also projects the persona of modernity. Therefore, the sender is not only sending a message but creating meaning which in the period of late modernity is seen as socially constructed.

The use of one voice through multiple perspectives in SMS speak can be seen in the following extract.

Extract 19

“Wat tym is it...party tym...wat tym is it party tym...o cum sing along...o cum sing along...say u dnt knw wat we been told supergal is gettn old dnt u worry dnt u fear it nly hpns once a year...say yo yo...yo yo...say yeah yeah...Its ur birthday!!! Mwah wat can i say...im back...mwah enjoy ur day bbz” (What time is it...party time...what time is it party time...o come sing along...o cum sing along...say you don't know what we been told super girl is getting old don't you worry don't you fear it only happens once a year... say yo yo..yo

yo...say yeah yeah...It's your birthday!!! Mwah what can I say...I'm back...mwah enjoy your day babe).

This is an example of a text message that has been stylized in such a way that it projects the persona of the sender of the message as a singer. This relates to what Coupland (2001) suggested about speaking “as if this is me”, as in this SMS the sender portrays the hypothetical identity of a singer singing the happy birthday song. Therefore, the sender is portrayed as owning this voice while simultaneously portraying the appropriate persona that goes along with singing a song. Thus, because this SMS has been stylized in this particular manner it is deemed as creative and being performed based on the communicative competence of the sender. This song is famous for being sung in a popular South African restaurant known as Spur where the waiters sing the song when it is a customer's birthday. Therefore, the sender has stylized this utterance by mimicking the same song to wish the recipient happy birthday. This also means that the idea of stylization in this message in relation to dialect implies seeing the dialect as a performance rather than behaviour and as a social practice rather than a variation.

Extract 20 below explores stylization and the sincerity of ‘putting on a voice’ when sending an apology.

Extract 20

“It's only @ nineish bra. I'm sorry bt dats just hw it is. Its just 1 day nje. I hv da documents so u cn do ur tuts” (It's only at nine brother. I'm sorry but that's just how it is. It's only just one day. I have the documents so you can do your tutorials).

Coupland (2001) states that “putting on a voice” or stylization denotes a more specific set of discursive constructions. When analysing this SMS according to stylization, it appears that the sender can in fact put on a voice because the sender says “*I'm sorry but that's just how it is*”. In this case one cannot tell how much conviction and sincerity went into the apology made by the sender. Thus, the sender can be putting on a voice and saying sorry in the SMS but she might not mean what she said and she could have said it just to please the recipient of the message. However, the SMS was stylized in a particular manner to make the recipient believe that what is being said in the SMS is true and sincere. This act of sincerity reflects on the usage of stylization pointing out its creativity and performance associated with the

message. In this case the sender of the SMS said she is sorry at which point the recipient of the message can question the sincerity of the apology. However, the message reads “*Its only just one day*” which acts as back up and reassurance for the recipient that not only was the apology sincere but the circumstance is for one day only and the sender does have the necessary documents required by the recipient.

Another risk that goes along with text messages regardless of whether or not it has been stylized lies in the tone of the message itself.

Extract 21

“*Tera ndicela uchole foun yakho plz*” – “*Tera ndicela uchole ifowuni yakho please*” (Tera answer you phone please)

For instance, extract 21 contains a multitude of tones such as urgency, desperation and annoyance. The sender cannot get in contact with the receiver of the message via phone call, thus an SMS was sent. Therefore, the tone in the SMS could be urgent, annoyed or desperate because the recipient of the message was unreachable. This can lead to confusion and miscommunication because the sender might send a SMS to a friend in a particular tone but the recipient after decoding the message might not have understood the tone the message was meant to be sent in and then a communication breakdown can occur. As is seen in the above example the sender of the message might have sent the SMS with an annoyed tone and when the recipient receives the message he or she might interpret the tone of the message as urgent or desperate as the sender could not get hold of the receiver of the message.

As a result, the manner in which the SMS has been stylized plays an important part in how the SMS will be interpreted by the receiver of the message. This leads to the conclusion that stylization can be restricted either by preference or by competence depending on the relationship between the sender and the receiver in which the SMSes are referred to as multi-voiced utterances because the speakers fill and create such utterances with their own style as well as the styles influenced by others forming a specific kind of message. Also, the styling of discourse such as the SMSes does not make the message less authentic as in the time of late modernity authenticity needs to be earned discursively rather than automatically credited (Coupland, 2007). The examples discussed above also show that participants express

themselves in unique ways and that the language and word usage demonstrated here known as SMS speak differs from standard language usage and varies from one context to the next.

6.5 Language as a local practice

According to Pennycook (2007) the notion of discrete, bounded languages becomes very dubious, since languages are always mixed, hybrid and drawing on multiple resources. Thus languages, like subjects are always a work in progress and we cannot understand language without taking particular language practices in particular locations into account. The SMS examples that will follow are aimed at either proving or disproving the above statement.

The word ‘*Exe*’ is linked to different languages echoing multivocality as a local practice. This also points out the universal use of SMS speak, its characteristics and symbols as these words may be abbreviated differently but still maintained the same meaning and interpretation.

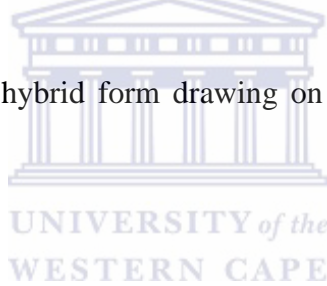
Extract 22

“Exe Bennito, zkhiphani my outi? C.T z rockn ntwana yam othrwyz we mc u jo, wa kenna mos” [Exe Bennito, zikhuphani my outi? Cape Town is rocking ntwana yam otherwise we miss you jo, wa kenna mos] (Hey Bennito, what’s up my man? Cape Town is rocking my man otherwise we miss you, you know).

In this example, evidence of hybrid language usage can be found for reasons being that the word ‘*Exe*’ might be spelt differently and leans more towards isiXhosa slang but is pronounced and in this context compared to the originated Afrikaans equivalent ‘*Ek sê*’ which loosely and directly translates to ‘*I say*’. The idea here is to account for the creative nature of language mixing in which the forms can be *bivalent* (Woolard, 1998) that is it can belong to two (or more) languages simultaneously leading to double-voiced usage, and hence having multiple meanings all at once. In this regard, speakers achieve multivocality through appropriating a text and infusing it with their own meaning (Higgins 2009: 7). Similarly the phrase ‘*my outi*’ is representative of the Afrikaans word ‘*ouchie*’ meaning ‘*man*’ in English. These example showcase how multiple speaking options like the phrases used here are being reused and recycled as these phrases share a common meaning but are spelt differently across varying linguistic codes. This confirms Pennycook’s (2007) notion of multiple language resources being used forming a communicative act which at the centre of the description involves the blending of languages across differing linguistic codes as is seen in this example.

Thus, even though multiple linguistic codes were used such as English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa, the SMS forms a coherent unit and is read as a unified message consisting of SMS speak where these languages were used as one forming a communicative act.

The style in which the language is used here highlights the flexibility and hybridity of SMS speak and ties the SMS to a particular location. From a more obvious perspective this SMS is embedded in Cape Town as a location as this was clearly stated in the message itself. However, from a less obvious perspective the phrase ‘*Exe*’ (*Ek sê*) and ‘*my outi*’ (*my ouchie*) link the SMS to Cape Town because these are phrases that are commonly used within this location. The fact that this SMS can be situated and linked to a particular location indicates that it is part of language as a local practice. Therefore, taking into consideration that language is a local practice as well as a social practice makes it understandable that speakers are able to negotiate which possible language forms they want to use for which purpose much like what is seen in this example (Pennycook, 2007).



The uses of SMS speak and its hybrid form drawing on multiple resources is seen in the extract below.

Extract 23

“*Morninz...leka raining ne n i juz gt 2 cmps nw, swak! Hot choc sounds lyka plan – C u l8a ☺*” [Morning...lekker raining ne and i just got to campus now, swak! Hot chocolate sounds like a plan – see you later☺] (Morning...raining nicely ne and I just got to campus now, uncool! Hot chocolate sounds like a plan – See you later☺).

This extract not only draws on multiple resources but is also evidence of the mixed, hybrid nature confined to SMS speak. This SMS also demonstrates its embeddedness in locality, focusing particularly on Cape Town as a location because many of the terms used in the message are commonly used throughout this area. The concept of blending of languages is prevalent in this example because when looking closer at some of the words used in this SMS such as the Afrikaans word ‘*leka*’ (*lekker*) which means ‘*nice*’ in English and the word ‘*swak*’ meaning ‘*weak*’ in English, however, in the context of this message it relates to the rain being ‘*uncool*’ or ‘*not cool*’. Lastly, the word ‘*lyka*’ which in English means ‘*like a*’ can be traced back to the original spelling of the Afrikaans word ‘*lyk*’ meaning ‘*like*’ in English. Here again, words were abbreviated differently but maintained the same meaning and

interpretation. For this reason, this phrase situates the SMS to Cape Town as a location because of its familiar usage. As a result, these are the ways the two languages English and Afrikaans are being blended and used as one categorising the SMS as hybrid.

6.6 Transidiomatic practices vs. language as a local practice

For Jacquemet (2005) transidiomatic practices are present in multilingual talk where transnational groups use deterritorialised technologies such as a cell phone to communicate both locally and distant. According to Jacquemet (2005) these SMSes such as the examples seen above draw our attention to the communicative process of people interacting across different linguistic and communicative codes, borrowing, bending, and blending languages into alternative modes of expressions. However, I disagree with this statement as SMS speak cannot be seen as an alternative mode of communication if it is being used all the time. Instead, the frequent usage of SMS speak declares it a norm rather than an alternative language. This connects to what Pennycook (2010) states that language practices are a product of repeated social activity and are always being rewritten and they are always under change. Therefore SMS speak cannot be seen as difference as straying from the norm but of difference as the norm and thus language is constantly relocalized through repetition. Consequently, what Jacquemet (2005) refers to as an alternative language is now known as a localised practice and a norm since SMS speak has become and is considered by many a legitimate language.

Additionally, from these examples we can see that language use in context is important but at the same time language creates the contexts where it is used in and that language is a product of socially located activities (Pennycook, 2010). These examples showcase that firstly, language is not bounded and secondly, that language use such as SMS speak is mixed, hybrid and draws on multiple resources and features of various kinds of languages. However, this type of language usage still passes as a coherent system despite its hybrid nature. Therefore, the paradigm of SMS speak implies a shift in looking at languages as bounded entities and focusing instead on language as a local social practice. As a result the above examples were aimed at showing how language as a local practice touches on concepts such as language, locality and practice in which participants or senders use and practice local languages so frequently that this mode of communication is now seen as a norm. This then also allows for the repeat, rewriting and changing of messages and highlights how the text messaging

interaction is being used as a local social practice because texting is something these participants are involved in on a daily basis.

6.7 Conclusion

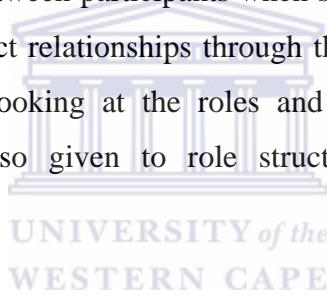
This analysis was aimed at comparing the three categories of data in the hope of highlighting similarities and differences between the use of English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa as one language with different forms. As a consequence, I have reached the conclusion that conventional spelling, letter-number words, contracted and abbreviated words were identified throughout the data. This confirmed that SMS speak is a language used in its own right operating with its own system of grammar which included multimodality where messages were seen as hybrid language practices. Through these examples I was able to witness how these languages are being transformed by this medium of communication. This is driven by the fact that this type of communication known as SMS speak is used extensively by individuals despite their first language to communicate with one another. It confirmed that participants used which ever features of a language were available to them to communicate. Furthermore, SMS speak proved not to be an alternative method in which to use language to communicate but instead has become a norm and legitimate localised language practice because of its frequent usage. These messages also act as an indicator that participants possess multicompetence. Bearing this in mind, the upcoming chapter will be examining the types of identities formulated using SMS/Mxit messages and will also be focusing on interpersonal meaning, relationship status and role structure.

Chapter 7

Identity Analysis – An examination of the performance of identities, role structure and power relations constructed in SMS interactions

7.0 Introduction

This chapter firstly focuses on identity options displayed in relation to the SMS/Mxit data. It is further aimed at investigating identity as a performance while highlighting the linguistic and discursive choices used by participants to indicate the types of identities they construct for themselves. It is based on the premise that identities are styled and the mere fact that participants are using SMS speak automatically provides them with the identity options of being modern, global and diasporic. Essentially, identities are viewed as performed, created and negotiated during an interaction. From this view point identities is seen as performed in relation to the social structures operating within SMS speak. Secondly, it aims to look at interpersonal meaning created between participants when sending messages by attempting to explore how participants construct relationships through the SMSes they send. The concept of tenor is also discussed by looking at the roles and statuses implicated in the SMS messages. Here attention is also given to role structure, social distance and power relationships.



7.1 Motivations for sending SMS/Mxit messages

The following tables summarise the reasons participants had for sending a SMS or using Mxit. Participants identified themselves according to their predominant home language.

Table 1

Participant	Motivation
E1	It is easier to send an SMS in terms of time saving
E2	It saves time because you can type fast and get the messages across faster
E4	It is a cheaper more efficient service used to communicate between the younger generation.
E5	It is the cheapest way to communicate and it is convenient.
E7	It is economical.
E12	It is easy, accessible and inexpensive.

E15	It is an inexpensive means of communicating and it saves time to be able to type out shorter words with only the content letters in that can stand alone.
E16	I use abbreviated words to type out the message much faster than to spell out the whole word or phrase.
E17	I use SMS speak in my messages because it is fast and easy.
E19	I find it to be efficient as well as cost effective.
E20	Mxit is very useful because it's a fast, effective and affordable way of keeping in touch.

A common thread in these responses is the cost effective factor. In addition, these participants like the fact that messages can be made shorter and save time and that this form of communication allows for rapid exchange of information. Other participants said that sending a message using SMS speak is fun and easy and it is just as effective as sending a text message typed out in Standard English.

Table 2

Participant	Motivation
A1	It is convenient and has proven to be more cost effective.
A3	I use this function because I believe it is much quicker.
A5	It is less work to type and more economical.
A6	It is easy and quick to write messages.
A9	It saves time by shortening your words to only a few letters.
A10	It is faster and more cost effective as it is much cheaper than sending a sms.
A13	Mxit is an easy and effective form of communication and it is cheaper because you can speak to all your friends.
A14	Shortening words is less time consuming and I can reply to messages faster.
A15	It is much easier and simpler to send messages using SMS speak.
A16	It is an inexpensive means of communication and it saves time.
A18	It allows for the typing of texts to be done quicker.

A19	It minimizes the stress of worrying about airtime.
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These participants clearly stated that sending an SMS or using Mxit saves time consumption and it saves airtime because it is seen as a more affordable means of communication. In addition, based on their motivations for using this medium of communication they find it economical as it is a fast effective way of communicating.

Table 3

Participants	Motivation
X1	It makes it easier to communicate with who you want using any language of your choice.
X2	It makes life easier and more convenient to communicate with my family back home.
X6	It is cheaper to communicate with my peers using a cell phone at any place and any time of the day.
X7	It makes essential communication quicker.
X9	The usage of a SMS is the easiest and the cheapest as the message gets to the receiver instantly.
X10	It is cost effective and saves me money instead of making phone calls back home.
X14	Mobile technology has made it possible for me to communicate as it is of the fastest and cheapest ways of interacting.
X15	I find it to be cheaper than using phone calls to communicate.
X17	Mxit messages save time as well as airtime when it comes to communicating and interacting with others.
X18	It makes it easy for me because I do less writing.

These participants emphasize factors like saving time; minimizing writing and the fact that it allows them to stay in contact with their families back home instantly. When comparing all three categories of data similar reasons for using SMS speak were identified across all language groups. Therefore, SMS speak and Mxit language works beyond linguistic boundaries as these conventions are used for the same reasons in many languages. The

reasons provided project identities of participants as global, trendy or fashionable, diasporic and modern which are foregrounded in the identity analysis.

7.2 Identity Analysis

The types of identities and roles analysed here were those that proved to be the most prominent. These include the identity of a student or learner, the role of a family member such as a son, daughter or grandchild, the identity of either a girlfriend or boyfriend and the identity of a friend. These diverse identities draw attention to the poststructuralist notion of performative, hybrid, transgendered identities that have previously been ignored and seen as bounded and dichotomous.

7.2.1 The student/learner

The participants constructed various identities for themselves that were elicited across all three categories of data. The most common self-portrait displayed is that of a student or learner. This can be identified throughout the three categories of data respectively by the participants' choice of linguistic and discursive practices as well as the manner in which they refer to themselves.

The manner in which language is used is considered an act of identity as is seen in the extract below.

Extract 1

“Im ok...just lookin at dis essay q...eish. Ima read lectur notes 1st n then il probably undastand it betta...” (I'm okay...just looking at this essay question...eish. I'm going to read lecture notes 1st and then I'll probably understand it better).

In this extract participant E4 presents herself as a student as she utilises a variety of words specific to the discourse of being a student at university such as 'essay question' and 'lecture notes'. Further, her identity as a student was exposed more by the fact that she indirectly states that she is looking at the essay question and she does not quite understand it hence going through the lecture notes would help her comprehend her current task. This is viewed as common behaviour of a student in the sense that when something is not understood clearly, the student will resort to doing research in the form of reading through lecture notes or text books to acquire the necessary understanding and knowledge to continue with the assignment

much like participant E4 explained she would do in her SMS. This extract also allows us to see how the identity of the student is being performed because the participant conditioned her speech or linguistic repertoire to suit the identity she wished to portray. This links with Cameron's (2001) statement that using language is an act of identity as is seen in this example where the language usage is specific to drawing out the precise identity of a student.

Indeed, Blommaert (2005) argues that identity repertoires are conditioned much like the conditioning of the linguistic repertoires. See extract 2.

Extract 2

"Sowi to bother, I was wondering if we can meet somewhere to discuss our group assign. Plz let me know be 4 1. Thnx." (Sorry to bother, I was wondering if we can meet somewhere to discuss our group assignment. Please let me know before 1. Thanks).

In this extract participant A7 portrays her identity as a student with linguistic choices such as *'meet somewhere'* and *'group assignment'*. She also uses the pronouns *'I'* and *'me'* to refer to herself and the pronouns *'we'* and *'our'* to refer to the group as a whole. This shows that as a student and a group member, A7 took the initiative to get her group together for work purposes indirectly exposing her role in the leadership position. This is complemented by the words *'please'* and *'thanks'* showing that even though she is organising the meeting and being firm with the rest of her group members, she is doing so in a polite manner. This is also an example of Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) assumed identities because based on what the participant said and the detailed linguistic choices used, the participant accepts and hence assumes the identity of a student. This can also be confirmed by the tabulated demographical details provided by the participants. In fact had this information not been supplied it could still have been assumed and argued that the participant was a student based on the topic and choice of words used in the message. This example stresses that language is central to the production of identity as the participant's identity was formed based on her linguistic and discursive choices used. This also emphasises the more modern view that identities are not attributed to individuals or groups as in this case but rather to situations and the semiotics of language concerns identity not as a fixed category but rather identity as an ongoing social process and hence always changing. Consider the extract below, for example:

Extract 3

“I arrived safely at rez. I feel guilty about the way I left home, I was angry, that flash had all my work and now I have to do it all over again 😞 goodnight” (I arrived safely at residence. I feel guilty about the way I left home, I was angry, that flash had all my work and now I have to do it all over again 😞).

In this SMS participant X17 portrays her contrasting identities with linguistic choices that draw on student discourses such as ‘rez’ (residence), ‘flash’ (flash drive) and ‘work’ which refers to assignments and exercises. She also makes use of the pronoun ‘I’ at the beginning of all her sentences which not only shows that she is referring to herself but simultaneously shows that she is owning up and taking responsibility for her actions, not only as a student but more so as a daughter/dependent at (home). The phrases ‘safely at rez’ and ‘the way I left home’ are indicative of the two identity options. The use of the multimodal smiley 😞 indicates and emphasises the sender’s emotions as well as the sincerity of the SMS. Thus, not only does it highlight the emotion of being sad in its physical form but it does so iconically with the image of a sad face embedded in the SMS. However, it points to another identity option, that is a computer savvy late modern young adult. Therefore, these specific linguistic and discursive patterns indicate how these participants construct different identities and the use of emoticons display that multimodality in these instances is also an act of identity marking.

7.2.2 The family member

The second type of identity participants constructed and performed is that of a family member, be it a son, daughter or grandchild. When reviewing the data I found that many participants sent text messages to a family member aligning them with their roots and simultaneously providing them with a sense of belonging.

Unlike in Extract 3, the identity of a daughter is explicit in the extract below.

Extract 4

“Mummy are you home yet? I want to know if u need anything from the shops, Im at the mall now. Lief vir jou” (Mummy are you home yet? I want to know if you need anything from the shops, I’m at the mall now. Love you).

This text message was sent by participant E10 and in the message she identifies herself as a daughter with a specific repertoire of linguistic features including *'Mummy'* indicating that she is someone's daughter and the use of the linguistic choice *'home'* indicates the participant or daughter's roots and sense of belonging because it shows that she belongs to a particular family. This also depicts participant E10 as considerate as she was not only thinking about herself but trying to be a helpful daughter towards her mother. This example can be analysed in terms of social activity as the language choices made here depicts the participant engaged in a social activity of going to the mall yet her identity of a daughter is prominent as she considered her mother's needs. For this reason Banda (2009) argues that language becomes a social practice, implicated in speaker's social experiences and behaviours much like what was seen in this example. This example does not confine to the norms of SMS speak as the entire message was sent in standard language excluding characteristics specific to SMS speak such as abbreviations and contractions. This could have been done because the message was meant for an older person (the sender's mother) who might not understand the conventions of SMS speak. The hybrid nature of the SMS is in fact what one would expect in this situation, in which affection is shown by the Afrikaans part. Using Afrikaans here exposes her role of being a daughter, being concerned and the role of affection (social roles will be further discussed later in the chapter). Thus, this is the "normal" way of languaging. Using English only would have been odd.

The extract below is an example of a participant displaying multiple, shifting identities.

Extract 5

"Morning ma and pa, mass will end about 9. then we will pick u up after mass" (Morning ma and pa, mass will end about 9. then we will pick you up after mass).

In this message participant A18 constructs for himself an identity of a grandchild. In this instance the linguistic choice made was *'ma and pa'* rendering the impression of a grandparent/ grandchild relationship. This is also clearly indicated by the manner in which he addresses his grandparents as *'ma'* and *'pa'* and by the fact that the SMS is addressed to them. Another type of identity evident in this text message is that of a Christian. This can be seen from the linguistic and discursive patterns used within the text message such as *'mass'*. The word *'mass'* is affiliated with the religious discourse. This is in line with what Cameron (2001) stated previously that identity is shifting and multiple, something people are

continuously constructing and reconstructing in their encounters with each other and the world.

With this in mind, participant A18 is seen as performing multiple identities displaying his hybrid identity as he was identified as a grandchild and a church goer. As was seen in the previous example, this example also consisted of standard language usage throughout the SMS. Hence it avoided the abbreviations and word contractions common to SMS speak as this message was also intended by the participant for recipients of an older generation. This also identifies the participant and his grandparents as traditional through 'standard' language use and modern simultaneously because even though the message did not conform to the grammatical rules of SMS speak the fact that his grandparents are using and are familiar with a cell phone shows that they too are accustomed to modernity even if they do not make use of SMS speak.

Likewise extract 6 below continues with the display of a single participant constructing multiple identity options.



Extract 6

“Mtase this year ndidicider ukubuyela esikolweni coz asikho ispan esigrand and ndidikiwe kukuphangela kule ndawo ndiphangela kuyo” (Cousin this year I decided to go back to school because there are no good jobs and I am tired of working where I am working).

In this message participant X1 portrayed an identity of a cousin as her message was addressed to 'mtase' meaning cousin; she simultaneously portrays an identity of a student as she states that she decided to come back to school. This was indicated by the linguistic feature 'school' which does not take on the literal meaning of the word school as primary or high school, instead it refers to university. This like the previous message suggests that a single participant signals and performs multiple identities. Here this can again be attributed to the fact that language is central to the production of identity since it is from these specific language choices that identity can be elicited.

7.2.3 The girlfriend/boyfriend

The third type of major identity the participants construct for themselves is that of a girlfriend or boyfriend.

Here multimodality is used as an act to portray the identity of a girlfriend. Consider extract 7.

Extract 7

“Hey my love plz bring leka movieSSS with 2moro ne;-) anyway I’l speak to 2u 2moro. Sleep leka nd dnt stay up 2 late dis nog werk môre lol... I mis u, mwah. Luv u” [Hey my love please bring lekker movies with tomorrow ne;-) anyway I’l speak to you tomorrow. Sleep lekker and don’t stay up to late dis nog werk more lol...I miss you. Love you] (Hey my love please bring nice movies with tomorrow;-) anyway I’ll speak to you tomorrow. Sleep well and don’t stay up to late its work tomorrow laugh out loud...I miss you, mwah. Love you).

With this message participant E3 presents herself as a girlfriend because she made use of a discourse specific to intimate relations. The linguistic patterns identified in this SMS include ‘my love’, ‘mis u’ (miss you), ‘luv u’ (love you) and the cyber kiss ‘mwah’. These are all linguistic choices used purposefully when communicating with a girlfriend or boyfriend of intimate relations. This SMS communicates to us the feeling or emotion participant E3 feels and that she not only cares for herself but it depicts her love and care for who she considers her significant other. She uses the pronoun ‘my’ indicating her possession over her significant other as well as her possession over the love they have for each other. She also uses multimodality in the form of a wink of the eye ;-) which demonstrates a kind of playfulness of the sender. This means that the multimodality used here was an act of identity and the use of the cyber kiss displays its multimodality not only through the use of the word but also iconically through the sound of the image.

Speaking in different styles transmits different social meanings as is seen in extract 8.

Extract 8

“Hi m sweetipie-hp jyt leke gslapies, mis jo! Gniet jo dag. Luv u 4eva” [Hi my sweetypie-hoop jy het lekker geslaap, miss jou! Ganiet jou dag. Love you forever] (Hi my sweetypie-hope you slept well, miss you! Enjoy your day. Love you forever).

In this SMS participant A8 constructs for himself the identity of a boyfriend as he uses terms of endearment to address his significant other. The linguistic choices used in this SMS include *'sweetipie'* (sweetypie), *'mis jo'* (miss you) and *'luv you 4eva'* (love you forever). These are deliberate language choices made that indicate that the sender and receiver share something more than just friendship. The use of the possessive pronoun *'my'* renders the impression that the recipient of the message belongs to him indicating a sense of belonging. This contributes to his identity as a boyfriend or significant other in which he uses terms of endearment but simultaneously shows his possession in the relationship. This message displays hybridity as the English and Afrikaans languages are used as one which is the bases of SMS speak. Thus, the style the speaker has adopted here when speaking to his girlfriend will differ from the style he will use with his friends or with people he hardly knows. The fact that speakers talk in different ways in different situations means that these different ways of speaking carry different social meanings. Therefore, Coupland and Jaworksi (2009) writes that style is part of language variation, but is always related to how an individual is displaying through these different styles.

Moreover, in the extract below participant X2 constructs for himself the identity of a boyfriend and the linguistic choices that indicate this identity include *'ma love'* (my love). These linguistic choices were used deliberately to indicate the type of discourse which is specific to communication between individuals with intimate relations.

Extract 9

"hop uphekile coz andilambe ma love" [hope uphekile because andilambe my love] (hope you have cooked because I am starving my love).

Here yet again the message was styled in a particular manner which proves that style shifts in relation to one's audience in this case recipient, one's relationship with that participant, and the status of the participant in terms of education, closeness and distance. Therefore, this SMS was styled based on the relationship between the sender and recipient as well as the closeness between the two participants. This provides evidence that speakers perform identities and that individuals display identities rather than one essential identity (Coupland, 2007). Therefore, just as identity is seen as hybrid in this SMS so too is the language used since SMS speak is present and abbreviations such as *'coz'* for 'because' and the omitting of vowels such as *'hop'* instead of 'hope' can be identified. Therefore, from a multilingual

analysis point of view speakers use which ever language in their repertoires to construct and deconstruct social identities.

7.2.4 The friend

The final identity constructed is that of a friend.

This example hosts the constructed identity of a friend involved with social activities.

Extract 10

“Yes Bru! Ther is no way we arnt going out later! you keen for drinks and dancing? Will call ya when im on my way” (Yes Brother! There is no way we aren’t going out later! you keen for drinks and dancing? Will call you when I’m on my way).

Within this message participant E6 constructed for herself an identity of a friend by using linguistic choices such as ‘Bru’ (brother) but in this case it refers to friend. The use of the phrase ‘bru’ is linked to colloquial language usage and the use of the word ‘ya’ instead of ‘you’ denotes a very informal relationship between the sender and the recipient. This can also be picked up by the type of conversation occurring between the sender and the receiver where their topic of conversation revolves around social activities such as dancing and going out for drinks. These are the types of activities associated with friends and friendships. Thus, multilingual speakers use languages in their repertoire to construct alternative discourses in which to advance alternative identities. The pronoun ‘we’ denotes oneself and another and provides a sense of collectiveness and togetherness. Therefore, participant E6 makes the recipient feel like part of the conversation by using the collective pronoun ‘we’. With this as evidence we can see how this message was constructed to render the impression of friends meeting up for a social activity.

Like the previous example, this type of discourse is specific to conversations between friends and moulds A11’s identity as a friend.

Extract 11

“Ons is by die huis Vrydagaand. Sal net bevestig en terugkom na jou toe. Hoekom kry ons nie sushi nie?” (We will be home Friday evening. Will just confirm and get back to you. Why don’t we get sushi?).

This message was sent by participant A11 in which she portrays the identity of a friend. In this case the linguistic choices made include the question and statement ‘*we will be home Friday evening*’ and ‘*why don’t we get sushi?*’ The question and statement is indicative of socialising interactions and the pronoun ‘*ons*’ (we) indicates collectivity hence more than one person will be involved in the interaction. Another indication that the conversation involves friends is the fact that the sender is confirming that she will be home Friday evening. Friday evenings is known as the start to the weekend and weekends are usually meant for socialising. The sender and receiver are also suggesting ideas about what to eat when they get together. Thus, these are all linguistic and discursive features typical of friends interacting and socialising.

The performance of identity seen in extract 12 is deliberate and a self-aware social display.

Extract 12

“*hey Toks sihlobo sam kha undizame R200 ndistrande sihlobo sam please!*” (hey Toks my friend can you help me with R200 I am broke my friend please!).

In this message participant X1 constructed an identity for herself as a friend and this can be seen through the linguistic choices made which includes the word ‘*friend*’. In this message the participant uses the actual word ‘*friend*’ twice. The use of the possessive pronoun ‘*my*’ indicates that the participant is exclaiming and attributing that it is her friend. The fact that the participant is asking for money indicates that there is a close personal relationship between the sender and the receiver as asking someone to lend money is seen as a personal question or request and the participant would not have done so if she did not have an intimate friendship with the recipient of the message. She also exclaimed that she is broke and this is not information one would share with an unfamiliar person unless there is a close connection to that particular individual. The participant uses and relies on the fact that the recipient of the message is her friend hence she can cross certain boundaries and ask a direct personal question about lending money which is a self-aware social display of identity. Additionally, this notion of hybrid identities and hybrid language practices illustrates that participants have a multiplicity of linguistic resources which they modify and reconstruct into hybrid discourses.

7.3 Performative identities vs. language choice

Participants perform various identities through the SMSes they send and from this analysis it is clear that language and identity is linked. Evidently, participants have multiple identity affiliations. Participants use grammatical patterns and various language choices in SMS speak to signal the many identity options available to them. Thus, not only are their speech acts stylized but so too are their identity options stylized in the process of performing multiple identities. This links with what Cameron (2001) suggests that the identities the participants perform are not something fixed or stable, rather these identities are shifting as participants construct and perform for themselves multiple identities in a single SMS interaction as is seen above. The wide range of linguistic choices participants make when SMSing depicts the wide range of identity options available to them. In essence, based on the era of late modernity, the mere fact that they use SMS speak when communicating identifies them collectively as modern, trendy, global and diasporic (Blommaert, 2007). Thus, these identities are socially salient even when participants are unaware of the identities they enact. This enactment enables us to see how these SMS examples are connected to identity. It also allows us to view identity as a production which is never complete and always in process and through this view participants are seen as constantly producing, enacting and stylizing new types of identities through the medium of SMS speak (Hall, 2003).

The above examples show that language is central to the production of identity and it also proves that even though the language choices are similar, participants manifest different identities. This can be seen when SMSes are sent to the older generation in comparison to SMSes sent to the younger generation as can be seen above in extracts 3,4 and 5. These examples all had the same phenomenon in common, that being that the recipients of the respective messages are all older persons such as parents and grandparents. As a result, the senders of these messages produced the SMS in full sentences without abbreviated and contracted words. This was done deliberately to avoid a communication breakdown as many older people are not aware of the SMS conventions, thus, they are unable to comprehend the message. This links to identity as the similarities the recipients share here are downplayed by their differences in being unable to comprehend SMS speak.

The language choices made above in extracts 7 and 8 indicate which types of identities are portrayed and performed. For instance, in extract 7 the phrases '*my love*', '*miss you*' and '*love you*' are indications that this participant is in an intimate relationship. Similarly, in

extract 8 similar phrases can be identified such as *'miss you'* and *'love you forever'*. This shows that the linguistic and discursive choices made by these participants indexes a particular kind of identity despite the difference in language variety as language variety here is seen as less important. What is important is the use of SMS speak to communicate with one another despite the various first languages of participants. Consequently, the use of these word choices identifies both participants as being involved in an intimate relationship as these are the kinds of similarities these participants index through their language usage. The type of identity displayed here through the linguistic and discursive choices made indicates that these are the types of identities that belong to this expected identity type. This according to Blommaert (2007) functions as a powerful source of indexical meaning that connects discourses to contexts and induced categories, similarities and differences within frames, and thus suggest identities, tones, styles and genres that appear to belong or to deviate from expected types.

Therefore, from these examples it is clear that language shapes the participants identities and that the linguistic structures used here such as *'love you'* and *'miss you'* are associated with the social categories of being intimate with a girlfriend or boyfriend. Thus, the identities exhibited here are highly deliberate and a self-aware social display of performance (Hall, 2004). With this established it is important to understand how these identities are performed, why they are formed and which semiotic processes are put to use when it is performed which was the underlying scheme of the above explanation. In terms of the positioning theory as cited by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), these participants use reflective positioning as they position themselves as either, a family member, a girlfriend or boyfriend, a friend or a student and from these initial prominent identities more subtly identities are performed using reflective positioning such as the identity of a Christian, working person and socialite which is identified in the SMS message below.

Extract 13

"Hey luv wud? I just gt home nw, i had a hectic day @ work. im goin 2church 2nyt. prob chat l8r. miss u☺" (Hey love what you doing? I just got home now, I had a hectic day at work. I'm going to church tonight. Probably chat later. Miss you☺).

Banda (2005) asserts that these participants construct different roles and identities for themselves through linguistic choices. This SMS encapsulates what Banda (2005) wrote

because in this SMS the sender has at her disposal register in more than one code as the message is hybrid and contains both codes of standard and the non-standard variety of English. This gives her a wide scope in which to construct different roles and identities for herself like the fact the SMS is addressed '*hey love*' and ends with '*miss you*' indicates that the participant is in an intimate relationship and the SMS is meant for her boyfriend, thus the sender identified herself as a girlfriend. The identity of a worker or working individual is also present because the participant mentioned that she had a hectic day at work in her SMS. Another type of identity present in the SMS is that of a Christian because the sender identifies herself as a church goer in the SMS stating that she is going to church in the evening. In this example it is not only the linguistic choices that signal multiple identities of the sender but also the use of emoticons such as ☹ and other multimodal devices which signals that the sender uses multimodality as an act of identity.

Therefore, multiple identity types exist in this single act of communication and the sender uses the different grammatical rules of SMS speak to her advantage such as multimodality in the form of a sad smiley face (☹) and the grammatical structure and formation of the abbreviated and contracted words such as '*2nty*' (tonight) and '*prob*' (probably) which creates meaning in the SMS. This links to what Banda (2005) states that identity is not a predictable social category but is instead created and designed during interaction and is used as a resource as is seen in the SMS above. As a result, the grammatical patterns used by these participants allow them to construct and perform their identities and social roles.

Identities are linked to specific social roles in society. In this regard the upcoming section looks at identity, role structure and role relationships implicated in the SMS extracts.

7.4 The creation of role structure and relationship status in SMS speak/discourse

Eggins and Slade state that "clues to the different social roles can be found in the linguistic choices interactants make" (1997: 71). They also add that the patterned choices indicate the different roles played by participants as well as how these roles are constructed in society (Eggins and Slade, 1997: 72). Multilingual speakers can construct and deconstruct roles not only through exploiting choices in English mood, but also through strategic switching between the standard and colloquial forms of one of the repertoire of languages at their disposal (Banda, 2005). The messages to follow are analysed against this backdrop focusing on tenor, the shifting of power and the status of role relationships between participants.

Thereafter, the interpersonal metafunction will be used to analyse the purpose of the language used in the various SMSes in conjunction to the construction of relationships. By doing this mood types such as declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives will be examined.

According to Halliday (1989) tenor describes the participants involved in the producing and interpretation of the text, their status and roles, and what kinds of role relationships are obtained among participants. Consider extract 14.

Extract 14

“Yo, sori bud bt wont make prac 2day, assignment takn lnga than expectd. Hava gud 1”
(Hey, sorry bud but won’t make practice today, assignment taking longer than expected. Have a good one).

In this case the participants involved are the sender, participant E1 and the receiver, the youth leader who is also the interpreter of the text. Prior contextual information provided by the sender included that the recipient of the SMS is the sender’s youth leader. The relationship status is that of an equal one and the social distance is considered minimal because of the manner in which participant E1 addresses his youth leader. He starts the SMS off by greeting his youth leader with ‘yo’ and also refers to him as ‘bud’ which is short for ‘buddy’. The word ‘yo’ is colloquial and also draws on an Americanised youth culture whereas, the word ‘bud’ is an indication that the sender and recipient have a close relationship because anyone will not be called ‘bud’ (friend), only those persons one is familiar with. With the use of these linguistic features and the switching between standard and non-standard language the sender constructs for himself the social role of a friend.

These linguistic markers tell us more about the role and relationship participants involved in the SMS have obtained as well as their status. In terms of interpersonal meaning, this SMS is regarded as a statement as it provides the recipient of the message with information. Additionally, Eggins and Slade (1997) write that when speakers produce more declaratives or statements like in this case they get to initiate exchanges by giving information more often than other interactants. This message is structured informally and the sender goes as far as offering a politeness strategy by saying “*Hava gud 1*” (Have a good one), meaning that the sender wants the youth leader or recipient to have a good practice session even though he cannot attend the session.

In comparison to the extract above, the extract below is evident of the deconstruction of the role of friends and the construction of an aggressive relationship.

Extract 15

“Hi please don’t forget my curling iron; you’ve had it for a while now. If this is always going to be the case where you take years when returning my things then I suggest you find somewhere else to borrow from” (Hi please don’t forget my curling iron; you’ve had it for a while now. If this is always going to be the case where you take years when returning my things then I suggest you find somewhere else to borrow from).

When analysing this SMS in terms of tenor and role, the relationship between the two participants is that they were friends. The fact that the recipient asked the sender to lend her curling iron indicates that the participants involved in the SMS had a relationship because if these participants did not have a relationship the recipient would not have felt comfortable enough to ask for the curling iron in the first place. From this extract it is evident that the participants went from having an equal relationship to an unequal relationship status due to the frustration of the sender who never received her curling iron back on time and had to wait for an unforeseen period of time before it was returned. The effect of this matter put strain on the participant’s friendship causing a social distance as participant E10 no longer regarded them as close friends which can be seen in the statement *“If this is always going to be the case where you take years when returning my things then I suggest you find somewhere else to borrow from”*. Thus, the linguistic choices used in this extract differ from the previous one (extract 14) where a politeness strategy was identified in comparison to this extract which holds a face threatening act. This can be seen as a relationship decline because the sender confronts the recipient of the message with complaints about the relationship or in this case the friendship.

This message also defies SMS speak and was typed out using standard language as the participant might have felt that SMS speak would make the matter appear less serious due to its contractions and abbreviations. The goal of this SMS is to warn the recipient that if the object borrowed is not returned on time, the recipient will not be able to lend objects from the sender again. Accordingly, the quality of this relationship was investigated based on what the sender of the SMS had to say more so than the receiver of the message. When viewing the SMS through interpersonal meaning it is seen as a statement as it provided the recipient of the

message information in the form of a warning. By doing this the participant is initiating the exchange between the two parties involved in the SMS. Participant E10 may choose to signal or not signal particular identities and roles depending on the dynamics of the conversation as cited by Banda (2005). In this case the participant chose to construct and signal her identity and role as threatened based on her frustration of not receiving her curling iron on time.

The extract below sees the sender of the message constructing a subservient, complaint role for herself as a girlfriend based on the polite manner in which her SMS was formulated.

Extract 16

“Hey angel. Would u mind me coming ova 2nyt? Or would tomorrow be better?” (Hey angel. Would you mind me coming over tonight? Or would tomorrow be better?).

What in this SMS tells us that the participants have a relationship? To answer this question there is a need to explore the language usage in the SMS besides the contextual details that were provided by the sender stating that the message was sent to her boyfriend. The manner in which the SMS is addressed *‘hey angel’* tells us that the sender and receiver are involved in a relationship because the sender used a term of endearment to address the recipient. Further, the sender also asked if she could come over to visit her boyfriend that evening by providing him with an alternative. Therefore, the sender provided the recipient with an option as she could either visit him that evening or alternatively she could come by the following day depending on the recipient of the message. In her messages she asks *“Would u mind me coming ova 2nyt? Or would tomorrow be better?”* In the first question the use of the auxiliary verb *‘would’* is considered more polite than the word *‘must’* which seems more coercive as if the sender was trying to force her question onto the recipient demanding an answer. In the second question the use of the auxiliary verb *‘would’* is seen as more polite than the word *‘will’* and by using these linguistic features the sender constructs a submissive role for herself as the girlfriend. If the sender made use of the words *‘must’* and *‘will’* she would have constructed a more dominating role for herself. Instead, this shows that the recipient/boyfriend has more power and status than the sender of the message in their relationship as he gets to determine when his girlfriend can visit.

Thus, the manner in which this SMS was constructed and the language used is indicative of an intimate role relationship between the sender and receiver in which the recipient has more

power, control and status over the sender of the message. Consequently, this amounts to the participants having a relationship with minimal social distance as they are involved in an intimate relationship. With regard to interpersonal metafunction the SMS sent by participant E14 is an example of a question as it requests information or an answer from the recipient. According to Eggins and Slade (1997), these yes/no questions are fashioned to request information from others making the initiator dependant on the responses of the other speaker in the conversation. By asking these questions the sender has handed over power to the recipient because the sender would now be dependent on the recipients reply.

The use of standard and non-standard language varieties below displays the constructed role of the sender as both a friend and a lover of shoe shopping.

Extract 17

“I went to shop some SHOES!!! YEAH!!! Ma ekt nie een paar gekry wt ek gelykit lol!!!”[I went to shop some SHOES!!! YEAH!!! Maar ek het nie een paar gekry wat ek gelyk het nie lol!!!] (I went to shop some shoes!!! Yeah!!! But I did not find one pair that I liked laugh out loud!!!).

The sender provided contextual details of the SMS stating that the recipient of the message is her friend. Therefore, in terms of tenor the participants involved in this interaction include the sender participant A17 and the recipient, her friend. The role relationship between them is that of friendship hence there is an equal social status and minimal social distance based on the informal manner of the text and the topic of conversation. Additionally, if the demographical details of this participant were not provided the assumption would remain that the sender of the SMS is female because shoe shopping is considered a frequent topic of conversation amongst girlfriends. The hybrid use of language including the formal and informal language types in the SMS indicate a level of intimacy and closeness since this kind of language choice is associated and used more commonly between people that know each other rather than with those who are less familiar with one another. This exhibits that the sender is familiar with the recipient’s language background hence the mixed forms of language usage. A17 demonstrated how she utilised the grammatical resources of SMS speak and the different language varieties at her disposal to make interpersonal meaning in this SMS since the English and Afrikaans language is used as one in this instance (Banda, 2005).

The SMS is an example of interpersonal meaning because it is seen as a declarative which suggests that the sender is initiating exchanges in the conversational SMS by providing the recipient with information. Thus, the construction of this SMS allowed for the viewing of the friendship between the participants and the manner in which the SMS was constructed indicates that the sender is fond of shoe shopping hence the words shoes was written in capital letters emphasising her love for shoes. The term 'YEAH' in capital letters indicates the excitement of the participant. Furthermore, the casualty of this SMS can be analysed as involving different linguistic patterns which both enact and construct dimensions of social identity, role and interpersonal relations for both participants (Eggins and Slade, 1997).

Likewise, with the use of informal, non- standard Afrikaans the sender constructs her role as a friend. See extract 18.

Extract 18

“Goeie more liefie, wat maak jy?” (Good morning love, what are you doing?).

When analysing this example in terms of tenor it appears that the role relationship between the participants is that of friendship. This information was also provided by the sender to contextualise the message and in her essay she stated that this SMS was sent to her friend. If this information was not given, the underlying assumption could have been that the SMS was meant for her boyfriend because of the manner in which the SMS was addressed that being 'good morning love'. This shows that social knowledge is constructed and that it is context bound. Therefore, this SMS takes on a specific kind of meaning and requests a specific type of information from the recipient and shows how their relationship is constructed through this SMS. The findings prove that in terms of interpersonal meaning this SMS is an interrogative/question since it is asking for information in the form of what the participant is doing. Consequently, this example was identified as a question as it had the word 'what' in the first position which is indicative of requesting information. According to Eggins and Slade (1997) the wh-question is meant to elicit circumstantial information therefore in this example the sender was trying to draw out circumstantial information from the recipient.

Through the use of an imperative in the SMS the sender constructs for herself the role of an authoritative sister.

Extract 19

“Fetch the washing outside when you get home! Kuzo netha phandle, ungalibali” (Fetch the washing outside when you get home! It’s going to rain).

This SMS was sent by participant X13 to her younger sister, thus, in terms of tenor and role relationships the participants are seen as having an unequal relationship because the sender is older than the receiver and it has no social distance as the participants are siblings. When analysing the example in relation to interpersonal meaning the first sentence *“Fetch the washing outside when you get home!”* acts as an imperative and the second sentence is a statement. As a result, the example was identified as an order, command or instruction because the message intends on getting someone in this case the recipient to do something for the sender since a command can only be given to someone who is junior or superior to the person giving the instruction. This is also the only category of data in which I was able to find a suitable example as an imperative. In this example, like in the previous extract the familiarity and intimacy characteristics are evident hence the sender feels comfortable enough to give the recipient of the message an instruction without having to worry that the recipient might feel threatened or intimidated by the content of the message. Additionally, the SMS foregrounds the way in which the participant can act upon another through language while simultaneously expressing her authoritative nature as the older sister in the SMS. By studying the grammatical patterns of interactants, it is possible to construct their identities and social roles much like what is seen in this example.

The example below demonstrates the role of the sender as an acquaintance in need of a reply from the recipient.

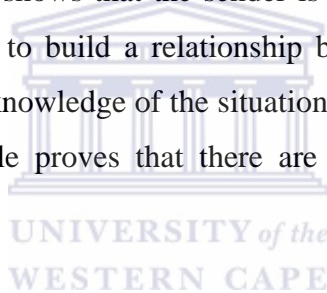
Extract 20

“Y u so rude xa undibana u logout kumxit?” (Why you so rude every time you see me online you logout off Mxit?).

The role relationship between the participants is that they are acquaintances who only chat to each other over Mxit as per the contextual details provided by the sender. This makes their relationship unequal as the participants are not considered friends and their relationship contains a social distance. With the interpersonal metafunction in mind, this SMS was identified as a question as it requests information from the recipient of the message. By

posing this question the sender has lost her position of power in the conversation since she is now dependant on the responses of the recipient (Eggins and Slade, 1997). The question posed by the sender is a direct question and the use of the word '*rude*' accuses the recipient of the SMS of being unbecoming as it is a fairly harsh word to use when asking someone who is not considered your friend something.

However, because the sender has divested herself of the right of holding the floor in the conversation and is now dependant on the recipient's response, the recipient of the SMS who is now in a position of power has every right not to answer the question leaving the sender without the response she so desperately seeks. Therefore, the linguistic choices and grammatical patterns used places emphasis on the question instead of asking '*why do you logout of Mxit every time you see me online?*' This version of the same question seems more polite to ask your acquaintance as it excludes the word '*rude*' and thus comes across as less direct and straight forward. This shows that the sender is an intentional and active agent in the interaction process of trying to build a relationship between the participants involved. More so, the sender is using her knowledge of the situation as a framework for evaluating the recipient as '*rude*'. This example proves that there are always shifts in power during a conversation.



Similarly, the example to follow showcases the sender's role as a client with a socially distant relationship to the recipient.

Extract 21

"Hello, im just reminding you of my twist braiding for tomorrow morning. I will come at 9:30 am, as agreed. I will bring R200 as you said I must" (Hello, I'm just reminding you of my twist braiding for tomorrow morning. I will come at 9:30 am, as agreed. I will bring R200 as you said I must).

The participants involved in this SMS include the sender and her hairstylist. The role relationship between them is that of client and hairstylist thus a social distance does exist as in the contextual details provided participant X13 explained that they are not considered friends as the hairstylist is older than her. Therefore, the relationship is seen as socially distant and unequal and the SMS functions for business purposes only as the content of the SMS is precise and contains important circumstantial information such as the time agreed

upon. With regard to the interpersonal metafunction this SMS is declared a statement as it provides the receiver with all the necessary information needed. The message is also systematically organised allowing for coherence and contributes to the information conveyed in the message. This adds to the sender's belief that the receiver is able and willing to perform the requested act and that the act would not have been done without it being requested from the sender. This indicates that the relationship between the participants exists for the sole purpose of the sender's request for twist hair braiding. As Eggins and Slade (1997) point out this type of interaction theorises the link between language and social life so that the conversation can be approached as a way of doing social life.

7.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the identities enacted and performed here are hybrid and stylized. This diversity, hybridity and fluidity are at the heart of language and identity and are based on performance strategies used in the negotiation of fluid communicative contexts such as in the context of SMSing. The hybrid discourses showcased how these multilingual participants use their various repertoires to shape and mould the diverse identities they wish to perform. The linguistic and discursive choices and patterns drawn on throughout the analysis of the chapter indicated how participants constructed and performed identities and roles for themselves and how these identities and roles influenced what they said and also how what they said had an influence on their identity. Language is structured to communicate the meanings which arise out of contexts of use, thus language has many functions. The interpersonal approach made it convenient to highlight who the participants involved in the messages were; what type of role relationship existed between them, whether or not they had an equal or unequal relationship status and if a social distance existed between them. Furthermore, it highlighted the existence of role structure and power relations in the SMSes.

Chapter 8

Conclusions - A summary of the main findings and conclusions

8.1 Main Findings

This thesis indicated that firstly, there is no differential effect in using SMS speak with languages such as English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa since the three languages were used as one prone to shorthand texting. This is in line with arguments that language should not be seen as an autonomous system with separate, distinctive entities (cf. Heller 2007). Instead, the practice of using SMS speak was not exclusive to a particular language as the same spelling conventions, abbreviations, contractions and letter-number words were found throughout the use of SMS speak where participants used whichever bits and pieces of a language available to them as different linguistic options in order to communicate. Thus, the shorthand texting was seen as space and time saving strategies used by speakers of all language types leading to the characteristics of SMS speak such as abbreviations and the contraction of words and sentences.

In terms of code-switching and code-mixing a conclusion was reached that the SMS/Mxit examples used throughout this study conformed to the notions of polylingual languaging and hybridity. In this regard, I argued that the notions of code-switching and code-mixing are premised on the use of languages based on an autonomous system or code whereas, with the use of hybrid languaging practices I proved that these SMS/Mxit messages should not be seen as autonomous language practices but instead suggested no boundaries in the manner in which features of different languages were used to reach a mutual understanding. This study also suggested that the traditional approach to code-switching and code-mixing needed to be relooked at to account for new global and technological realities of which hybridity is a norm. Through the use of hybrid language practices I also made apparent that the SMSing convention is not seen as an alternative means in which to practice language but instead has become a norm and valid language practice because of its frequent use among participants. This study proved that SMS speak is used as an integrated 'language' by participants who claimed to have various first languages. Instead, they utilised features of any language at their disposal in order to communicate. This type of language practice is governed by its own rules of grammar which included its own characteristics of SMS speak as well as multimodality which incorporated emoticons such as smiley faces and cyber kisses adding depth to the SMSes.

The themes that were elicited throughout the process of the thematic analysis all proved to be important as different themes highlighted different impressions of the concepts that were explored. Therefore, through the use of themes I showcased mixed forms of language usage or hybridity as the SMSes displayed more than one feature of a language being used within the same message. The themes identified in the thematic analysis also revealed that hybridity can take place on two levels, the first being between SMSes where features of multiple languages were used as one. The second was present in SMSes where one language was used but differed in terms of standard and non-standard use of register and language variety. Consequently, both types of SMS/Mxit messages were considered hybrid. The use of these themes also publicized that the SMSes were multimodal as many of the text messages were written or typed out and contained imagery or emoticons such as smiley faces. This type of communication allowed for visual and graphic meaning to be integrated.

This study disclosed that the first language of the recipient did not influence the language the sender formulated the SMS in since the participants sent messages containing mixed language choices used as one regardless of what language participants claimed to have as their first/home language. Furthermore, senders of messages used any means available to accommodate recipients despite differences in their first language, culture or beliefs. For instance, if the receiver was of an Islamic nature Arabic terminology would be used such as the universal greeting '*salaam*' (hello). Through this it was revealed that other languages were also being modified by this mode of communication specifically the Arabic language, where the very greeting of '*salaam*' mentioned above is contracted to form '*slm*' omitting all the vowels. This proved that SMS speak is not only modifying but also amalgamating languages such as English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa and even Arabic focused on in this study to form one means of communication. Further, I discovered that across all three categories of data when participants sent SMSes to people of the older generation such as parents or grandparents, they would do so in full sentences to avoid confusing the recipient.

The concept of globalization also referred to here as mobility or migration in the era of globalization has impacted on SMSing based on its definition and the fact that many of the participants that formed part of the study were residents to other provinces and some have made the move from a rural environment to an urban environment. Through this I showcased that there was a constant movement of not only people but their languages as well leading to participants having to adapt and adopt the languages they spoke in order to accommodate the

environment and people they were now associated with. This was linked to transidiomatic practices which demonstrated that SMS/Mxit messages was a means in which to communicate across different linguistic and communicative codes blending languages to form new modern modes of communication. This verified that the merging of text messages was a result of globalization and a manner in which to explore language as a social interaction. In terms of polylingual languaging, I noted that it impacted on the SMSes as it demonstrated the mobility of language based on the premise that language is ever changing and was communicated in various ways by participants.

Stylization was evident in these mobile messages, as participants used multi-voiced utterances when sending text messages filled by their own style as well as the imitation of those of others in order to communicate their intended message. Therefore, style formed part of their language variation because participants spoke in different ways in different situations and this meant that these different ways of speaking came loaded with different social meanings. Stylization enabled them to perform different identities and fine tune different meanings to perform particular roles and statuses. In turn, this has led to questions of how language as a local practice impacted SMSing. Through the process of this study it has become clear that language as a local practice touched on concepts such as locality and practice in which participants used local languages constantly introducing SMS speak as a norm rather than an alternative language practice. As a result, the SMS examples used in this study were not only analysed in terms of polylingual languaging, transidiomatic practices, language as a local and social practice and stylization but were also aimed to highlight how these concepts impacted on the composition of the SMSing phenomenon.

I used the interpersonal meaning/tenor to examine the types of relationships participants built for themselves and the relationship that they built between themselves and the recipients of the messages they sent. This method enabled me to see who the participants involved in the SMS interaction were, what the relationship between them were and it aimed to clarify whether the relationship was of an equal or unequal social status. Furthermore, this method was useful as it indicated whether SMSes were declaratives, interrogatives or imperatives and by doing so highlighted the power relations between participants involved in a conversation.

Lastly, this study has also highlighted that just as language is considered hybrid so too is identity. Participants constructed various identities and roles for themselves ranging from

students to family members, girlfriends and boyfriends and they did so by using different languages and language varieties as a resource. This related to how these individuals spoke differently in different situations and the types of identities that participants displayed through these differing styles. This showcased that identities are multiple, mobile and performative. It also proved that identities are stylized as a single participant was able to signal and index multiple identities. From this it was also ascertained that in terms of linguistic performativity, participants' identity options will fluctuate and change depending on the range of linguistic features available to them. Therefore, participants portrayed and stylized various identities when engaging in SMS speak and their language use shaped their identities to the point where multiple affiliations were existent in a single act of communication or SMS.

8.2 Further Research

This research could be taken forward by firstly conducting more studies of this nature focusing on the popular BBM text messages which includes not only the sending and receiving of emoticons but also includes voice notes, status updates and profile picture updates, making this form of communication super hybrid. Secondly, more studies could be carried out focusing on new and upcoming phenomena such as languaging and styling in relation to social networking. Finally, future studies can further look at the more traditional concepts of alternate languages and the notion of the third space and come up with a new understanding of these concepts in relation to the present modern day social networking.

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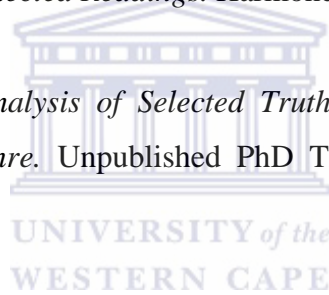
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10.1 Glossary

luv – love

wud – what you doing

nw – now

2nyt – tonight

prob – probably

l8er – later

u – you

plz – please

c – see

anywu – anyhow

tyk – take

ur – your

nid – need

4rm – from

ima – I'm going to

nxt – next

jst – just

wlk – walk

yester – yesterday

abt – about

mrng – morning

l8 – late

b – be

4 – for

doin – doing

hav – have

da – the

buk – book

wit – with

nd – and

gradu8 – graduate

mod – module



smstr – semester
hwa – how are you
sori – sorry
sowi – sorry
textn – texting
wana – want to
wat – what
tym – time
wer – where
xactly – exactly
n – and
lng – long
wel – well
thort – thought
gr8 – great
gana – going to
wkend – weekend
cn – can
d8 – date
hav – have
futha – further
hapi – happy
bday – birthday
hpe – hope
njoyd – enjoyed
cnt – can't
agen – again
gudeveninz – good evening
nt – not
disturb – disturbing
dropn – dropping
lt – let
tht – that
wrng – wrong



ere – here
phne – phone
fne – phone
cht – chat
dn – then
lemme – let me
quik – quick
gota – got to
wen – when
msg – message
cuz – cousin
lil – little
syd – side
chocl8 – chocolate
lol – laugh out loud
mc – miss
gudnyt – goodnight
r – are
y – why
fwend – friend
ther – there
arnt – are not
goin – going
juz – just
playin – playing
clubbin – clubbing
tryin – trying
cal – call
wmen – women
rmind – remind
askin – asking
thnx – thanks
mic – miss
bin – been



bizi – busy
colbek – call back
ud – you would
twas – it was
lurv – love
inda – in the
xtra – extra
agen – again
oryt – alright
idk – I don't know
cmpus – campus
lyka – like a
prac – practice
2day – today
takn – taking
Inga – longer
betta – better
coz - because



10.2 Essay Instructions

LCS 311 Essay 1 2011

Multilingualism, code-switching and identity in SMS/Mixit-speak: an analysis of 5 sent and 5 received messages

Background

- This essay is intended to deepen our understanding of how cellphone/Mixit messages and other forms of digital communication are reshaping our multilingual language use patterns in the 21st century.
- It forms part of a larger research project. Information and consent forms will be issued in the next lecture.

Introduction

- A short introductory paragraph on your daily use of the cell-phone as a form of personal communication, followed by a brief explanation of the purpose of this essay: to analyze language in EITHER your sms or Mixit messages. If you are going to give permission for the department to use your data, you should say that your essay will form part of a larger research project on mobile literacies in the 21st century.

Methodology

- Your next paragraph should set out the methodology used to collect the data: either by copying out 5 sent, and 5 received sms/Mixit messages or by downloading these messages onto a computer. **IMPORTANT: ensure that you have the permission of the senders of your received messages to use their data.**

THE DATA

- Start with your 'sent' data. First, provide brief biographical details about yourself as the sender: age, gender, ethnicity, language/s, social class. Then copy out the five 'sent' messages and supply the context of the messages (why? When? To whom? What?).
- Now copy out the 'received' data. With each message, provide brief biographical details about the senders: age, gender, ethnicity, language/s, social class. Also provide the context of the messages.
- TWO-THREE PARAGRAPHS

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

- Reflect on the language choices in each message – what language/s were used? Did code-switching/mixing occur? Was slang used, or was the language use quite formal? Was 'sms-speak' used (emoticons, abbreviations, etc.) or full sentences with standard punctuation? By whom? Why? What type of multilingualism (from the typology of multilingualism) is reflected in the language use of your sent and received messages? How do they reflect language identity? Is your home language being changed/modified?
- TWO-THREE PARAGRAPHS

CONCLUSION and REFERENCES

- Write a brief concluding paragraph in which you sum up what you have learned through doing this essay.
- Add at least two references, one of which could be the multilingualism reader which should be referenced as follows:
- Dyers, C. 2011. LCS 311 Multilingualism Reader. Dept. Linguistics, UWC.
- Note that these references are only valid if they are also referred to in the body of your essay with correct page references, e.g. (Dyers, 2011:7).

Other details

- 2 and a half - 3 pages minimum (approximately 9 paragraphs),
- 2 references minimum,
- typed, 12pt, 1 and a half spacing, Times New Roman,
- Cover page (name, st.no., module, title of essay, name of lecturer).
- Due date: Week of 2 March. (submit to Ms Skade, room L118, and sign class-list).
- Total marks: 20.



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10.3 Consent Form

LINGUISTICS DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

RESEARCH PROJECT: Electronic Languages and Literacies – Digital Communication in a Multilingual Society YEAR: 2011

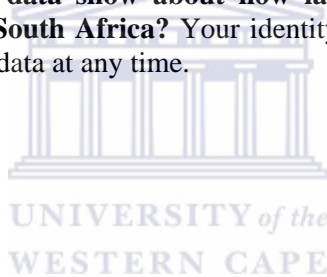
Dear Student,

We would like to invite you to participate in an important research project on digital communication which seeks answers to the following questions:

To what extent are digital communication technologies re-shaping communicative practices, social interaction and identities in South Africa? What types of mono- and bilingual literacies are currently developing in electronic domains? In particular, what versions and varieties of South Africa's languages are being 'literalized' in these contexts, and for what purposes? How do users' social identities (class, race/ethnicity, gender, age) shape their engagement with these new media?

Your part in this project is to permit the researchers to use the sms data from your LCS essay entitled: **What does your SMS (or MXit) data show about how languages are used in new ways in contemporary communication in South Africa?** Your identity will of course not be revealed, and you have the right to withdraw your data at any time.

Yours sincerely
Prof Charlyn Dyers (co-researcher)



LETTER OF CONSENT TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT RESPONDENTS

I (FULL NAME OF STUDENT), student no.:....., hereby give the Linguistics Department of the University of the Western Cape permission to analyze and use my sms data for the above research project.

The project was fully explained to me and I was not awarded coursework marks for an essay analyzing the SMS data.

I am aware that I have the right to withdraw my data from the project at any time. I am also aware that all my data will be used strictly anonymously, using a system of coding instead of real names for identification. I am also aware that I can have access to any reports using my data once the research project has been concluded.

Signed:.....

Date:.....