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**TOURISM AND MULTILINGUALISM IN CAPE TOWN:  
LANGUAGE PRACTICES AND POLICY**



**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts**

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## DECLARATION

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **ABSTRACT**

Language diversity continues to create a language barrier to international tourism. Tourists from non-English speaking countries face a language barrier in South Africa and this affects their experiences in the country. Measuring and understanding something of this challenge is the purpose of this study. The focus is on how the tourism industry in Cape Town uses languages to sell and promote the city internationally. The study investigates procedures, strategies, and policies adopted by the tourism industry in Cape Town to cater for tourists from across the world. In addition, the study also investigates how tourists from non-English speaking countries adapt linguistically to cope with their stay in Cape Town.

The study targeted both tourism organisations and international tourists who use tourist facilities in most popular tourist areas in Cape Town. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Convenience sampling was used to select both tourism service providers and tourists. To enhance validity, reliability, and accuracy, various tools have been deployed to collect the data. Primary data were collected from both tourism service providers and international tourists using questionnaires, interviews, photographs and observations.

Secondary data collection involved observations of public signage as well as analysis of electronic and printed promotional materials such as brochures, guidebooks, menus, newspapers and websites. Collected data were captured in spread sheets to

enable descriptive analysis of tourists' languages and of language use in tourism organisations in different forms of niche tourism in Cape Town.

Survey results reveal that a little more than half of all surveyed tourism organisations in Cape Town sell and promote their products using only South African languages including English whilst a minority sell and promote their products using English coupled with foreign languages. The majority of multilingual staff in those surveyed tourism organisations who have adopted multilingualism are working part-time or employed temporarily. In addition, results also indicate that English dominates other languages in public signs and printed and electronic promotional publications used by surveyed tourism organisations in Cape Town. Foreign languages are used most in tour operations and travel agencies sector whilst South African languages dominate in accommodation and restaurants sectors.

On the other hand the research shows that a big proportion of foreign tourists in Cape Town were able to speak English and other foreign languages. The research shows that the majority of tourists from non-English speaking countries are more interested in learning foreign languages compared with their counterparts from English speaking countries. Only less than a quarter of all surveyed tourists from non-English speaking countries in Cape Town are monolingual in their home languages. These tourists struggle to communicate with service providers in Cape Town. Translators and gestures were used by non-English speaking tourists as a way of breaking down communication barriers in Cape Town. Contrarily, a big proportion (two thirds) of all surveyed tourists from English speaking countries in Cape Town does speak only English.

Foreign tourists in Cape Town speak tourism service providers' language rather than tourism service providers speaking tourists' languages. The majority of tourism service providers in Cape Town are reluctant to learn foreign languages and to employ multilingual staff. This means that most tourism organisations sell and market their product in English only. Other South African languages such as Afrikaans and Xhosa are used frequently in informal communication in the tourism industry in Cape Town. Seemingly, Afrikaans dominates Xhosa in all forms of tourism except in township tourism where the majority of service providers are Xhosa-speakers.

To market and promote Cape Town internationally, the tourism industry in Cape Town should employ multilingual staff who can communicate in tourists' native languages. Multilingualism should be practised in all tourism sectors rather than in one or few sectors because all tourism sectors compliment each other in meeting customer's satisfaction. Failure in one tourism sector may affect other tourism sectors' performance.

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## KEY WORDS

Adaptation

Cape Town

Foreign languages

Language barrier

Language policy

*Lingua franca*

Multilingualism practices

Non-English speaking tourists

Promoting and selling tourism product

Urban tourism



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

*Own only what you can carry with you;  
know language, know countries, know people.  
Let your memory be your travel bag.*

Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918 – 2008)

### 1.1 Introduction

Language diversity across the world is a colossal barrier in the tourism and hospitality industry. There are people who claim that English is an international business language and that it dominates other languages in the world (Arsky and Cherney, 1997; Granville *et al.*, 1997). However this assumption of English's hegemony is questionable in the tourism and hospitality business. An alternative view is that the tourism industry has to be staffed by multilingual and multicultural employees to respond fruitfully to international tourism demand (Jafari and Way, 1994). The number of tourism service providers who acknowledge language and culture diversity across the world is increasing significantly: they are marketing and selling their products in different languages (Lituchy and Barra, 2008).

The tourism and hospitality industry may be regarded as non-goods producing and as a people-oriented industry. The success of the tourism and hospitality industry, as well as other service industries, depends on effective communication, more so than manufacturing industries. Organisations in the tourism and hospitality industry rely heavily on communication with tourists through a variety of channels selling and promoting tourism products and creating customer relationships (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006). Language certainly plays a fundamental role in the tourism industry, but gestures and body language should not be ignored in customer-employee interactions (Heo, Jogaratnam and Buchanan, 2004).

### 1.2 Tourism numbers and geographies

Tourism is a major employer and mover of people across the world. International tourism has increased significantly between 2004 and 2007. In 2007, a report from the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) revealed that international tourist

arrivals reached 842 million in 2006 with a growth rate of 4,5 percent per annum (UNWTO, 2007). One year later, a new record of 900 million international tourist arrivals occurred, representing an estimated annual growth rate of six percent (UNWTO, 2008a). The UNWTO projects that international tourist arrivals will reach nearly 1.6 billion in 2020 of which 1.2 billion will be intraregional and 378 million will be long-haul travellers (UNWTO, 2008b). Regarding how international tourist arrivals are shared among continents, Africa continues lagging behind other continents despite its relatively large geographical size and population. Europe continues to take the lead with the greatest share of international tourist arrivals and departures (Sindiga, 1999; UNWTO, 2008a).

### **1.2.1 Tourism as an engine for economic development in Africa**

The tourism industry in developing countries is regarded as an economic sector with the potential to make a contribution towards poverty reduction (Rogerson and Visser, 2004). As a result of complications in terms of trade in other sectors, and protection of manufactures, many developing countries turned their hope to tourism as an alternative source of survival. Tourism plays a crucial role in the economy of poor countries and it is a major invisible export in Third World countries (UNWTO, 2004b). During the past two decades, many African countries showed an interest in tourism and started to develop tourist destinations hoping to attract international visitors. Accordingly, tourism is flourishing in some African countries although their resources are limited and they receive policy guidance from donors (Iain and Doreen, 2001).

Although the growth rate of tourism in Third World countries is higher than in developed countries (UNWTO, 2004a), the African continent has been receiving an insignificant number of international tourist arrivals compared to other continents (Sindiga, 1999; Iain and Doreen, 2001; Cleverdon, 2002; UNWTO, 2008a).<sup>1</sup> In 2001 Africa only received approximately four percent of all international travellers and tourism receipts (Iain and Doreen, 2001). The African continent cannot compete

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<sup>1</sup> The international tourist arrivals worldwide in 2007 were nearly 900 million of which Africa had only 44 million with a growth rate of more than 8%. In the same year the international tourist arrivals in other continents were: 46 million for Middle East (growth of 13%); 185 million for Asia and Pacific (10% growth); 142 million for Americas (5% growth); and 480 million for Europe, the leading world's destination with more 50% of all international tourist arrivals (4% growth) (UNWTO, 2008).

effectively as a destination with better developed destinations in Europe and America. The tourism industry throughout Africa is performing below international competitive standards (Iain and Doreen, 2001). This poor performance of the tourism industry in Africa is due to natural disasters, civil conflicts, threats to tourists' safety and inadequate international access (Cleverdon, 2002; Maswera, Dawson and Edwards, 2008).

Despite the African continent experiencing an insignificant number and rate of international tourist arrivals, there is a disparity in the geography of international tourist arrivals in Africa. Most international tourist arrivals in Africa are shared among few destinations.<sup>2</sup> Major destinations such as South Africa, Kenya and Morocco dominate other destinations in terms of tourist arrivals and receipts (Sindiga, 1999; Rogerson and Visser, 2007b). Indeed, tourism seems to be developed in few African countries.<sup>3</sup> Among sub-Saharan countries, one country (South Africa) can compete at international level, but the remaining countries need to do much more to develop the tourism industry.

### **1.2.2 Tourism performance in South Africa**

South Africa's political independence in 1994 was crucial to the tourism industry becoming accessible to international tourists. The country had an insignificant number of international visitors before then. During the apartheid epoch, tourism in South Africa was mainly domestic-based and anti-developmental because of international boycotts and sanctions. Mostly, international tourists from Britain and other Europeans came to visit friends and relatives and to do business (Rogerson and Visser, 2004). South Africa failed to reach its own set target of one million tourists in 1980 (Dondolo, 2002).

The apartheid regime adversely affected all sections of South Africa's economy but the tourism industry suffered most. The number of international tourist arrivals reduced considerably and South African tourism offices in many countries across the world closed their doors as a result of international sanctions. To make the matter

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<sup>2</sup> North Africa receives 35%, Southern Africa 30%, East Africa 23%, West Africa 10%, and Central Africa 3% (Rogerson and Visser, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> These countries include Tunisia, South Africa, Morocco, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Botswana, Mauritius and Namibia (Sindiga, 1999).

worse, legislation encouraged the tourism industry to focus on the domestic market in which the majority of South Africans (Black Africans) had no access to facilities. During the apartheid era, many beaches, hotels, restaurants, and national parks were reserved for the privileged white minority (Rogerson and Visser, 2004). The apartheid policies were characterised by discrimination based on the skin colour of South Africans.

After the fall of apartheid in 1994, the South African government recognised that tourism could contribute to economic and social empowerment and upliftment. The new government believed that investing in the tourism industry would create new jobs and generate foreign earnings (Binns and Nel, 2002; Rogerson and Visser, 2004; Rogerson, 2005). Promotion of tourism became one of the strategies adopted by the new South African government to eliminate the poverty and socio-economic disparity left by apartheid (Binns and Nel, 2002; Rogerson and Visser, 2004; Rogerson, 2005; Muhanna, 2007). Indeed, the government has been investing in, promoting and encouraging Black Africans to participate in the tourism industry. However, there is still inequality and disparity because Black Africans are under-represented in all sectors, including tourism sector. The white minority of South Africa's population continues to lead the tourism industry in terms of both ownership and employment (Rogerson, 2005).

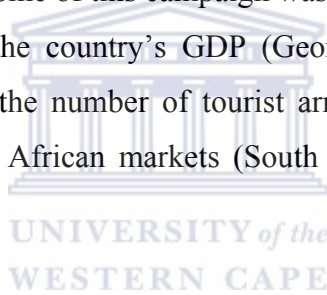
Regardless of Black South Africans being unrepresented in the tourism industry, South Africa has experienced a notable increase of international tourist arrivals and receipts. Between 1998 and 2002, tourism was the only industry that showed positive growth in terms of employment and contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) (Rogerson, 2005). International tourist arrivals increased in South Africa soon after independence in 1994 due to the country's political stability and economic development (Boniface and Cooper, 2005; Rogerson and Visser, 2007b). In 1995 international tourism in South Africa soared by 52 percent (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004). The number of tourist arrivals grew from 70,000 in 1994 to 6.7 million in 2004 (Ruggia, 2005).

At a continental level, South Africa presently receives a large share of tourists who travel to Africa (Sindiga, 1999; Rogerson and Visser, 2007b). In 1997, South Africa



accounted for 24 percent of all international arrivals and 26 percent of financial tourist expenditure and receipts generated for Africa. In the same year, South Africa was just two percentage points behind Côte d' Ivoire which experienced the highest (17 percent) annual increase in international tourist arrivals in Africa (Iain and Doreen, 2001).

South Africa spends vast sums of money marketing the country as a tourist destination to both tourists and potential tourists internationally and domestically. Tourism's contribution to GDP increased from 4,6% in 1993 to 8,3% in 2006. It is projected to increase to 12% by 2014 (Burger, 2008). However, these increases are not surprising. Soon after South Africa getting its independence in 1994, it spent millions of Rands campaigning in foreign markets including both English-speaking countries (the U.K and USA) and non-English speaking countries (France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands). The outcome of this campaign was positive. The tourism industry contributed significantly to the country's GDP (George, 2003). In 2007, a South African report revealed that the number of tourist arrivals reached 9.09 million of which the majority are from African markets (South African Tourism (SATOUR), 2008).<sup>4</sup>



### **1.2.3 Cape Town tourism**

Cape Town is one of South Africa's preferred destinations and it is often presented as a tourist city (Field, Meyer and Swanson, 2007). The city claims to have the most popular areas of interest to both domestic and international tourists. These areas of interest are known as the "big six".<sup>5</sup> As a tourist destination Cape Town is formally second to Johannesburg in receiving the highest number of tourist arrivals; many tourists flying into Johannesburg, however, are only in transit. Every year Cape Town receives millions of both domestic and international tourists who flock to the city to enjoy its physical beauty and cultural diversity. There were 800,000 international and 3.8 million domestic tourists in 1998 (Field, Meyer and Swanson, 2007).

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<sup>4</sup> The African market generated 6,626,731 tourists who arrived in South Africa by land and 280,831 tourists by air.

<sup>5</sup> The "big six" are Cape Point, Constantia Vineyards, Kirstenbosch National Botanic Gardens, Robben Island, Table Mountain, and the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront.

The popularity of Cape Town as an international tourist destination has been increasing in the last decade. Political independence in 1994 was an opportunity for Cape Town to market and promote tourism internationally. The city has been developing tourism infrastructure which makes it possible to compete with other international destinations across the world (Cape Town Tourism, 2008). Eight of South Africa's top 10 tourist attractions are located in Cape Town and, as a result, the city attracts 52 per cent of all international visitors to South Africa (George, 2003). In 2004, Cape Town was top long-haul destination in the UK 2004 Trends and Spends Survey (Pirie, 2007). Cape Town is the only African city that is a member of 'Bestcities' Global Alliance alongside Copenhagen, Dubai, Edinburgh, Melbourne, San Juan, Singapore and Vancouver (Cape Town Tourism, 2009b).

### **1.3 Multilingualism as a strategy for building a non-racial South Africa**

Apartheid's most noted impact on tourism was to dissuade international tourism and give uneven access to domestic tourists. In addition, during apartheid rule South Africa adopted a bilingual policy using Afrikaans and English as official languages (Verhoef, 1998; Pluddemann, 1999; Christopher, 2003). The measure was exclusionary in the tourism field.

Nominally, both Afrikaans and English had an equal share in education and administration. Taking advantage of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, apartheid gained control over education for Black Africans. Apartheid introduced the Mother Tongue Education (MTE) policy, which was in favour of Afrikaans. African languages such as Xhosa and Zulu were surprisingly not considered in this policy. Then Afrikaans started its hegemony in secondary schools as the language of learning and teaching. The MTE policy was a strategy adopted by apartheid to reduce the growth and influence of English that was the language of instruction together with Afrikaans in secondary school (Pluddemann, 1999; McKay and Chick, 2001).

In 1976 students in Soweto, Johannesburg's largest Black township, revolted against using Afrikaans as the language of instruction in secondary schools. Although many students died and others lost their loved ones, apartheid lost the battle when the use of Afrikaans in Black secondary schools collapsed (Heugh, 1999; Pluddemann, 1999). Two years after the Soweto students' struggle, English instruction started.

To help construct a non-racial society, South Africa chose to follow a multilingual policy only a few years after a democratic government was installed in 1994. Eleven languages, including Afrikaans and English, were declared to be official languages in terms of the South African Constitution. This language policy ended the marginalisation and stigmatisation of other African languages during the apartheid era (Pluddemann, 1999; Baker, 2007). The acceptance of indigenous languages as official languages was a step taken by the South African government to address the unequal status of languages and to enhance and protect cultural and language diversity in the country (Webb, 1999; Barkhuizen, 2002).

Although one of the objectives of declaring eleven official languages was to promote neglected African languages, many researchers confirm that English is actually becoming dominant in schools, businesses, and even civil administration (Granville et al, 1997; Verhoef, 1998; Pluddemann, 1999; Webb, 1999; Barkhuizen, 2002; Van der Walt, 2004; Dyers, 2008). Some researchers note numerous signs that South Africa is heading where it was during the apartheid regime: the country is likely to end up being monolingual instead of multilingual (Verhoef, 1998, Pluddemann, 1999; Webb, 1999). English continues to gain prominence in government, in parastatal bodies, in the private sector, and in schools and universities (Barkhuizen, 2002; Dyers, 2008).<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding the large number of people in South Africa who speak African languages, Barkhuizen (2002) postulates that African languages cannot compete with the status of English. One can argue that some African languages are spoken by few people and that therefore those languages should not (and cannot) impinge on other more widely spoken languages. Baker pointed out that among African languages some languages have higher status than others (Baker, 2007). Conversely van der Walt laid stress on the importance of English by saying that English does not create a

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<sup>6</sup> Examples where English dominates include public services such as Parliament, the South African Defence Force and the Courts. In parastatal bodies English prevails in Post Offices, South African Airways, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (TV). In the private sector English is the only language used in the Landbank (known as the Land and Agricultural Bank of South Africa), the ABSA banking group, the Council of Real Estate Agents, the official journal of nurses (Nursing World) and the editorial board of De Rebus (the official journal of the Society of Lawyers) (Pluddemann, 1999; van der Walt, 2004; Webb, 1999).

barrier to access and it opens doors to job markets and international communication (Van der Walt, 2004).

The languages in South Africa are distributed in such a way that they form concentrations in particular areas. These concentrations have their roots partly in colonial and apartheid rule. Apartheid forced people to live in segregated spaces according to their culture and language (Madiba, 1999; Dondolo, 2002). Unilingualism was functional; multilingualism was not necessary or encouraged. People in each region speak their own languages and people from different regions may not understand each other if they speak in their indigenous languages. During colonial times, urban areas in South Africa were created for commercial and administrative purposes in favour of White people. Native English speakers concentrated in urban areas.

Even before 'apartheid' in 1948, South Africa's 'native' population was segregated in urban areas. The official segregation of 'native' population in Cape Town was initiated in 1901. By the 1950s, Cape Town's population was 742400, of which 361300 were coloureds, 307000 were whites and 74100 were Black Africans (Wilkinson, 2000). Although South Africa experienced a high rate of rural-urban migration in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Christopher, 2004), an African language such as isiXhosa is still dominated by Afrikaans in Cape Town (Wilkinson, 2000).<sup>7</sup> Black Africans comprise approximately three quarters of South Africa's population but their number is still insignificant in Cape Town (Western, 2002). Indeed, the majority of people who speak languages other than isiXhosa are urbanised (Christopher, 2004).

There is linguistic complexity in urban areas because of the influx of economic migrants from rural to urban areas. One prominent linguist claims that every South African speaks at least two languages. But Black Africans, especially those who are in urban areas, are likely to speak three or more languages (Banda, 2002). In addition to rural-urban migration, the main South African cities experience influx of foreign

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<sup>7</sup> In 1980, Cape Town's population was almost 1.9 million of which 9950600 were identified as coloureds, 573000 were whites and 315700 people were Africans. In 1996, the population of Cape Town was 2.6 million of which 48% were coloureds, Africans and whites were 25% and 21% respectively. These statistics indicate that Afrikaans is mostly spoken in Cape Town, followed by IsiXhosa then English.

migrants. These Black foreigners have an impact on English, increasing its popularity in urban areas (Pluddemann, 1999; Vigouroux, 2005). Besides the urbanisation and influx of Black foreigners to South African cities, there are foreign tourists who visit South Africa for the purpose of improving their English. Cape Town for example, is a popular language-learning travel destination (Walker, 2006).

In line with South Africa's language policy, the Western Cape Province supported the country's language policy by introducing its own language policy in 2001. The Province's language policy officially recognises three tongues (Afrikaans, English and Xhosa).<sup>8</sup> The provincial government encouraged private organisations to develop and implement their own language policies that are in accordance with the provincial language policy. In addition, the province called on people in the private sector to extend the multilingualism policy by learning other important foreign languages, saying that "Provincial and local governments shall endeavour to promote the most important languages of trade and tourism such as German, French, and Japanese" (Western Cape, 2001). However, English remains the business language in Cape Town and the Western Cape regardless of an increasing number of immigrant French and German speakers in South Africa from Europe and west and central Africa (Cape Town Tourism, 2009a).

Regardless of the dominance of Afrikaans speakers in provincial and local government administration and language policy-making in the Western Cape, English seems to dominate in all formal communications whereas Afrikaans is dominant in informal mediums. A report in an official provincial source affirmed that Xhosa is rarely used and is being marginalised. However, language use is affected by officials' own language backgrounds rather than just the needs of others around them. In addition, history and politics have a great influence on an individual's language choice. If a White person expresses him/herself in Afrikaans for example, it seems as he/she is reminding others about the power relations of apartheid. On the other hand, speaking in Xhosa is also viewed as reacting to the dominance of other languages such as Afrikaans and English in the Western Cape (Western Cape, 2002).

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<sup>8</sup> Afrikaans, English and Xhosa are the home languages of the majority of the Western Cape Province's inhabitants (Western Cape, 2002).

Even though the Western Cape and South Africa are in the process of promoting foreign languages, one researcher claims that there are some Black South Africans who show no interest in learning foreign languages (Baker, 2007). One reason given by Baker is that Black South Africans feel that their indigenous languages are marginalised and stigmatised. This stigmatisation has been acknowledged by other researchers (Pluddemann, 1999; Barkhuizen, 2002). Further, South Africa in general and Cape Town in particular are not seen as friendly, welcoming and hospitable destinations especially for tourists from African markets (*Cape Times*, 21 November 2005). Yet, to sell and promote tourism products to non-English-speaking tourists in South Africa there is need for a *lingua franca* between hosts and non-English speaking guests to break down language barriers.

Indeed, language in tourism industry in South Africa continues to be a gigantic problem as some international tourists face a language barrier during their stay in the country. One study showed that the majority of tourists from English speaking countries travel independently whilst almost every tourist from non-English speaking markets such as France, China, and Japan take package tours. The language barrier was considered to be the main reason why these tourists from non-English speaking countries resort to inclusive tours (Rogerson and Visser, 2007b).

#### **1.4 Aim of the research**

Multilingualism in South Africa has become a topic of interest to many researchers (for example Granville et al., 1997; Banda, 2002; Barkhuizen, 2002; Christopher, 2003; Baker, 2007). Researchers have focused on investigating language mainly in the education sector; no research has been conducted relating to language in tourism, let alone in any specific tourism market or space. The following study investigates the extent to which languages are used in the tourism industry in Cape Town to market and promote the city as a tourist destination to non-English speaking tourists.

The central aim of this study of language usage in the tourism industry in Cape Town is to explore the extent to which tourism service suppliers in Cape Town are sensitive to language diversity when marketing and promoting the city as a tourism product to non-English speaking travelers. The study identifies procedures, strategies and policies adopted by the tourism industry in Cape Town to cater for non-English



speaking tourists visiting the city. The research also investigates means and ways adopted by non-English-speaking tourists to deal with language barriers before and during their stay in Cape Town. Finally, the inquiry identifies target markets which the tourism industry in Cape Town serves based on the languages used to promote and sell Cape Town as a tourist destination.

### **1.5 Problem statement**

Language continues to be a barrier to international tourists in many countries including South Africa. Tourists from non-English countries face a language barrier in South Africa and this barrier affects their experiences in the country (Rogerson and Visser, 2007b). Measuring and understanding this challenge is the reason for this study into how the tourism industry in Cape Town uses languages to sell and serve tourists from all over the world.

### **1.6 Delimitation of the study**

Areas of interest to tourists in Cape Town have been selected as a sample of tourist sites at which to conduct the research. These areas include the top six tourism attractions and service points of Cape Town Central Business District (CBD), Robben Island, Victoria and Albert Waterfront, Constantia Vineyards, Kirstenbosch National Gardens and Table Mountain. The study targets the tourism service providers running tourism businesses, and also non-English speaking tourists using facilities at those sites. This study also investigates languages used by tourism service providers in different ephemeral publications and on public signage.<sup>9</sup>

### **1.7 Significance of the research**

Good communication in service industries including the tourism industry is the key to success. Oral presentation plays a pivotal role in selling and in creating a relationship with customers (Kotler, Haider and Rein, 1993). Understanding how languages are used in the tourism industry in Cape Town to promote and sell tourism product to non-English speaking tourists is important in an effort to improve relationships between tourism service providers and non-English speaking tourists. The tourism industry in Cape Town should recruit suitable candidates to meet customers' needs,

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<sup>9</sup> Ephemeral publications used in this study include: visitor and destination brochures, accommodation and tour agency websites, tourism guide books, restaurant menus and newspapers.

wants, and expectations through communicating with tourists in their own languages. In addition, this study may help the tourism industry to develop an appropriate tourism and language policy which will protect the interests of all stakeholders. On the other hand the study will help institutions to train people in such a way that they will meet industry demand.

## **1.8 Summary**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, international tourism has increased significantly. Many countries especially in the Third World see this increase as an opportunity to revive their economies and reduce poverty. However, the performance of tourism in South Africa was negatively affected during apartheid rule due to international sanctions. Soon after South Africa's independence, the country became one of the most visited countries in Africa receiving millions of tourists from across the world, with Cape Town being the draw card of tourists in the country.

Despite the increasing numbers of international tourists, linguistic diversity continues to be a barrier in the tourism industry in many countries including South Africa. During the apartheid era, Afrikaans and English were the only South African official languages. After South Africa getting its independence in 1994, it adopted a multilingualism policy with eleven official languages as a way of giving all languages equal status. To promote multilingualism, the Western Cape introduced its own language policy with three languages used by the majority of its inhabitants. Regardless of both South Africa's and provincial language policy, English dominates other official languages in formal public use.

The hegemony of English globally affects the experience of non-English speaking tourists who travel to English speaking countries. Against this backdrop the study investigates the extent to which the tourism industry in Cape Town uses multiple languages to promote and sell the city as a tourist destination to international tourists from across the world. The study was carried out in the most popular tourist destinations in Cape Town and involved collection of both primary and secondary data.



## CHAPTER TWO

### SOUTH AFRICA'S CITIES AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

*Travel gives me the opportunity to walk through the sectors of cities where one can clearly see the passage of time.*

Jerzy Kosinski (1933 - 1991)

#### 2.1 Introduction

Cities play a pivotal role in tourism development. A city provides a bundle of different activities that can be chosen by customers who may be either residents or visitors. Visiting cities is one of the reasons why people take holidays locally or abroad (van Limburg, 1998). Urban areas themselves and activities associated with them form a major part of tourists' travel experiences (Page, 1995). However, urban areas attract distinct visitors based on differences in the nature and functions of urban areas and on travelers' motivations (Barker and Page, 2002). Surprisingly, before the 1980s tourism was not included in the main functions of the city that should be considered by planners and local governments (Hubbard, 1995; Law, 1996).

Tourism was slow to become one of the recognized functions of cities and urban areas (Page 1995; Law, 1996). Some reasons for tourism being ignored in city and town planning include market dynamics and the nature of tourism. Dredge and Moore (1992) argue that the tourism industry is driven by private enterprises which have the objective of maximizing profits, whilst city and town planning is an activity undertaken for the purpose of serving the community or general public. Therefore city and town planners had no exposure to or understanding of the market dynamics that drive the tourism industry. The absence of a proper definition of the tourism industry also created some difficulties in integrating the tourism industry into the city and town planning framework. The tourism industry is a collection of many different service-based activities such as shops, restaurants, accommodation, transportation, attractions and events.

## 2.2 Cities as tourist destinations

Tourism has increased the opportunities for numerous cities across the world to boost their local economies. Tourism is viewed as a growth strategy for many cities as manufacturing jobs are replaced by service industry employment, and as consumption replaces production (Van der Ark and Richards, 2006). City governments now devote huge resources to developing tourism after experiencing a decline of other industries (Hubbard, 1995; Law, 1996; Meethan, 1997; Judd and Fainstein, 1999; Santos, Belhassen, and Caton, 2008). From the 1980s cities were developed in ways to meet the needs of visitors (Hannigan, 1995). Indeed, cities do not only offer administrative services, business and commercial activities, they also provide cultural services and urban amenities that enhance the quality of life of their residents. Cities also provide the economic base for urban tourism and leisure-oriented service activities (Sinclair and Stabler, 1997). Tourists are attracted to cities because of the specialized functions and the range of services they provide (Page, 1995). Many tourist facilities such as theatres, bars, nightclubs, concert halls, museums, hotels and restaurants are located in inner-city areas (Visser, 2003a).

The availability of large numbers of visitors in cities and towns especially during events may increase threats for crime. Indeed, tourists can be regarded as outsiders and this makes them less confident in an unfamiliar environment in which tourists are constrained by language difficulties (Barker and Page, 2002). Similarly, the language barrier is a major element of customer dissatisfaction in the tourism industry when there is a poor command of foreign languages (Kuo, 2009). In addition, any communication barrier at tourist destinations makes tourists change their travel plans.

Cities not only serve as destinations, but they act as a link among destinations depending on the availability of services, facilities and accessibility. A city presents a point of embarkation and debarkation either to or from other destinations (Hwang, Gretzel and Fesenmaier, 2006). Johannesburg, for example, is a hub of international commerce, home to Africa's biggest businesses and busiest airport. Many travelers to South Africa have to spend one night in Johannesburg after the long flights from Europe, the USA or the Far East. Then they take off on another flight to Cape Town, Kruger National Park or to neighbouring countries such as Botswana and Zimbabwe (Cauvin, 2002). Johannesburg, and to a lesser extent Cape Town, are international

gateways through which overseas visitors enter South Africa (Rogerson and Visser, 2007).

The availability of attractions and services in cities are not the only factors that pull visitors. There are some cities with potential to attract a quite number of visitors, but they still receive few visitors. Accessibility is very important to reach attractions and other services. However, the distance between the country of origin and destination, and the financial and time costs associated with geographical distance, are the main factors that influence accessibility (Oppermann, 1995, cited in Hwang, Gretzel and Fesenmaier, 2006). Cities such as Turin, Lisbon and Rotterdam are known for their good accessibility to events and attractions (Russo and Van der Borg, 2002). Other considerations that influence accessibility and tourism visits include risks of crime and terrorism, health risks, lower prices, well-developed transportation, and cultural and language similarity at the destination (Jeg and Fesenmaier, 1998, cited in Hwang, Gretzel and Fesenmaier, 2006).

Urban tourism shows strong growth in terms of both tourist arrivals and receipts. For example the globe's most popular urban destination, Paris, receives approximately €3.6 billion (R39.6 billion) of tourism money every year. Tourism in the city employs 150,000 people directly (Brunton, 2007). In the USA over 50 percent (26.6 out of 50.9 million) of the visits by international tourists in 2000 were to the top ten city destinations (Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), 2001). In 2007, the top nine African destinations ranked by one prominent the U.K magazine were cities (*Travel Weekly* (U.K), 10 December 2007).<sup>10</sup> Six African cities (Cape Town, Cairo, Johannesburg, Marrakesh, Mombasa and Nairobi) appeared in the Rough Guides series. Cape Town, Johannesburg and Nairobi featured in the London-based *TimeOut* city guides. America's Fodor mini-guides included Cairo, Cape Town, Fez, Johannesburg, and Marrakesh (Pirie, 2007).

Among African cities, Cape Town is the most popular tourist destination. The city has unique characteristics based on its physical and non-physical attributes. On the list compiled by BBC television in October 2002, Cape Town was ranked fifth among

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<sup>10</sup> The top nine African destinations include Johannesburg, Cape Town, Lagos, Accra, Nairobi, Marrakesh, Taba, Monastir, and Sharm el-Sheikh.

“fifty places to see before a person dies” (Pirie, 2007). One year later Cape Town International Airport was considered to be the best airport in the world (*Sunday Times*, 17 August 2003). In the same year, one travel magazine in the United States ranked Cape Town fifth after Sydney, Florence, Bangkok and Rome. The same magazine voted the city as best destination in Africa/Middle East, and eighth best city in the world. One newspaper in the U.K (*Sunday Times*) voted Cape Town as “the world’s hottest winter sport”. In 2004, a report from the British Airways onboard magazine *Highlife* revealed that airline staff voted Cape Town “the best city in the world for eating out” (Pirie, 2007). Based on an annual poll of readers of one magazine (*Travel and Leisure*), Cape Town was voted the best tourism city in Africa and the Middle East (*Weekend Argus*, 22 July 2006). In addition, in 2002 one African city (Cape Town) was reported to be one of the greatest places in the world together with Antwerp, Tijuana in Mexico, Zhongguancun of China, Kabul, Marseilles, Newcastle, and Gateshead (Pirie, 2007). In 2005, Cape Town’s Clifton beach has been ranked one of the top ten beaches in 2003 and 2004 by satellite television Discovery Travel Channel. In 2005 and 2006 Forbes.com rated Clifton beach as one of the Top Ten Topless beaches in the world.<sup>11</sup> Cape Town is the only African city whose guide is sold by Lonely Planet publishers (Lonely Planet, 2009).

Before the 1980s, capital cities and other large cities were reluctant to position themselves as tourist destinations (Hubbard, 1995). Urban areas are presently struggling to differentiate themselves through creativity (Leslie, 2005). There is great competition among cities for construction of city spaces and the promotion of urban areas through specific places such as convention centers, tourism sights, concert halls, museums and shopping malls (Grand, 2005). Tourism offices in many cities are doing everything possible to brand themselves by marketing and promoting their physical and cultural assets through brochures and touristic advertising (Leslie, 2005).

### **2.3 Urban niche tourism**

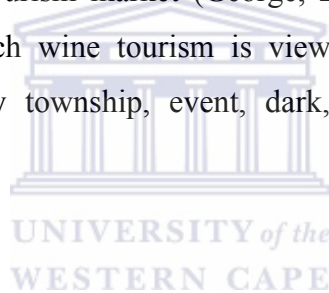
In the mid-1980s, South Africa’s cities and towns recognized the potential contribution of tourism to poverty reduction and they started to include tourism development in their plans (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). Currently urban tourism

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<sup>11</sup> <http://blog.sa-venues.com/provinces/western-cape/top-10-topless-beaches/> Retrieved on 20 August 2008

development is a focal point of local socio-economic development in the country. Existing tourist facilities have been renovated and new tourist facilities have been developed to meet tourist needs. The tourism industry is currently regarded as one of the elements of economic development planning in South Africa's major cities such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. The industry has been promoted through building new international convention centers and development of hotels in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). The evidence is that tourism development in South Africa's cities has increased after the demise of apartheid regime.

Urban niche tourism has attracted many international tourists regardless their native languages. Therefore, multilingualism is needed to cater for tourists from non-English-speaking countries such as France, Germany, Italy and Netherlands which are included in South African tourism market (George, 2003). This niche tourism has taken several forms of which wine tourism is viewed as the most growing and attractive niche followed by township, event, dark, gay, medical and shopping tourism.



### **2.3.1 Wine tourism**

Tourism, wine tasting and purchasing are also part of modern tourism. Wine is a beverage linked with relaxation, complementary to food consumption and learning about new things and hospitality (Bruwer, 2003). Wine is regarded as an integral component of the tourism product and experience (Macionis, 1998). Wine tourism, its development and marketing is a new phenomenon (Bruwer, 2003) and there is still a lot to understand about how the two (tourism and wine) industries will complement each other to make a positive outcome in their shared regions (Cambourne, et al., 2000, cited in Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002). Wine tourism has certainly become a strong and growing area of special interest tourism in wine-producing countries where it is recognized as a key component of the regional and rural tourism product (Bruwer, 2003).

Wine route development is an essential part of the wine tourism industry. Wine routes are the roadways to the main attractions in the wine tourism product. These wine routes are characterized by natural attractions (mountains and other scenery) and

attractions such as wineries, vineyards (Bruwer, 2003). The success of wine and tourism industries relies heavily on regions which are branded (Macionis, 1998). This argument is in line with the definition of wine tourism as visits to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for grape wine tasting and experiencing the attributes of grape regions (Hall *et al.*, 2000, cited in Getz and Brown, 2006). A unique combination of the physical, cultural and natural environment differentiate each region from others to give a distinctive tourist appeal (Hall and Mitchell, 2002, cited in Sparks, 2007). Areas around wine regions will have a great influence on travel decisions, but what makes a wine region for travel purposes is based on more than the simple presence of vineyards and wineries (Getz and Brown, 2006).

Wine and tourism have been entwined after wineries noticed that tourism has potential for the wine industry (Telfer, 2001). In countries where the economic contribution of wine tourism has been recognized, the evidence is that the wine tourism industry is growing significantly in terms of both tourist arrivals and receipts (Galloway *et al.*, 2008). For example, about 10 percent of all international visitors to Australia in 1994 paid a visit to a winery (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002). In 2003, at least one winery in Australia received 4.8 million tourists of which 2.3 million were overnight tourists, 2 million domestic day visitors and 524,000 international tourists (Galloway *et al.*, 2008).

In 2001, American tourists reportedly praised South Africa's wines for their deliciousness. The tourists said that "South Africa's wines are good value for money". However, the volume of exported South Africa's wines to the USA is still insignificant (4% of that from Australia) (*Cape Times*, 29 August 2001). In South Africa the wine industry contributed R16.3 billion to total GDP whilst wine tourism contributed an additional amount of R4.2 billion (WOSA, 2005, cited in McEwan and Bek, 2006). This crucial contribution of wine to the local economy creates intense competition among wine regions across the world. Currently, numerous wine regions are racing to market their products to attract high-yield wine tourists (Getz and Brown, 2006). The wine industry is regarded as one of the main contributing sectors to South Africa's income from tourism. The industry generates approximately R 6.75 billion each year from foreign visitors (*Star*, 23 April 2009). The Cape Winelands benefit enormously from this influx of tourists who speak different languages.

The wine tourism industry seems to be gaining popularity in ‘Western’ countries including Australia and New Zealand. South Africa was the only African country that had wine-related travel in the last five years (Getz and Brown, 2006). One may argue that South Africa and other African countries are not visited frequently because of the long distance between African countries and their markets. But distance is less important to the most popular wine destinations such as France, Australia, New Zealand and other European countries. Indeed, one international wine magazine, *Wine Spectator*, pointed out that anybody who loves wines knows where the finest wine is made (Getz and Brown, 2006).

Comparing the wine industry in South Africa with other well-known wine countries, there is a huge difference in terms of production and number of wine estate enterprises. For example, in 2000 the South African wine industry had the capacity of producing between 800 and 900 million litres which is only half the size of Australian wine industry production and 60 percent of the Chilean wine industry production. In the same year only 355 wine estate enterprises were registered in the South African wine industry whilst Australia registered 1,465 wine estate enterprises (Bruwer, 2003). However, the relative smallness of South Africa’s wine industry does not reduce its tourist potential. The industry attracts many domestic and foreign tourists from all over the globe.

The wine industry in South Africa is concentrated in the Western Cape and along the lower Orange River (McEwan and Bek, 2006). In the whole country, the wine industry involves about 215,000 people – farmers, employees and dependents in its primary, secondary and tertiary economic activities. South Africa has 105,000 ha of vineyards. The South African wine industry is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> largest in the world considering total wine volume (including distillates and juice). In terms of table wine production, the wine industry is the 11<sup>th</sup> largest across the globe (Bruwer, 2003). These statistics suggest that this niche tourism is big and serves not only local market but also international markets. Therefore, foreign language skills are necessary for wine tourism to meet customer needs and expectations.



The majority (95%) of wine farms are in the Western Cape Province specifically within a radius of less than 200km of Stellenbosch. Three quarters of all wine estates are within 45 to 50 minutes drive from Cape Town city center. Wine estates in the Stellenbosch area account for 36 percent of all land planted under grapes and devoted to their processing (Bruwer, 2003). The wine routes of the Western Cape evolved through many years (Nowers, De Villiers and Myburgh, 2002). In South Africa, Cape Town is the only member of the 'Great Wine Capitals' of the World network (*Star*, 23 April 2009) alongside Bordeaux, Florence, Melbourne and Porto (*Business Day*, 13 October 2004). Cape Town faces fierce competition from big foreign cities. One may argue that multilingualism practices in Cape Town may play a pivotal role to build a competitive advantage.

### **2.3.2 Township tourism**

The apartheid regime was characterized by socio-economic inequality among South Africans (Dondolo, 2002; Boniface and Cooper, 2005; Rogerson and Lisa, 2007). Before South Africa's independence, the tourism industry was dominated by the White minority because Black Africans were marginalized and had no access to tourist facilities. Indeed, South African legislation encouraged domestic tourism that was not friendly to Africans. Throughout the apartheid period, Black Africans were not allowed in any tourism-related activities (Rogerson and Visser, 2004; Rogerson and Lisa, 2007). All enterprises were owned and managed by small White elite (Rogerson and Visser, 2004). The industry protected exclusively the needs and interests of white South Africans so much so that heritage tourism was synonymous with "white heritage" (Goudie *et al.*, 1999 cited in Nemasetoni and Rogerson, 2007).

Before South Africa's independence, the country was only receiving European tourists who were mostly coming to visit their families and do businesses (Rogerson and Visser, 2007b). However, the situation changed abruptly after 1994 when South Africa noticed a remarkable growth of domestic tourists as Black Africans gained access to all tourist facilities (Rogerson and Lisa, 2007). Apartheid's collapse opened doors and opportunities for Black Africans who had been segregated from tourism development. International tourists took advantage of the peace and democratic transition to visit black townships which had become 'no-go' areas for international tourists (Nemasetoni and Rogerson, 2007).



These visits to black townships emerged as a sightseeing niche with potential for tourism development in new South Africa (Nemasetoni and Rogerson, 2007; *Economist* London, 12 March 1994). Townships as new tourism products attract many international tourists whose desire is to experience and understand the poverty issues of marginalized and anti-apartheid communities (Nemasetoni and Rogerson, 2007). An area such as Mzoli's Place in Gugulethu Township is a popular site for local and international visitors to experience township culture.<sup>12</sup> Foreign language skills may be regarded as one of the strategies of responding to international visitors in township tourism effectively. With effective communication, visitors could get better opportunities of mingling with township residents and learn learning about their lives.

Due to violence and struggle against apartheid rule, township tourism has been termed a South African variant of 'justice tourism' (Scheyvens, 2002 cited in Nemasetoni and Rogerson, 2007). Township tours in areas such as Soweto and Alexandra in Johannesburg, Gugulethu, Langa, Nyanga and Khayelitsha in Cape Town are increasing significantly. Township residents get opportunities to enter the tour operating businesses which were traditionally controlled by white South Africans (Nemasetoni and Rogerson, 2007). One study clearly shows that Black tour operating businesses began after apartheid's fall.<sup>13</sup> Until 2007, only 30 percent of 10,000 tour guides in South Africa were Black South Africans (Burger, 2008).

Despite Black people being under-represented in the tourism industry, their tour operating businesses face challenges such as insufficient operating capital and marketing support. Three quarters (75%) of businesses run by Black tour operators are operating from home, and the remaining 25% of their businesses operate from formal offices outside their home (Nemasetoni and Rogerson, 2007). This may suggest that the majority of Black tour operators are in township tourism where tour operators share the same culture and language with township residents. Referring to the violence, torture, harassment and suffering that Black Africans went through during the apartheid era, one may argue that township tourism in South Africa is not

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.sa-venues.com/attractionswc/mzolis-place.htm> Retrieved on 24 August 2009

<sup>13</sup> The longest established business had been in operation for eight years and the majority of businesses (60%) had been in operation for at least five years (Nemasetoni and Rogerson, 2007).

different from dark tourism. People were killed in these townships during the apartheid era (Heugh, 1999; Pluddemann, 1999; Hlongwane, 2007).

The Gugulethu Seven Memorial is another site that attracts tourists to Gugulethu Township, Cape Town. The Memorial was constructed and dedicated to the brutal death of seven young Black activists in March 1986. These seven Black men were ambushed by South African Police and shot dead. The monument was unveiled on Human Rights Day in March 2005 in memory of Mandla Simon Mximwa, Zanisile Zenith Mjobo, Zola Alfred Swelanin, Godfrey Miya, Christopher Piet, Themba Mlifi and Zabonke John Konile.<sup>14</sup>

In Cape Town city centre, there is the District Six Museum which was established in December 1994 in memory of 60,000 people who were forcibly removed from District Six during apartheid (District Six Museum, 2009). The museum is visited by many foreign tourists from both English and non-English speaking countries. Providing multilingual information in all printed and electronic promotional materials gives equal opportunities all existing and potential tourists to access information related to township tourism. In addition, multilingual staff in Cape Town township tourism may act as intermediaries between township residents and guests.

### **2.3.3 Event tourism**

Event tourism has attracted attention in many cities and towns across the world so as to boost their local economic benefits (Barker, Page and Meyer, 2003). Hallmark events play a significant role in cities and urban tourism development. Hallmark tourism is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of sporting events, expositions, cultural, fairs, and festivals (Gibson, Willming and Holdnak, 2003; Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). Culture is one of the major driving sources of an urban tourism system. Indeed cultural tourism is growing notably in the global tourism market (van der Ark and Richards, 2006). Many countries take advantages of their cultural and linguistic diversity to attract tourists with the intention of boosting their local economy (Yang and Wall, 2008). A country such as South Africa, which claims to be a 'world in one country' and a 'melting pot' of African, European and Asian heritage,

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.sa-venues.com/today/Western-Cape/Gugulethu-Seven-Memorial-Dedicated-t-seven-young-men-233> Retrieved on 24 August 2009.

considers its cultural diversity as a tourist attraction (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004). Several South African cities and towns recognise hallmark tourism and its potential contribution to the local economy. Festivals have been introduced in many cities and towns in the country with the hope of drawing tourists (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). Cities are competing intensely with each other to develop cultural attractions (Van der Ark and Richards, 2006).

Among South Africa's cities and towns, the city of Cape Town is growing popular internationally because of hosting and promoting hallmark events. The city is growing a profile as a very attractive conference destination (*Cape Business News*, 29 November 2005). The city has regarded hallmark events as one of the key strategies for local tourism development. In some quarters Cape Town is branded as "The Cape of Great Events". However, there are claims that since the construction of Durban International Convention Centre, Durban became the country's 'conference capital'. Durban is now rated as one of the top business tourism cities in the world due to hosting various key global events (Nel, Hill and Maharaj, 2003). Other South African cities developed international convention centers, including Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a).

Although culture is regarded as a strong tool for branding a city (Evans, 2003, cited in Leslie, 2005), sport has been identified as a tourism niche which is growing fast throughout the world (Bull and Weed, 1999 cited in Funk and Brunn, 2007). Thousands of people travel long distances to watch their favourite sports on a regular basis. A good example is the USA where more than 75 million American adults (two fifths of the population) attend a sports event as either a spectator or as a participant (TIA, 1999). Sport tourism plays a crucial role in generating revenue in the host cities. Fans as tourists spend time and money at the destination especially when they travel a long distance. Mostly fans spend on lodging and shopping during their stay at a destination (Gibson, Willming and Holdnak, 2003). Event sport tourism generates US\$27 million (approximately R305.1 million) a year in the USA (TIA, 2001). Sport tourism has played a pivotal element for increasing tourism in many cities (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). Commonly, cities organize tournaments and special events to attract tourists as spectators or participants (TIA, 1999).

For several decades, governments in the developed world have invested a large amount of money into (inter)national sporting events hoping to attract visitors. Sporting competitions and tournaments are internationally marketed and managed to present cities and nations as tourist destinations (Green and Chalip, 1998; Nauright, 2004). Sports are currently used as a marketing strategy adopted by many cities to differentiate themselves from others (Gibson, Willming and Holdnak, 2003). The most popular sports such as the Olympics or the Football World Cup provide opportunities for marketing cities and towns (Nauright, 2004).

South Africa successfully hosted mega-events such as the Rugby World Cup, Cricket World Cup and the Africa Cup of Nations soccer tournament in the 1990s (Goslin, Grundling and Steynberg, 2004; Nauright, 2004; Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). South Africa also wanted to host the 2004 Olympics and 2006 soccer World Cup but the country was unsuccessful. The country will host the mega-event FIFA World Cup in June/July 2010. South Africa is the first country ever in Africa to host this event since the first FIFA World Cup tournament in 1930. Currently ten stadiums are under construction of which six are located in the major cities, including Cape Town. The other four stadiums are in smaller cities (Bloemfontein, Nelspruit, Polokwane, and Rustenburg) (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). As a way of responding to the growing market of sport tourism, the South African government launched a sports tourism campaign, South Africa Sport Tourism (SAST) (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). Major South African cities and towns are competing among themselves to attract international tourists during the FIFA World Cup in 2010.

The event is an opportunity for South Africa to market itself to the whole world as a tourist destination. Cape Town, not least, is expecting a wave of tourists before and after the tournament, and is gearing up to handle the associate influx of sports administrators and media. The FIFA World Cup event will attract an estimated 445000 visitors from new markets such as Brazil as well as established markets in Europe and the USA (*Star*, 17 September 2007). To meet the needs and expectations of visitors during the event, foreign language training has been considered. In 2007, various diplomatic missions were requested to assist tourist guides in French, Mandarin and Spanish languages (Burger, 2008). In addition, FIFA is recruiting volunteers who will help to translate during this event. The volunteers will assist with

language interpretation when required by spectators, guests and service providers (FIFA, 2009). This is an indication that the tourism industry in South Africa as whole faces foreign language skill shortages.

#### **2.3.4 Dark tourism**

Deaths, disasters and atrocities are becoming an increasing feature within modern tourism (Stone, 2006). Sites associated with or sites of death, disaster, battles, depravity, punishment and incarceration have become popular tourist attractions. Tourism associated with one of these attractions is referred to as ‘dark tourism’ or ‘thanatourism’ (Seaton, 1999; Ashworth, 2002; Miles, 2002; Strange and Kempa, 2003). Dark tourism may be defined simply as travel to and experience of places associated with death, suffering or hurtful, regrettable events (Stone, 2006).

Both the terms ‘dark tourism’ and ‘thanatourism’ were first used in the 1990s (Ashworth, 2002), but traveling to and experiencing places associated with death or disaster are not new phenomena in the tourism industry. Centuries ago the Roman gladiatorial games, pilgrimages or attendance at medieval public executions were forms of death-related tourism (Stone and Sharpley, 2008). The guided tour in England with a train trip to Cornwall to witness the hanging of two murderers in 1838 is another example of tourism linked with death (Boorstin, 1987, cited in Stone, 2006). During the 1990s other terms such as ‘blackspot’ tourism and “atrocities heritage” emerged to make easy the packaging and consumption of death or distress as a tourist experience (Rejek, 1993, cited in Strange and Kempa, 2003).

Many people may not differentiate between sites *associated* with death, disaster, and depravity, and sites *of* death, disaster, and depravity. If visits to sites *associated* with these elements is ‘dark tourism’ then visits to sites *of* trauma itself constitutes a further degree of empathetic travel – this is even darker tourism (Miles, 2002). “Does the popularity of dark sights result from a basic fascination with death, or are there more powerful motivating factors and if so what ethical issues surround the exploitation of tragic history?” (Stone and Sharpley, 2008) Is dark tourism demand or supply driven? These questions remain unanswered.

Dark tourism encompasses broad categories of tourism behaviour. The first category is travel to witness public enactments of death. Examples of this category include sightseers who rush to disaster scenes of air crashes, ferry sinking, and terrorist explosions. The second category is travel to see the sites of mass or individual deaths, after they have occurred. This category covers travel to atrocity sites, disaster sites such as the shores of Zeebrugge (the capsizing of the ferry *Herald of Free Enterprise*) in 1987 (Seaton, 2006), the homes of famous individuals such as Mother Teresa and President Kennedy (Strange and Kempa, 2003) as places of celebrity deaths, other sites include Ground Zero (New York), ruins of Hurricane Katrina (New Orleans), and locales of mass murder and tragedy such as Auschwitz-Birkenau or the Killing Fields of Cambodia (Stone, 2006), Civil war battlefield in the USA, First and Second World War graves in Belgium and France, colonial war centenary in Kwa Zulu Natal are much visited. The third category of dark tourism is travel to internment sites and memorials to the dead.

The fourth category is traveling to view the material evidence or symbolic the representation of a particular death in a location unconnected with their incidence. A South Africa's examples include District Six Museum and Gugulethu Seven Memorial, both in Cape Town and Hector Peterson Museum in Soweto, Johannesburg. The fifth and last category is travel for re-enactment or simulation of death (Seaton, 1999). Hector Peterson Museum is related to the death and suffering of Black Africans during apartheid rule. The museum commemorates over 16,000 rounds fired by police, 1,339 injured and 172 dead. The museum's name, 'Hector Peterson', was the name of the 13-year-old boy who died on 16 June 1976 in the Soweto student uprising (Crowley and Matthews, 2006). The majority if not all tourists (both international and domestic) who tour Soweto visit the Hector Peterson Memorial & Museum. Tourists come to witness and honour all those who died and were injured physically, psychologically and materially by the apartheid regime.

As dark tourism grows popular across the world, many sites of tragedy and violence such as Alcatraz have been converted into museums or heritage sites. Cape Town's Robben Island prison is an example of sites of punishment and violence which were converted into museums or heritage sites. The island is one of the most famous historic penal sites across the world (Strange and Kempa, 2003). The prison at



Robben Island was known for its maximum security and it incarcerated many anti-apartheid political prisoners. Most prisoners at Robben Island were key members of the Africa National Congress (ANC) the largest anti-apartheid and pro-democracy political party in the country. Prominent prisoners include Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Walter Sisulu, and Govan Mbeki (Shackley, 2001; Strange and Kempa, 2003).<sup>15</sup>

In the new South Africa, the prison at Robben Island became a site for cultural tourism (Shackley, 2001). During apartheid the property was in the hands of South African Department of Correctional Service and it was transferred to the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology in 1997 (Shackley, 2001; Strange and Kempa, 2003; Deacon, 2004). The Robben Island Prison is now the Robben Island Museum (Shackley, 2001). Two years after the transfer of control over Robben Island, UNESCO declared Robben Island a World Heritage site (Shackley, 2001; Strange and Kempa, 2003). The museum is presently South Africa's most famous cultural tourism attraction.

Robben Island and other dark sites in Cape Town have experienced growth in domestic and international visitors speaking different languages coming to witness the suffering of Black South Africans and their struggle against the apartheid rule. Robben Island only receives approximately 1,800 visitors a day in the peak season (*Cape Times*, 6 November 2008). English may be a communication barrier to some of the international visitors from non-English speaking countries when are at Robben Island. However, English may create a communication barrier not only when tourists interact with tourism service providers in Cape Town but also in promotional materials used by these tourism service providers to sell and promote dark tourism as new niche tourism.

### **2.3.5 Gay and lesbian tourism**

The availability of sexual opportunities characterizes many popular tourist destinations across the world (Bauer, 2007). This is so for both heterosexuals and

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<sup>15</sup> Nelson Mandela's long life in prison (twenty years) was at Robben Island (Shackley, 2001) before being transferred to the mainland institutions in 1982 (Strange and Kempa, 2003). In 1994, Nelson Mandela became the first elected Black African President of South Africa. Govan Mbeki is the father of the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki.

homosexuals. Being away from their homes gives gay tourists, not least, an opportunity to participate in activities which may be regarded as illegal, unethical or unacceptable in their home societies (Visser, 2008). For many years gay people have traveled across the globe to obtain sexual gratification or to holiday in places where their sexuality is not challenged. 'Gay tourism' is not a new phenomenon (George, 2004). But tourism organizations are increasingly targeting gay men as a market segment for tourism (Hughes, 2002). Gay men and women are a new dimension of the tourism industry. Gay and lesbian tourism gains its popularity in urban areas where leisure facilities such as theatres, concert halls, bars, night clubs, restaurants and hotels are available in abundance (Visser, 2003b).

Gay and lesbian tourism has become especially popular in the major urban centres of European and American countries (Graham, 2002). These centres are made mutually aware of each other's existence through media connections. They are seen as part of a growing global gay connectivity in which any tourist visit to major cities contributes to that awareness. Across much of the world the gay and lesbian market is currently promoted and marketed openly like other tourism products through the media and events. In Europe there are many major gay and lesbian tourist events such as national gay pride celebrations, EuroPride and World Pride. During the 2000 Sydney Olympics, brochures informing tourists about Sydney's large and prominent gay and lesbian population were available. Indeed, Sydney's two major gay newspapers, the *Sydney Star Observer* and *Capital Q*, published regular pieces about the contribution of gay men and women to the organization of the games (Graham, 2002). Thailand's the first gay magazine, *Mithuna*, was published in 1983. Four years later, an English language gay guidebook, the *Men of Thailand* was published. Currently there are at least 5 gay guides for Thailand, one of which one is in Cantonese, the others in English. Some gay advertisements also appear in the classified sections of the English newspapers, the *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* (Sanders, 2002).

During the apartheid era homosexuality was prohibited (Visser, 2003a) and a taboo in some South African societies. However, few gay activities were reported among wealthy whites who were advantaged by the apartheid regime and class position they had in the society. Gay leisure facilities such as bars and clubs were available in white-designated areas in many South Africa's metropolitan regions (Visser, 2003a).



The visibility of gays and lesbians in South Africa increased after the demise of the apartheid regime in 1994 (Visser, 2003a; 2003b; Rogerson and Visser, 2007a).

South Africa's new constitution plays a significant role in the growth and intensification of gay and lesbian practices. South Africa is the only country with a constitution that guarantees equal rights to gays and lesbians (Visser, 2003a). The constitution ensures equal rights irrespective of gender, racial and personal sexual preference. As a result, gay tourism in South Africa is gaining in popularity (Visser, 2003a; 2003b). Five years ago, Visser claimed that South Africa had the most fashionable gay tourist destination (Visser, 2003a). Gay tolerance and life is certainly regarded as one of the tourism 'products' offered in major South African cities and towns (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a).

Among South African cities and towns, Cape Town is the best known gay tourist destination domestically and internationally. Many gay men reside permanently in areas such as Green Point and Sea Point neighborhoods on the Cape Town Atlantic Seaboard. The presence of gay communities and the availability of gay-based services make Cape Town a most desirable gay tourist destination (Visser, 2003a). The gay community in Cape Town is large and growing. The city boasts a liberal attitude towards the gay community.<sup>16</sup> In 2001, one guide, *The Cape Gay Guide*, reported that Cape Town was placed 5<sup>th</sup> for its 'gay-friendliness' behind the gay-Mecca's of San Francisco, London, Sydney and Amsterdam (Visser, 2003a). Except Amsterdam, San Francisco, London, Sydney and Cape Town itself are cities from English-speaking countries. Therefore, multilingualism may help Cape Town to differentiate itself as an international tourist gay destination.

A study done by British Airways reveals that Cape Town is the second largest gay capital in the world, one of the Top three travel destinations and number one in terms of value for money as far as gay destinations are concerned (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). The city is reported as one of the gay tourist destinations recommended in guides such as the long-standing Spartacus Guide and on gay travel websites such as PlanetOut Travel and GayGuide.net (De Waal, 2002). Gay-owned and gay-friendly

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.discoverthecape.com/gay.html> Retrieved on 16 August 2009.

facilities have been developed to respond to international and domestic gay tourists in Cape Town. These include bars, night clubs, saunas, massage studios and gay cinemas (Visser, 2003a). One of the oldest gay venues in Cape Town might be Café Manhattan. Advertisements on the Internet and in gay magazines have attracted many gay tourists from Australia. The influx of gay tourists has encouraged talk of the 'pink rand' and the 'lavender market' (*Times* London, 1 January 1996).

Regular events and dance parties such as the Mother City Queer Project attracts up to 10,000 people in Cape Town from across the globe every December.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the city is an international destination that attracts many travelers of any kind. To cater for the large and growing gay tourist market in Cape Town, service providers need foreign language skills. Indeed, the use of foreign languages to sell and promote Cape Town as a gay and lesbian tourist destination may open new markets. Indeed, the Internet may be an ideal communication channel considering its coverage.

### **2.3.6 Medical tourism**

The number of patients in the developed world looking overseas for medical treatment is increasing. Medical tourism has emerged as a new niche in developing countries to satisfy this growing number of patients from the First World (Connell, 2006). Medical tourism involves traveling to other countries to obtain medical, dental and surgical treatment (Srivastava, 2006) while simultaneously taking a holiday (Connell, 2006). The tourism and hospitality industry in the Third World offers packages that combine airfare and hotel accommodation with medical expenses that are 80 per cent lower than in the USA (Newman, 2006). High costs and long waits are the main reasons why people from Europe and North America seek medical care abroad (MacReady, 2007). In the USA for example, records show that 46 million Americans do not have health insurance. Of the estimated 250 million who do have insurance, the majority have policies that do not cover the cost of certain medical procedures (Newman, 2006). Among other factors motivating medical tourism is absence of particular services in some countries of origin, the affordability of international travel, and the development of technology and quality of services in hosting countries (Taquri, 2007).

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.discoverthecape.com/gay.html> Retrieved on 16 August 2009

Across the world medical tourism is generating US\$60 billion (around R600 billion) a year and is growing by 20 per cent a year (MacReady, 2007). The prediction is that medical tourists from all over the world will generate US\$4 billion (R40 billion) for Asia by 2012 (Newman, 2006). Medical tourism is flourishing and expanding in countries such as India, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia (*Financial Mail*, 8 February 2008). These five countries attract 1.3 million medical tourists from all over the world (Newman, 2006). In 2007, India was expecting to receive 500,000 foreign patients to its hospitals and by 2012, medical tourism is projected to contribute US\$2.2 billion approximately R17 billion to the country's economy (MacReady, 2007). India is gaining popularity as a health destination (Taquri, 2007) because care there is cheaper than in the western countries. Indeed, the cost of medical treatment in the West or the USA can be the equivalent of treatment in India, a tour there, and the pricelessness of time saved before any medical procedure (Srivastava, 2006).

Medical tourism has grown in recent years in South Africa. The high quality of medical care and the favourable exchange rate in the country has attracted many foreign patients (*Star*, 23 July 2008). South Africa, among few other developing countries, offers world-class health care services at reasonable prices (*Financial Mail*, 8 February 2008). There is a claim that patients undergoing with cosmetic surgery in South Africa, can save 50 percent of medical costs compared with overseas (*Cape Times*, 23 January 2008). 'Surgeon & Safari' is the first South African company that organized medical tourism packages focusing on cosmetic surgery in Cape Town and Johannesburg since 1999. This package includes a luxury visit to a game reserve (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). The Cape Town Fertility Clinic is popular for infertile couples from all over the World (*Star*, 23 July 2008).

Besides the foreign market for medical tourism in South Africa, cities are major destinations for domestic health tourism in the country (Rogerson and Lisa, 2007; Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of domestic tourists

are Black South Africans.<sup>18</sup> The main reason advanced for travel to cities for health care has to do with the superior quality and availability of health care there (Rogerson and Lisa, 2007).

Many governments have taken steps to develop medical tourism. The government of Hong Kong markets its Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) capabilities to the Asian region. Singapore has already started to market its world-class medical capabilities. The Malaysian government has requested its leadership to facilitate and encourage health tourism development. Indeed this government formed a National Committee for the Promotion of Health Tourism (Tech and Chu, 2005). By contrast, medical tourism lacks appropriate support in South Africa (*Cape Times*, 23 January 2008). Some tour operators, medical practitioners and associations in the medical tourism industry are also worried about South Africa not being accredited. For this reason medical tourism in South Africa faces a big challenge in competing with rival Asian countries. To be accredited is crucial for global benchmarking purposes.

Regardless of the accreditation, South Africa has been a popular medical tourism destination for Europeans due to the country's health facilities including world-class institutions, tranquil vacation settings and skilled doctors. For example, 1967 Dr. Christiaan Barnard and his team put South Africa on the medical map with the first successful heart transplant at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town. Other reasons why the Westerners seek medical treatment South Africa include the use of English as an official language in the country and cultural diversity. There are many Europeans in South Africa who speak different languages such Dutch, English, Flemish, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Portuguese and Scottish.<sup>19</sup> Considering all these languages, this may give an impression that medical tourists may not face any language barriers in Cape Town and South Africa as a whole. Although medical tourism in South Africa has prospects for growth, most patients come from sub-Saharan Africa, followed by the UK, Middle East and the USA (*Financial Mail*, 8 February 2008). However, all these claims do not guarantee that every patient will be

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<sup>18</sup> Domestic health tourists in South Africa are distributed as follows: Whites, 13%, Africans, 74%, Coloured, 8%, and Indians, 5%.

<sup>19</sup> <http://medicaltourism.com/destination/destination-item.php?title=South%20Africa&lang=en>  
Retrieved on 16 August 2009.

served in his or her native language. Serving customers in their own native languages may be regarded as a foundation of building a good relationship with customers.

### **2.3.7 Shopping tourism**

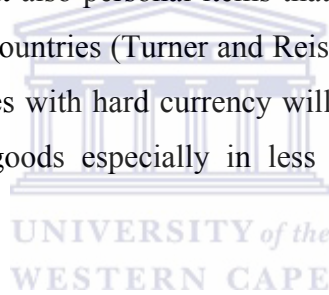
Shopping is one of the main activities engaged in by tourists and has significant economic, psychological and social benefits while they are at destinations (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2007). Tourism and shopping are like inseparable twins (Hsieh and Chang, 2006). Indeed shopping is believed to be one of main purposes why tourists are involved in travel activities (Cohen, 1995; Timothy and Butler, 1995; Yüksel, 2004). In addition a tour without shopping activities is regarded as an incomplete traveling experience (Keowin, 1989, cited in Hsieh and Chang, 2006). The desire and necessity for shopping that motivates people to travel, make shopping an important component of leisure or tourism. All shopping centers and malls are designed in such a way to lure shoppers. At destinations such as Paris, Hong Kong, Venice and Bangkok, shopping is a big attraction for tourists (Timothy and Butler, 1995).

Despite shopping being a core activity of tourists at shopping centers, other minor different activities and a friendly environment attract tourists. At shopping markets tourists indulge themselves in entertainment (eating and playing games) as well as conventional commodity purchases. They also take pleasure experiencing the native customs and culture of host communities (Hsieh and Chang, 2006). In addition, tourists on vacation are not only drawn to a shopping center offering a variety of selection of goods and services but as also as opportunities for interaction, and a perceived freedom from danger (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2007). At a destination tourists like to feel that they are mingling with local residents. However the experience of native customs and culture is only possible if tourists and local residents share shopping spaces (Snepenger *et al.*, 2003). Tourists enjoy bargaining practices at destinations and they feel proud, excited, and accomplished if they pay reduced prices (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2007). Even the active body language and loud voices of vendors at shopping markets attract shoppers' curiosity (Hsieh and Chang, 2006).

However, the contribution of shopping to a tourist destination depends on how well a destination satisfies shopping tourists. Shopping in urban tourism has been recognised as one of the important components in tourism planning. Providing shopping

satisfaction is very important to maintain an attractive destination. Many tourists spend heavily on shopping after paying for accommodation, but in some destinations such as Hong Kong, tourist expenditures are greater on shopping than accommodation (Turner and Reisinger, 2001). For example in 2000, more than half (50.2 percent) of total tourism receipts in Hong Kong were from shopping (Wong and Law, 2003). Similarly, shopping expenditure varies from destination to destination depending on the attractiveness and accessibility of destinations.

Tourism planners and urban developers are currently promoting shopping tourism through constructing tourist shopping villages and creating duty free shopping at all major airports and cruise ports (Getz, 1993, cited in Timothy and Butler, 1995). Cities view shopping tourism as a strategy for rejuvenating their economy (Cohen, 1995). Adopting this strategy, the number of tourists will increase considerably since tourists do not only buy souvenirs but also personal items that are not easily found in or are too expensive in their home countries (Turner and Reisinger, 2001; Hsieh and Chang, 2006). Tourists from countries with hard currency will take advantage of weak local currencies and low priced goods especially in less developed countries (Yüksel, 2004).



Although shopping tourism facilities are being developed at an increasing rate in the bigger urban centers of developing countries (Cohen, 1995), one may argue that many governments and urban planners do not know much about shopping tourism or do not have enough resources to develop destinations so that they can compete internationally. However shopping tourism has been notably developed in two of South Africa's main cities (Cape Town and Johannesburg) to attract revenues from regional tourists in sub-Saharan Africa. Evidence is that the African market is sustainable and growing (*Business Day*, 29 December 2003; *Star*, 24 July 2006). Visitors from Africa rose more than 15 per cent in 2004/2005 and majority of these visitors are from SADC countries (*Star*, 24 July 2006). A collaborative research project carried out by a private research agency, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), and the City of Johannesburg, confirms that cross-border trade plays a crucial role in the country's economy. The research also noted that African cross-border shoppers pay cash up front unlike other foreigners who pay using banking services (*Sowetan*, 6 September 2006). South Africa Tourism reveals



that the contribution of African market brings to the local economy goes beyond tourism into other sectors such as manufacturing (*Star*, 24 July 2006).

The city of Johannesburg is a hub of international commerce and home to Africa's biggest businesses (Cauvin, 2002; *Star*, 24 July 2006). The city attracts millions of visitors who come to South Africa to shop. The majority of foreign shoppers in Johannesburg are cross-border traders traveling by road from South Africa's neighbouring countries, especially Mozambique and Zimbabwe (Rogerson and Visser, 2007a). African cross-border shoppers contribute considerably to Johannesburg's local economy. Johannesburg's official tourism office reported that 35 percent of the city's annual tourism market was from tourists generated by African countries (*Business Day*, 29 December 2003). Indeed, African tourists made up more than double the number of tourists from outside the African continent.<sup>20</sup> In 2006, more than half a million people coming to Johannesburg for shopping contributed between R15 billion and R20 billion every year (*Sowetan*, 6 September 2006). The establishment of the Johannesburg Cross-border Association resulted from the recognition of the huge contribution of shopping tourism to the city's economy. The association aims to make Johannesburg a preferred shopping destination by eliminating negative factors affecting shoppers (*Star*, 24 July 2006).

'Shop till you drop' is a favourite slogan amongst Capetonians. Among numerous shopping places around Cape Town, ten are the most favourite places for tourists. These shopping places include V&A Waterfront, Greenmarket Square, Pan African Market, Cavendish Square, Canal Walk, Montebello Design Centre, Craft Markets, Treasure Coasts, Roadside Stalls and Imhoff Farm. Most shops accept international credit cards and traveller's cheques. Foreign exchange bureaus are also available in major shopping centres.<sup>21</sup> Although there are no shopping-related statistics available in Cape Town, the existence of international credit cards, traveller's cheques and bureau de change services is clear evidence that these shopping places receive foreign travelers and are ready to serve them. Speaking European languages in shopping places may make foreign shoppers feel welcome.

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<sup>20</sup> Among 2, 6 million of tourists who visited Johannesburg in 2003, 1, 8 million were Africa-based and 800000 tourists were from outside African continent (*Business Day*, 29 December 2003).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.CapeTowntravel.com/shopping.asp> Retrieved on 20 August 2009.

## **2.4 Summary**

Across the world many cities and towns have regarded tourism as an anchor in their local economic rejuvenation (Van der Ark and Richards, 2006). For this reason cities and towns are competing fiercely to attract tourists from all over the world. Cities and towns adopted different strategies to market and promote themselves internationally as tourist destinations. However, cities and towns as tourist destinations attract various visitor groups based on differences in the type of traveler and their motivations to visit (Page, 1995). To respond to needs and wants of tourists, many tourist facilities such as hotels, bars, restaurants, nightclubs, concert halls, theatres, and museums were developed in inner-city areas.

Urban niche tourism in major South African cities has taken different forms. These forms of niche tourism in Cape Town include wine, township, event, 'dark', gay and lesbian, medical and shopping tourism. However, wine and township tourism are viewed as the most popular and growing forms of niche tourism in Cape Town. Cape Town tourism attracts both domestic and international tourists. International tourists come from both English and non-English speaking countries. The use of foreign languages in different forms of niche tourism in Cape Town is regarded as an opportunity for the city to sell and promote itself as an international tourist destination.



## CHAPTER THREE

### MULTILINGUALISM IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

*In language there is life,  
in language there is death*

(Ancient Hawaiian proverb)

#### 3.1 Introduction

Language is the extraordinary tool used by human beings to communicate. Spoken language is for communicating face-to-face while written language is for conveying messages across space and time (Stock, 2001). However, language continues to create a huge barrier due to cultural and linguistic diversity across the world. There are more than 6,000 language communities on Earth (Arsky and Cherney, 1997) but some of these languages have higher status than others. To appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity all languages should be given equal status.

Despite the assumption that English is the international language and it dominates other languages (Arsky and Cherney, 1997; Cleveland and Laroche, 2007), multilingualism is necessary in international businesses, including tourism. The quality of service in the tourism industry depends on interaction between service providers and consumers. Indeed, this interaction is an opportunity for tourists to experience native customs and culture (Snepenger *et al.*, 2003). Cultural sensitivity and the ability to discern variation in cultural practices is very important in destination marketing (Neelankavil, Mummalaneni and Sessions, 1995).

Like other industries, the tourism industry has to market its product to existing and potential customers. As tourism is regarded as one of the strategies for poverty alleviation in many urban areas, especially in developed countries, destination advertising has become competitive (Singh and Formica, 2007). Successful marketing needs proper planning and analysis of data and information obtained from the tourists who frequent the destination and those who do not (Bloom, 2005). 'Place marketing' (also labeled 'place promotion' or 'city management') is a new concept that became popular in European urban literature in recent years (Avraham, 2004; Bradley, Hall and Harrison, 2002). Place marketing has become much more than simply selling an

area to attract companies and tourists. It is currently viewed as a fundamental part of guiding the development of places in a fashionable way (Bradley, Hall and Harrison, 2002). Besides marketing done by city managements, Avraham argues that media play a crucial role positioning cities to compete nationally and internationally to attract investors and tourists (Avraham, 2000). Destination image is created by destination marketing organisations through various mass media such as brochures, newspapers, websites, magazines, television and guidebooks (Singh and Formica, 2007). The dominance of websites as a promotional and marketing tool continues to grow significantly in the tourism industry (Jeong and Lambert, 2001; Wong and Law, 2005; Bai, Law and Wen, 2008).

### **3.2 Electronic marketing**

The development of Information Technology (IT) has made communication easy. For many years scientists have used the Internet for sharing data, collaborating on research and exchanging messages. In a brief span of time, millions of computer users worldwide have begun to use the Internet for commercial purposes (Wang, Yu and Fesenmaier, 2002). Since the emergence of the Internet or World Wide Web (WWW), time and money spent on marketing in the tourism industries have been reduced. Nowadays many tourism products including flights and accommodation are marketed and sold through the Internet without physical or oral contact with a salesperson (Lituchy and Barra, 2008). The growth of the Internet, websites in particular, has great marketing potential for tourism business (Hanna and Millar, 1997). The influence of IT in the hospitality and tourism industry has been given much attention by many researchers (Lake, 2001; Doolin, Burgess and Cooper, 2002; Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2007; Frías, Rodriguez and Castañeda, 2008).

Tourism is an information intensive industry in which organisations rely heavily on communication with tourists through various channels to market and promote their products and build customer relationships (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006). With regards to the nature of tourism product that cannot be sampled before the purchase decision is made, the Internet became an important means of promoting and distributing this product (Beeton, 2001; Doolin, Burgess and Cooper, 2002). In addition the Internet is regarded as the most effective channel for tourists to seek information about and purchase tourism-related products (Wan, 2002; Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006). A major

reason is that the Internet offers global reach and multimedia capability (Doolin, Burgess and Cooper, 2002). Therefore, the service industries take advantage of the informational and transactional potential of the Internet to get a competitive advantage (Baloglu and Pekcan, 2006).

Undoubtedly, the development of IT changed significantly the ways numerous companies in the tourism industry operate and integrate their activities. For example, a website allows tourism and other businesses to be accessed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. With Internet connection access, physical contact, geographical distance and time zone are no longer obstacles. The need for immediate person-to-person contact between tourism service providers and consumers has been considerably reduced (Gilbert, Powell-Perry and Widijoso, 1999). The involvement of third parties such as travel agencies in the travel arrangements is on the decline because guests can reserve rooms directly with their own computers and receive instantaneous confirmations (Chung and Law, 2003). Consumers in the tourism industry may even undertake their entire product search online and then book online (Gracés *et al.*, 2004).

The web can be used as a source of information and as a marketing tool to facilitate online transactions. Consumers with computers at home can access multimedia information about tourism products and organisations across the globe any time and at low cost (Lau *et al.*, 2001; Gracés *et al.*, 2004). The cost of booking a hotel online could be as low as US\$3 to US\$3.50 (R30 to R35) while a reservation via a call centre would cost at least three times as much in the USA (Wong and Law, 2005). Unlike other traditional communication media, the web may provide access to a greater store of information, and offers users the means of selecting and retrieving only the information which appeals to them (Gilbert, Powell-Perry and Widijoso, 1999). One study suggests that the majority (67%) of internet users who travelled in the USA in 2003 used the Internet to obtain information on destinations and to check prices or schedules (Wong and Law, 2005). However, consumers are sometimes overwhelmed by the huge amount of information available on websites. They may struggle to locate what they intended to find and they may become frustrated and confused (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006).

Many countries across the world are making efforts to improve their Internet services. Simultaneously, the numbers of Internet users are increasing dramatically. For example, 133 million people worldwide had access to the Internet in 1998; one year later the number reached 215 million people (Rayman-Bacchus and Molina, 2001). In 2004, eTForecast released a report claiming that there were 666 million Internet users in the world (Wong and Law, 2005). The evidence shows that the Internet is used particularly strongly in the tourism industry. A 2001 study reported that about 95% of web surfers use the Internet to gather tourism-related information; about 93% indicate that they visited tourism websites when they plan for vacations (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006). Although hotel bookings via the Internet were estimated at only 7 per cent of the total in 2003, more than half of all bookings will be done online in future. Online hotel booking has been projected to grow between 20-30% of all reservations (Wong and Law, 2005). However, booking tourist establishments via internet may not benefit small tourism businesses like those in townships in Cape Town where computers are still numbered.

The tourism industry regards websites as important tools to establish, maintain and enhance long relationships with customers and the third parties (Gilbert, Powell-Perry and Widijoso, 1999). Many companies adopted a relationship marketing strategy because it is expensive to attract new customers rather than retaining the existing ones. The cost of attracting a new customer is estimated to vary between five to ten times higher than the cost of retaining an existing customer (Gilbert, Powell-Perry and Widijoso, 1999). The website's content has a strong impact on advertisement and marketing (Wan, 2002). A study carried out in Turkey on the role of websites and Internet in marketing hotels shows that over than 60 percent of the hotel websites 'tangibilise' the service by including hotel and room pictures and using quality pictures and texts (Baloglu and Pekcan, 2006).

Although tourists can search product information and do all transactions online without physical contact with tourism service providers, there is need of flexibility, specialisation and accessibility of products, interaction and the communication with tourism service providers (Gracés *et al.*, 2004). There are customers who still want face to face interaction with tourism service providers so that they experience foreign cultures (Corrigall, 2005). This interaction is an opportunity for tourists to experience

native customs and culture especially when tourists and local residents share tourist facilities (Snepenger *et al.*, 2003). Yet tourists enjoy bargaining practices at destination and they feel proud, excited and accomplished if they pay a reduced price (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2007). A study carried out in the Western Cape showed that almost half (49%) of tourists indicated that Internet would be their preferred way of making a holiday booking (Haitao, 2005).

The Internet as a global and easily accessible information space (Rayman-Bacchus and Molina, 2001), can be an effective means for developing countries particularly in Africa to promote and market their tourism products to their target markets. However, one can argue that the Internet is not seen as a vital tool for promoting and marketing tourism on the African continent. The use of Internet in Africa's tourism is still a dream because the tourism industry remains underutilised and undeveloped (Maswera, Dawson and Edwards, 2008). Indeed, the majority of African population has no access to internet because it is expensive. Few people and tourism organisations in Africa can afford to use Internet. The Internet is currently becoming prominent in many businesses, especially those like tourism which are information intensive (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006; Maswera, Dawson and Edwards, 2008). African tourism organisations and merchants should view the Internet as a strategy of communicating efficiently and effectively with their customers in a way that would be difficult, slow and expensive using older communication systems (Maswera, Dawson and Edwards, 2008).

### **3.2.1 Electronic tourism and multilingualism practices**

Although websites play a pivotal role in the tourism industry and many travellers turn to online travel communities to fulfill their travel-related tasks such as seeking information and trips, making travel transactions and finding travel companions (Wang, Yu and Fesenmaier, 2002), languages used on the websites create a significant travel barrier in the tourism industry. Most information sources on the Internet are developed in monolingual format which creates a disparity in dissemination of information across the diversity of cultures and languages (Aytac, 2005). The Internet has been criticised for its stereotyping and disparity in dissemination of information to users across the world. English is assumed to be a *lingua franca* in international business, diplomacy, international institutions and

tourism and it dominates other languages across the world (Arsky and Cherney, 1997; Granville et al, 1997; Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). This assumption however, is of people with myopic thoughts because it cannot benefit the international businesses such as tourism. An international tourist destination such as Cape Town may market and promote tourism product in different languages to cater for a wide range of tourists.

Research has revealed clearly that English will never monopolise world websites (Rayman-Bacchus and Molina, 2001; Warschauer, 2001; Starr, 2005; Kim, Ma and Kim, 2006; Chung *et al.*, 2008). In August 1999 for example, there were 215 million people who had access to the internet of which 57 percent are English language users. A quarter (26 percent) use European languages other than English (Rayman-Bacchus and Molina, 2001). In addition, only 36 percent of Internet users in the world use English as the first language (Starr, 2005). Even in the USA where there are huge numbers of English speakers, the USA Census in 2000 reveals that 47 million Americans speak languages other than English at their homes. Across the world the online users in 2004 accounted for 737 million of which more 67% were non-English speakers (Global Reach, 2004, cited in Lituchy and Barra, 2008). In 2006, Ho predicted that this share of non-English speaking online users from Pacific Asian and American groups will increase (Kim, Ma and Kim, 2006). Similarly, the Asian and Pacific region has about 27 different languages including Chinese which is assumed to be the second language to be used on the Internet after English (Lituchy and Barra, 2008).

With regards to the dominance of English on websites, the truth is that English was only dominant in the websites during the early stage of Internet development. A study done in 1996 by Graddol revealed that the majority (82 percent) of the web pages in the world were available only in English (Warschauer, 2001). This early dominance of English language was due to various factors. First, a high percentage of website users were located in North America. Second, the computer scientists who designed personal computers and Internet used the American standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII). This ASCII made computing in other alphabets or character sets inconvenient or impossible. Third, by bringing together users in many countries,



English was being used as *lingua franca* to communicate internationally (Warschauer, 2001).

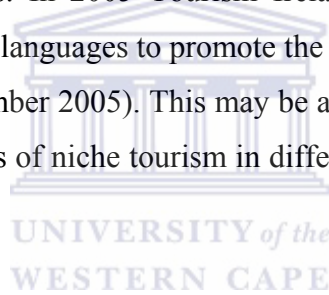
There is a possibility that Chinese may become one of the largest language groups on the Internet in the near future (Lituchy and Barra, 2008). In 2003, it was reported that China in 2002 was the world's second biggest population of Internet users following the USA (Kim, Ma and Kim, 2006). Two years later, the China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC) also reported that online populations were had increased since 1998 at an average annual rate of 159 percent. Ninety four million users were estimated at the end of 2004 (Kim, Ma and Kim, 2006). In addition, another report by iResearch Inc. clearly shows that Chinese will over take English on the websites. The same report also showed that Chinese online users were expected to reach 140 million in 2007 (Bai, Law and Wen, 2008).

Convincingly, another study showed that the proportion of English on websites is expected to fall from 80 percent to approximately 40 percent during this decade (Graddol, 1997, cited in Warschauer, 2001). During the early stage of the Internet development, more than 90 percent of users were located in North America where English is dominant, but the Internet is currently growing rapidly in developing countries such as China and India. There is a shift of direction from *globalisation* to *relocalisation*. A few years ago English was viewed globally as a *lingua franca* on websites, but nowadays English is losing its supremacy. Some website users around the world are now enjoying surfing on the websites in their regional or local languages (Warschauer, 2001). Research carried out in 2004 by Global Reach shows that the majority of the global online population (60%) lives in non-English-speaking countries (Chung *et al.*, 2008).

Some service providers in the tourism industry acknowledge language diversity among their customers and are now marketing and selling their products in different languages. Many websites offer information in different languages so that they can reach all targeted customers. A recent study shows that the dominance of monolingual websites is decreasing. For example, in 2004 Global Reach reported that 80% of Australian sites, 50% of British sites and 42% of USA sites offered English only content. In 2008, Lituchy and Barra examined 21 homepages in the hotel and airline

businesses to determine language options available for travellers and they found that English was the most frequently language used in all 21 sites. Japanese was the second within 14 sites, followed by German in 13 sites, French (12), Spanish (12) and the last language was Italian which was available within 9 sites (Lituchy and Barra, 2008).

As an industry selling services and product, and as an international business, the success of the tourism industry depends heavily on the information offered and how this information is offered during promotion and marketing process. Tourism is an information intensive industry (Pan and Fesenmaier, 2006) that relies on effective communication. The targeted markets have to be communicated with and have to understand the message clearly. To avoid any language barrier on websites, some tourism service providers have adopted multilingualism as a strategy for promoting and marketing their products. In 2005 Tourism Ireland for example, launched 24 websites in fourteen different languages to promote the country as a tourist destination (*Computer Weekly*, 27 September 2005). This may be a good example for Cape Town to copy and promote all forms of niche tourism in different languages to reach a large market.



Multilingualism on websites will give tourism organisations and merchants a greater chance to increase their market shares. Websites with multilingual content will be accessed by a larger number of browsers across the world. Even in the USA which is an English speaking country, Spanish is the second most popular language – Spanish speaking people in the USA were reported to be more than 20 million in 2006. Regardless of the Spanish speaking population found in the USA, this language is spoken in 21 other countries and it is the fourth most used language in the world (Sí Spain, 2006, cited in Chung *et al.*, 2008). Spanish speaking people in Latin American countries were reported to number more 390 million, more than 6 percent of the world's population. By 2030, this population will significantly increase with an average annual growth rate of 1.4 %, a rate higher than the 1.33%, average growth rate of the world's population (Country Watch Inc., 2006, cited in Chung *et al.*, 2008).

Although the Web is viewed as an important channel of communication in the tourism industry, there are still huge numbers of travellers that have no exposure and access to



this new technology. For these reasons some tourism organisations and individual business people are still advertising their products in a traditional way using print advertisements. Print advertisements such as brochures, menus, tourist book-guides and newspapers are still in use and benefiting both tourism businesses and consumers.

### **3.3 Printed promotional materials and foreign languages**

The emergence of the Internet and websites has partially changed the tourism industry in terms of disseminating information to travellers. Although most organisations and consumers in the tourism industry pay much of their attention to this new communication channel, statistics of Internet users around the globe (Rayman-Bacchus and Molina, 2001; Wong and Law, 2005) show that the numbers of Internet users are still insignificant. Therefore, the printed promotional materials such as brochures remain the major sources of information to both international and domestic travellers especially where both service providers and travellers have no exposure to this new technology (Andereck, 2005). A tourism brochure is defined as a form of printed promotional material designed to communicate quickly with existing or potential tourists (Molina and Esteban, 2005).

Historically, brochures have been the primary advertising tool used by destination marketers (Singh and Formica, 2007). Many studies conducted on the role of brochures in disseminating information to tourists, confirm that brochures still play a crucial role in tourism marketing. In 1993, research found that brochures were the third most important source of information on attractions, following interpersonal sources and past experience (Andereck, 2005). In the same year, other researchers ranked brochures third out of twelve in the information sources most used by travellers following two forms of interpersonal communication. In a 1998 study, brochures were found to be the second most frequently used after commercial guidebooks. Similarly, in a study carried out in 1999, brochures were considered to be one of the two most important sources of information for Japanese tourists. A study done in 2005 concludes that brochures are the most information source since small destinations and businesses cannot source adequate finance for sophisticated and costly information dissemination (Andereck, 2005).

Despite small area coverage and difficulties in accessing printed information and advertisements due to geographical distance and time constraints, printed advertisements have some advantages. The printed materials give consumers the opportunity to interact with service providers and ask for clarification. This opportunity is generally not possible on websites (Gracés *et al.*, 2004). In addition, print can be taken home for future reference and even sharing information with family members and friends. Furthermore, customers may use printed promotional materials as complete guides on accommodation, destination, bus and train timetable, events and maps that depict the best routes according to their preferences for sightseeing (Migas, Anastasiadou and Stirling, 2008). Although, these printed promotional materials may provide information that meets tourist needs, wants and expectations, suggestions and advice from tourists' families and friends play a vital role in forming destination images (Molina and Esteban, 2006).

With the great number who use printed publications as source of travel-related information (Andereck, 2005) and cultural sensitivity in the tourism industry, some tourism organisations and merchants are currently providing multilingual information about their products and destinations. For example, Hilton hotels, one of the world's leading hotel chains, started offering brochures in various languages when the number of international visitors increased (Laura, 1993). As another example the city of Glendale tourism, in the state of Arizona printed a four-colour brochure in five languages (Balzer, 2001a).<sup>22</sup> In the same state, the Greater Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau started its international marketing campaign with travel brochures in Japanese, French and Italian. Presumably, the languages used in these printed promotional materials reflected the target markets (Balzer, 2001b).

The availability of multilingual information in printed promotional materials plays a significant role in achieving customer's satisfaction. A study carried out among Japanese and Korean tourists in the USA, in facilities managed by Americans, Japanese and the Koreans, clearly showed the importance of providing information in the customers' own languages. The study found that the Japanese in the Japanese-operated tourism facilities were most satisfied with the Japanese language-related

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<sup>22</sup> The brochure was available in English, French, German, Japanese and Spanish.

services such as staff speaking Japanese, the availability of newspapers in Japanese as well as the availability of guest service information in Japanese. Similarly, the Koreans who were staying in the Korean-operated hotel were also satisfied with availability of the Korean language newspapers, the Korean spoken by staff, as well as efforts taken by employees to understand English spoken by guests. On the other hand, the Japanese guests who stayed in American-managed property were satisfied with the availability of international signs in public areas with staff efforts to speak English slowly and clearly, and with their attempts to understand English spoken by Japanese travellers (Heo, Jogaratnam and Buchanan, 2004).

Pictures or international signs may help to achieve customer satisfaction if tourism organisations are not in a position to provide information in customers' home or first languages. In addition, pictures showing travel products make promotional materials attractive (Bai, Law and Wen, 2008). Promoting or advertising using pictures of a product is identified as an important means for communicating to consumers. Pictures evoke emotion and create desire for the associated product and destination. Visual advertisements require less frequency of exposure than verbal advertisements to achieve the same effect. Pictures have a positive effect on consumer's memories for product-related information when the brand name and product attribute were both unified in picture (Singh and Formica, 2007). A comparison made between pictures and text in advertising shows that pictures play a pivotal role in attracting consumers and arousing their attention while text works well in conveying information about product (Decrop, 2007).

In addition to multilingualism in ephemeral publications such as brochures, menus, Internet, newspapers, guide book, the tourism industry has also to be staffed by multilingual and multicultural employees if the industry is to effectively respond to international market demand (Jafari and Way, 1994). Interaction between tourists and service providers is necessary because tourists are an integral part of the service process. Tourist involvement has a great influence on what is delivered (Baker and Crompton, 2000). Customer satisfaction in the tourism industry is highly dependent on interaction between customer and service providers. During this interaction, language acts as a catalyst for a good relationship between host and guest, because language determines what to say and how to say it (Reisinger and Turner, 2003).

### **3.4 Language as catalyst of host-guest relationships**

Although exploring and visiting places as a tourist provides an opportunity for discovering and learning new things from other people, it can be frustrating especially when the tourist is unable to speak the host's language (Hottola, 2004). In a case where there is no shared or common language (*lingua franca*), both host and guest may have a negative interaction. This may create reservation, suspicion, lack of understanding and dissatisfaction (Kozak, 2007). The negative interaction in this case is referred to as 'culture shock' which is the result of losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs and symbols vary from culture to culture because they are linked to norms, beliefs and language (Furnham, 1992; Hottola, 2004).

Culture confusion has become an obstacle that can tarnish or even ruin tourists' experiences. On top of psychological confusion, some visitors in 'culture shock' decide to cut short their travels. Other visitors revise their travel plans either by cutting the number of destinations or by shortening the duration of visits at some places. Furthermore, visitors in 'culture shock' spend money buying at higher price or paying for fast and expensive forms of transport (Hottola, 2004). Conversely, cultural familiarity and similarity enhances interaction because it reduces ambiguity and doubts. Usually people enter social interactions with people with whom they can communicate in a similar way (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). The use of foreign languages in Cape Town may enhance relationship between tourism service providers and foreign tourists especially those from non-English speaking countries.

In the tourism and other service industries, service quality depends on the degree of interaction between tourism service providers and guests. If there are differences between tourists and service providers, interaction difficulties are likely (Kozak, 2007). Despite developing a positive host-guest relationship for the sake of tourist satisfaction, understanding this relationship is very important for repeat business (Bitner *et al.*, 1990). The attitudes toward each party in conversation affect the social interaction. People with similarities are likely to have effective communication. A positive interaction between the service providers and customers in the tourism industry requires a common language that is understood by both parties (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). The host-guest relationship is often thought to be grounded in

linguistic acculturation in which the host population learns tourists' languages while tourists do nothing to learn the host's languages (Nuñez, 1977).

Tourism service providers who understand the needs, wants and expectations of foreign travellers will be in the best position to attract travellers from targeted cultures (Heo, Jogaratnam and Buchanan, 2004). Meeting travellers' cultures, many tourism service providers currently offer information in different languages as a way of responding to international tourism demand. Understanding and appreciating cultural and linguistic diversity across the world is the key of success to marketers in the tourism industry and other international businesses. Indeed, cultural sensitivity as well as the ability to distinguish variation in cultural practices becomes very important in marketing generally (Neelankavil, Mummalaneni and Sessions, 1995) and in international tourism.

Cross-cultural sensitivity plays a vital role for successful interactions between people of different cultures. Indeed, intercultural sensitivity does not only enhance relationship but it is also important for job performance and customer satisfaction, especially in international business such as tourism (Bhawuk and Brislin, 1992). To enhance host-guest interaction, there should be cultural and linguistic similarity between host and tourists.

#### **3.4.1 Who should be multilingual – hosts or guests?**

Language continues to be one of the barriers to customer satisfaction in international businesses including tourism across global spaces of cultural and language diversity (Arsky and Cherney, 1997; Higley, 1997). A language is the foundation of communication between people. Indeed a language represents people's cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003; Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). Despite this assumption of English being a *lingua franca*, some organisations and individual operators in the tourism industry chose to adopt a multilingual strategy as a way of responding to increasing international tourism demand (Jafari and Way, 1994; Higley, 1997; Dittman, 1998).

Tourism is among the few industries that have recognised the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity (Dittman, 1998; Yang, Wall and Smith, 2008). Unlike other

industries, tourism does not view cultural and linguistic diversity negatively but as an opportunity to attract tourists (Yang and Wall, 2008). Indeed, the tourism industry appreciates the existence of cultural and linguistic diversity among its members including tourists (Jafari and Way, 1994). This appreciation is reflected through encouraging people working in the tourism industry to learn foreign languages. The industry takes the initiative to ensure that foreign guests express themselves and communicate their needs in their native languages (Marshall, 1996; *Travel Trade Gazette* UK & Ireland, 25 January 2008). As international tourism demand increases across the world, many tourism organisations and operators need multilingual employees who meet tourists' needs and expectations.

Linguistic ability has become a valuable asset in the tourism industry (Jafari and Way, 1994; Marshall, 1996; *Travel Trade Gazette* UK & Ireland, 25 January 2008). A study carried out among hotels in the USA affirmed that the best way to respond effectively to the international tourism is to staff the tourism industry with multicultural and multilingual employees (Jafari and Way, 1994). In 2000, a study conducted in Spanish hotels revealed that a language skill was one of the competencies in which managers had to improve to increase customers' satisfaction. A similar study also carried out in 2003 showed that demand for training on languages was ranked in 3<sup>rd</sup> place; this demand was predicted to rank one place higher following computer training hotels (Agut, Grau and Peiró, 2003).

Depending on the availability of resources in individual organisations, some organisations may choose to recruit bilingual/multilingual employees or train a few of their existing workers. In the USA for example, certain Hilton hotels have a policy of hiring employees who speak various languages. Radisson hotels also introduced world-wide toll-free numbers by which potential and existing guests can make reservations in their own language (Laura, 1993). In case an organisation opts to train its existing staff, this may be either on-the-job or off-the-job training. On the other hand, organisations may hire translators who may work full-time or part-time (Mazzullo, 2001). In a country where there is a shortage of multilingual employees in the labour market, some tourism organisations prefer to recruit immigrants. An example is South Africa where African immigrants from French speaking countries

work as translators, tour guides in the tourism industry and as French language teachers (Vigouroux, 2005).

In preparation for the expected influx of international tourists during the forthcoming 2010 FIFA World Cup, South Africa is currently working hard to break language barriers before this mega event. Although South Africa adopted a multilingual strategy with eleven official languages, the country believes that being multilingual in foreign languages will open doors for international tourists (*Business Day*, 2 October 2003).<sup>23</sup> Different tourism organisations in the country want their workers to become multilingual. In 2006 for example, a group of thirteen South African tour guides went to China to learn the language and culture in preparation for the flow of Chinese tourists during 2010 FIFA World Cup (*Daily Dispatch*, 2 August 2006). In 2008, another group of tour guides from Eastern Cape Province went to learn Mandarin and other foreign languages. The Province also trained 17 tour guides to speak German and 12 tour guides to speak basic French (*Daily Dispatch*, 23 January 2008).

Although, language skills are necessary in the tourism industry, jobs available in this industry are not language-centred but they are language-related jobs. Language-centred jobs are those positions in which people use foreign language ability as the primary skill. These positions include teacher, translator and interpreter. On the other hand language-related jobs include positions in which knowledge of a foreign language complement other skills (Verada, 1994). People with language skills relatively increase their opportunity for employment in the tourism industry although many of these employees work on part-time or temporary basis (Higley, 1997). Currently many tourism organisations recruit people with knowledge of the industry coupled with foreign language proficiency. For this reason individual people supplement their qualifications with language skills to increase opportunities of winning job interviews. Indeed, many people in the tourism industry use foreign language proficiency as a strategy of advancing their careers (*Travel Trade Gazette UK & Ireland*, 25 January 2008).

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<sup>23</sup> South Africa has eleven official languages of which 9 are African languages. English and Afrikaans are the other two.



The ability of staff in the tourism industry to communicate with customers in their own languages is very important if the industry wants to flourish. Greeting and communicating with tourists in their preferred languages has a positive impact on customer intimacy development. In addition, tourists feel that they are being welcomed and treated personally. Besides speaking tourists' languages and creating a friendly environment for both service providers and guests, communicating with customers in their languages is an opportunity for staff to improve their own performance (*Travel Trade Gazette* UK & Ireland, 25 January 2008; Vaughan and Woodhall, 1998). Furthermore, language skills give the organisation a competitive advantage to differentiate itself from other organisations that offer similar products (Vaughan and Woodhall, 1998).

After the realisation of the importance of languages in promoting and selling tourism products, different organisations in the tourism industry adopted written or unwritten language policies which stipulate languages to be spoken by staff when communicating with customers or their fellow employees. As result of these language policies, hiring policies became discriminatory and often favours people who have linguistic skills to cater for tourists (Smith, 1977). Employees at workplaces are forced to communicate only in those recommended languages. In the USA for example, in the 1990s there was an increasing number of cases of employment discrimination based on English only policies (Cacas, 1995; Higley, 1997). Some hotels refused to recruit non-English speaking people (Cacas, 1995) and others forbade their staff to speak their native languages with co-workers (Higley, 1997).

Every person has cultural rights to freedom of expression and the dissemination of his/her work in a language of his/her choice (UNESCO, 2003). Similarly, Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) mentions that a person of linguistic minority shall not be denied the right in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language (Phillipson, 1992, p. 94). Prohibiting employees from speaking languages of their choices to their co-workers is viewed as a discriminatory. Similarly, forbidding people from speaking to their co-workers in their native languages is to prevent employees talking to each other (Higley, 1997).



However, with or without language policies found in some tourism organisations at a certain destination, local communities still adapt to tourism for the purpose of catering for tourists because of the economic benefits. Host communities often desire to meet tourists' needs, attitudes and values, and residents often cope with tourists' culture (Nuñez, 1977) including language. The native residents are attracted to jobs in the tourism industry because in return they gain economic benefits (Smith, 1977). As international tourists flock to a destination, residents compromise by acquiring tourists' languages. Host populations may produce bilingual and multilingual individuals to cater for tourists while tourists themselves refrain from learning the host's language (Nuñez, 1977).

As a consequence of the acquisition of majority and foreign languages, host residents may end up abandoning their native languages; extinction of these languages may follow. Considering the explosive expansion of a few dominant languages in recent decades, at least half of the world's languages are critically endangered. In the near future these languages will have no speakers and become extinct (Crystall, 2000, cited in Minnet and Wang, 2008).

As people of different cultures and languages increase at a destination, social contact between hosts and guests changes so that both parties can accommodate each other. An example is a Panamanian Crede village which was using only Spanish to communicate with tourists from across Panama. After 1995, the number of multilingual international tourists from around the globe significantly increased in that village and social contact with tourists changed. As a result, residents in the village stopped using only Spanish to communicate with multilingual outsiders. English emerged as more useful than Spanish in terms of communicating to outsiders in the Panamanian Crede village (Snow, 2004).

If governments and organisations do not take appropriate measures to protect minority languages, there is a possibility that the minority languages will disappear completely. A small group of Nahuat people in Mexico abandoned their mother tongue and they chose to speak Spanish only. These people did not feel part of their native community: they did not use Nahuat language, nor did they not speak it to their

children. The Mexican government however, developed a tourism policy that encourages the preservation of indigenous languages (Greathouse-Amador, 2005).

Currently, in countries with linguistic diversity, ethnic tourism emerged as a strategy of preserving minority cultures and languages and as an opportunity for economic growth in those areas with minority people (Yang, Wall and Smith, 2008). However, the use of minority or indigenous languages may experience a decline in case migrants gain employment in the tourism industry especially in urban areas (Page and Hall, 2003).

As local hosts abandon their native languages and acquire foreign languages to satisfy tourists' needs and wants, there is evidence that majority languages continue to become popular. With the assumption that English is as a *lingua franca* across the world (Arsky and Cherney, 1997; Granville *et al*, 1997; van der Walt, 2004; Cleveland and Laroche, 2007), English speaking countries resist learning minority or other foreign languages. A study carried out among tourism management students in the UK reported that non-UK students acknowledge that people in tourism management should know at least two languages, while their UK peers opposed this idea by saying: "not everyone may want to study a language" and "foreign language is important but should be a choice" (Leslie and Russell, 2006 p 1402).

Similar study in the UK pointed out that among European countries the UK produces few bilingual people (Leslie, Russell and Forbes, 2002). Although the majority of UK students saw foreign language skills as essential, these students recommended that foreign language skills are needed for people who intend to work abroad. The minority of the students dispensed with foreign languages and said that "English is the most important language" and that "if you know English it is not necessary to learn a foreign language". This perception of English's hegemony created the attitude that 'English is all you need'. The haughtiness of English speaking hosts affects tourism business in the UK. The majority of employers face challenges to recruit staff with foreign language skills rather than providing and encouraging development of these skills at workplace. Around 50% of employers found difficulties in recruiting staff with the requisite foreign language skills. Employers pointed out that if they make foreign languages one of the recruitment criteria they will be limiting themselves to

less than 5 percent of their potential employees. To overcome this problem, employers prefer to recruit foreign nationals (Leslie and Russell, 2006 p.1402).

In the tourism industry learning foreign languages has come to be regarded as a strategy to enhance the socio-economic relationship between service providers and tourists. However, this acquisition of foreign languages is one-sided. It has been noticed that local residents show interest in learning tourists' languages while tourists refrain learning local languages (Nuñez, 1977). Host-guest interactions are characterised by conciseness that offers little friendship potential. There is little room for both parties to co-operate to achieve common goals (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2005). Despite socio-economic benefits from the acquisition of tourists' languages, there is a serious threat to indigenous languages. The native languages and cultures are likely to extinct (Hofling, 1996) because residents adopt tourists' languages.

### **3.5 Summary**

Despite the assumption that English is a prominent and international language, multilingualism on web sites has grown significantly since the late 1990s. Initially, information on web sites was only available in predominant languages. But nowadays the priority is to bridge linguistic gaps among communities to facilitate the circulation of texts in more than one language. Multilingualism in the tourism industry is viewed as an anchor of customer retention and attracting new customers in the industry.

Language is the foundation of effective communication among people and is part of their culture (UNESCO, 2003). Cultural or linguistic similarity has a strong influence on tourists' decision making behaviour. Tourists are more likely to visit a destination where they share cultural and linguistic similarity (Ng, Lee and Soutar, 2006). The interaction between hosts and guests is high if both parties have a common language. To enhance this interaction, some organisations in the industry offer multilingual information in ephemeral publications and others produce multilingual staff. Linguistic differences should be taken into consideration by tourism marketers.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA COLLECTION: STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

*When I'm working on a problem,  
I never think about beauty. I think only how  
to show a problem. But when I have finished,  
if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong*

R. Buckminster Fuller (1895 - 1983)

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the data collection processes used in the research on tourism and language in Cape Town. The study employed various techniques to collect data from different sources. This variety strengthens inquiry (Kane and O'Reilly-de Brún, 2001). Use was made of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from tourism service providers and tourists. Secondary data were obtained from sources such as newspapers, restaurant menus, brochures, guidebooks and Internet websites used by tourism organisations in Cape Town. Primary data from both tourists and tourism service providers were collected during the tourism peak season in Cape Town in the summer of 2008/2009.

#### 4.2 Primary data collection

The study involved a sample of 114 interviewees of whom some were international tourists from different countries across the world and others were tourism service providers running tourism businesses in Cape Town. Convenience sampling was used to collect data from both tourism service providers and tourists. International tourists were from both English and non-English speaking countries. Tourists were surveyed at several popular tourist sites in Cape Town. These places are also where it is easiest to meet and access tourists. The study also involved 77 tourism organisations. More than half (64.6%) of the surveyed 77 tourism organisations were in central Cape Town (the CBD). The remaining 35.4% were surveyed from Somerset West/Stellenbosch, Table Mountain and the V&A Waterfront. Furthermore, shopkeepers and metered taxi drivers were also surveyed.

In this sample, the majority of surveyed tourism service providers are from the CBD because many tourist facilities seem to be concentrated in the CBD. In addition, it was more convenient for the researcher to trace these facilities and tourists in the CBD rather than in the suburbs. Even though there are few tour operators and travel agencies in the city centre, the observation shows that the majority of tour groups visit the South African Museum and the National Gallery alongside the historic Anglican Cathedral, District Six and Parliament which are located in the central city.

Primary data were collected using questionnaires, informal interviews and observations. In an attempt to support and enhance the validity of primary data, photographs were taken as additional evidence. Different forms of ephemeral publications were collected from various tourism service providers as part of the secondary data. However, considering the number of tourism service providers available in Cape Town and international tourist arrivals in Cape Town each year, the sample size of this study is too small. Therefore, care needs to be taken using the findings of this study to make concrete decisions.

### **4.3 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were the main tool used to gather primary data from both tourism service providers and tourists. Two different types of questionnaires (involving closed- and open-ended questions) were designed, one type for tourists and another for tourism service providers. The questionnaire for tourism service providers was designed in four sections (Appendix D). The first section covers questions on background information of an organisation such as the organisation's name, the type of tourism business the organisation is in and how long the organisation has been in business. The second section covers questions related to language practice in the tourism industry. These questions touch aspects such as the languages used in the organisation for the purpose of serving tourists, the number of bi/multilingual staff employed in the organization, and the availability of translators in the organisation. The third section comprises questions related to a language policy in the organisation. Eleven questions in this section investigate whether an organisation has a language policy, and identifies recommended languages in that policy. The fourth and last section probes general information related to tourists' behaviour and socio-demographic issues.

Questionnaires for tourists were made available in English (Appendix E). To collect data from as wide a spectrum of city visitors as possible the English questionnaire was translated in other four European languages including French, German, Italian and Portuguese. The basic English language questionnaire was translated into French by the researcher who can speak French, and by a family relative. The German translation was done by a friend. Portuguese and Italian translations were done by postgraduate students at the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

Before translating questionnaires, those in English for both tourists and tourism service providers were piloted among third year tourism students at UWC to assess their intelligibility, relevance and validity. Students who are working part-time in the tourism industry were given questionnaires for tourism service providers whilst questionnaires for tourists were distributed among the remaining students. In addition, four postgraduate exchange students from Belgium were involved in piloting questionnaires for tourists.

In mid-September 2008 soon after the research proposal approval, Cape Town Tourism (Somerset West branch) was approached to assist with circulating interview sheets among tourism service providers.<sup>24</sup> The survey was intended only for international tourists who might face linguistic problems in Cape Town. Using George's (2003) strategies of placing questionnaires at information centres in Cape Town, some questionnaires for this study were also placed at tourist information centres at the V&A Waterfront and others at Table Mountain Cableway station. Although these two tourist information centres undertook to hand out surveys, both centres were reluctant to ask tourists to fill in questionnaires.

After two weeks of disappointing data collection, questionnaires left at the V&A Waterfront and at Table Mountain were taken back and the researcher undertook the survey independently. Only six completed questionnaires for tourism service providers were collected from the Somerset West tourism office. Again the researcher was obliged to collect data from service providers himself and the data collection

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<sup>24</sup> Cape Town Tourism is the regional tourism organisation for Cape Town, responsible for destination marketing, visitor and industry services.

period was extended by several months. It was found convenient to collect data from tourists and service providers simultaneously wherever possible.

Collecting data from tour guides and their customers (tourists) at tourist stops was generally successful. Difficulties included identification of international tourists, unwillingness of some tourists to complete questionnaires, and tour guides who kept tourists inaccessible. International tourists were identified by observing their behaviour such as moving in groups, carrying cameras and maps in their hands, and dressing distinctively. Of course, language itself was a useful pointer: many international tourists conversed in a language other than English.

#### **4.4 Informal interviews and observations**

Informal interviews with tourists and tourism service providers were conducted in an attempt to give opportunities to both service providers and tourists to express themselves on linguistic issues. Questions related to linguistic adaptation and challenges were asked of tourists. Tourism service providers were asked questions pertaining to language practices in their establishments. These interviews were conducted throughout the whole period of data collection from November 2008 to February 2009. Informal interviews involved 26 informants, of which twelve were tourists. The remaining fourteen informants were tourism providers.

The study also involved behavioural observations as part of primary data collection. Like the informal interviews, behavioural observations were made continuously throughout the period of data collection. Specifically, while conducting surveys and interviews with both tourists and service providers, interactions and relationships between guests and hosts were observed, and recorded in writing afterwards. Body language such as facial expression, gestures, and eye contact were noted. The observations were done sensitively. To avoid intrusion observations were done incognito and at reasonable distance.

Observations were not only limited to behavioural observations; they also included observations of symbols such as flags and public signs used in the tourist establishments to transmit messages to tourists. The presence of foreign flags at many hotels indicates that those hotels are international and should be multicultural and



multilingual. Hotels flying foreign flags in Cape Town were noted and the flags identified to assess whether there is a similarity between foreign flags available at particular hotel and the foreign languages spoken in the same hotel. Public signs used to give instructions and directions to tourists were also assessed in terms of languages used by tourism organisations in Cape Town.<sup>25</sup>

#### **4.5 Secondary data collection**

Secondary data involved collecting 795 electronic and printed items used by the tourism industry in Cape Town for the purpose of disseminating information to existing and potential tourists across the world. Among these publications, more than half (53.7%) were brochures. A third (32.9%) was websites, 10.1% were menus, and 3.3% were guide books and maps. These ephemeral publications were collected in such a way to cover the main tourism sectors such as accommodation, tour operators, travel agents, food and beverages, and museums. Languages used in these publications were identified and numerically recorded. They also compared thematically to find out the depth of translation where two or more languages were used in one document: information may be shallow in one language and intense in other language. In cases where the printed language is unknown (for example an Asiatic language), the number of lines, paragraphs and pages were counted enabling an estimate of the depth of content in that language. Announcements about vacancies in the tourism industry (as advertised in newspapers and on tourism websites) are a supplementary indicator of whether foreign language proficiency is one of the criteria for a person to be recruited in the tourism industry.

#### **4.6 Ethics**

During data collection, ethical issues were considered carefully. All interviewees were told fully what the research was about, its purpose and objectives. No interviewee was forced, bribed or persuaded to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary and the participant had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and at any stage of his/her participation. In addition, interviewees' contributions to the study remained confidential: no names and addresses were collected. While making observations of

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<sup>25</sup> Examples of signs that give instructions include signs for non-smoking areas, parking areas and dangerous areas. Examples of signs that give tourists directions are those to hotels, swimming pools, toilets and tourist information points.



the interaction between tourists and tourism service providers, a reasonable distance was kept to avoid intrusion.

#### **4.7 Summary**

The data collection process provided an opportunity to meet and interact with people from all over the world. That process was crucial to formulating an informal view of tourism and multilingualism in Cape Town. The formal process of distributing and collecting interview forms, and of interviewing service providers, was challenging. Although the majority of tourists were helpful in terms of participating in the survey, there were some who had no interest in participating. Similarly, some tourism service providers were not willing to cooperate. Indeed, they made it difficult to access tourists who were using their facilities. These challenges delayed but did not stop data collection: information was collected from other people who were willing to participate in the survey.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### LANGUAGE PRACTICES AND POLICY

*Think like a wise man but communicate  
in the language of people*

William Butler Yeats (1865 – 1939)

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The numerical data derived from tourists and tourist organization surveys in different parts of Cape Town were collated and captured in spread sheets to enable descriptive analysis. Simple frequencies and percentages help to describe and analyse tourist language service and use. This chapter presents findings of the study, and also interpretation and discussion. Findings of the study are about languages used by tourism organisations for the purpose of servicing tourists, and about strategies adopted by tourists to overcome language barriers in Cape Town. The study involved 77 tourism organisations of which 19 were in the accommodation business, 19 were in the food and beverages business, 27 were tour operators and travel agencies, and 12 tourism organisations were running businesses such as museums, airlines and wineries. The study also involved 15 shopkeepers and shop assistants and 10 metered taxi drivers.

#### **5.2 Tourism service providers and multilingualism practices**

There are few tourism organisations in Cape Town that have included foreign languages in their daily operations with the intention of catering for tourists (Table 5.1). Results show that more than half (55%) of all tourism organizations only use South Africa's languages to communicate with the existing and potential tourists. The remaining (45%) of tourism organizations entwined South Africa's languages with foreign languages to communicate with tourists.

It was noticed that foreign languages are used mostly in tour operations and travel agencies. Almost three quarters (74%) of all tour operations and travel agencies sector incorporated foreign languages in their operations. A quarter (26%) of all surveyed tour operators and travel agencies communicate with customers only in South Africa's languages including English. However, this full range of eleven South

Africa's languages is used little: English significantly dominates. Results also indicate that more than three quarters (79%) of organizations that run accommodation businesses communicate with guests using at least one of South Africa's official languages. Less than a quarter (21%) of accommodation businesses included foreign languages for serving foreign visitors.

Languages	Accom		Restau		Tour op & travel ag		Others		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%
English and local	15	79	13	68	7	26	7	58	42	55
Foreign languages	4	21	6	32	20	74	5	42	35	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.1:** Surveyed tourism organisations (by sector) in Cape Town that practise multilingualism (Accom = accommodation; Restau = restaurant; Tour op = tour operators; travel ag = travel agencies)

It is not surprising that English and other South Africa's official languages dominate in the accommodation sector. The accommodation sector employs many people compared with other tourism sectors. Indeed, most workers in the accommodation sector are likely to be less educated and doing manual work such as waitrons, guest room attendants and cleaners. Therefore, these workers may communicate with guests using their native languages. Based on this argument, Afrikaans might be the most used language in the accommodation sector because the majority of inhabitants of the Western Cape are Afrikaans-speakers. However, there is no surprise because the majority of all employees in the tourism industry in Cape Town are Afrikaans-speakers. Afrikaans dominates even an informal communication in the public sector in the Western Cape (Western Cape, 2002).

This dominance of Afrikaans speakers makes Xhosa marginalised in all tourism organisations in Cape Town. Moreover, the majority of Xhosa-speakers occupy low positions. A big proportion of all Xhosa-speakers working in tourist establishments tend to greet and welcome every Black guest who approaches them in Xhosa rather than in English.<sup>26</sup> This may be one way of reacting to the dominance of Afrikaans in the tourism industry in Cape Town. The negligible number of tourism businesses that

<sup>26</sup> Observations in six tourist establishments including Cape Grace Hotel, a prominent boutique hotel in Cape Town, Cape Town Hollow, Iziko Museum, Nelson Mandela Gateway, Southern Sun Hotel and Tourism Information Centre at V&A Waterfront.

are owned by Xhosa-speakers and few positions occupied by Xhosa-speakers in tourism organisations in Cape Town might be other reasons why the Xhosa language is shadowed by Afrikaans. Consequently, Xhosa-speakers may have no influence on any language use in the tourism industry. However, Xhosa may be frequently spoken in tourist establishments found in townships or in tourist establishments run by Black South Africans.

In the food and beverages sector, results revealed that 68% of all surveyed organisations serve their guests only in one or more of South Africa's languages. For the remaining tourism organizations that run other tourism businesses, results show that the majority (58%) of these organizations also cater for their existing and potential visitors only in South Africa's languages. Overall, slightly less than half of all surveyed tourism businesses in Cape Town have thought it necessary to serve tourists in non-South African languages.

The dominance of foreign language usage in tour operation and travel agencies organizations is not surprising. It seems that tour operators target foreign markets, as confirmed by some tour operators during informal interviews. Foreign visitors, especially those on township and wine route tours, are more likely to use tour operators and travel agencies due to unfamiliarity with a new environment in terms of culture and languages. In contrast, domestic tourists do not need to involve tour operators because they do not face any language barrier and are familiar with the environment. These findings correspond with Rogerson and Visser's (2007b) results that revealed that tourists from non-English speaking countries in South Africa as a whole chose inclusive tours due to a language barrier and unfamiliarity of the country. In line with this argument, Cape Town township tours are guided by people who can speak and understand Xhosa and who are familiar with township environments. Mzoli's Place and the Gugulethu Seven Memorial (Figure 5.1) are the most popular township sites for international and domestic visitors. Knowledge of Xhosa may be a big advantage for visitors who want to interact effectively with township residents.



**Figure 5.1:** Gugulethu Seven Memorial, Cape Town<sup>27</sup>

Although tour operators in Cape Town have adopted multilingualism so as to accommodate a wide range of tourists from all over the world, tour operators do not recruit multilingual employees. Rather, they hire tour guides who are able to speak tourists' languages. As an employee of one prominent tour operator remarked, "*We tour operators do not usually recruit multilingual people but if we receive a group of tourists speaking a particular language, we find a guide who can speak that particular language*".<sup>28</sup> This is an indication that non-English speaking tourists have to inform tour operator in advance if they will need translators. Other tour operators echoed this suggestion when pointing out that if the organisation receives non-English speaking tourists and there is no-one in the organization who can speak their (non-English speaking tourists) language(s), tourists are referred to other organisations. Indeed, they added that they may even turn down non-English speaking tourists.<sup>29</sup>

If tourism organisations refuse customers or refer customers to competitors, there is a loss of business. Customers are probably neglected due to lack of fierce competition among tourism organisations in Cape Town. If these tourism organisations are still making profits easily, they do not see how important it is to learn customers' languages with the intention of meeting a customer's needs. Indeed, acquiring customers' languages might be one of the strategies of achieving 'relationship marketing' in the tourism industry. On the other hand, tourism service providers

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.sa-venues.com/attractionswc/gugulethu-7-memorial.htm> Retrieved on 24 August 2009.

<sup>28</sup> Informal interview with anonymous Hylton Ross Company coach driver, Table Mountain coach park, 18 November 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Interviews with the Director of GRF Tours, 10 November 2008 and anonymous tour guide from Springbok Atlas Tours, Company's Gardens, 12 December 2008.

might consider the number of non-English speaking tourists to be insignificant in Cape Town, and their contribution to profit as negligible. However, tourism organisations in Cape Town might be thinking of short-term profit rather than long-term survival. Non-English speaking countries such as Brazil, China, France, German, Japan and Italy have stable and flourishing economies. Therefore, Cape Town tourism may not take languages spoken in these countries for granted.

A study carried out in Spanish hotels revealed that language skill was one of the areas that managers had to improve in order to increase customer satisfaction (Agut, Grau and Peiró, 2003). However, this is not the case in most hotels in Cape Town. South Africa's own languages predominate in the accommodation and restaurant businesses. Surprisingly foreign languages were neglected even in those hotels with outstanding and well known brand names internationally such the Cape Grace, One and Only Cape Town, and Westin Grand. The neglect of foreign languages in accommodation and in food and beverages businesses in Cape Town does not reflect South Africa's tourism market because the majority of South Africa's tourism market is non-English speaking countries (George, 2003, SATOUR, 2008).<sup>30</sup> It is surprising that foreign languages are neglected in the accommodation and restaurant sector where tourists need to interact frequently with service providers. Hotels that best understand the needs, wants and expectations of foreign travellers from their targeted markets satisfy their customers (McCleary *et al.*, 1998 cited in Heo, Jogaratnam and Buchanan, 2004).

Unlike hotels and restaurants, without foreign language skills it will be almost impossible for tour operators to deliver their product. Tourism product offered by tour operators is about offering information and anecdotal stories about visited sites, photographed places and encountered people. Tour guides provide information as text accompanying the panorama passing outside the windows of tour buses. Indeed, tour guides act as interpreters and intermediaries between local hosts and tourists (Leclerc and Martin, 2004). Regarding this argument, people who guide dark tours at Robben Island are more likely to be multilingual because the site receives many international

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<sup>30</sup> South African Tourism's major target market includes Africa, France, German, Italy, Netherlands, UK and USA.

tourists speaking different languages. To meet customer's satisfaction of non-English speaking tourists however, the whole tourism industry needs foreign language skills. All sectors in the industry work as a team in meeting a customer's needs. If guests communicate with tour operators effectively but face a language barrier when communicating with a receptionist in a hotel, the guests' overall satisfaction will be affected negatively. The tourism industry has to ensure that foreign guests are served in their own languages in which they can express themselves freely (Marshall, 1996).

Different foreign languages are used by some tourism organisations in Cape Town to cater for a wide range of international tourists (Table 5.2). However, only English and other South African languages are spoken in more than half (51%) of all tourism organizations in Cape Town. Less than a quarter (18%) of tourism organisations practised multilingualism with English, French and German. Still fewer (12%) communicated with tourists in English and German. Less than one tenth (6%) of tourism organisations use either English or French to communicate with tourists; 6% communicate with their guests using English and foreign languages than French and German. Very few (4%) tourism organisations communicate with their guests only in English. There was no any single tourism organisation that offers its services in Afrikaans or indigenous languages only.

African languages might be most used in tourist establishments found in townships or those tourism businesses run by Black South Africans. To promote African languages in the tourism industry, the South African government encourages foreign tourists to respect these languages by learning a few words to use when interacting with local people (South Africa, 2002). However, one may wonder how practical it is to teach tourists local languages. Customers cannot be forced to learn local languages if they are not interested. Tourism service providers in Cape Town have to learn tourists' languages to meet customer need and wants.

English is spoken in all surveyed tourism organisations in Cape Town. This is an indication that English continues its domination in all tourism organisations and South Africa.



Languages	Accom	%	Restau	%	Tour & travel ag	%	Others	%	Total	%
<i>South Africa's languages</i>										
English only	0	0	0	0	3	11	0	0	3	4
English & other local languages	15	79	13	68	4	15	7	58	39	51
<i>Eng &amp; Foreign languages</i>										
Eng & French	0	0	0	0	4	15	1	8	5	6
Eng & German	1	5	1	5	6	22	1	8	9	12
Eng, French & German	3	16	2	11	7	26	2	17	14	18
Eng & foreign lang excl. German & French	0	0	3	16	3	11	1	8	7	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.2:** Languages spoken in surveyed tourism organizations in different tourism sectors (Accom = accommodation; Restau = restaurant; ag = agencies)

These results are consistent with the claim that use of English in South Africa surpasses that of the other ten official languages (Wright, 2002). Regardless of the multilingualism policy in South Africa and Western Cape (Western Cape, 2001), one prominent tourism organisation in Cape Town Tourism stipulated that English is the business language in the Western Cape (Cape Town Tourism, 2009a). This claim is not surprising because among 15 interviewed shop assistants at V&A Waterfront and in the city centre, only one shop assistant was able to communicate fluently in three foreign languages other than English.<sup>31</sup> Four shop assistants can speak English and basic foreign languages whilst ten shopkeepers and shop assistants do speak only English. Similarly, a proportion of 8 out of 10 metered taxi drivers speak only English and the remaining two drivers speak English and French. However, these two metered taxi drivers were foreigners from the French speaking Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

German and French are the most preferred foreign languages among tourism organisations in Cape Town that have adopted multilingualism in their operations (Figure 5.2). The choice of German and French is not surprising because Germany

<sup>31</sup> Informal interviews at V&A Waterfront were conducted in the Clock Tower Shopping Centre, Craft Market, and Indaba Curious. Informal interviews in the city centre were conducted in the African Women's Trading Market and Greenmarket Square.

and France are ranked third and fourth respectively after the UK and the USA in terms of South African tourism's main target market. There is a claim that the number of French and German speakers from Europe and west and central Africa is increasing in South Africa (Cape Town Tourism, 2009a). France and Germany are in the top 5 countries that generated overseas tourist arrivals for South Africa in 2007 (SATOUR, 2008). The popularity of spoken and written German in particular, also reflects the high number of German investors in South Africa (Baker, 2007). Furthermore, SATOUR reported that since 2004 Germany is the most loved of South Africa's outbound destinations (SATOUR, 2008). This implies that there may be many South Africans who have a grasp of German.

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**Figure 5.2:** Advertised tourism job vacancy in a Cape Town daily newspaper recommending French or German as a 'big' advantage, *Cape Times*, 10 March 2008

Many tourism organisations in Cape Town may see France and Germany as a market that has a potential of generating tourists for South Africa. In addition, France and Germany are economically and politically strong and stable. Moreover, there are quite a number of people who speak French across the world. Portuguese and Spanish are not really practised in the tourism industry in Cape Town. Relatively few Spanish-speakers visit South Africa, preferring instead to visit Latin America where linguistic

barriers are less. Yet neglect of Portuguese and Spanish is likely to create language barriers during 2010 FIFA World Cup between service providers and soccer fans from Portuguese and Spanish speaking countries in Cape Town. There is a possibility that Brazil and some of Spanish speaking countries are likely to qualify for this mega event. Indeed, it was affirmed that Brazil is one the markets that will be attracted by the event (*Star*, 17 September 2007). This event will only last one month but Cape Town tourism may think beyond 2010 FIFA World Cup. Knowledge of languages spoken by people from these tourism markets may be a simple strategy the tourism industry in Cape Town can adopt to establish long-term relationship with these new tourism markets. However, foreign language skills should be not only in the event tourism niche but in other tourism niches such as wine, township, dark, gay and lesbian, medical and shopping niches.

Although the majority of tourist arrivals in South Africa are from Africa (SATOUR, 2008), continental African languages (other than French and Portuguese) are not spoken in any tourist establishment in Cape Town. One may argue that there is a disparity of how tourists from the African market are distributed throughout South Africa. There is a possibility that Cape Town receives few of tourists from continental Africa due to the city's reputation for racial discrimination, its allegedly unwelcoming attitude to Africans (*Cape Times*, 21 November 2005) and its distance from those tourist markets. Most continental African tourists may be visiting Johannesburg, which is nearer than Cape Town. The argument is validated by SATOUR's claim that approximately 100,000 African tourists visit the country for shopping each year in Johannesburg. These tourists are from South Africa's northern neighbours (*Star*, 25 July 2007).

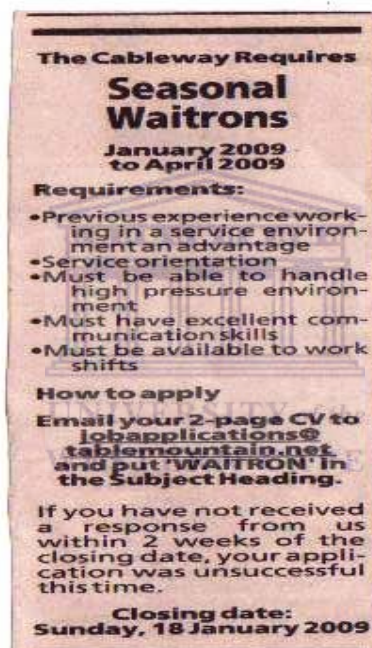
### **5.2.1 Multilingual staff in tourist establishments**

Against the background that a minority (45%) of all tourist establishments (Table 5.1) are multilingual, it is notable that a large proportion (66%) of multilingual employees in 32 tourist establishments are working on a part-time basis.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, more

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<sup>32</sup> A tourism service provider in Cape Town who speaks any of the two South African languages is bilingual and a tourism service provider who speaks any of the three South African languages is multilingual. In this research, a bilingual tourism service provider is a tourism provider who speaks one or more of the South African languages plus one of the European languages. A multilingual tourism

than three quarters (77%) of multilingual employees in 30 tourist establishments were temporarily employed and 33% of multilingual employees are permanently employed. It is not strange for most multilingual employees in the tourism industry to be working part-time or to be temporarily employed, because the industry is seasonal. Data for this study were collected during the summer tourism peak in Cape Town (November and December), so there were many part-time and temporary employees. Seasonal demand for female and male waitrons at the city's major attractions generate local press advertisements. One of the city's daily English newspapers, the 'excellent communication skills' specified for applicants for the Table Mountain café / restaurant makes no stipulation about language (Figure 5.3).



**Figure 5.3:** Typical tourism job vacancy advertised in a Cape Town daily newspaper with no language specification, *Cape Times*, 12 January 2009

With regards to sufficiency of multilingual staff in Cape Town's tourism industry, 61% of tourism service providers (n=31) who adopted multilingual practices admitted that there are too few multilingual employees in their establishments. Conversely, 39% of tourism service providers said that they have sufficient multilingual staff. Multilingual employee numbers alone do not measure service capacity or efficiency: only 33% of tourism organisations (n=27) revealed that their multilingual employees

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service provider is a tourism provider who speaks one or more of the South African languages and any two or more of the European languages.

are always available to serve tourists. The majority (77%) of tourism organisations noted that their multilingual employees are available in the organisations only if they need them. This claim was affirmed by a receptionist at One & Only Cape Town, one of the 5-star hotels in Cape Town.<sup>33</sup> Lack of regular multilingual staff in the 5-star hotels is not surprising because the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) does not consider foreign language skills as one of the star grading criteria (TGCS, 2009b). Indeed, foreign language skills were not even mentioned among services expected in tourist establishments of any grade (TGCSA, 2009a).

Some tourism organisations admitted that they lost business as a result of the insufficiency of multilingual staff to serve non-English speaking tourists. Surprisingly, most tourism organizations admitted that they experience multilingual staff shortages, but they do not show any sign of recruiting multilingual staff. This was confirmed by a hotel assistant manager who said “*we do not employ a person because he or she can speak foreign languages, but knowing foreign language is ‘A+’*”.<sup>34</sup> The statement implies that most tourism organisations in Cape Town recognise the importance of foreign languages although the number of accommodation and food and beverages businesses that employ multilingual staff is still insignificant (see previous Table 5.1). The lesson needs reinforcing that a strong and good relationship between tourists and hosts is based on linguistic interactions (Cohen and Cooper, 1986, cited in Huisman and Moore, 1999).

Although there is no establishment specifically for gay and lesbian tourists identified among the surveyed establishments in Cape Town, probably gay and lesbian facilities also have multilingual staff shortages. This point is corroborated by thousands of gay tourists who visit Cape Town each year for events and parties.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the forthcoming event, 2010 FIFA World Cup will attract a huge number of gay and lesbian tourists in Cape Town which is usually a popular gay tourist destination across the world. Thus foreign language skills are needed to cater for this growing niche tourism.

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<sup>33</sup> Informal interview with a Receptionist at One and Only Cape Town, V&A Waterfront, 2 September 2009.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with the Assistant Front Office Manager of Fountains Hotel, Cape Town city centre, 24 November 2008.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.discoverthecape.com/gay.html> Retrieved on 16 August 2009.

Considering the official South African tourism organisations' target market (SATOUR, 2008) and the few tourism organisations that are multilingual in Cape Town, there is a lot to be done to overcome communication barriers between service providers and tourists. A mere quarter (16%) of tourism organisations (n=75) in Cape Town affirmed that they consider foreign language skills as one of the criteria for employing someone. In other countries foreign language skill is viewed as a competitive advantage for people to advance their careers in the tourism industry (*Travel Trade Gazette UK & Ireland*, 25 January 2008).

Besides not considering foreign language proficiency during the recruitment process, many tourism organisations in Cape Town do not motivate their present staff to learn foreign languages. The research survey disclosed that a negligible proportion (2.6%) of tourism organisations (n=74) provide incentives and in-house foreign language training to their staff. These results reinforce Jafari and Way's (1994) suggestion that the tourism industry should employ multilingual employees who are likely to respond effectively to increasing tourism demand. Similarly, South Africa has affirmed that having multilingual staff in the tourism industry may be an opportunity for the country to increase the number of foreign travelers (*Business Day*, 2 October 2003). Some tourism organizations in South Africa responded positively to this call and they are now training their staff in foreign languages and cultures (*Daily Dispatch*, 2 August 2006).

In line with insignificant numbers of multilingual staff in the tourism industry in Cape Town, this study further revealed that only a small proportion (14.8%) of tourism-related job vacancies in Cape Town (n=350) advertised in newspapers and on websites required applicants to be multilingual.<sup>36</sup> The remainder (85.2%) of those job vacancies did not specify any particular language(s) (Table 5.3).<sup>37</sup> This silence on recommended language leads to the assumption that the recommended language was

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<sup>36</sup> 14.8% is the total of all percentages (2.3%, 2.8%, 2.6%, 0.8%, 0.3%, 2.3% and 3.7%) of tourism-related job vacancies that recommend foreign languages (Table 5.3).

<sup>37</sup> 85.2% is the total of all percentages (84.3%, 0.6% and 0.3%) of tourism-related job vacancies that recommended local languages (Table 5.3).



English. The big proportion of job vacancies that require job applicants to be fluent in English indicates that the tourism industry in Cape Town does not consider foreign language ability as an important criterion for a person to get employed in the industry. In addition, the inadequacy of multilingual staff in the tourism industry in Cape Town is not a result of shortages of multilingual people in the labour market but rather it is reluctance of employers in the tourism industry to recruit multilingual staff. There is no evidence that there is a shortage of multilingual people in the labour market. Cape Town's case is different from the UK case. If the tourism industry in the UK had to recruit multilingual staff, the industry could lose potential employees due to shortages of multilingual potential employees on the labour market. As a result the tourism industry in the UK decided to recruit foreigners (Leslie and Russell, 2006).

Languages required	Hotel & restaurants	%	Tour & travel	%	TOTAL	%
<i>Local languages</i>						
English	281	95.6	14	25	295	84.3
English & Afrikaans	2	0.7	0	0	2	0.6
English & Xhosa	0	0	0	0	0	0
English, Afrikaans & Xhosa	1	0.3	0	0	1	0.3
<i>Foreign languages</i>						
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0
French	0	0	8	14.3	8	2.3
French & German	0	0	10	17.9	10	2.8
German	2	0.7	7	12.5	9	2.6
Italian	1	0.3	2	3.57	3	0.8
Japanese	1	0.3	0	0	1	0.3
Spanish	3	1	5	8.93	8	2.3
Foreign lang. proficiency in general	3	1	10	17.9	13	3.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>

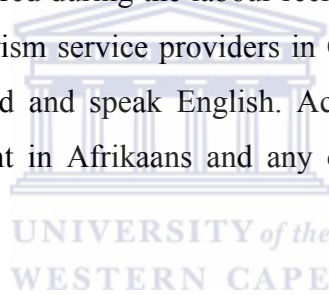
**Table 5.3:** Languages specified in tourism-related Cape Town job vacancies in Cape Town advertised in newspapers and websites

The reluctance of tourism organisations in Cape Town to recruit multilingual staff could be related to the assumption that English is a *lingua franca* across the world. As Leslie and Russell (2006) pointed out, English speaking people generally are ignorant of foreign languages and not interested to learn them. Many English speaking people



ignore that enhancement of social interaction occurs if people communicate in the similar way (Reisinger and Turner, 2003).

With regards to recommended languages for tourism-related job vacancies in each tourism organisation, almost all (95.6%) tourism-related job vacancies (n=294) in accommodation and restaurant businesses recommended job applicants be fluent in English. Less than five percent of job vacancy advertisements recommended the job applicants speak foreign languages. The fewest (1%) job vacancies in accommodation and restaurant businesses specifically required job applicants to speak English coupled with Afrikaans and/or Xhosa. In contrast, in tour operations and travel agency businesses, three quarters (75%) of all advertised job vacancies (n=56) recommended foreign language proficiency. A quarter (25%) requested the applicants to be fluent in English. Based on these results, it appears that South African languages other than English are not much considered during the labour recruitment process in the tourism industry in Cape Town. Tourism service providers in Cape Town assume that every South African is able to read and speak English. Accordingly, requesting tourism service providers to be fluent in Afrikaans and any other African language is not thought necessary.



Tour operators and travel agencies do not even consider South African languages other than English during the recruitment process (Table 5.3). Giving these languages a minimum consideration may mean that tour operators and travel agencies sectors target foreign tourists rather than domestic tourists. The fact that the number of domestic tourists who involve tour operators in their travel arrangement when travelling in Cape Town is negligible, neglecting South African languages other than English in tour operations sector may be understood. Domestic tourists are familiar with the environment and they do not even face a language barrier in Cape Town. Tourists who involve tour operators in South Africa are foreigners especially those from non-English speaking countries as reported in Rogerson and Visser's (2007b) study. On the other hand, tourists from English speaking countries who visit townships might be taking inclusive tours because they are not familiar with language spoken in townships.

The demand for foreign languages in the tourism industry across the world is booming and growing but there are still a small number of multilingual tourism organisations in the tourism industry in Cape Town. Failure to include foreign language skills as one of the criteria for a person to be recruited in the tourism industry in Cape Town has an effect on languages spoken in the industry (see previous Table 5.2). Evidence is that many tourism organisations prefer recruits with work experience rather than foreign language proficiency. If all tourism-related jobs advertised electronically and in newspapers required potential job applicants to have foreign language skills, the tourism industry in Cape Town would be able to communicate more effectively with people from across the world. This indeed, is the stated ambition of the tourism industry in South Africa (*Star*, 14 February 2007).

### 5.2.2 Multilingual electronic and printed promotional materials

The tourism industry in Cape Town uses different ephemeral publications to promote and market its product domestically and internationally. These publications include both print materials (such as brochures, menus and guide books) and electronic materials. Different languages have been used in the 795 sampled printed and electronic promotional materials by the tourism industry in Cape Town to sell and promote its product internationally (Table 5.4).

Languages	Brochures		Guides & maps		Menus		Webs		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%
<i>Local languages</i>										
English only	391	92	22	85	64	80	182	69.5	<b>659</b>	<b>82.9</b>
English, Afrik & Xhosa	5	1.2	0	0	1	1.3	2	0.8	<b>8</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Indigenous languages only	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<i>Foreign languages</i>										
English & Chinese only	1	0.2	0	0	2	2.5	0	0.0	<b>3</b>	<b>0.4</b>
English & Dutch only	5	1.2	2	7.7	1	1.3	5	1.9	<b>13</b>	<b>1.6</b>
English & French only	2	0.5	0	0	3	3.8	6	2.3	<b>11</b>	<b>1.4</b>
English & German only	9	2.1	2	7.7	2	2.5	41	15.6	<b>54</b>	<b>6.8</b>
English & Spanish only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
English, French, German & other languages	7	1.6	0	0	6	7.5	26	9.9	<b>39</b>	<b>4.9</b>
French only	2	0.5	0	0	1	1.3	0	0	<b>3</b>	<b>0.4</b>
German only	3	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>3</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.4:** Languages used in printed and electronic tourism promotional materials in Cape Town

The use of English continues to dominate other languages in all promotional materials collected from different tourism niches in Cape Town. More than three quarters (82.9%) of all print and electronic promotional materials offer information only in English. Less than ten percent (6.8%) of all promotional materials offer information only in English and German; 4.9% of promotional materials offer information in English and more than one other European languages. Among all print and electronic promotional materials, only 1% offer information simultaneously in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. Very few (0.3%) of all promotional materials offer information exclusively in languages that are indigenous to South Africa's Black citizens.

Specifically, the content of information offered by the majority (92%) of 427 brochures was in English whilst less than two percent of 427 collected brochures offered information in English and other South African languages. The remaining brochures (6.3%) offered information in English and / or foreign languages. Similarly, the content of information in more than three quarters (84.6%) of all guide books and maps (n=26) was offered exclusively in English. Few (14.4%) guide books and maps offered information in English and /or foreign languages. English only was used in 80% of all menus (n=80); one fifth (20%) of menus offered information in English and /or foreign languages.

With regards to languages used on websites, results show that the number of websites that offer tourist information only in English is low compared with other promotional materials (Table 5.4). For example, 69% of all tourism-related websites (n=262) offered information in English only. Information in more than a quarter (30.2%) of websites used English and foreign languages in parallel. A minute number (0.8%) of websites mixed English and other South African languages to offer information to tourists. The fact that English is viewed as a *lingua franca* among South Africans, offering multilingual tourism-related information in English and other South African languages will be a waste of resources in terms of money and time.

Besides English dominating all verbal communication in Cape Town's tourism organisations (see previous Tables 5.2 and 5.3), the language takes the lead in all written documents. English is mostly dominant in brochures and guidebooks because these promotional materials are available at key destinations rather than tourist origins. Tourism organisations may assume that those independent tourists who may use these materials are already in South Africa and can therefore speak English. In other words, tourism service providers are probably assuming that almost every tourist who visits South Africa is able to speak English. Here again the assumption is that English is an international *lingua franca* (Lituchy and Barra, 2008). English is frequently used in any form of product advertising even in countries where there few people, if anyone is fluent in English (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007).

Including tourism service providers who are already offering multilingual information, service providers who appreciate linguistic diversity face a financial challenge when adopting multilingualism in their brochures and guide books. One service provider in the Cape Town study commented that although it would be good to offer information in foreign languages it is very expensive to translate information into those languages.<sup>38</sup> One may argue that if tourism service providers want to ensure customer satisfaction, then they simply have to meet communication-related costs. Translating information to guests leads to true understanding between both hosts and guests (Hixson, 2002). Indeed languages used in tourist facilities construct and define tourist experiences (Urry, 1990, cited in Huisman and Moore, 1999).

Comparing linguistic practices in brochures and guide books with those in restaurant menus, it is clear that menus use foreign languages more than brochures and guides (Table 5.4). Tourism organisations include foreign languages in their menus as a way of welcoming tourists and marketing tourism product. Neelankavil *et al.* (1995) argue that cultural considerations have a great influence on how people consume goods and service. Therefore, including foreign words in advertising is crucial in multicultural marketing. In line with this argument, the use of foreign languages in many menus could be because of the numerous foreign-owned restaurants in Cape Town. In addition, these foreign-owned restaurants have specific markets they target. For

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Guest Relations Officer in Southern Sun Hotel, 15 January 2009.

example, Hildebrand Restaurant that notes Italian flag on its façade may be targeting Italian market (Figure 5.4). This may suggest that languages used in menus or in other promotional and non-promotional materials are influenced by business ownership and market targeted.

Similarly, results showed websites included foreign languages more than other ephemeral publications used by tourism organisations in Cape Town. English is evidently losing its prominence on websites. There is a similarity between this finding and experience in Australia, the UK and the USA where the proportion of monolingual websites is decreasing (Lituchy and Barra, 2008). The tourism industry in Cape Town ignores that the number of web users in non-English speaking countries across the world is increasing (Lau *et al.*, 2001).



**Figure 5.4:** Hildebrand Restaurant, V&A Waterfront, notes Italian flag on façade, 2 September 2009.

Despite the inclusion of foreign languages in some websites used by tourism organisations in Cape Town, the majority of information content in these multilingual websites is English. Surprisingly, English is the only language used in the websites of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), and other prominent tourism organisations in Cape Town such as Cape Town Routes Unlimited (CTRU) and Cape Town Tourism (CTT) which are the major Cape Town tourism marketers. There are websites that offer a few select foreign words or language choice on the home page; these give the impression that the

websites are multilingual. Non-English speaking web users or surfers are surely disappointed when they open subsequent pages and find the information content is in English throughout. Some websites also gesture at multinationality rather than multilingualism by placing foreign flags on home pages without any single foreign word. If information content is provided in tourists' own languages on websites, communication barriers will be minimised and interaction between web users and service providers will improve (Powell-Perry and Widijoso, 1999).

Dominance of English in many tourism websites may affect tourist behaviour when searching travel-related information or purchasing tourism product in Cape Town. Most people are interested and motivated when they view promotional materials in their local languages (Aytac, 2005). There are some tourism websites in Cape Town that are fully multilingual but in many cases the information content in foreign languages is shallow whilst the content in English is intense. The majority of all observed multilingual tourism websites in Cape Town are foreign tourism organisations that are operating or based in Cape Town. These webs always balance information content in all languages regardless of languages spoken their home countries. Examples are the websites of globalised airlines such as Air France, Lufthansa and Alitalia, all of which operate in South Africa.

Generally, multilingualism is not given much attention in travel and tourism-related ephemeral publications in Cape Town. Both electronic and printed promotional materials play a pivotal role in promoting and marketing tourism product (Gracés *et al.*, 2004; Andereck, 2005). Therefore, multilingual information is necessary in promotional materials to accommodate a large number of existing and potential tourists. Relating to the functions of promotional materials, it is argued that international business such as tourism needs to produce these materials in different languages to cater for a large number of potential customers. It is surprising that a renowned tourist destination such a Cape Town offers most of its promotional materials in English only. Tourism organisations in all tourism niches in Cape Town might have ignored the potential of multilingual websites and brochures. On the other hand, these organisations are making enough profit and they do not want to increase their marketing costs. For the present, Cape Town might have reached its tourist carrying capacity and does not need to attract new visitors.



If the tourism industry in Cape Town still wants to attract more visitors, multilingualism in electronic promotional materials may be crucial. The number of people who use webs to find travel-related information is increasing significantly. A study published eight years ago found from an online survey of 2,100 business and leisure travelers that 95% of web surfers use the Internet to gather travel-related information, and 93% of the respondents visited webs when planning travel (Lake, 2001). However, multilingualism is not only needed in printed and electronic promotional materials used by tourism organisations in Cape Town but also in non-promotional printed materials such as newspapers, TV guides, and magazines. Although non-promotional print materials such as newspapers, TV guides and magazines found in guest rooms and hotel lounges were excluded in Table 5.4, most of these materials are available in English only or with other South Africa's languages. The targeted market and business ownership may also play a significant influence on languages used in non-promotional materials found in many tourist establishments in Cape Town.

Regarding this argument, there were English and Afrikaans Bibles that were placed in guest rooms in Ongegund Lodge & Conference Centre which is located in the Winelands at Somerset West. English and Afrikaans Bibles are provided in this tourist establishment because they target English- or Afrikaans-speakers. Providing hotel directories, magazines, newspapers and other non-promotional materials in the guests' native languages play a crucial role in customer satisfaction in the tourism industry (Heo, Jogaratnam and Buchanan, 2004). On the other hand, the English and Afrikaans Bibles are available in this establishment because the owners of the establishment are Afrikaans-speakers. Thus, the availability of Bibles and ephemeral publications in Afrikaans is not surprising.

### **5.2.3 Multilingual public signage**

Public signs available in tourist establishments or at tourist destinations are very important to people who are unfamiliar with new environments. These public signs may give either directions or instructions. During the research public signs were observed in different tourist establishments in Cape Town. The overwhelming majority of public signs are offered only in English. Cape Grace Hotel, a five star and



well known boutique hotel in Cape Town (Appendix A) is an example of tourist establishment that offers public signs in English only. In a few instances signs are presented in three local (and official) languages (Figure 5.5). Although the sign board below intends to help people, it may also help pedestrian tourists who cross the railway from/to a car park outside well-known restaurants and picturesque harbour where tourists flock. ,



**Figure 5.5:** Sign board with sign language and three official languages of the Western Cape Province in public signs, Kalk Bay, 24 March 2009

The dominance of English in public signage is not surprising because English dominates all verbal and written communication in the tourism industry in Cape Town as shown previously (Tables 5.2; 5.3 & 5.4). Multilingual signs would help non-English speaking tourists in monolingual tourist establishments. The availability of multilingual public signage in tourist establishments contributes significantly to customer satisfaction. International signs to instruct or direct tourists (Appendix C) in public areas were provided in most surveyed tourist establishments in Cape Town. These international signs may play a crucial role where tourists face language barriers.

Similarly, there are many hotels and other tourist facilities in and around Cape Town that fly foreign flags (Figure 5.6). Flying a foreign flag is a sign of welcome and, perhaps, a record of nationalities served in the past. Visitors may decide to use those

tourist facilities hoping that their languages are spoken in those facilities. However, out of four tourist facilities flying foreign flags in Cape Town that were visited during the research, only one practices multilingualism in the sense of having employees who can speak more than English and other South African languages. Surprisingly, big hotels in Cape Town such as Cape Grace, One & Only Cape Town and Westin Grand Arabella Quays do not fly any foreign flags. The big hotels in Cape Town may not fly foreign flags because these hotels are differentiated and well known hotels at international level. In addition, big hotels might be members of international hotel chains or operating in partnership with other big international companies such as airlines, tour operators and travel agencies that market and sell their products abroad.



**Figure 5.6:** Foreign flags (foreground) flying at Cape Town Hollow Hotel, 25 March 2009

Although Africa is viewed as the main market for South African Tourism (SATOUR, 2008), no tourism establishment visited in Cape Town flew any flag representing any African country north of South Africa. The most commonly hoisted foreign flags were from western countries such as the USA, France, Germany, the UK and sometimes Netherlands. Again, the pattern reflects the main South African tourism target markets (SATOUR, 2008).

### **5.3 Language policy**

Across the tourism industry in Cape Town, the proportion of organisations that adopted multilingualism either in verbal or written communications with the intention

of catering for tourists is still insignificant (see previous Tables 5.1; 5.2 & 5.3). This section discusses language policies adopted by those few tourism organisations that sell and promote tourism products using tourists' native languages. In addition, the strategies and challenges which tourism organisations face during language policy implementation are discussed. The main focus is on foreign languages rather than South African languages. Recommended languages in these language policies are identified to make a comparison with South African Tourism's main market.

Lack of proper tourism-related language policy is a challenge that needs to be dealt with seriously in the tourism industry across the world. If there is no influence from the government, some tourism organisations in one state or nation may adopt different languages policies depending on their target markets. Other tourism organisations may even operate without language policy at all. An example in the literature is a US hotel (Boston Harbor) that promotes language diversity but has no language policy (Higley, 1997). Similarly in Cape Town, there are some tourism organisations that encourage multilingualism practices without language policies. As shown previously, among those tourism organisations that claimed to promote and sell their products in different languages (Table 5.1), few (14.3%) of them (n=28) stated that they have language policies. More than three quarters (85.7%) of Cape Town tourism organisations do not have any language policies.

Even though there are tourism organisations that claimed to have language policies, these are not implemented formally: they are not written anywhere in the organisation. These organisations do not have specific languages and they use any foreign languages when serving tourists provided they have an employee who can speak them. Indeed, they do not even consider foreign language ability as a criterion for a person to be employed or promoted. One interviewee commented that the organisation considers work experience rather the foreign language proficiency.<sup>39</sup> This statement may reflect the small number of tourism-related job vacancies that require job applicants to have foreign language skills (see previous Table 5.3). Generally, most tourism service providers who adopt multilingualism practices mentioned that they only use foreign languages so as to increase their market shares.

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<sup>39</sup> Informal interview with a receptionist in Tulip Hotel and Conference Centre, 13 January 2009.

It is no secret that foreign language skills create competitive trading advantages for tourism organisations (Vaughan and Woodhall, 1998).

Two languages (French and German) have been identified as the most commonly used foreign languages among multilingual tourism organisations in Cape Town either orally or in written promotional materials (Appendix C). These two foreign languages are the most demanded by employers in the tourism industry in Cape Town (Table 5.3). The demand for French and German reflects South Africa's main non-English speaking tourism market (SATOUR, 2008). However, multilingual tourism organisations emphasised that languages used to serve visitors do not limit the markets which tourism organisations target. This may mean that these multilingual tourism organisations serve tourists from across the world regardless of languages spoken by service providers or tourists' languages. On the other hand, there is a lack of specific target markets. Unclear target markets may lead to customer dissatisfaction and loss of business by refusing or referring customers because of language considerations.

Adhering to a language policy can be associated with language discrimination. In the 1990s cases of employee discrimination related to language policy were reported in the tourism industry in the USA (Cacas, 1995; Higley, 1997). In contrast, tourism organisations in Cape Town give employees freedom to communicate in any languages regardless languages used in these organisations. One may argue that no discrimination based on language policy exists in Cape Town because there is no tourism organisation in the city that has implemented a clear language policy. During the observations, it was noticed that employees in multilingual tourism organisations in Cape Town are allowed to communicate in any language when serving customers or talking with his/her co-workers. Allowing employees to communicate in any language of their choices is in line with UNESCO's declaration on cultural rights to freedom of expression and the dissemination of his/her work in a language of his/her choice as declared by (UNESCO, 2003). In addition, Higley (1997) discouraged language policies that prevent employees to communicate in their own languages because these policies discourage employees from talking to each other.

Surprisingly, multilingualism among those tourism organisations which claimed to practise multilingualism is mostly used in verbal communication. Survey results show that a large proportion (86%) of tourism organisations (n=28) do not practise multilingualism in written information and less than a quarter (14%) offer written information in different languages. These results are similar to those showing that multilingual information is insignificant in all print and electronic promotional materials as previously shown (Table 5.4). However, tourism service providers gave different reasons why multilingualism practices were given little attention in written messages. Costs of translating documents into different foreign languages were the main explanation. This claim is consistent with Andereck's (2005) suggestion that small destinations and businesses may not be able afford to meet costs associated with information dissemination. However, providing multilingual information in websites and print promotional materials plays a crucial role in serving the whole targeted market (Lituchy and Barra, 2008).

#### **5.4 Summary**

The majority of tourism organisations in Cape Town promote and sell their products using English regardless of the languages spoken by tourists from their target markets. Even though there are few tourism organisations that have adopted multilingualism, most are in tour operations and the travel agencies sector. Generally, the majority of tourism service providers admitted that multilingual employees are not able to serve customers in the customers' preferred language. Surprisingly, during the recruitment process foreign language proficiency is not viewed as an essential criterion for employment. Indeed, the majority of all tourism-related job vacancies advertised in newspapers and on websites require the job applicants to be fluent in English rather than being fluent in English and one or another foreign language.

Regarding multilingual information in printed and electronic promotional materials, the majority of information content is provided in English. Where information is offered in different languages, the information content in English is very detailed whilst the information content in other languages is shallow. Among all foreign languages used in the tourism industry in Cape Town, French and German were identified to be those most frequently used foreign languages by many tourism

organisations. Even though some tourism organisations claimed to be multilingual, there is no tourism organisation that has a formal language policy.





## CHAPTER SIX

### TOURISTS' ADAPTATIONS: CAPE TOWN AS A TOURIST MONOLINGUAL ENVIRONMENT

*The limits of my language mean  
the limits of my world.*

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889 – 1951)

#### 6.1 Introduction

Regardless of the narrow range of languages spoken in Cape Town tourism organisations, the city receives international tourists of many different culture and languages. The study involved 114 international tourists of which 58 were from sixteen non-English speaking countries, and 56 were from seven English speaking countries. Although some tourism organisations in Cape Town have adopted a multilingualism strategy to cater for tourists, not every tourist's language is spoken by tourism service providers. This chapter focuses on tourists' challenges and adaptations in their attempt to overcome perceived and actual possible language barriers they face before and during their stay in Cape Town.

#### 6.2 Tourists learning host's languages

Currently tourists are learning hosts' languages as opposed to Nuñez's (1977) claim that hosts learn tourists' languages whilst tourists avoid acquiring hosts' languages. More than half (55.2%) of tourists (n=58) from non-English speaking countries speak their home language and also English; 29.3% of tourists from non-English speaking countries are able speak English and one or more other foreign languages in addition to their home languages (Table 6.1). A small proportion (15.5%) of tourists from non-English speaking countries speaks only their home languages.

The current results suggest that tourists are more interested in learning host's languages. Probably tourists want to communicate with service providers and local people directly without involving interpreters and translators. Tourists want the freedom of doing what they like, talking to anyone they like at any time. This argument is inconsistent with Dann's (1996, cited in Huisman and Moore, 1999) claim that tourists are treated as children, ordered, instructed what to do, how to act,



how to experience local people and places, and told where to go. Presumably, a language barrier was one of the reasons why tourists were being cajoled as children.

<b>Tourist's country of origin</b>	<b>National language only</b>	<b>National language &amp; English</b>	<b>National language, English &amp; others</b>	<b>Number of tourists</b>
Belgium	1	3	0	<b>4</b>
France	6	2	6	<b>14</b>
Germany	0	8	5	<b>13</b>
Netherlands	0	4	3	<b>7</b>
Sweden	0	5	2	<b>7</b>
Other countries	2	10	1	<b>13</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.1:** Languages spoken by surveyed Cape Town tourists from non-English speaking countries

Although the majority of tourists from non-English speaking countries claim to speak English (Table 6.1), some of them struggle to communicate with tourism service providers in Cape Town effectively. One third (31%) of tourists (n=58) in Cape Town claim that they can speak and understand English very well. More than one third (38%) indicated that they speak and understand English well. Fourteen percent rated their English as poor, whilst the remaining (17%) respondents could not speak English at all (Table 6.2). Among all surveyed tourists in Cape Town, France has a great number of monolingual tourists. Six out of nine monolingual tourists are from France and six out of 14 French tourists are monolingual in French.

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>No English</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Number of tourists</b>	18	22	8	10	<b>58</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.2:** Ratings of English knowledge of tourists from non-English speaking countries

The assumption that English is a *lingua franca* across the world (Phillipson, 1992; Leslie and Russell, 2006; Cleveland and Laroche, 2007), there is no surprise that the majority of tourists from non-English speaking countries are able to communicate in English. Indeed, this is confirmation that English is overwhelming other languages across the world. By the same token, a Spanish tourist admitted that she learnt English

because it is an international language.<sup>40</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> century is the era of globalisation in which technology and mobility of people have significantly increased. Therefore, people tend to learn foreign languages to adapt effectively to a host's environment thereby avoiding potential language barriers and creating a good and meaningful relationship with host communities.

One may wonder why tourists from English speaking countries are reluctant to learn other foreign languages. A sizeable proportion (68%) of Cape Town tourists from English speaking countries are monolingual (Table 6.3). The remaining (32%) tourists from English speaking countries speak English and one or more other foreign languages. Comparing Tables 6.1 and 6.3, it is evident that tourists from English speaking countries are reluctant to learn other foreign languages whilst their counterparts from non-English speaking countries are more interested in learning other foreign languages, including English. This reluctance of people from English speaking countries to learn foreign languages is endorsed in Leslie and Russell's (2006) study in the UK. The study affirms that people from English speaking countries are proud of their English and they do not need other foreign languages. Based on Leslie and Russell's results and the results from Cape Town, it may appear that tourists from English speaking countries seldom travel in non-English speaking countries.

<b>Tourist's country of origin</b>	<b>English only</b>	<b>English &amp; other foreign languages</b>	<b>Number of tourists</b>
Australia	1	0	<b>1</b>
Canada	0	4	<b>4</b>
Ireland	6	3	<b>9</b>
Kenya	2	0	<b>2</b>
Mauritius	0	1	<b>1</b>
UK	26	9	<b>35</b>
USA	3	1	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>67.9</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.3:** Languages spoken by surveyed tourists from English speaking countries in Cape Town

<sup>40</sup> Informal interview with a tourist from Spain, Table Mountain cableway station, 15 December 2008.

A strong and flourishing economy and society in English speaking countries such as the USA and the UK noticeably influence foreign language acquisition. In the past, much of the world's economy and wealth has been controlled by these countries. The remaining non-English speaking countries with weaker economies had to learn English to make sure they established a strong relationship with the powerful English speaking countries. In addition, these English speaking countries are scientifically and technologically established. This argument is corroborated by Cohen and Cooper (1986, cited in Huisman and Moore, 1996) who pointed out that English is not only the dominant *lingua franca* in the world of international tourism but also in the world's economic arena. People from English speaking countries may not be interested in learning other foreign languages because they assume that they will gain nothing economically from non-English speaking countries.

Among all tourists from non-English speaking countries, Cape Town's French tourists are relatively resistant to learn English and other foreign languages (Table 6.1). This resistance may be related to France's economic position in the world. The country has noticeable political influence over its former colonies in all of which French is spoken. Therefore, if France encourages its population to learn English, its former colonies may also follow the same strategy of learning English. In the end France may lose informal power over its former colonies. Besides, French is the third (if not the second) language spoken in many countries across the world.

People from English speaking countries are least inclined to learn foreign languages. A portion of bi/multilingual tourists from English speaking countries were from bilingual countries such as Canada and Mauritius. Another portion was from monolingual countries including Ireland, the UK and the USA. Possibly these tourists from these monolingual countries were migrants who settled in those countries. On the other hand those tourists were people who have experience of travelling in non-English speaking countries. Furthermore, these tourists might be working in other countries where the English is not spoken. This argument is corroborated by Leslie and Russell's (2006) findings which disclosed that in the UK foreign languages are necessary for those people who aim to work abroad. Indeed, Leslie and Russell's findings are echoed by a group of multilingual tourists from a monolingual country

who were in Cape Town for charity work in an African township.<sup>41</sup> Another possible reason why people from English speaking countries do resist learning foreign languages is national pride or pride in language. They do not want to lose their languages.

### **6.3 Challenges and adaptation**

Although the majority of surveyed Cape Town tourists from non-English speaking countries were able to understand and speak English, they faced some linguistic challenges. These challenges hindered tourists' experiences before and during their stay in Cape Town while communicating with tourism service providers and searching for information.

#### **6.3.1 The need for a *lingua franca* during guest-host interaction**

The dominance of English use among tourists from non-English speaking countries may suggest that only tourists who can speak English are likely to visit South Africa; others assume that they may face a language barrier in South Africa. Non-English speakers may be keen to avoid frustration and 'culture shock', and so choose not to visit places like Cape Town where they know, imagine or sense that they will experience language difficulties. Inability to speak a host's languages leads to tourist's frustration (Hottola, 2004). A *lingua franca* between host and tourist is very important to break down communication barriers (Reisinger and Turner, 2003).

Research carried out three years ago showed that language differences between tourists and hosts affected the way tourists travelled in South Africa (Rogerson and Visser, 2007b). The current study confirms Rogerson and Visser's claim. Tourists from non-English speaking countries travel differently from their counterparts from English speaking countries. Almost three quarters (74%) of tourists (n=57) from non-English speaking countries in Cape Town purchase organized tours. Tourists from non-English speaking countries feel safe and protected if they move together as a group. Indeed, moving together may be one of the strategies adopted by these tourists to avoid potential language barriers. They move around with a tour guide who acts simultaneously as a translator for those who do not understand English. In contrast,

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<sup>41</sup> Informal interview with a group of tourists from Ireland, Table Mountain, 18 December 2008.

three quarters (75%) of tourists (n=56) from English speaking countries engage in independent touring, and only a quarter (25%) of tourists from English speaking countries signed up for inclusive tours.

Even though the current study indicates that 26% of tourists to Cape Town from non-English speaking countries take independent tours, most of these tourists travel as groups with at least one person who acts as a translator. It was noticed that most of these tourists were from Asia (especially China and Japan), few were from France, Germany, Sweden and Latin America.<sup>42</sup> The language barrier is suggested to be one of the reasons why these tourists sightsee around Cape Town in groups. Indeed the language barrier might be one of the factors that worsened part of South Africa's tourism market. In 2006, four out of six top markets that experienced a decline in terms of tourist arrivals in South Africa were non-English speaking countries (SATOUR, 2008).<sup>43</sup>

While tourists from English speaking countries enjoy long stays in Cape Town, tourists from non-English speaking countries may leave the city frustrated. One tourist from France commented that he could not move freely or buy anything without his friend who can speak English for him.<sup>44</sup> The maximum length of stay for surveyed tourists (n=56) from English speaking countries was 90 days, and the minimum length of stay 2 days. The mean was 10 days. On the other hand, the maximum length of stay for tourists (n=58) from non-English speaking countries was 30 days, the minimum length 2 days, and the mean 8 days. Longer stays may have something to do with fluency in English, itself reflected in a higher proportion of tourists from English speaking countries visiting friends and relatives in Cape Town. Knowledge of English is an advantage to tourists from English speaking countries in terms of interacting with hosts in Cape Town.

The shorter stays of tourists from non-English speaking countries are matched by their frequency of visits in Cape Town. The majority of tourists from both English and non-English speaking countries were in Cape Town for their first time (Table 6.4) but

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<sup>42</sup> Informal interaction with tourists at various Cape Town tourism sites.

<sup>43</sup> In the top six countries were China, Brazil, Sweden, Mauritius, Tanzania and France.

<sup>44</sup> Informal interview with anonymous tourist from France, V&A Waterfront, 21 December 2008.

tourists from English speaking countries stayed longer than their counterparts from non-English speaking countries. This is evidence that lack of a *lingua franca* between tourists from non-English speaking countries and tourism service providers hinders the experience of these tourists. Most of these tourists visit Cape Town without anticipating a language barrier but are disappointed when they arrive. Even those few tourists from non-English speaking countries who can understand and speak English, complained about the poor quality of English spoken by some of South Africans. Tourists mentioned that some South Africans' pronunciation is totally different from American and British pronunciation. It is hard to understand South African English.<sup>45</sup>

Tourists who face a language barrier in Cape Town prefer to communicate with tourism service providers using gestures. An example is one lady with her two daughters from Colombia who were buying souvenirs in the African Women's Trading Market.<sup>46</sup> This lady pointed to things she wanted to buy and the seller was writing down the price. To negotiate the price, both parties (buyer and seller) exchanged writing until they reached the agreed price because none of them could understand each other's language. The buyer (tourist) was speaking Spanish and the seller was speaking English. Sometimes the buyer looked frustrated and humiliated for her inability to speak English. Although a price was agreed, lack of *lingua franca* between both parties might have limited chances of negotiating a better price to both sides. On the same token, other shopkeeper added that “...*if customers cannot speak English, they point or touch the object....we negotiate the price using international signs...*” The shopkeeper gave an example of a tourist lady (Figure 6.1) “...*if that lady does not speak English she may pick something she wants to buy then she shows me....most of the time we negotiate the price by writing down because none of us can understand each other* ”. However, the shopkeeper admitted that the knowledge of English only is not enough for a shopkeeper who receives international tourists.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Informal interview with two anonymous German tourists, The Company's Gardens, 16 November 2008 and one Kenyan tourist at Table Mountain cableway, 5 December 2008.

<sup>46</sup> Observations in the African Women's Trading Market, Cape Town CBD, 5 November 2008.

<sup>47</sup> Informal interview with anonymous shopkeeper in Indaba Curious, V&A Waterfront, 2 September 2009.



The availability of a common language between the seller and buyer helps to negotiate a good price. Tourists feel good if they manage to bargain for a low price (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2007).



**Figure 6.1:** A tourist observing an object to buy, Indaba Curious (V&A Waterfront), 2 September 2009

The survey results reveal that more than three quarters (81%) of tourists from non-English speaking countries were in Cape Town for the first time whilst a small proportion (19%) of tourists from non-English speaking countries visited Cape Town twice or more (Table 6.4). A language barrier coupled with a new environment may be the factors that dissuade tourists from non-English speaking countries to revisit Cape Town.

Frequency	English-speaking countries		Non-English-speaking countries		Total	
		%		%		%
First time	42	75	46	81	88	78
Second time	7	13	4	7	11	10
Third time	4	7	3	5	7	6
More than three times	3	5	4	7	7	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100</b>

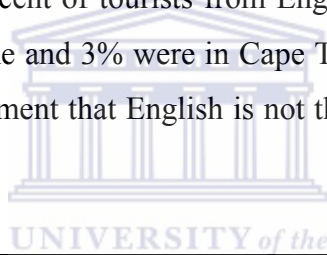
**Table 6.4:** Frequency of visits of tourists from both English and non-English speaking countries

However, these may not be regarded as the only factors that restrain tourists from non-English speaking countries revisiting Cape Town. Recall that the majority of



tourists in Cape Town speak English and may not even face any language barrier (see previous Table 6.3). Probably tourists from non-English speaking countries do not come back to Cape Town because they visit new destinations in South Africa and even in other countries rather than visiting Cape Town again and again. In validating this argument, the majority (93%) of these tourists from non-English speaking countries were in Cape Town for holiday purposes (Table 6.5). Most holiday makers do not like to visit the same place again unless there is something special that may require them to revisit the place. Holiday makers enjoy visiting as many different places as possible.

Even tourists from English speaking countries prefer visiting other places rather than returning to Cape Town. The majority (75%) of tourists from English speaking countries were in Cape Town for their first time. Thirteen percent were in Cape Town for the second time. Four percent of tourists from English speaking countries visited Cape Town for their third time and 3% were in Cape Town for more third time. This is in line with the above argument that English is not the only factor that discourages repeat visits to Cape Town.



Purpose	English-speaking countries		Non-English-speaking countries		Total	
		%		%		%
Business	0	0	2	3.6	2	1.8
Health	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holiday	47	87	52	93	99	90
Visiting friends/relatives	2	3.7	1	1.8	3	2.7
Others	5	9.3	1	1.8	6	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.5:** Purpose of visits of tourists from English and non-English speaking countries

Exactly what restrains tourists from English speaking countries making repeat visits to Cape Town is not clear. It was expected that the number of tourists from English speaking countries who repeatedly visit Cape Town would be high since there are similarities between these tourists and service providers in terms of language and

culture.<sup>48</sup> Based on this argument, one may expect many tourists from the UK who frequently visit Cape Town to visit friends and relatives. If these tourists do visit Cape Town to visiting friends/relatives, the tourists may not revisit popular tourist areas in Cape Town where data were collected. These sites could have been visited when the tourists came to Cape Town for the first time. This could be the reason why the number of surveyed tourists from English speaking countries that came to Cape Town for visiting friends and relatives is insignificant (Table 6.5).

Although there is a claim that medical tourism in South Africa shows growth of patients from sub-Saharan countries, the UK, Middle East and the USA (*Financial Mail*, 8 February 2008), the survey results show that there was not single medical tourist in Cape Town among the surveyed tourists (Table 6.5). Monolingual information in English only (Figure 6.2) could have impinged on medical tourism. Tourists from non-English speaking countries might prefer to travel in other countries where they do not face language barriers. On the other hand medical tourists may not visit popular tourist areas in Cape Town because their health may be in critical condition.



**Figure 6.2:** Monolingual public signs for health travel, Clock Tower Shopping Centre (V&A Waterfront), 3 August 2009

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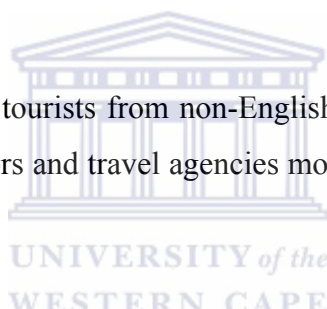
<sup>48</sup> The majority of tourists from English-speaking countries were from the UK. In addition, the majority of tourism businesses in Cape Town are owned by Whites of whom many are descendents of English-speaking people.

### 6.3.2 Multilingualism and information search

#### *Promotional materials: printed and electronic*

Before visiting a tourist destination, it is important for tourists to gather information related to that destination. There are many sources of information on tourism products and destinations. However, ephemeral publications such as print promotional materials and websites are the most used sources of information for both English and non-English speaking tourists in Cape Town (Table 6.6). To some extent a language barrier restricts non-English speaking tourists to using electronic and printed promotional materials as sources of information. English speaking tourists use more ephemeral publications than non-English speaking tourists. Sixty-two percent of sources of information used by tourists from English speaking countries were in print promotional materials and the Internet compared with 45% of uses by non-English speaking tourists.

The results also indicate that tourists from non-English speaking countries consulted friends, relatives, tour operators and travel agencies more than their counterparts from English speaking countries.



Source of information	English-speaking countries		Non-English-speaking countries		Total	
		%		%		%
Friends & relatives	15	21	21	25	36	23
Tour operator & Travel agencies	13	18	18	22	31	20
Websites, brochures, guides,	41	58	42	51	83	54
Others	2	3	2	2	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.6:** Sources of information of used by tourists from English and non-English speaking countries in Cape Town

These results suggest that most tourists from English speaking countries use ephemeral publications as their main source of information because of almost these publications are available in English (see Table 5.4). Although all print and electronic promotional materials are tabulated together (see previous Table 6.5), there is a possibility that the majority of non-English speaking tourists use the Internet as their

main source of information which searching information prior to traveling. However, these results may suggest that non-English speaking tourists used websites to search information because websites allow tourists to retrieve information in different languages (Capstick *et al.*, 2000). In addition, electronic brochures that include pictures of tourism products and tourist facilities allow potential tourists to explore (Gilbert, Powell-Perry and Widijoso, 1999).

Like the claim that German and French travellers to the USA use friends and family and travel agencies as their main sources of information (Uysal *et al.*, 1990, cited in Gursoy and Chen, 2000), the current results also suggest that non-English speaking tourists consult friends and relatives or tour operators and travel agencies due to a language barrier they face in printed and electronic promotional materials.<sup>49</sup> Both the USA and South African cases are similar in that the two countries are English speaking. Therefore, French and German tourists in the USA and South Africa might prefer to consult friends/family due to languages used in promoting and selling tourism product in both countries South Africa and the USA.

Strengthening this suggestion, the Cape Town research results revealed that more than three quarters (82.9%) of all printed and electronic promotional materials are available in English only (see previous Table 5.4). This means that a small percentage (17.1%) of printed and electronic promotional materials that offer tourism-related information in different languages could not provide all necessary information about Cape Town. Furthermore, tourists find information about Cape Town when they are still in their home countries. Thus non-English tourists frequently consult friends, relatives, tour operators and travel agencies from their home countries because they speak the same language. Therefore, it is no surprise that only a few non-English speaking tourists who use ephemeral publications to find information about tourism product and tourist destinations in Cape Town.

Providing information in different languages may contribute significantly to tourists' decision-making because they can find relevant travel information about destinations. Indeed, tourists like other people are motivated if they read information in their own

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<sup>49</sup> German and French tourists comprise almost half of non-English speaking tourists and so might be the ones who frequently consulted friends/family and travel agencies (Table 6.1).

language (Aytac, 2005). In line with Aytac's view, a quarter (26%) of tourists (n=105) from both English and non-English speaking countries in Cape Town stated that the availability of information in tourists' own languages would be very helpful (Table 6.7).

Ratings	English-speaking countries		Non-English speaking countries		Total	
		%		%		%
Very helpful	11	23	16	28	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>
Helpful	13	27	26	46	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>
Not helpful	13	27	7	12	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>
Do not know	11	23	8	14	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

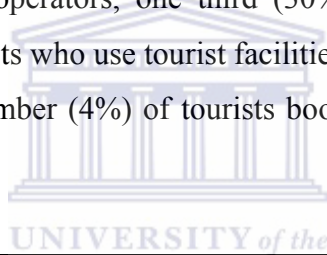
**Table 6.7:** Tourists' assessment of the helpfulness of multilingualism in ephemeral publications in Cape Town

Thirty-seven percent of tourists from English and non-English speaking countries wish to have multilingual information. Generally, there is a high proportion of tourists from non-English speaking countries who value the importance of multilingualism in ephemeral publications compared with their colleagues from English speaking countries. These high percentages affirm the negligible number of multilingual ephemeral publications available in the tourism industry (see Table 5.4).

Indeed, dominance of monolingual information in electronic and printed promotional material encourages non-English speaking tourists to consult friends, family and tour operators when searching travel-related information on Cape Town (Table 6.6). The availability of information in different languages could help Cape Town to market itself. Indeed, Vaughan and Woodhall (1998) suggested that multilingualism is an invaluable tool for tourism organisations to build competitive advantage against competitors. These tourists' wishes of having multilingual information give an indication that monolingual information might be a large barrier to customer's satisfaction in Cape Town. This case of Cape Town is similar to New Zealand's case. German tourists in New Zealand also commented that it could be too much like being at home if everything was translated for them (Huisman and Moore, 1999).

The survey results also show that many Cape Town tourists from English speaking countries would like to have information in different languages. These tourists do not face any language barrier in Cape Town, so what makes them ask for multilingual information is unclear. In addition, the number of tourists from English speaking countries who can speak other foreign languages is not that large (Table 6.3). These tourists could be worried about their colleagues from non-English speaking countries. Or they could feel it is unfair to see all information is available in English rather than in different languages to promote language diversity.

The dominance of English in electronic promotional materials used by tourism organisations in Cape Town affects the way tourists purchase tourism product. Tourists book tourist facilities using different methods due to language differences. Results indicate that less than half (46%) of all surveyed tourists book tourist facilities using travel agents or tour operators, one third (30%) books tourist facilities via Internet. The number of tourists who use tourist facilities without bookings is one fifth (19%) whilst a negligible number (4%) of tourists book tourist facilities using other methods (Table 6.8).



Booking methods	English-speaking countries		Non-English speaking countries		Total	
		%		%		%
No booking made	12	21	10	17	22	19
Booking via travel agencies/tour operators	17	30	36	62	53	46
Booking via Internet	24	43	10	17	34	30
Booking via others	3	5	2	3	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.8:** Booking methods used by tourists from English and non-English speaking countries in Cape Town

Comparing tourists from both English and non-English speaking countries who book facilities using travel agents/tour operators, results reveal that the proportion (62%) of tourists from non-English speaking countries is double the proportion (30%) of tourists from English speaking countries. This is an indication that tourists from non-English speaking countries consult travel agents/tour operators more than their counterparts from English speaking countries. One of the reasons why tourists from

non-English speaking countries consult travel agents/tour operators more than their counterparts from English speaking could be a language barrier. Consistent with previous arguments that English dominates other languages in all communication channels used by tourism organisations in Cape Town (Tables 5.2; 5.3 & 5.4). On the other hand, the proportion (43%) of tourists from English speaking countries that use the Internet to book facilities is almost three times the proportion (17%) of their counterparts from non-English speaking countries. As claimed previously that English dominates other languages on websites used by Cape Town tourism organisations (Table 5.4), this dominance of English on websites could be one of the factors that hinder tourists from non-English speaking countries to use the Internet to book facilities in Cape Town.

The study carried out among German tourists in New Zealand proved that providing information in tourist's native language and interpretation reduces language barriers and makes reservations easier for tourists (Huisman and Moore, 1999). The Cape Town research shows that a tiny number of tourists from non-English speaking countries use the Internet to purchase or book tourist facilities. This is indication that tourism organisations in Cape Town ignore the importance of multilingualism on websites. The role of multilingualism on websites may not be limited to marketing and promoting tourism product, but is also used as selling strategy in tourism organisations. Indeed, this claim was echoed by Gilbert, Powell-Perry and Widijoso (1999), whose research findings disclosed that the majority of hotels have taken advantage of the potential of websites as a strategic information centre and reservation medium. Similarly, online reservation is becoming a very large e-business (Li and Law, 2007).

Rather than booking via the Internet, tourists from non-English speaking countries prefer to approach tour operators or travel agencies. The main reason why these tourists use tour operators or travel agencies to book tourist facilities could be language barriers they face in all promotional materials. This point is validated by the negligible number of promotional materials that offer multilingual information content (see Table 5.4). Recall also that tour operators and travel agencies are more multilingual than other tourism service providers in Cape Town (see Table 5.3).



The insignificant number of ‘hotel walk-ins’ further strengthens the argument about a language barrier among tourists from non-English speaking countries who try to book tourist facilities<sup>50</sup>. Only 17% of tourists from non-English speaking countries were ‘hotel walk-ins’ whilst twenty-one percent of tourists from English speaking countries used tourist facilities without prior booking. Although the difference between these two percentages (17% and 21%) is very small, it suggests that tourists from English speaking countries have relatively a language advantage in Cape Town. Tourists from non-English speaking countries might be avoiding frustration related to language barriers which may occur if they find tourist facilities are fully booked.

### ***Non-promotional materials: printed and electronic***

During observations in five hotels in Cape Town it was noticed that most printed non-promotional materials (such as newspapers and magazines) available in hotels’ lounges and TV guides in guests’ rooms were available only in English.<sup>51</sup> Considering the number of foreign languages and how languages are used in tourism organisations (see Tables 5.1; 5.2; 5.3 & 5.4), it is no surprise that non-promotional materials available for tourists are also monolingual in English. However, it may be argued that tourism organisations in Cape Town have not yet considered the importance of printed non-promotional materials in customer’s satisfaction. These materials contribute extensively in meeting customer’s needs and expectations if they are offered in customer’s native language. Research carried out in the USA among foreign-managed properties showed that the availability of newspapers and tourist information in a customer’s native language was considered to be the most satisfying factor among foreign visitors (Heo, Jogaratnam and Buchanan, 2004).

The USA case is not different from the current case of Cape Town. Foreign tourism organisations based or operating in Cape Town offer multilingual information more than local ones. Although foreign tourists in American-managed properties were not satisfied with information in their languages, they were satisfied with other factors. The same applies to tourists from non-English speaking countries in Cape Town. Tourists in establishments that offer multilingual information and those tourists in

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<sup>50</sup> Hotel walk-in means a guest who does not have a hotel reservation but he/she walks right in to the hotel to purchase a room (<http://www.luxury-hotel-secrets.com/hotel-walk-in.html>)

<sup>51</sup> Observed hotels are Cape Diamond Hotel, Cape Town Hollow, Fountains Hotel, St Georges Hotel and Tulip Hotel and Conference Centre.

establishments that offer monolingual information feel satisfied. However, it is very difficult to know who is more satisfied than others since satisfaction is relative and subjective.

### 6.3.3 Tourists and monolingual public signs

Besides non-English speaking tourists in Cape Town being unable to communicate with service providers in English, public signs in tourist facilities in Cape Town are not user friendly. Some tourists complained that these signs were only available in English, or in English and one of the other South African languages (Appendix A & Figure 5.5 and Figure 6.3). Generally, the majority (82%) of tourists (n=103) from both English and non-English speaking countries agreed that multilingualism in public signage would be useful to tourists. A small proportion (18%) of tourists from both English and non-English speaking countries reported that providing public signs in different languages would be of no help.



**Figure 6.3:** Tourists posing at a monolingual public sign in English, Cape of Good Hope (Cape Point), 25 March 2009

A comparison between tourists from both English and non-English speaking countries about helpfulness of multilingualism on public signs is provided in Table 6.8. Among tourists from English speaking countries, less than half (37%) of tourists (n=41) rated the availability of multilingualism in public signage to be very helpful. Fewer tourists (29%) rated the multilingualism ‘helpful’ whereas 22% rated the availability of public

signs in different languages to be unhelpful. Twelve percent of tourists were not sure whether multilingualism in public signage was helpful or not.

Since tourists from English speaking countries do not face a language barrier in Cape Town, the relevance of multilingualism in public signage from the majority of tourists from English speaking countries is unexpected. There are two reasons why multilingualism was considered to be important among tourists from English speaking countries. First, tourists from English speaking countries might be feeling pity for tourists from non-English speaking countries after seeing how they struggle to communicate with service providers in Cape Town. Second, tourists from English speaking countries might have experienced a language barrier in other countries where English is not spoken. Therefore, they know how frustrating it is to experience language barriers in a foreign country. Dittman (1998) corroborates this view by highlighting how important it can be if English people travel in a country where English is not the chief language and hosts serve them (English people) in their native tongue.

In contrast, among tourists from non-English speaking countries, a sizeable proportion (52%) of tourists (n=58) rated multilingualism in public signage to be helpful; 29% indicated that multilingualism in public signage is very helpful (Table 6.9). Less than quarter (14%) considered multilingualism practices on public signs to be unhelpful and few (5%) tourists were not sure whether multilingualism in public signage could contribute to customer satisfaction or not.

Ratings	English-speaking countries		Non-English speaking countries		Total	
		%		%		%
Very helpful	15	37	17	29	32	32
Helpful	12	29	30	52	42	42
Not helpful	9	22	8	14	17	17
Do not know	5	12	3	5	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.9:** Helpfulness of multilingualism in public signage for tourists from English and non-English speaking countries in Cape Town

Twenty nine percent of tourists from non-English speaking countries may be part of those few tourists cannot or speak poor English. Indeed, more than half (69%) of

tourists non-English speaking countries do speak English well.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, there is no surprise that the remaining tourists (52%; 14%; 5%) from non-English speaking countries (Table 6.9) do not rate multilingualism in the public signage to be very helpful to them. These tourists might not be facing any language barrier in Cape Town. So there is no need to provide public signs in foreign languages. In addition, 29.3% of tourists from non-English speaking countries do speak English and other foreign languages (Table 6.1). Their ability to speak English and foreign languages is an advantage and it enabled them to move around in Cape Town.

#### **6.4 Summary**

The majority of tourists from non-English speaking countries were able speak English and foreign languages in addition to their native language. Tourists from English speaking countries are very reluctant to learn other foreign languages. Despite the majority of tourists from non-English speaking countries speaking English, there are some tourists who face language barriers in Cape Town. Any language barrier will affect their experience in Cape Town. Some tourists from non-English speaking countries face challenges of searching for tourism-related information and communicating with service providers in Cape Town.

As a way of adapting linguistically, many tourists from non-English speaking countries who are unable to communicate in English move around in Cape Town with translators or in groups. Although these tourists use translators to avoid a barrier in oral communication, they still have a language barrier in written communication. English dominates in all communication channels used in the tourism industry in Cape Town. The majority of tourism-related information available in all electronic and printed non-promotional and promotional materials is in English. Most tourists from both English and non-English speaking countries commented that it would be helpful if multilingualism is practised in all communication channels including public signage.

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<sup>52</sup> The 69% of tourists from non-English speaking countries are the sum of 31% of tourists who can speak English 'very well' and 38% of tourists who can speak English 'well'.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*When you travel, remember that a foreign country is not designed to make you comfortable. It is designed to make its own people comfortable.*

Clifton Fadiman (1904 - 1999)

English dominates other languages in all surveyed tourism organisations in Cape Town. Indeed, English gains hegemony in all communication channels used by surveyed tourism service providers to sell and promote their product across the globe. The majority of verbal and written communications between service providers and tourists are done in English. Communication between tourism service providers and tourists from English speaking countries is characterized by a good and strong relationship. These tourists do not face any communication barrier in Cape Town, although a few tourists complained about poor quality English spoken by some of the South Africans. Tourists from non-English speaking countries experience other kinds of interaction and relationships with tourism service providers in Cape Town. The interaction between tourists from non-English speaking countries is characterised by disappointments and frustrations. Lack of a *lingua franca* between these tourists and tourism service providers hinders these tourists' stay in Cape Town.

A few tourism service providers in different forms of niche tourism in Cape Town have adopted multilingualism as a strategy for breaking the language barrier with their customers from non-English speaking countries. These tourism service providers integrated foreign languages with English. Although multilingual employees have been recruited, the service providers acknowledged that the multilingual employees are still insufficient in Cape Town tourism organisations to cater for tourists from non-English speaking countries. On top of that most of these multilingual staff are employed temporarily and the majority of them work on a part-time basis. In some cases, non-English speaking tourists have to notify tourism service providers in advance that they will need a translator.

Non-English speaking tourists face a language barrier even in official tourism organisations such as Cape Town Tourism and Cape Town Routes Unlimited, boutique hotel such as Cape Grace, and brand new top-rated chain such as One & Only Cape Town. This is an indication that multilingualism is an individual tourism organisation's initiative not government's. Indeed, the Tourism Grading Council South Africa does not consider foreign language skills even when grading tourist establishments. Within any one tourist establishment grade there are some tourism organisations that practise multilingualism while others are not practising multilingualism.

However, there are tourism organisations that offer multilingual information to their existing and potential customers. Within the insignificant amount of multilingual information, there is a disparity on how multilingual information content is translated. The information content in English is detailed whilst the information content in foreign languages is shallow. It was noticed that international or foreign-owned tourism organisations operating in Cape Town offer multilingual information more than local tourism organisations. Indeed, there are even some foreign-owned tourism organisations that provide information exclusively in foreign languages. However, tourism organisations choose foreign languages that are in accordance with their target markets.

Despite the dominance of English in the tourism industry in Cape Town the use of other South African languages is not prohibited. Language choice during interaction between the service provider and domestic guest depends on the similarity between parties. If the tourism service provider and guest do speak the same language, they may choose to communicate either in that language or in English. Contrarily, if tourism service provider and guest speak different languages, both parties communicate in English which is regarded as a *lingua franca* for all South Africans.

The tourism industry in Cape Town is not limited only to South Africa's major tourism market. Indeed, Cape Town's tourism market is not limited to languages spoken in tourist establishments. The city receives international tourists from every corner of the world. These tourists are either from English speaking countries or non-English speaking countries. Considering the number of all surveyed tourists in Cape



Town, there is a possibility that the number of tourists from non-English speaking countries is likely to be greater or equal to the number of tourists from English speaking countries. Therefore, tourists from non-English speaking countries should not be ignored. Some tourists from this market still face a language barrier in Cape Town due to the insignificant number of multilingual tourism service providers. Indeed, tourism organisations offer their services in few foreign languages.

Some foreign languages used by these tourism service providers in Cape Town were given higher status than others. French and German were identified as the most used foreign languages in the tourism industry in Cape Town, both in verbal and written communications. Other popular foreign languages such as Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Spanish and Portuguese are used insignificantly in the tourism industry in Cape Town. The choice of language to be adopted in an individual tourism organisation is based on the organisation's target market and economic status of a country that uses that particular language rather than the number of people who speak the language. For example, there are many Chinese and Spanish speakers all over the world but German is used more than other foreign languages in the tourism industry in Cape Town, probably because more German tourists visit Cape Town than Chinese and Spanish. Another example is languages from African countries. African countries were recognised as the main South Africa's tourism market (SATOOR, 2008) but there was no African language other than South Africa's languages used in any tourist establishment in Cape Town.

Any tourism organisations' decisions to be multilingual depends on the market it intends to target and the type of tourism product it offers. The majority of the tour operators and travel agents in Cape Town do offer their services in tourists' native languages because of their target market and nature of product/niche tourism. These organisations do rely strongly on foreign tourists who are likely to face a language barrier in Cape Town. To avoid 'culture shock' due to unfamiliarity with an environment and a language barrier, many foreign tourists use tour operators.

Although few tourism service providers put forward cost as a deterrent to multilingualism practices in their organisations, generally tourism service providers in Cape Town are reluctant to adopt multilingualism. The proportion of tourism-related



job vacancies advertised electronically and in newspapers that require potential job applicants to have foreign language skills is still negligible. The tourism industry in Cape Town will be staffed with multilingual employees only if the industry recruits multilingual staff or trains its existing staff in foreign languages. But far from training the existing staff in the industry, the research here shows that almost every tourism organisation in Cape Town fails to motivate its existing staff to learn foreign languages by providing either training or incentives.

Moreover, even those tourism organisations that have a multilingual staff have no clear language policy. A few of these organisations claim that they have language policies, but these policies are not implemented supportively. The survey results reveal that a large majority of tourism organisations practise multilingualism but they have no language policy. The balance claimed to have a language policy but it is not written and formally implemented. Lack of proper planning and implementation of language policy makes it hard for multilingual tourism organisations in Cape Town to measure and evaluate the success of their language policies.

The reluctance of tourism service providers in Cape Town to adopt multilingualism practices in their organisations has effects on customers' satisfaction. A language barrier hinders the behaviour and experience of tourists from non-English speaking countries. Tourism service providers assume that every tourist who visits Cape Town speaks and understands English. Some tourists from non-English speaking countries were struggling to cope with the new environment due to language barrier. Consequently, some tourists from non-English speaking countries rely on translators when communicating with tourism service providers.

Although the majority of surveyed tourists from both English and non-English speaking countries were in Cape Town for their first time, tourists from non-English speaking countries had short stays compared with their counterparts from English speaking countries. These short stays of tourists from non-English speaking countries may be the result of the communication barrier they face in Cape Town. Tourists from English speaking countries feel at home during their stay in Cape Town and, as a result, may extend their stay.

Besides language similarity between tourists from English speaking countries and tourism service providers that might have motivated the tourists to stay longer in Cape Town, culture and past history might contribute. The majority of the surveyed tourists from English speaking countries were from the UK and most white South Africans are descendants of British expatriates who colonised South Africa. Therefore, culture and history make tourists from the UK feel part and parcel of South Africa.

The Cape Town survey results also show that tourists from non-English speaking countries are more interested and keen in learning foreign languages compared with tourists from English speaking countries. Only a third of surveyed tourists from English speaking countries were able to speak one or two foreign languages in addition to English whilst more than three quarters of tourists from non-English speaking countries were bi/multilingual. The reluctance of tourists from English speaking-countries to acquire other foreign languages is associated with the assumption that English is the most common global tongue.

Despite the assumption of English being *lingua franca*, English speaking countries such as the UK and USA have significant political and economic influences across the globe. Therefore, it is not surprising that the many travellers from non-English speaking countries learn English as a strategy for enhancing good relationships with people from those English speaking countries. Indeed, people from non-English speaking countries learn English due to benefits they get from English speaking countries. It is in this way that the majority of the surveyed tourists from non-English speaking countries are able to communicate with tourism service providers in Cape Town.

Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested, first, that many more tourism organisations in Cape Town should be staffed with bi/multilingual employees who are able to communicate with tourists in languages of their (tourists') choice. This can be achieved best if foreign language proficiency is considered as a key criterion during the recruitment process. It was noticed that the majority of tourism organisations consider working experience rather than coupling working experience with foreign language skills for a person to be recruited.

Second, in case there is a shortage of multilingual people in the labour market, tourism organisations have to produce their own multilingual staff from their existing employees. This can be done through training employees on foreign languages which can be either in-house or off-site training. Third, if there are tourism organisations that have no capacity or willingness to train their existing staff on foreign languages, the existing employees in those organisations should be motivated to learn foreign languages. Tourism organisations may provide incentives such as promotion and rewards to multilingual employees or those who take initiative of learning foreign languages.

Fourth, multilingualism practices in the tourism industry in Cape Town should not be limited only to oral communication. Multilingualism should prevail in all communication channels used by tourism organisations in all forms of niche tourism. Information in all electronic and printed non-and promotional materials in all tourism niches should be in different languages to accommodate a large number of existing and potential customers. Indeed, the information content in one language should be the same in other languages to avoid disparity of information dissemination to customers across the globe regardless of the targeted tourism market.

Fifth, each tourism organisation should develop its own language policy that stipulates languages to be used when communicating with tourists. The policy should be written and every person in the organisation should be aware of it. The majority of tourism organisations have no language policy even those few that claimed to have language policies; their policies are not written. As a result it was very difficult for them to evaluate when their policies were successful or not. Tourism organisations should adopt language policies that are in accordance with South African and Western Cape provincial language policies but should not necessarily restrict themselves to domestic practices.

Sixth, although South African languages other than English were given little attention in the tourism industry especially in formal communication, all employees have the freedom of communicating in their own languages when communicating among themselves. There is no language-based discrimination among employees. The

industry should continue promoting multilingualism giving all South African languages equal status at workplace.

Seventh and last, to promote and market tourism product to a large number of people across the world, tourism organisations in Cape Town should consider also other popular foreign languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish in addition to French and German. The challenges of multilingualism in the tourism industry in Cape Town are considerable; the need is urgent. Speaking as many foreign languages as possible in the industry in Cape Town may be one the strategies to lure and accommodate a wide range of tourists from all over the world.



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## APPENDICES

**Appendix A:** English only in public sign at a tourist establishment



Cape Grace Hotel, 2 September 2009



**Appendix B:** International sign used to direct tourists to the information centre



Tourist Information Centre, V&A Waterfront, 2 September 2009

## Appendix C: Tourism brochure with the information in English, French and German

### CAPE TOWN SAFARI

**Full Day Tour**

Depart	±06h15 - 07h00
Return	±18h00

Just 2 hours from Cape Town you can now experience, for the first time in over a century, the return of Africa's wild animals. Set in big green oasis in the middle of the Karoo, you can see Buffalo, Rhino, Lion, Giraffes, Waterbuck, Oryx, Kudu, Lechwe, Zebra, Bontebok, Red Hartebeest, Springbok, Black Wildebeest, Cheetah, Impala... & more than 165 species of bird.

**ONE DAY SAFARI**

**DAY 1**

- Travel via the wine region & Klein Karoo
- Fruit growing region of Ceres
- Welcome drinks on arrival
- 2 hour game drive in open air 4x4
- Walk with giraffes (time permitting at game rangers discretion)
- Visit lion projects
- Lunch under trees in the open-air or in the boma style restaurant
- Relax around the pool in summer or at the fireplace in winter
- Return to Cape Town via the Huguenot Tunnel

**PRICE: R 1390 (per person)**

**Includes:** welcome drinks, game drive & lunch. **Excludes:** drinks



### SAFARI AU CAP

**Journée complète**

Départ	±06h15 - 07h00
Retour	±18h00

Située en bordure du Karoo, la réserve que nous vous proposons de découvrir s'est évertuée de redonner ses droits à la vie sauvage d'Afrique en proximité de Cape Town. Au cours d'un safari en 4x4 découvrez vous pourrez observer: girafes, rhinocéros, buffles, zèbre, et de nombreuses espèces d'antilopes et d'oiseaux, ainsi que le projet de réhabilitation de guépards et de lions.

Circuit à la journée	R1390.00	par personne
Circuit avec une nuit à partir de	R2550.00	par personne
Forfait journée (avec votre véhicule)	R595.00	par personne



### TWO DAY / ONE NIGHT SAFARI

**DAY 1**

- Travel via the wine region & Klein Karoo
- Fruit growing region of Ceres
- Welcome drinks on arrival
- Relax around the pool in summer or at the fireplace in winter
- Lunch under trees in the open-air or in the boma style restaurant
- Early evening game drive
- Bush Sunset with big cats
- 5 course dinner

**DAY 2**

- Tea or coffee
- Breakfast
- Morning at leisure (tennis courts and other facilities available)
- 2 hour trip in spectacular setting on quad bikes (optional)
- Game drive in open air 4x4
- Walk with giraffes (time permitting with game rangers discretion)
- Lunch under trees in the open-air or in the boma style restaurant
- Return to Cape Town via the Huguenot Tunnel

PRICE: Guesthouse:	R2550.00	per person, sup single R595.00
Chalet:	R2690.00	per person, sup single R595.00

**Includes:** accommodation 2 lunches, breakfast and 2 Game drives. **Excludes:** drinks




### KAP SAFARI

**Tagestour**

Abfahrt	±06h15 - 07h00
Rückkehr	±18h00

Entdecken Sie auf unserer 4x4 Safari Giraffen, Nashörner, Büffel, Zebras ... und eine Vielfalt von anderen Tieren wie z.B. Antilopen, & das Rehabilitationsprogramm von Geparden und Löwen.

Tagesausflug	R1390.00	pro Person
Mit Übernachtung	R2550.00	pro Person
Einzelzimmerzuschlag	R595.00	pro Person






Source: African Eagle (tour operator)

**Appendix D: Questionnaire for tourism service providers**



**University of the Western Cape  
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies**

**Questionnaire for tourism service providers**

**Research project:** Use of languages in the tourism industry in Cape Town.

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Organization's name: -----

Respondent's position: -----

Date of survey: ----/---/2008

1. What type of tourism business is your organisation in?

*(Please tick one)*

- |                  |                          |                              |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Travel agency             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Restaurant    | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Car hire & rental         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Airline       | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Others ( <i>specify</i> ) | _____                    |
| 4. Tour operator | <input type="checkbox"/> |                              |                          |

2. How long has your organisation been in this business?

*(Please provide number of years)*

3. How many employees does your organisation have?

*(Provide number of employees)*

**SECTION B: LANGUAGE PRACTICE**

4. Which languages does your organisation use for the purpose of serving customers/tourists?

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |

**If languages mentioned above do not include foreign languages such as *French, Dutch, German, Italian, Chinese ...* go to question 18.**

5. How many bi/multilingual (people who can speak the above foreign languages) employees does your organisation have? (*Please provide language and number of employees who can speak that language*)
- | Languages | number of employees |
|-----------|---------------------|
| 1. _____  | _____               |
| 2. _____  | _____               |
| 3. _____  | _____               |
6. Does your organisation have enough bi/multilingual employees to assist customers? (*Tick ONE*)
1. Yes there are enough
  2. No there are not enough
7. How long have most bi/multilingual employees worked for your organisation? (*Please provide number of years*)
8. Are bi/multilingual employees permanently employed in your organisation? (*Tick one*)
1. Yes, they are permanently employed
  2. No, they are not permanently employed
  3. Some of them are permanently employed
9. Are these bi/multilingual employees working full-time? (*Tick ONE box*)
1. Yes, they are working full-time
  2. No, they are working part-time
  3. Some of them are working full-time
10. Did you employ these bi/multilingual employees because of their foreign language ability?
1. Yes
  2. No
11. Is foreign language ability one of the reasons for hiring an employee in your organisation?
1. Yes
  2. No
12. How does your organisation help employees learn foreign languages? (*Tick one*)
1. The organisation provides no help
  2. The organisation provides rewards/incentives
  3. The organisation provides in-house foreign language training (*specify languages*) -----
  4. The organisation provides after work foreign language training (*specify languages*) -----
  5. Others -----
13. Do bi/multilingual employees assist guests in any interpersonal translation?
1. Yes
  2. No
14. If yes, does your organisation charge tourists for personal translation services?
1. Yes
  2. No
15. Are translators always available in your organisation?
1. Yes
  2. No

16. If no, how long does it take for a translator to be available in he/she is needed? (*E.g.25 minutes*)

Hours

Minutes

17. Do tourists notify your organisation in advance if they will need translators?

1. Yes

2. No

18. In case a tourist finds translators are not available in your organisation, what do you do?

---

---

19. In case your organisation does not have translators at all, how do you help a guest who needs a translator?

---

---

20. How does a guest react if he/she finds that there is no translator in your organisation?

---

---

**SECTION C: LANGUAGE POLICY**

21. Does your organisation have a language policy?

1. Yes

2. No

***If your answer is NO go to section D***

22. Which language policy does your organisation follow?

1. Monolingual policy

2. Bilingual policy

3. Multilingual policy

23. How often are African languages used in your organisation to assist customers/tourists?

	Afrikaans	Xhosa	Zulu	Others
1. Very often	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. Often	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. Rare	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. Not at all	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

24. When did your organisation start the language policy you have selected in question 22?

Month  year



25. What are recommended languages in your language policy? *(If some local languages are also recommended in your policy, please include them)*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |

26. Do you allow your employees to speak/use languages other than the recommended ones?

1. Yes                       2. No

27. If no, are there any disadvantages for an employee who speaks languages other than recommended ones?

1. Yes                       2. No

28. Do you follow the same language policy when providing written messages?

1. Yes                       2. No

29. Is the language policy successful in your organisation?

1. Not at all
2. To some extent
3. Completely successful

30. Does your language policy limit the tourist market(s) you can target?

1. Yes                       2. No

31. What challenges does your organisation face in implementing or executing your language policy?

---

---

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32. Besides having bi/multilingual employees, what other strategies has your organisation adopted to serve and market your product to non-English speaking tourists?

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---

---

**SECTION D: GENERAL INFORMATION**

33. Have you received any complaints from tourists about a language barrier?

1. Yes                       2. No

34. If yes, how did you assist tourists?

---

---

---

---

35. Have you ever lost business due to a language barrier in your organisation?  
1. Yes                       2. No                       3. Unsure
36. Which languages do you use in advertising/marketing your product?  
1. In newspapers: \_\_\_\_\_  
2. In brochures: \_\_\_\_\_  
3. On a website: \_\_\_\_\_
37. What type of tour do tourists take?  
1. English speaking tourists  
    i. Organized tour   
    ii. Independent tour   
2. Non-English speaking tourists  
    i. Organized tour   
    ii. Independent tour

*Thank you for your assistance*





**Appendix E: Questionnaire for English speaking tourists**



**University of the Western Cape**

**Department of Geography and Environmental Studies**

**Research project:** use of languages in the tourism industry in Cape Town.

**Questionnaire for English speaking tourists**

**Date of survey:** ---/---/2008

1. What is your home country? -----
2. How many days are you expecting to be in Cape Town? (*Provide number of days*)  days
3. How did you travel coming to Cape Town?
  1. Travel as a group
  2. Travel alone
4. If you travelled as a group, do you sometimes move around alone within Cape Town?
  1. Yes
  2. No
5. What is the purpose of visit?
  1. Holiday
  2. Business
  3. Health
  4. Visiting friends/relatives
  5. Others (*Please specify*)-----
6. How many times have you visited Cape Town before?
  1. First time
  2. Second time
  3. Third time
  4. More than three times
7. If you were in Cape Town before, are you using the same tourist facilities (e.g. hotel, restaurant, museums...) you used in your previous visit(s)?
  1. Yes
  2. No

8. How did you book for a tourist facility you are currently using?
1. No booking have been made
  2. Booking via travel agency/tour operator
  3. Booking via Internet
  4. Booking via others (*specify*)-----
9. Besides travel agent/tour operator, who else involved in your travel arrangements?
1. No one
  2. Friends/relatives
  3. Employer
  4. Other (*specify*)-----
10. Where did you find information about Cape Town?
1. Friends and relatives
  2. Websites, brochures, guide books...
  3. Travel agencies/tour operators
  4. Others (*specify*)-----
11. If you used websites, magazines, brochures... to find information about Cape Town, which languages were used in those publications?
1. -----
  2. -----
  3. -----
  4. -----
  5. -----
  6. -----
12. Which languages do you speak?
1. -----
  2. -----
  3. -----
  4. -----
  5. -----
  6. -----
13. If you can speak English, how do you rate your English?
- |                  | Very good                | good                     | poor                     |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| i. Understanding | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. Writing      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. Speaking    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
14. If you see English as communication barrier in Cape Town, how do you communicate with tourism service providers?
1. Use a translator
  2. Use signs or little English I know
  3. Use other means (*specify*) -----
15. In case a translator has been used, where do you get him/her?
1. Within tourist facilities
  2. I use a hired translator or a friend
  3. Other places (*specify*) -----
16. Do you get a translator within tourist facilities any time you need him/her?
1. Yes
  2. No

17. Do you pay extra charges for translation services if you a translator from within tourist facilities?  
 1. Yes  2. No
18. Have you ever complained about a language barrier to any manager/supervisor from tourist facilities you are using?  
 1. Yes  2. No
19. If yes, which action did the manager/supervisor take to resolve communication break down?  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----
20. Were you expecting to face a language barrier in Cape Town?  
 1. Yes  2. No
21. If yes, which measurements did you take to break down a language barrier in Cape Town?  
 -----  
 -----  
 -----
22. Do you move around within Cape Town with a translator?  
 1. Yes  2. No
23. Do you wish to use the same tourist facility (e.g. hotel, museum, restaurant, airline, tour operator...) during your next visit in Cape Town?  
 1. Yes  2. No
24. If no, is a language barrier one of your reasons why you will not use the same tourist facility during your next visit?  
 1. Yes  2. No
25. Were translation services helpful during your stay in Cape Town?  
 1. Yes  2. No
26. Did language barrier spoil your experience in Cape Town?  
 1. Yes  2. No
27. Do you think it could have helped you if information found in book guides, newspapers, brochures, menus, and websites is offered in different languages? (*Tick one*)
- |                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Very helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Helpful      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Not helpful  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Do not know  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

28. Do you think it could have helped you if there were translators or some staff within tourist facilities who are able to speak your language(s)? (*Tick one*)

- 1. Very helpful
- 2. Helpful
- 3. Not helpful
- 4. Do not know

29. Which consequences do you suffer because of language barrier in Cape Town?

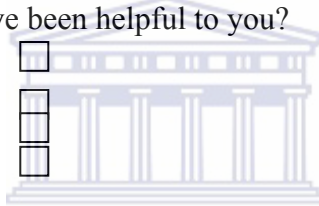
- 1. No consequence
- 2. Loss of money/property
- 3. Insecurity
- 4. Other (*specify*) -----

30. Is public signage (signs used to give directions and instructions) found in some tourist facilities in Cape Town useful?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

31. If no, do you think if directions and instructions are provided in different languages it could have been helpful to you?

- 1. Very helpful
- 2. Helpful
- 3. Not helpful
- 4. Do not know



Please provide your comments/suggestions concerning language use in the tourism industry in Cape Town.

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

*Thank you for your assistance*