

Language practices and identities of multilingual students in a Western Cape
tertiary institution: Implications for teaching and learning

by

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that 'Language Practices and Identities of Multilingual students in a Tertiary Institution (Western Cape): implications for teaching and learning' is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.



Date: NOVEMBER, 2011

Dominic P. A

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents: Your blessings gave me the strength to continue with this study.

Thank you



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Abstract

In South Africa, there has been little research into the language practices of multilingual students in tertiary institutions or into how such students negotiate identities in these globalising contexts where the dominance of English remains an important factor. This research was aimed at exploring the appropriateness of 1997 Language-In-Education policy for schools and the national Language Policy for Higher Education (2002) for equipping students for tertiary teaching and learning. It therefore investigated the relationship between the language practices and construction of identities of a group of multilingual first year students in the Education Faculty at a Western Cape university. In this integrated institution, in spite of the current political and socio- economic transformation that has been at the centre of new policies, the medium of instruction is still predominantly monolingual. The premise of the research was that in a multilingual country such as South Africa with 11 official languages, tertiary institutions ought to more vigorously engage with their current language policies in order to value and extend the language practices of multilingual students for academic learning. Here multilingual repertoires are understood as resources rather than problems.

The research draws extensively on Bourdieu's notion of 'linguistic capital' quantifying language itself as a form of capital with a market value. Through thematic analysis of themes drawn from questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation in both tutorials and lectures, the investigation concluded that a monolingual medium of instruction to non-native speakers should be practised alongside other languages as means to support in their academic attainment. Finally the research emphasised the importance of code switching as a strategy that facilitates learning and promotes understanding of the role language resources play in social and academic interaction.

Keywords: Academic discourses, Bilingual education, Code-switching, Funds of knowledge Hybridity, Identity, Language policy, Medium of instruction, Mother tongue, Multilingualism

List of Acronyms

CS	Code –switching
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
LE	Linguistic Ethnography
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LiEP	Language-in-Education policy
MOI	Medium of Instruction
MTE	National Commission on Higher Education
SC	Science
TL	Target Language
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation
UWC	University of the Western Cape



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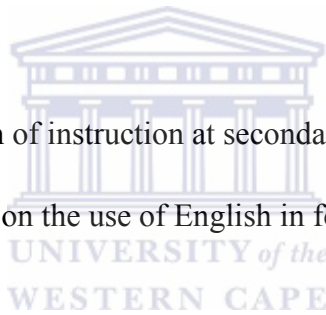
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Chapter 1: Situating the study

1.1 South African reforms in Higher Education

1994 was seen as a turning point in the history of South Africa, not only in its socio-economic and political reforms but as a period of great transformation or change in higher education. One of the main triggers for these reforms was globalization seen as a general phenomenon in the world in which change increasingly ‘locates individuals and their interactions across multiple boundaries: linguistic, cultural, ethnic, racial, economic, religious, political, national, and digital’ (Lee & Anderson, 2009, p. 181). This constant movement of people underscores the need to reconsider how language practices and identities are conceptualized and framed within social interactions across different contexts including education. In educational contexts, questions of identity and language practices are crucial because educational practices and language policies are developed and adapted in different ways according to the needs of particular societies. Coombe (1991 cited in Cloete et al., 2004, p.8) summed up the role of higher education as follows:

Universities remain great national storehouses of trained, informed, inquiring and critical intellects, and the indispensable means of replenishing national talent. They have considerable reserves of leadership and commitment on which to draw. Impoverished, frustrated, dilapidated and overcrowded as they may be, they have no substitutes.

It was within this swiftly changing global context, that Nelson Mandela, the Former South African President issued a proclamation appointing a National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) to ‘preserve what is valuable and to address what is defective and requires transformation’ (NCHE, 1996, p.1). This Commission had two central tasks: to rid higher education of the aberrations of apartheid and to modernise it by infusing it with international experiences and best practices. The aberration in this context was the educational policy of the apartheid government that undermined the right to study in African languages in higher institutions of learning.

The proclamation clearly pointed out that South Africa realised it was time to take control of the national reform programme for higher education at a time of global change. Olsen (2000), for example argued that there were widespread accusations of insufficient quality, responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency in higher education. This tied up with the concern of this research aimed at investigating the appropriateness of the national and institutional language policies at an integrated tertiary institution in the Western Cape. According to the 1997 Language-in-Education policy (LiEP) for schools, derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996: Section 32c), students have the right to study in the language in which they are most comfortable. However, a variety of socio-economic and political factors contribute to a situation where this is very rarely the case. The second relevant policy, the Ministry of Education's (2002) Language Policy for Higher Education emphasises the need to develop a multilingual environment in which all languages are developed for use in education and the medium of instruction does not serve as a barrier to access and success. Once again, though, economic and political factors severely limit the extent to which this has taken place.

The concern of this research is that on the whole the largely monolingual language practices in tertiary institutions in South Africa do not fit well in a multilingual society with eleven official languages. This linguistic diversity is reflected in the student population of South African higher education institutions which in turn poses a number of challenging questions such as: what are the intersections between multilingual students' language practices and identity construction in and outside of the formal learning context? Are these students given the chance to study in the language in which they are conversant in order to excel in their academic work? How and in which languages do they interact with their lecturers and peers in different settings (tutorials, lecture halls, in seminars) what linguistic and other strategies do they use in order to facilitate their studies?

Diverse backgrounds and students' readiness for higher education

Diverse backgrounds in this context include those who studied in both English and Afrikaans medium schools, but who may have had the first three grades of schooling in a

different home language, in this case, mostly isiXhosa¹. These students would have studied either in rural areas or urban areas or, depending on the quality of their schooling, have different degrees of proficiency and fluency in English that would either facilitate or undermine their studies in English in higher institutions.

In this case I argue that language should serve to promote the interests of students otherwise it becomes a problem and affects both the students and the institutions they leave who feel the added economic burden caused by their premature departures. Indeed, the impact of a monolingual medium of instruction on students' academic performance extends beyond institutions of higher learning to the nation itself. Seidman (2005a, p. xi) explains,

A strong, vibrant, varied, and expanding national economy depends in part on the educational attainment of its citizens. A nation that values and promotes the educational attainment of its citizens is a nation that is concerned with its ability to compete in the global economy.

Based on this premise, the university that is the focus of this study needs to be mindful that by implementing a single medium of instruction it may be hindering its student's participation in a broader society and their ability to meet the challenges of a global world. A possible consequence of this may be the deterioration of the relationship between higher education and society and the re-interpretation of higher education as a service-company with society as its market place. The limited nature of multilingualism in educational policies and practices means that many South Africans are concerned about the lack of promotion and development of African languages (Desai, 2000; Heugh 2005, 2006). This is because two of the eleven languages, English and Afrikaans, remain dominant languages. Though these two languages are extensively used, English is by far the most powerful language used in the domains of power such as government and administration, education, economy as well as diplomacy. Furthermore, English does not only serve as a lingua franca in inter-ethnic communication but also as a language of wider regional and international communication. As in other post-colonial contexts, English has come to be the language of the elite, of power and privilege, and therefore seen by many as a language

¹Note. 'Xhosa' is used from this point on as this was the form that students used when talking about their language.

of vertical social mobility (Samuels, 1995, Kamwangamalu, 2000). The prominence of English therefore appears to go against the principle of language equity and language rights as enshrined in post-apartheid South Africa's new Constitution of 1993 which embraced language as a basic human right and multilingualism as a national resource, raising nine major African languages to national official status alongside English and Afrikaans. Many people outside South Africa still hail the new language policy of eleven official languages as progressive and far-reaching (Desai, 2000). In practice, however, it does not appear progressive as African languages remain on the margins of power and are used mainly as vehicles for transmission of cultural heritage from generation to generation, much as they were in the apartheid era (Kamwangamalu, 2000). This calls into question the practical, transformative role of language policy and more specifically the Language-in-Education policy (LiEP, 1997) and the Language Policy for Higher Education (2002).

Consequently, the rationale behind this research project was to explore the appropriateness of the 1997 Language-In-Education policy for equipping learners for tertiary teaching and learning and of the Language Policy for Higher Education (2002) for facilitating access and success. The research focused on the language and literacy practices of first-year undergraduate students from different backgrounds in the University of the Western Cape. It aimed to understand how these students with different language repertoires make meaning of academic discourses in an integrated tertiary institution

A question that has received little attention so far is the official monolingualism in higher institutions in spite of the ever-increasing diversity of students' population in universities nation-wide. Thus, trying to build a national identity that is multilingual using policies which are in effect monolingual is ideologically inconsistent and bound to face some challenges at the level of implementation. In this way, I found Mastin Prinsloo's (2010) argument quite fitting when he argued that 'there is something going on when policy statements from national government and the Education Ministry set out one policy direction for language in education and practice takes a different direction' (researcher's notes on paper presented).

In this research, therefore, higher institutions of learning are considered as multilingual spaces in which linguistic diversity could be viewed as a resource so that students are given the opportunity to expand their repertoires by socializing, learning and interacting

with their peers in more than one language (Ruiz, 1984). This perspective views language as a tool for expanding students' knowledge and helping them interact academically. Moreover, for Tse (2001, p. 48), bilinguals have an advantage because they have more than one way of thinking about a given concept, making them more 'divergent' thinkers and more effective problem solvers. These attributes need to be drawn on and developed, rather than ignored.

1.2 Language ideology in South Africa

In investigating the linguistic practices and the performance of identities in a highly integrated tertiary institution, the researcher understands that the multilingualism of the population of South Africa is not often reflected in the educational practices of such institutions. This research thus aimed to explore the linguistic practices of first year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education in different formal and informal spaces on campus where negotiation in and about language might become visible (Blackledge & Creese, 2010). In order to better understand these language practices, it is logical to have an idea of the language ideologies of about 45 million South Africans based on the 2001 Census in the table below.

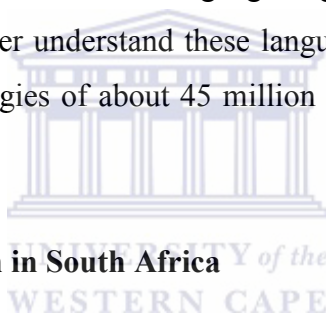


Table 1.21 Languages spoken in South Africa

Languages	Zulu	Xhosa	Afrikaans	Pedi	Tswana	English	Sotho	Other
SA	23%	17.6%	13%	9%	8.2%	8.2%	7.9%	11.6%

Source: Statistics South Africa, 2001, p. 16.

What stands out from the above table is the fact that English, a minority language, is the most influential of the nominally equal 11 South African languages. Barkhuizen & Gough (1996) indicated that English was the preferred medium of instruction over Afrikaans, which had increasingly been rejected as a language of oppression, and over African languages as mother-tongue education in African languages was part of the divide and rule tactics of the apartheid government. But then the question is: what has been the situation with regards to African languages since power was transferred to a democratically elected government in 1994.

According to Perry (2003, pp. 7-9), in spite of the government's multilingual policy, between 1994-1995 English was chosen by the government as the lingua franca and thus became the de fact language of government. Tollefson (1991, p. 2) asserts that:

Language is built into the economic and social structure of society so deeply that its fundamental importance seems only natural. For this reason, language policies are often seen as expressions of natural, common sense assumptions about language in society.

He nevertheless acknowledges that language policies are tactics designed by government to promote the interests of specific classes and social groups. In responding to this, Alexander (2005, p. 2) notes that it is not true that language policies simply develop 'naturally' as it were; but that they are developed and manipulated within definite limits to suit the interests of different groups of people. This was evident in pre 1994 apartheid regime and still surprisingly stretched into contemporary South Africa in spite of the 1996 constitution that promulgated language rights into law. Alexander further asserts that whether or not governments acknowledge it, languages are always planned in that legislation prescribes, often in great detail, where one or more languages are to be used and this has significant consequences in critical domains such as education.

Though Alexander and Tollefson disagree on some aspects, what unites them is the fact that Alexander sees English as a colonial language and argues that its acquisition is often at the expense of people's own indigenous languages. Tollefson (1991, p. 10) again notes that:

The policy of requiring everyone to learn one language is widely seen as common-sense solution to the communication problems of multilingual societies. The assumption that learning the dominant language will solve economic and social inequality is an example of an ideology.

The concern of this research pivots on multilingualism which provides a lens through which to examine language practices as socially and politically embedded and their actual and potential impact on learning and teaching processes.

1.3 Definitions of terms

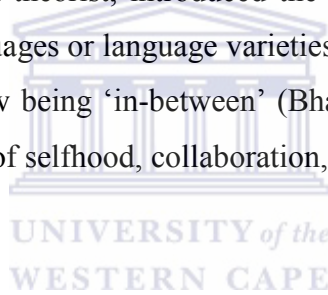
The following terms will be defined to give more understanding of what this research covers namely: identity, hybridity, multilingualism, identity, language equity, language planning, language policy, mother-tongue education.

Identity

Within a post structural framework, identity has also been defined by Hall (1996, p. 1) as the ‘endlessly performative self’. That is to say, identities are ‘points at which individuals temporarily attach themselves to the subject positions that are created by discourses’ (Hall, 1996, p. 6). Ivanič (1998, p. 22) also takes a performative view of identity when she defines it as ‘a set of conventions that only exist once performed’.

Hybridity

Bhabha (1994), a postcolonial theorist, introduced the term ‘hybridity’ as a metaphor to understand the mixing of languages or language varieties within a single utterance. Further, hybridity theory examines how being ‘in-between’ (Bhabha, 1994:1) can provide a space for elaborating new strategies of selfhood, collaboration, and contestation.



Multilingualism

Multilingualism is the ability to communicate across speech communities and to speak, at the same level, more than one language (Edwards, 1995). Sociolinguists believe that in multilingual societies domains of social behaviours, which include family, neighbourhood, work and school, determine language choices (Mesthrie, 2007).

Language Policy

Language Policy is commonly defined as

‘what a government does either officially through legislation, court decisions or policy to determine how languages are used, to cultivate the language skills needed to meet national priorities or to establish the rights of individuals or groups to use and maintain languages.’

The Department of Arts and Culture (2007) further describes language policy as an official decision/decreed on the status of various languages spoken in heterogeneous/multilingual

communities, for example which languages will be the national or official languages, which will be used as regional languages and what their status will be.

Mother tongue education

A clear definition of mother-tongue education might not be easy to reach but Ouane and Glanz (2010, pp. 13-14) have defined it in simple terms and quite appropriately within the context of this research as:

The language or languages of the immediate environment and daily interaction which 'nurture' the child in the first four years of life. Thus, the mother tongue is a language or languages with which the child grows up and of which the child has learned the structure before school. In multilingual contexts such as many African societies, children naturally grow up with more than one mother tongue as there are several languages spoken in the family of the child or in its immediate neighbourhood.

UNESCO (1953 cited by Tabouret-Keller (1997) further defines mother-tongue education as:

Education which uses as its medium of instruction a person's mother-tongue, that is, the language which a person has acquired in early years and which normally has become his natural instrument of thought and communication.

1.4 Languages of participation in a democratic South Africa

As mandated by Section 30 of the Constitution (1996):

Everyone has the right to use language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.

Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all

reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account;

- a)Equity
- b) Practicability: and
- c) The need to redress the results of the past racially discriminatory laws and practices’
Section 29 (2) of the Constitution

Taking into account the rights of the citizen is fundamentally important in matters of freedom of expression. However, what emerges is that, although linguistic rights in post-apartheid South Africa have been articulated in the Constitution (1996), the implementation of basic and higher education language policies has been problematic especially in tertiary institutions with multilingual student profiles such as the University of the Western Cape. With the gaps and lapses in the application and implementation of policies, the impact falls most heavily on students who have studied in their first language exclusively but do not have the same rights to pursue studies through that language at a higher level and on those who have Xhosa as a first language and have completed their schooling in English but have not been well prepared for academic studies in this language. Therefore, it is very important to examine contemporary policy by looking at the historical context for the formulation of policy.

1.6 Historical background of language policy for higher education.

Kamwangamalu (2004) points out that language planning and language policy are, in South Africa, historically sensitive concepts and have been used as a means of suppression of indigenous language groups. This has a direct impact on the identities of the speakers of indigenous languages whose position has been undermined by the dominant language, English.

According to Pattanayak (1985, p.403)

Language politics is intimately connected with economics and resource planning. Unless resources are so developed that sub-groups within a region or culture or groups within culturally diverse nation get equal opportunity for their creative fulfilment, language is bound to be used for divisive purposes.

The history of language policy development dates back to 1652 with the arrival of the first group of Dutch settlers to 1994 when democracy was born, paving the way for a multilingual and a pluralistic society. As early as 1925, Afrikaans was already a dominant language in the two Provinces of Orange Free State and Transvaal that were under the control of the Afrikaners. By 1948, the policy of separate development known as Apartheid was introduced. As is well known, this discriminatory policy affected the entire nation both politically and economically in many ways, including education. According to Spencer (1985, p.392), for a national government to force minority language communities towards the sole use of their mother tongue in education is clearly discriminatory, as with South Africa's Bantu Education Act in the 1950s, and drives them towards 'a linguistic and cultural ghetto, with all the economic and political disadvantage that this entails'.

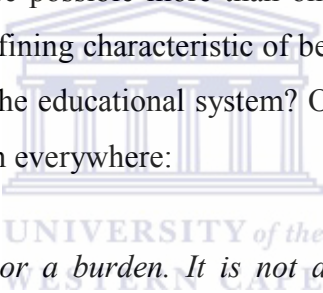
Before the 1994 democratic elections, the language of instruction in South Africa's schools for all 'races' was either English or Afrikaans. The imposition of Afrikaans in particular provoked anger and culminating in the 1976 Soweto uprising. To overcome this legacy, the 1996 Constitution granted all of South Africa's citizens the right 'to use the language and participate in the cultural life of one's choice' and the right 'of language choice in educational institutions' and the right to establish educational institutions based on a common culture, religion or language'.

1994 thus marked a new era in the socio-economic and political life of South Africa. The sweeping changes witnessed included the educational system particularly in higher institutions. Prior to 1994, apartheid era languages in education policies for South Africa were developed by the white minority. Although these policies affected black citizens directly, they had no voice in issues that determined their own future. According to Alexander (2005, p.2), language policies were developed and manipulated within definite limits to suit the interests of different groups of people. Ironically, this situation can be said to continue in the new South Africa as, although it is the mother tongue of a minority and increasingly of a small Black elite, English is both the language of power and the language of educational and socio-economic advancement, that is, a dominant symbolic resource in the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991).

The multilingual nature of South Africa and Higher Education

The multilingual nature of South Africa presupposes a multilingual LiEP and language policy for Higher Education that no longer serves as a barrier to access in tertiary institutions. The apartheid policies had entrenched the use of English and Afrikaans as languages of instruction in Higher Education. With the transfer of power in 1994 the multilingual South African state did not necessarily bring about the establishment of multilingual universities where the eleven new official languages were used as media of instruction.

Within the context of globalisation and the case of South Africa in particular, it could be argued that it is vital to promote a new multilingual climate at higher education institutions, where the previously marginalised official languages could be developed as media of instruction, and where possible more than one medium of instruction could be used. If multilingualism is a defining characteristic of being South African, why is this not reflected at the every level of the educational system? Ouane and Glanz (2010, p.7) argue that multilingualism is the norm everywhere:



It is neither a threat nor a burden. It is not a problem that might isolate the continent from knowledge and the emergence of knowledge-based economies, conveyed through international languages of wider communication.

1.5 Language Policy for Higher Education in South Africa

According to the Language Policy for Higher Education in South Africa published in November 2002, the policy framework covers the following three aspects:

- Policy on languages of teaching – the current position of Afrikaans and English is recognised until such time as the African languages have adequately been developed for use in higher education functions; institutions are expected to develop strategies to obtain proficiency in the designated languages of instruction; Afrikaans is recognised as a language of science and scholarship and as a national

asset; a task team is proposed to advise on the development of other languages as languages of learning and teaching; former Afrikaans universities are to compile plans for the period 2004–2006, indicating that Afrikaans as medium of instruction will not impede admission.

- Policy on South African languages as languages of academic study and enquiry – institutions are encouraged to devote attention to curriculum development in this area; plans and funding incentives are proposed to encourage the development of programmes in the South African languages.
- Policy on the studying of foreign languages and literature – institutions are encouraged to find ways to encourage multilingualism and to find ways of encouraging proficiency in an African language; institutions are expected to compile a rolling plan over a three year period to indicate their strategies on how multilingualism will be promoted.

Very little attention has been paid to this policy, with the exception of small studies at the Universities of the Witwatersrand and KwaZulu-Natal (Conduah, 2003; Moodley, 2009) and work by Ramani, Kekana, Modiba & Joseph (2007) at the University of Limpopo. Instead of promoting institutional multilingualism in tertiary institutions, it is monolingualism that has been institutionalised with English as the dominant language of instruction. This leads us to the Language Policy of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) where the current study undertakes to investigate the language practices of multilingual students and their implications for teaching and learning.

1.6 The University of the Western Cape Language Policy

The policy outlined below was accepted by the Board of Management of the Iilwimi Sentrum in April 2003, and approved by the University Council in June 2003.

Preamble:

The University of the Western Cape is a multilingual university, alert to its African and international context. It is committed to helping nurture the cultural diversity of South Africa and build an equitable and dynamic society. This language policy relates to one aspect of that commitment. It attempts to guide institutional language practice so that it furthers equity, social development, and a respect for our multilingual heritage.

Languages of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Languages used in lectures, tutorials and practicals

Lectures, tutorials and practicals for any module will be delivered in the language formally approved by the Faculty concerned, in accordance with the spirit of the policy. If lecturers are competent users of other languages, they are encouraged to use these languages in addition to main language of teaching, if such a practice facilitates communication or discussion.

Languages used in the setting of tasks, assignments, tests and examinations

Regarding the languages used in the setting of tasks, assignments, tests and examinations, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa should be used wherever it is practicable to do so.

Languages used in writing tasks, assignments, tests and examinations

Unless otherwise negotiated between a student or a class and a lecturer, the language in which tasks, assignments, tests and examinations should be completed shall be English.

Languages in which texts are available

Regarding the languages in which texts are available, efforts should be made to provide alternatives and options in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa wherever it is practicable and academically desirable to do so. Texts here refer to support materials such as course outlines, lecture notes and computer courseware.

Languages students use in self-directed learning processes and activities

Regarding the languages students use in their self-directed learning processes and activities, departments should actively seek to appoint some student tutors who can assist students in Xhosa and/or Afrikaans, as well as English.

(Adapted from the original draft discussion document, 1998)

A glance at this policy shows that spaces are created for the use of other languages. However, there has been little research to explore the extent to which the opportunities afforded are made use of on campus.

The concern of this research is thus with students from diverse backgrounds who enrolled into an institution that has a stated commitment to three languages of learning and teaching: Afrikaans, Xhosa and English, yet appears to practice a largely monolingual approach with English as a medium of instruction. In a nutshell, universities in South Africa face major challenges with regard to language: the adoption of multilingualism in their institutional policies and practices to counteract the hegemony of English, and the promotion of indigenous African languages as fields of academic study and research.

1. 7 Diversity at the University of the Western Cape

This could sound as somewhat of an exaggeration but to an outsider it appears as if UWC is a miniature of South Africa. The student population is a cross section of the nation's population (excluding international students). Without enough evidence but as part of the participant observation that I undertook as well as casual conversations with some students, there is no doubt as to the high levels of diversity. The front of the library serves as a good point for participant observation. By mere observation one can distinguish a wide variety of students with different physical appearances, different hairstyles and colours, different dressing styles, different accents and pronunciations and different styles of dressing. All these highlight the different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds of students enrolled at the institution. However, there is no one-to-one relationship between physical aspects of identity or identity performance and students' official classification by the university. Peck (2007, p.60) confirmed that enrolment documentation has assigned ethnic identities to students as African, Coloured, Indian, White, Asian, etc., and linguistic identities as Afrikaans, English, Xhosa, and so on. Yet such enrolment statistics may be deceptive given the diversity of the student population viewed from the perspective of poststructuralist approaches to identity. Thus endeavouring to understand the ways in which students' understand their ethnic and linguistic identities provides reasons for investigating the language practices of these students.

1.8 Rationale of the study

As outlined above, in the context of a pluralistic and multilingual society like South Africa, language in education policy is crucial since it has a direct impact on the educational system of the whole country. In this way, I would argue that it is important to understand how institutions like universities are affected. Unpacking the complexities and ideas behind a policy would offer a greater understanding of the challenges faced by higher

institutions in an attempt to implement a common medium of instruction. In accordance with this, the National Higher Education Plan (2001) outlines the role of higher education institutions in the new South Africa:

The key challenges facing the South African higher education system remain as outlined in the White Paper: 'to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities' (Department of Education White Paper, 2001, 1.1)

Improving efficiency and addressing the equity needs of the country raises conflicting challenges for higher education institutions (Scott, 2004). These challenges are exacerbated by the fact that most students enter university under-prepared and therefore require more support to bridge the gaps in the required knowledge and skills (Paras, 2001). Given this situation and the stated intention of (LiEP) to redress imbalances of the past and promote multilingualism, the question arises as to why it is that post-apartheid South Africa is still encouraging students in most tertiary institutions to receive instruction in English exclusively, instead of in African languages or the language of their choice?

1.9. Statement of the problem

The main problem is that within the period of transition in higher education, students who are multilingual and may have studied through other languages such as Afrikaans are now offered a zero option to study exclusively in English. To align with Cummins (1996), this research seeks to highlight the fact that language and academic success are closely related and that academic language proficiency is far more difficult to acquire in a second or additional language than in one's own language. Therefore, students learning in a second or third language are at a disadvantage often compounded by inadequate schooling. However, a concern here is not only that English is used as a medium of instruction in many institutions but that it is used exclusively as a medium of instruction in an integrated university which claims in its mission statement that it will 'attempt ... to promote multilingualism, linguistic diversity and racial harmony' (UWC, 2003: Section 2(3)). In keeping with its language policy, the institution equally underscores that 'in the setting of tasks, assignments, tests and examinations, English, Afrikaans and Xhosa should be used

wherever it is practicable to do so. Nevertheless, in practice, the vast majority of assessment tasks are in English. Therefore, to what extent is multilingualism actually promoted?

The implications for students' academic attainment are profound since some of the students are not proficient enough in English to engage in standard academic discourses. Many of these students come from groups disempowered by social class, race, gender or cultural positioning. Corson (2001, p. 23) argues that education fails to take account of the fact that many children's discursive relations, before and outside schools, are inconsistent with 'the kinds of lexico-semantic demands that schools and their high status culture of literacy place upon them, often unnecessarily'. The aptness of this argument is that South Africa is a multilingual society and it is not uncommon to find students with widely differing linguistic repertoires and levels of language proficiencies in tertiary institutions.

This lack of exposure to academic discourses can be traced back to early transition models in place in most South African schools where learners whose home language is not English switch to this medium in Grade 4. This model is widely used throughout Africa despite the fact that, since 1990, most African states have committed themselves to greater use of African languages in formal education (McCarthy, 2009). When learners study in an unfamiliar language, the resulting difficulties quite often result in educational failure, thus, reproducing inequality. Therefore, the incongruity between official language policy and actual language practices, especially in schools and in higher institutions, means that there is a need to reconsider the educational role of indigenous languages. The elaboration, modernization and development of these languages are important requirements for the attainment of social and economic equality and justice for the majority of South Africans (Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, 1998).

1.10 Aims and research questions

The general purpose of the study is to identify the educational implications of the multilingual language practices of students in a Western Cape tertiary institution. There are three main objectives:

1. The research aims to find out how multilingual students construct their academic identities and position themselves in relation to lecturers, tutors and peers with different linguistic repertoires.
2. In so doing, it will examine the links between linguistic practices, opportunities for learning and processes of identity negotiation for linguistically and culturally diverse students. As part of this it would be important to establish the linguistic options and identities (including hybrid identities) available to students in a Western Cape tertiary institution and to understand how students negotiate their various identities through linguistic innovations such as code switching.
3. It will draw out the implications of the above for first year learning and teaching.

Research questions

The study therefore seeks to understand how students from different socio- cultural and diverse backgrounds use their various repertoires to interact amongst themselves and with lecturers in a multilingual space. It examines the effects of the institutionalization of the dominant language and its implications for the construction of academic identities.

My main research question is therefore:

How do first-year Language Education students use their linguistic repertoires to construct academic identities in and outside of the formal learning context?

In order to explore this question, the following sub-questions will be investigated

1. What are the multilingual language practices of first year students in formal academic interactions in the lecture hall or tutorial space?
2. What are their informal language practices on campus?
3. What is the relationship between the language practices of multilingual students and their negotiation of academic identities in different spaces?
4. What are the perceptions of lecturers and students' as to the use of English as a medium of instruction in an integrated tertiary institution?

1.11 Scope of the study

Data collected was limited to 53 first year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education. Although small scale, focusing in detail on the linguistic interactions in formal and informal campus spaces does offer valuable insights into the patterns of language practices of first year undergraduate students, which could be confirmed or nuanced by larger studies.

1.12 Significance of the study

This study hopes to provide some insights on how first year undergraduate students use languages in a new environment and with English as the medium of instruction as practised in the tertiary institution. Further it hopes to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the identities that students construct when confronted with monolingual language practices in the new learning environment. Of great significance is the fact that the study presents an analysis of how students negotiate meaning through their various repertoires in both formal and informal settings. As a result, the significance of the study lies in its analysis of the impact of language practices and the different ways that the students draw on their language repertoires in both formal and informal domains.

Further, it highlights implications for classroom pedagogy and practice. It may provide useful insights for further research in this area. The study I hope will help government, higher institutions and parents to recognise the value of multilingualism in the global world instead of aligning exclusively towards a dominant language as a medium of instruction. The study suggests that every language is an icon that contributes to the pool of knowledge in today's global world.

1.13 Chapter Division

Chapter One: Situating the study

This chapter provides a background to the official language policy in South Africa and how this impacts on language in education policies in formal education contexts. It seeks to understand the unplanned consequences of this official policy and how this could affect those students from diverse backgrounds in new academic environment. Additionally, it affords a background to the South African educational context from a higher education perspective in terms of the language policy and how this impacted on learning and teaching.

Chapter Two: Theoretical framework

This chapter provides a detailed literature that reveals previous work done on language practices particularly on multilingualism and identity formation of diverse students while in an integrated institution in the Western Cape.

Chapter Three: The research methodology

Chapter three informs the reader about the theoretical framework for this project and the Research Methodology is described in detail. It describes how ethnography influenced this study of diverse students' interaction in formal and informal settings. A detailed description of the participants, instruments and tools and the procedures for data collection follows systematically.

Chapter Four: Presentation of data

Chapter Four is the critical analysis of the data collected from the institution where the current research took place from students. A detailed transcription and translation of data collected from interviews, observations and focus group conversation where necessary; and followed by discussions and interpretation.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter Five is an analytical summary of the study. It offers general conclusions and observations about the study based on the research questions and the problems raised at the beginning of the study. A set of recommendations for improving and creating awareness of multilingual language practices as a resource to the student as an effortless strategy in teaching.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1 Background

A study of the relationship between language practices and processes of identity formation of students within a multilingual setting can be viewed in the context of poststructuralist and constructionist approaches to language and identity.

Within the context of this study, the idea of ‘linguistic capital’ is particularly significant to the current research. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argued that linguistic capital is an important component of a broader ‘cultural’ capital that favours those from the privileged classes and places those from a low socio-economic background at a disadvantage. Sullivan (2001, p.893) clarifies that linguistic capital is ‘the ability to understand and use ‘educated’ language’. Elaborating on this, Morrison and Lui (2000, p. 473) define linguistic capital as ‘fluency in, and comfort with, a high-status worldwide language which is used by groups who possess economic, social, cultural and political power and status in local and global society.’

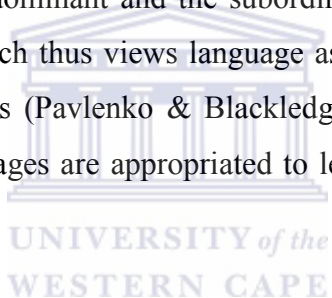
In the case of South Africa, the situation is quite specific in terms of linguistic capital. English is a colonial language and therefore most South Africans have historically spoken English either as a second, third or fourth, and some have had no access to the language at all. The ultimate concern of this research is the degree of proficiency in the use of English for academic purposes by those who do not use it as their mother tongue. This takes us back to the research question that aims to investigate how first-year Language Education students use their linguistic repertoires to construct academic identities in and outside of the formal learning context.

This research draws on two paradigms for its theoretical framework, post structuralism and social constructionist approaches, in order to explore the relationship between language and identity. These two approaches will be the lenses through which data will be analysed.

2.2 Poststructuralist approaches

The poststructuralist view explains how language is appropriated in the construction and negotiation of identity. Poststructuralists acknowledge the ways in which language, ideologies and identities are linked to relations of power and political arrangements in communities and societies (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 10). These authors argue that ‘language choices in multilingual contexts [are] embedded in larger social, political and cultural systems’ (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 349).

Linking these choices to issues of power in society, Bourdieu (1991)’s sociological framework sees linguistic practices as a form of cultural capital which can be converted into economic and social capital. This capital is usually distributed unequally within a speech community. The significance of Bourdieu’s approach is that he argues that the official language or the more standardised language becomes the hegemonic language of institutions because both the dominant and the subordinate groups ‘misrecognise’ it as a superior language. The approach thus views language as situated and tied to questions of power and identity in societies (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Researchers within this paradigm focus on how languages are appropriated to legitimise, challenge and negotiate particular identities.



2.3 Social constructionist approach

Like the poststructuralists, social constructionists conceptualise identities as ‘an interactional accomplishment produced and negotiated in discourse’ (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 13). Contrary to earlier approaches, constructionists show that there is a dynamic relationship between individual and social relations (Widdecombe, 1998).

According to Sadowski (2003, p.33) how students interpret and develop their identities in a given context is shaped by ‘self-perceptions, desires, hopes, and expectations, as well as salient aspects of the social context, such as socio-political ideologies, histories, and structures that are often beyond the control of an individual’. In education more specifically, ‘the life chances of students are determined by their ability to interact critically with the discourses around them’ (Corson, 2001, p.14), particularly when these discourses are expressed in a language with which they are not fully conversant. Thus, the processes of identity negotiation for students can become ‘a site of opportunity and struggle in local institutional spaces’ (McDermott 1993, p. 269).

I will now focus on how the empirical study of identity in educational contexts has contributed to different theoretical and practical uses of the term identity in my research.

2.3 Identity negotiation

My view of identity is influenced by post-structuralist theories. In particular, my theorizing of identity herein relies most heavily on the work of Pavlenko & Blackledge (2004) and Weedon (1987). However, I also borrow a number of understandings from Hall (1996) and Fairclough (2001) as well others. I value poststructuralist theory because it examines the relationship between ‘language, subjectivity, social institutions and power’ (Weedon, 1987, p. 12). Within this paradigm, language acts as a vehicle for the construction of individuals’ identities, or subjectivities (Weedon, 1987). Subjectivities can be defined as ‘the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of individuals, their sense of themselves, and their ways of understanding their relation to the world’ (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). Such subjectivities are not fixed but open to conflict and change.

2.4 Language and identity formation in education

Identity as a theoretical construct is gaining ground in educational research and many scholars believe that identity is intrinsically linked to the ways in which we interact, learn, and teach (Hall, 1996; Norton, 1997; Sadowski, 2003). However, the concept of identity and its impact on education seems to have been under researched in South Africa until recently.

Newer theoretical and methodological issues focus on the negotiation processes of linguistically and culturally diverse students because their identities are ‘often marked as being ‘non normative’ or ‘other’, in ways that provide salient insights into what is at stake when identity is connected to learning’ (Lee & Anderson, 2009, p.33). In educational contexts, identity can be seen as ‘a set of discursive domains that are evoked and constructed based on shared or negotiated assumptions, categories, and knowledge in classroom spaces’ (Lee & Anderson, 2009, p. 183). What is encapsulated here is that both students and teachers bring their own identities and experiences with them into classrooms or any academic setting. The classroom is therefore a different place for different students.

Complementing the above standpoint, Norton (2000, p.5) sees identity as ‘how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across

time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future'. The possible implication of Norton's definition of identity is that a community of speakers who share a particular language might deliberately and collectively choose to speak another language. In South Africa, for example, research shows that an increasing number of Black parents choose to speak English with their children as a consequence of a shift in political power and perceived economic advantages accruing to competence in this language (Plüddemann, 2004). Thus economic, political, social, cultural and technological changes often affect language use, directly or indirectly (Baker, 1996) and may induce a conscious language shift.

Whatever the case, in each new interaction, whether formal or informal, multilingual speakers make choices about what language or language variety to use in order to highlight particular aspects of their social identities while down playing others (Doran, 2006). In contrast to this and within the context of education, students whose first language of communication is not English are bound to negotiate or code switch for proper understanding, thus limiting the identity options open to them. The current monolingual bias in schooling and tertiary education can be said to 'obscure the hybrid identities and complex linguistic repertoires of bi/multilingual individuals' (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 5).

Therefore, in a multilingual space the notion of identity in relation to learning and teaching can have pedagogical implications. Students need to constantly negotiate and transform their selves: to construct, co-construct and re-construct their identities in order to survive and deal with their own world of academic discourse (Note. The last sentence is my own).

2.5 Identity and new spaces

When one moves from one space to another, there can be a complete shift both physically and psychologically leading to change in thoughts and thinking as well as perception of the new environment, an environment that could be culturally different. This transition offers possibilities for new forms of identities by reshaping one's horizon and establishing behavioural patterns and beliefs. Thus, when students move from high schools, in this case, their first space, and enrol in tertiary institutions or universities, a second space, they move to a world full of unknown challenges. One of the challenges that this research project

seeks to investigate is the language practices of these multilingual students that as a result of their social and economic backgrounds as well as their beliefs and cultural affiliations could be identified as either being advantaged or disadvantaged. In similar research on English-medium higher education in the United Kingdom, Phillipson (2010, p.1) points out that often students are enrolled in institutions that fail to offer them a valid or appropriate learning environment and are blind to students' cultural and linguistic strengths. Phillipson (2010) further emphasises that this perspective should be a wake-up call not merely for the United Kingdom, but for any education system that promotes subtractive language learning. In the context of the South Africa, the wake-up call is very important in that it is a multilingual society yet in higher education English remains the medium of instruction. This is an indication that other national languages have been marginalised and that students are unable to draw on their 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992), that is, their existing cultural and linguistic capital.

Phillipson (2010, p.2) drawing on Siân Preece's paper in the same issue emphasised that her research taps into the awareness of less privileged students of the gap between informal and academic discourses and argues that universities need to pay attention to 'the polyphony of the student body so as to re-imagine universities as multilingual spaces'.

This brings into focus the relevance of 'space' and its pedagogical implications for learning and teaching.

Space and language

According to Vigouroux (2005, p.241), 'every language is located in space' which is multi-layered, complex, and socially constructed. Thus Vigouroux' study provides insights to rethink critically the importance of the notion of space in relation to multilingualism and how new spaces create new communication possibilities and barriers. Spaces can influence language practices either individually or by shaping group relations. Spaces are what makes up 'context' and context, as Gumperz (1982) and others have argued, is not a passive part of the communicative process, but an active one.

Hybridity and identity formation

In relation to the concepts of space, identity and language, Bhabha (1994), a postcolonial theorist, introduced the term 'hybridity' as a metaphor to understand the mixing of languages or language varieties within a single utterance. The notion of 'hybridity' can be applied to 'the integration of knowledge and Discourses; to the texts one reads and writes; to the spaces, contexts, and relationships one encounters; and even to a person's identity enactments and sense of self' (Moje et al., 2004, p. 42). Furthermore, hybridity theory examines how being 'in-between' (Bhabha, 1994, p.1) can provide a space for elaborating new strategies of selfhood, collaboration, and contestation. Some scholars refer to this in-between, or hybrid, space as 'third space' (Moje et al., 2004, p.3). Third space is produced in and through language as people come together (Moje et al., 2004) and renegotiate or resist cultural authority, in this case the established conventions of academic discourses. Bhabha (1994) calls this simultaneous taking up and resisting of academic discourse a 'splitting' of discourse, culture, and consciousness.

This notion of splitting factors into a situation where an individual, in this case, a student who struggles to achieve a strong sense of self, must at the same time always articulate himself or herself in response to an 'Other'. On a positive note, Bhabha has argued that it is in this struggle for identity that 'newness enters the world' (1994, p. 212). When students from diverse cultures and academic backgrounds converge in a tertiary institution, it is clear that they have to associate, build relations and interact, but without an environment which encourages the creation of productive third spaces, the potential to harness the rich resources of diversity is lost.

Moje et al (2004) conclude that a third space is important because it provides opportunities for success in formal academic learning while also making a space for marginalized voices. Thus third spaces can increase academic engagement and learning gains.

2.6 Code switching

Code switching, or the use of more than one language in conversation, is a daily practice for much of the world's population. Speakers' ability to code switch at different moments of a single conversation has been exhaustively described, initially by ethnographic

linguistics (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972) and later on through the frameworks of interactional sociolinguistics and conversational analysts (for example, Auer, 1984, 1998a).

Although sociolinguists and particularly interactional sociolinguists originally focused on code switching in conversations between bilingual adults in informal settings (Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Gumperz & Hernandez- Chavez, 1971), the study of language switching has been extended to include formal settings such as schools (Aguirre, 1988; Benjamin, 1996) and, more precisely, second and foreign language classrooms (Ludi & Py, 1986; Pekarek, 1999; Nussbaum, 1990; Nussbaum & Unamuno, 2001; Unamuno, 2003).

Adendorff (1993) and Pennington (1995) have argued that most scholarship on code switching practices in teaching spaces (lecture hall, tutorial room, language laboratory, seminar room) analyse conversation between teachers and learners. By implication, interactions between peer and peer have been shifted to a borderline, thus pointing to an important area for research that can inform language policy.



Code switching as a legitimate practice

Code switching or ‘the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems’ (Gumperz, 1982, p.59) has been conceptualized as a resource available to learners that can illuminate the processes through which students acquire new knowledge.

A related concept to code switching is code mixing. Researchers often differentiate between the two terms: for Myers-Scotton (1993) code switching occurs when bilinguals alternate between two languages during one interaction while code mixing is the use of words, affixes, phrases and clauses from more than one language within the same sentence. Thus (CS) becomes a resource that enables students to draw from their various linguistic repertoires.

Code switching as a resource in multilingual contexts

Code switching (CS) does not occur in isolation. First, participants are involved in a conversation based on a topic and the context where the conversation is taken place. In classroom studies, code switching has been used for the following purposes: to emphasize

a particular point, to substitute a word in place of unknown word in the target language (TL), to express a concept that has no equivalent in the culture of the other language, to reinforce a request, to clarify a point, to express identity and communicate friendship, to ease tension and add humour into a conversation, and in some bilingual situations, code switching occurs when certain topics are introduced (Baker, 2006; Eldridge, 1996, cited in Sert, 2005; Lu, 1991; Probyn, 2009).

2.7. Multilingualism and education.

Beyond monolingualism, or a monolingual medium of instruction, the Director General of UNESCO has recently emphasised that:

We must act now as a matter of urgency, by encouraging and developing language policies that enable each linguistic community to use its first language, or mother tongue, as widely and as often as possible, including in education...only if multilingualism is fully accepted can all languages find their place in our globalised world (Matsuura, 2008).

As stated above, Blackledge & Creese (2010, p.42) point that notwithstanding UNESCO's imperative towards education for multilingualism, the education of multilingual students is frequently orientated towards monolingualism rather than multilingualism. Yet it has been consistently demonstrated in the United Kingdom and the United States that students who enter school with a first language other than a national or dominant language perform significantly better on academic tasks when they receive 'consistent and cumulative academic support in the native/heritage language' (McCarthy, 2007, p.34). Nevertheless, educational policies and practices often 'deny that multilingual, multicultural reality, attempting to coerce it into a single, monolingualist and multiculturalist mould' (McCarthy et al., 2006, p.91).

In a similar argument Shohamy (2006, p.173) points out that in most educational contexts of the world, 'a specific national language, spoken by the powerful groups in society, is the only legitimate language in schools'. Though Shohamy's standpoints work well in some societies where the languages of minority groups are viewed as having low status, with no legitimate place in schools, the direct reverse becomes true in the context of South Africa. The dominant language in South Africa is English, the language of a minority that is

considered as the language of prestige at the expense of the ten other official languages. However, the basic point remains the same, that students who do not have the language of power as a first language are severely disadvantaged.

The ultimate conclusion is that in general educational policy and institutions worldwide do not take into consideration the multilingual resources of students despite research evidence that indicates that ‘when people develop multilingual proficiency they benefit socially, personally, cognitively and (sometimes) economically’ (Blackledge, & Creese, 2010, p.44).



Chapter 3: The research methodology

The goal of my study was to gain an understanding of language practices and identities of multilingual students in a Western Cape tertiary institution. The research seeks to explore how these students from diverse backgrounds study and interact with their peers and lecturers in different settings; Qualitative research methodology was used in order to arrive at a general idea of their language preferences and how this affects their academic attainment in an integrated institution.

In this chapter details of the research design, research sites and the participants involved are discussed. In addition, an account of the data collection procedure approaches and analysis of data is highlighted and an explanation of relevant issues involving trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative research is provided.

3.2 Research paradigm

Epistemology is ‘an area of philosophy concerned with questions of what knowledge is and how it is justified’ (Gottlieb, 2007, p.5): anyone attempting to produce or evaluate knowledge relies on some set of beliefs about what knowledge is, how it is created, and how knowledge claims can be made.

In terms of this research I found a predominantly qualitative approach appropriate in that the study explores the impact language and learning had on the lives of first year students in both formal and informal situations in an academic environment. I attempted to understand the meanings and significance of social practices from the perspective of the individuals, the group, or all those involved in the setting. Creswell (1998, p.15) defines qualitative research as, ‘an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem.’ Babbie & Mouton (2001) insist that when studying any ‘human action’ within this paradigm, one should always study it from the perspective of the ‘social actor’ since the primary goal would be to understand and describe what people think or feel. This ties up with the purpose of this research which aimed to get a clear understanding of how students from various backgrounds engage in academic discourses with different language proficiency. Qualitative research is used to describe how groups of people live, or how they cope with their daily lives in different domains. This provides a rich description that enables the

researcher to understand and make sense of reality. In other words, it enables the researcher to consider experiences from the participants' perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Patton (2002, p. 42) explains that 'naturalistic inquiry is thus contrasted to experimental research where 'the investigator attempts to completely control the condition of the study.'

Characteristics of qualitative research

Qualitative methodology takes account of the complex social contexts that shape human experience and actions. One of the great contributions of qualitative research is the culturally specific and contextually rich data it produces as it addresses factors such as cultural norms, ethnic identities, gender norms, and socio-economic status (Bassey, 1999; Cresswell, 1998; Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey et al., 2005).

A second major feature of qualitative research is that it investigates experiences as they materialise in everyday situations and explores ways to obtain responses that convey the meanings attached to practices by the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). McNiff (1998) and Merriam (1998) refer to this as an 'emic' or insider's perspective, versus the 'etic' or outsider's perspective. Because of these valuable insights provided into the local perspectives of participants, qualitative research methods are gaining popularity outside the traditional academic social sciences, particularly in public health and international development research (Mack et al., 2005).

This research design is framed within an interpretive tradition that focuses more on qualitative data analysis as it seeks to understand issues of language preference and identities in post-apartheid South Africa. Though the study largely qualitative in nature, it does make use of a questionnaire for baseline data which complement the qualitative findings. The pitting of quantitative against qualitative research is seen as counterproductive (Miles & Huberman, 1994) as depending on the purposes of the research, both might be necessary for a complete understanding. The next section describes the main qualitative approach adopted in this study.

3.3 Ethnography in education research

Ethnography, one of several possible approaches within qualitative research, has a particular strength that makes it enthralling to many researchers. It can reveal intricacies and subtleties that other methodologies miss. By going out into the world and observing things as they occur, an accurate picture is captured in a natural setting. The key strength of this approach is that it provides the researcher with a much more comprehensive perception than other forms of research.

Ethnographic research means describing the social scene or more broadly the behaviour of a group of people in a particular environment. It is a description that includes people's language, behaviour, customs, beliefs, physical environment and other aspects of setting. Ethnographic research is apt when one wishes to know 'why' people behave in a certain way over a period of time (Cresswell, 1998). The researcher wants to understand a phenomenon in its natural setting. Therefore, ethnographic research enabled me to start asking how, when and why students use the language practices they do when they interact with their peers in different situations. This kind of social interaction provides the data that can add to our understanding of the complexity of society. Furthermore, ethnography, with the emphasis on people's lived experiences, is well suited to 'locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and patterns of their lives'(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11).

Ethnography thus provides a detailed exploration of group activity through the use of multiple research methods such as observation and interviews. As a research method, ethnographic approaches are of particular significance within the scope of this project because they concern lived experiences, behaviours, and emotions. Thus, any interaction with the researched or amongst students in any given spaces is of great importance since my intention is to gain knowledge or an understanding of problems related to multilingual language practices of first year undergraduate students. The ethnographic research method is useful in that the voices of the participants are brought in through their own words (Key, 1997, as cited in Tatah, 2009). As such, one is able to make meaning of the complexity of language practices of the participants, their understanding of the environment and their struggles in the quest of knowledge in tertiary institutions.

In my case, as a student researcher, I could not have obtained valid data without immersing myself both as insider and at the same as an outsider. In this study I was thus a 'participant

observer'. Patton (1990) claims that participant observation is the most comprehensive of all types of research strategies because one can both observe and experience the events taking place and then reflect upon the events at a later time. As a participant observer I also kept field notes and wrote reflections from these field notes after every class. This aspect is addressed in more detail in section 3.5.1.

By means of observing, a lot of details about students' daily and practical concerns could be gathered, particularly by completely engaging and taking part in their activities. These details included conversations, mode of dress, sitting position and even the kinds of friends they made while in tutorials, and lectures, and on campus in general. Over two semesters, I was able to sit for 18 weeks in three tutorial groups and in lectures, seeking to understand participants in different situations as they struggled to be heard and to master the academic challenges in a new environment.

Though ethnographic research can be fundamental to our understanding of human behaviour in a given situation, it has some disadvantages.

Disadvantages of the ethnographic method

The most difficult aspect of the ethnographic method is that it is time consuming. Some scholars suggest that ideally, it should take at least six months to two years to complete a research study. The risk involved here is that within this period, a lot of things might happen thereby altering the focus of attention. It is also risky in terms of access to the group of people or organisations. It needs highly creative approaches to have enough access to the culture or group of people under study.

In a nutshell, qualitative research is a process based on fieldwork using a variety of research techniques (observation, interview, focus groups) which include engagement in the lives of those being studied over an extended period of time. The eventual written product - ethnography – draws its data primarily from this fieldwork experience and usually emphasises descriptive detail (Davis, 1999).

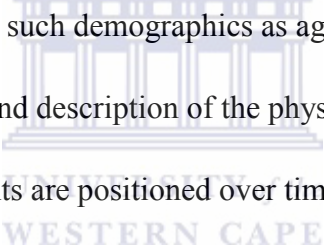
It is also important to emphasise that the purpose of collecting data from a variety of sources was not only to establish validity as defined by Yin (1994), or to ensure 'methodological triangulation' (Cohen & Manion, 1996, p. 248), but to enrich and deepen the study by asking more about the same question (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

3.4 The study site and participants

3.4.1 Site

As mentioned above this study was carried out at the University of the Western Cape. The study focused on first year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education aimed at understanding how students from diverse backgrounds engaged, interacted and socialised with their peers in different spaces both on and off campus such as lecture halls, tutorial rooms, language laboratory, seminar room, and shopping complexes. In alignment with Whyte (1997), Schweizer (1998) argues that a researcher enters the field with particular problems to examine or theories and hypotheses to test. The logical conclusion is that, as pointed out by Gupta and Ferguson (1997), the field site is largely determined in relation to the questions the researcher wants to ask and investigate.

In mapping out the setting being observed, Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999) suggest the following should be included:

- 
- a count of attendees, including such demographics as age, gender, and race;
 - a physical map of the setting and description of the physical surroundings;
 - a portrayal of where participants are positioned over time;
 - a description of the activities being observed detailing activities of interest.

The site of this research was carefully mapped to provide the researcher an opportunity to engage with students on different occasions and scenarios. Beside monitoring and observing students in tutorial groups and lecture halls, the details listed above were necessary in order to understand the situation and have some idea about students' feelings and perceptions in different settings. Therefore such naturalistic settings were not limited only to tutorials and lectures but covered practices indifferent domains including homes, gyms, travel and shopping.

This study made use of field notes as a way of capturing the data collected from participant observations. In the field, notes were taken to capture this data and records were kept of what was observed, including formal and informal conversations with participants, and records of interviews. Recordings were done to gather useful information that could not have been jotted down. Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) describes field notes as both data and analysis, as the notes provide an accurate description of what is observed and are the

product of the observation process. As they note, observations are not data unless they are recorded in field notes.

Description of site

Although participants in this study were all from the Faculty of Education all their lectures were in the Science building. The Science building is situated behind the Student Centre and very close to a set of prefabricated buildings. Further away from the Prefabs, the Science building is very close to the Unibell train station, and further north a motor pathway separates it from The Roots (an African Restaurant) that is close to the UWC sport complex. The two lecture halls in the Science building could accommodate the 595 first year undergraduate students who enrolled for 2011 academic programme. I observed these students in two different lecture halls (SC1 and SC6) twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9.40am to 10.40am respectively. The academic literacy module (EDC111) was a semester course. In the second semester I observed the same students in another academic literacy module (EDC 101).

These specific locations, Science 1 and 6 (SC1 and SC6), were quite spacious enough to accommodate such a huge number of students. This was a good learning environment located within a building with easy access by students and with necessary equipment, isolated from noisy gathering places, and situated on the lower floors of the buildings. This provided an easy avenue for students and convenient access for the disabled and support services. The sloped or tiered floor was furnished with fixed semi-circular table seats with a central lectern and projector at the front. These seats were like those in the theatre meant for people to sit and watch Shakespearean drama. The multimedia lectern was placed to one side of the front teaching wall, leaving students an unobstructed view of the writing surface and projection screen. There was enough space for a moveable instructor's chair but no instructor's table.

In terms of physical access and movement, the students could flow in and out of the space and within the space as well, as the need arose for the instructor to move around in the front of the hall. The success with which a student receives information from the lecturer or can effectively participate in lecture can be affected by factors of the room design, the shape as well as the placement within the building. In this case the students' ability to interact with the lecturer and other students was easy. This added to the strength and clarity

with which the lecturer's voice could be heard. The quality of the microphone was good for lectures.

There were also a whiteboard and green board, board makers and chalks, projector, a computer, and two cameras were installed for surveillance. The lighting system was good and there was a fire extinguisher hanging at a strategic position in the hall for any eventuality.

Entrances and exit points - There were four entrances - two upstairs and two downstairs. Students could come into the lecture halls from the back area facing the Prefab.

The walls were beautifully decorated with sixteen good posters and pictures. I found these highly educative and informative as they mostly focused on HIV with themes such as 'Spread love and not gossip' in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa as follows: *We care Ons Gee Omand Siyakhathala* respectively.

Tutorials

There were 20 tutorial groups. The classrooms were spacious enough to accommodate all students. Unlike lecture halls, tutorial rooms had whiteboards and green boards. Some had projectors but without computers which meant that no tutor could use PowerPoint for any presentation.

These rooms were not quite decorated like lecture halls that were beautifully decorated with posters. All rooms had tiered seating and were furnished with fixed tables and moveable chairs. These rooms were designed for 25-50 students though some rooms such as E22 and S84 in the education building were quite small and could only accommodate 20 students.

Limitations

The lecture halls were spacious enough, but the way they were designed showed that it was not meant to accommodate a huge number of students. Lecturers used microphones but there were some concerns. First, there was no actual engagement between the students and the lecturers as a result of the large size of the hall. The lecturer could not possibly see what was going on with students sitting right at the back. In situations where questions were either asked by the students or by the lecturer there would be no clear understanding because of the distance between them and the students were not equipped with

microphones so could not respond to lecturer's questions. In such situations, there were distractions as students had to move from where they were sitting to the front to get the microphone from the lecturer in order to respond.

The next issue was the use of the PowerPoint in teaching. It worked to the disadvantage of the students as there was a lot of noise and at this point some students with laptops were chatting with their friends. Those that I watched chatting were Afrikaans speakers and I could not understand what it was all about. The scenario in lecture halls was quite different from what actually transpired in tutorials. In tutorials there was no use of computers and tutors paid a lot of attention to students. There was more interaction in the groups. In all, information that was not obtained from the participant observation in the field was addressed through a questionnaire and administered as discussed in greater detail below.

3.4.2 Research population

The study population was first year undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education. This population consisted of students from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Some of the students were from the rural areas; some had studied in private and well-resourced and funded institutions while others studied in under-resourced institutions. In all, there were 600 students divided into 20 tutorial groups. I observed these students in lectures and in three selected tutorial groups of between 20 to 25 students tutored by different tutors from different backgrounds. The rationale was to have a better understanding of how these students with different language profiles and academic backgrounds, and faced with tutors and lecturers with different accents and cultural backgrounds, interacted in tutorials and in lecture halls. The students were randomly selected for focus group discussions and individual interviews, although I attempted to achieve a mix of language backgrounds.

Emotional investment in the field

I began this inquiry in November 2010 and continued through June 2011. I spent four hours a week in two different lectures and two hours in two tutorial groups and one hour in my own tutorial group, an average of 480 minutes in a week excluding other sites such as social gatherings on campus. I had the opportunity to have many informal conversations with students that certainly added to my data.

I was emotionally connected in teaching my own students. I needed to confront those biases head on so they would not cloud my objectivity as I looked at their participation in this research. During the interview process I was constantly aware of the need not to impose my own belief into questioning and probing. I tried to remain inconspicuous and reminded myself to ask students to ‘tell me more’, ‘and so?’, ‘what else?’ so that I could hear their views and their experiences. Fetterman (1989) states that biases can serve both positive and negative functions. If they are controlled, they can focus and define the research effort. However, additional quality controls are also needed, for example, ‘triangulation, contextualization, and a non- judgmental orientation place a check on the negative influence of bias’(pp.11-12).

In my study findings were triangulated through multiple methods of data collection.

Observations provide information about the behaviours of people in action. Interviews provide a chance to learn how people reflect on their behaviour, events and other things. The following are some important points to consider when conducting interviews:

3.5 Research tools

In this qualitative research, I used questionnaires, participant observation, focus group discussions and individual interviews. The participants involved in these interactions did so willingly and voluntarily as evident in the consent forms that they signed. The consent forms were signed only when I had duly explained to them the scope and purpose of the project and why their participation was very important.

To ensure that each source of data complemented and deepened the other, I started with questionnaires, followed by participant observation, then focus group and individual interviews. I asked permission before audio-taping any information obtained from the FGDs or observations. As part of participant observation activity, and in order to keep track of the discussion in case of any malfunctioning of the tape-recorder, notes were taken. The recorder served to store information in its most natural form and also to preserve it for future references. Tape-recording also facilitates transcriptions and guarantees accuracy. The data collection procedure was as follows:

3.5.1 Participant observation

In line with this research, a distinction between observation and participant observation will be drawn.

Observation was considered useful in order to capture natural interactions in tutorials and in lectures. Marshall and Rossman (1989, p. 79) explain that observation is ‘the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study.’ Observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a ‘written photograph’ of the situation under study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Creswell (2005, p. 211) on his part, defines observation as ‘the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site’. Therefore, to understand the complexities underlining language practices and the issues of identity I discovered that to get first-hand information from the participants from diverse linguistic backgrounds, it was important to become a participant observer rather than a non-participant observer. My purpose was to discover everyday language practices of these students moving from high schools into a new learning space wherein English became the sole medium of instruction. Silverman (2003, p.45) argues that ‘...in order to understand the world first-hand, you must participate yourself rather than just observe people from a distance’.

I contacted the participants on campus in lecture halls where I attended as a tutor. I attended lectures two times a week and on different venues and this enabled me to approach some of the students and invited them for focus group discussions. However, not all the students that I contacted confirmed their participation but gave me their phone numbers which I called later. The selection of this group of students was most suitable for me because as a tutor, I had the opportunity to interact with them on the different occasions on campus. As such, this offered me the chance to investigate how these students interact with their peers given that English is the lingua franca of the institution.

In this study, I was equally curious to know if these students had abandoned or maintained aspects of their different identities due to their being in an integrated institution where English was the only medium of instruction. The second point of interest was to know whether this medium of instruction had pedagogical implications for the learning and teaching process. This suggested why observation was considered a useful instrument in carrying out this research project.

Why use observation to collect data?

Kawulich (2005) clearly draws a distinction between ethnographers and sociologists when it comes to observation by pointing out that ethnographers try to understand others by observing them and at the same time write a detailed account of others' lives from an outsider point of view. Sociologists on their part have taken a more insider viewpoint by studying groups in their cultures. This research found both views quite enriching as it enabled the researcher to gain an insight of the participants' language practices and how they interacted with peers in given spaces or situations. While observing these first year undergraduate students in both tutorials and in lectures I had a clear understanding of what actually transpired in these learning spaces. This method of data collection enabled me to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacted with whom, grasp how participants communicated with one another, and checks how much time was spent on various activities.

In the lecture hall that could accommodate more or less 350 students I observed students for two semesters which was useful for my research. I was able to pick out useful details that tied up with communication barriers during lectures. In a situation where a student could not ask or answer a question, either more of body language was used or the linguistic code was switched. It was not uncommon to identify particular students taking the same seats and sitting with the same peers in lectures. In this case the choice of peer group was more the issue of where they were from and how well they related to each other. During lectures, these students frequently used their home languages Afrikaans or Xhosa for discussion. The lecturer of the module, Academic literacy (EDC 111) was a 'coloured' lady and an Afrikaans speaker. In this way students whose first language was Afrikaans most of the time switched from English to Afrikaans in responding to a question posed by the lecturer or attempting to answer a question for clarity, while Xhosa speakers did not have this option.

According to Dewalt and Dewalt (2002, p. 92) "the goal for design of research using participant observation as a method is to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method." Participant observation can be used to help answer research questions, to build theory, or to generate or test hypotheses (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). Kawulich (2005) on his part argues that participant observation should be used as a way to increase the

validity of the study, as observations may help the researcher have a better understanding of the context and phenomenon under study. Therefore, in using observation as a data collection method, the site as an integrated institution was carefully chosen to gain a better insight into the language practices of the diverse population.

Advantages of participation observation

Through participant observation, researchers can uncover factors important for a thorough understanding of the research problem but that were unknown when the study was designed (Creswell, 1998). This is the great advantage of the method because, although we may get truthful answers to the research questions we ask, we may not always ask the right questions. Thus, what we learn from participant observation can help us not only to understand data collected through other methods (such as interviews, focus groups, and quantitative research methods), but also to design questions for those methods that will give us a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Although observation has the above important advantages which makes it suitable for this research, it is also limited in that sometimes the results do not reflect the actual behaviour of the learners. The closeness and presence of the researcher has a direct impact and can negatively affect the behaviour of the participant and may also result in biases which may later affect the researcher's objectivity in the analysis of the data (Cohen and Manion, 1996).

Disadvantages of participant observation

The main disadvantage of participant observation is that it is time-consuming. In traditional ethnographic research, researchers spend at least one year in the field site collecting data through participant observation and other methods. This is not practical for most applied research studies. A second disadvantage of participant observation is the difficulty of documenting the data – it is hard to write down everything that is important while you are participating and observing. As the researcher, you must therefore rely on your memory and on your own personal discipline to write down your observations as soon as possible. The quality of the data therefore depends on 'the diligence of the researcher, rather than on technology such as tape recorders' (Mack et al, 2005, p. 15).

A third disadvantage of participant observation is that it is a subjective process whereas research should be as objective as possible. It is therefore important to make a clear distinction between reporting and describing versus interpreting (Mack et al, 2005).

Field notes

Field notes are the basis on which ethnographies are created. These are copious field notes made by the researcher throughout the whole time in the field (Geoffrey, 2009). During this period of fieldwork and observation, I found Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein (1997) useful as a guide to developing field notes as follows:

- Date, time, and place of observation
- Specific facts, numbers, details of what happens at the site
- Sensory impressions: sights, sounds, textures, smells, taste
- Personal responses to the fact of recording field notes
- Specific words, phrases, summaries of conversations, and insider language
- Questions about people or behaviours at the site for future investigation

Field notes can offer ‘subtle and complex understanding of others’ lives, routines and meanings’ (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 13). Therefore I used field notes to discover or create participants’ meanings.

Lecture halls in the Science building

In lecture Halls specifically in (Sc1 & Sc6) I observed between 400 and 595 students attending first year modules over a period of two semesters. The first thing I noticed was the seating positions, and the question of who sat next to whom. I discovered that the hall was split into two camps, that is, the black students occupying one camp and the ‘coloured’ Afrikaans speakers, another section of the hall. It appeared that those who sat elsewhere did so because they came late and had to sit anywhere in order to listen to lectures and take notes. During the period of observation I made sure that I sat somewhere right at back in order not to be noticed. Here I could move easily from one point to another. The question ‘who speaks to whom and for how long’ was a tricky one as some students engaged in endless conversation till the end of the lesson. In terms of who initiated interaction, it

appeared to be those students who had laptops and were networking. Most of the students were discussing in their mother tongue except those who were non-South Africans and could not speak any of the indigenous languages.

I discovered that students from the same linguistic backgrounds identified most with those who shared the same background and had a lot in common. What stood out clearly as a distinguishing factor was language - Afrikaans, isiXhosa, English or any other. It was quite rare to find South African students speaking or conversing informally in a language other than their first language. This pattern continued into tutorials and lectures especially when these students from the same background sat together. The audio taped sessions in tutorials and lectures clearly showed how students frequently discussed matters in their mother tongue.

Physical behaviour and gestures. Differences were quite obvious or noticeable among students who come from different social-economic and cultural as well as political and religious backgrounds and quite indicative of the integrated nature of the institution.

3.5.2 The questionnaire as a research instrument

According to Van Ransburg, Landman & Bodenstein (1994, p. 504), the questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with some topic or related group of topics given to a selected group of individuals for the purposes of gathering information on a problem under consideration. Put differently, questionnaires are 'any written instruments that represent participants with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers' (Brown, 2001, p. 6).

Questionnaires are used especially as a means of collecting information from a wider sample than can be reached by personal interview. Questionnaires are also employed as devices to gather information about people's opinions, often asking participants to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement given, but sometimes merely posing a question and giving participants space in which to formulate their own replies. According to Dowling, (2010, p. 233), Likert has greatly formalised this procedure through the creation of the Likert scale, a format in which participants are asked to strongly agree,

agree, or strongly disagree, or perhaps strongly approve, approve and so forth, with a statement or question.

The questions can either be open-ended or closed. If the purpose is to help discover new qualitative material, then it is better to have more open and unstructured questions. Questionnaires in qualitative research often contain a mixture of the two in order to elicit more information that would be helpful in providing answers to the research questions.

The questionnaire was chosen as a research instrument because it offers participants the opportunity to give honest answers to statements which otherwise would have appeared personal in face-to-face interaction.

Construction of questionnaire

Questionnaires are a popular research tool because most investigators assume that they know how to ask questions (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995, p.115). In this way, Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990) insist that it is advisable to discuss questions with a specialist in order to have proper guidelines so the set of questions reflect the phenomenon under investigation. An important aim in the construction of the questionnaire for this investigation was to present the questions in a simple, orderly and straightforward manner so as to have the most relevant and honest responses from the respondent as possible.

The researcher further aimed to avoid ambiguity, vagueness, bias, and complex language in the questions in case these led to misunderstanding. The questions constructed were directed at student responses with regard to different situations where they interacted as indicated in the following scenarios: Peer-peer relationship and student-tutor relationship as well as student-lecturer relationship and finally formal and informal situations.

Characteristics of a good questionnaire

Throughout the construction of the questionnaire the researcher had to consider the characteristics of a good questionnaire in order to meet the requirements necessary for the research instrument to be reliable. Some of the characteristics of a good questionnaire are, following Norval (1990, p.60): It has to deal with a significant topic that the respondent will recognise as important enough to spend his time on. The significance should be clearly and carefully stated on the questionnaire and in the consent form. It must be as short as

possible, but long enough to be understood. Each question has to deal with a single concept and should be worded as simply and straightforwardly as possible.

Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires

The designed questionnaires were personally handed to a group of 90 students in three tutorial groups. The written questionnaire as a research instrument, to obtain information, has the following advantages (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995): affordability and the ability to reach a large sample of the target group, a guard against possible interview bias (that is, the way the interviewer asks questions and even the interviewer's general appearance or interaction may influence participants' answers), anonymity, time to consider answers before responding, greater ease of analysis and interpretation than verbal responses. A respondent may answer questions of a personal nature more openly on a questionnaire than in face-to-face situations with an interviewer who may be a complete stranger.

Disadvantages of the questionnaire

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990) a key disadvantage of the questionnaire is lack of flexibility. In an interview an idea or comment can be explored. This makes it possible to understand how people are interpreting the question whereas with a written questionnaire there is no chance of clarifying or elaborating answers. Also, if participants interpret questions differently, the validity of the information obtained will be jeopardised. Moreover, people are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing. A further issue is that participants may ask friends or family members to comment on their answers, causing bias if the participant's own opinions are needed.

The questionnaires were delivered by hand during tutorials in five different groups to the participants. This was followed by a consent form explaining the purpose of the research attached as Appendix A. Before the questionnaires were distributed to all participants, I explained to them that the research aims and it would be helpful to our educational system in many ways and that it would become successful only through their participation.

3.5.3. Interviews

Interviewing is a versatile technique for gathering and collecting data on multilingualism and useful in obtaining both linguistic productions from multilingual speakers and also content data (Codo, 2003). Interviews provide large amounts of data for analysis in the form of open-ended questions. This flexibility allowed the participants to voice their

feelings to the researcher. As a principal researcher, I personally conducted each interview; recorded on tape and made notes during the course of the interviews. The audio taped data was listened to over and over, and later on transcribed for accuracy as details could have been missed otherwise. Interviews were conducted and each session lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. In the interests of time and my inexperience in transcribing, the task of transcribing the interviews was outsourced to a qualified person and the transcription was done properly and correctly. For sessions done in tutorials and lectures, I could not equally transcribe because greater portions of it were either in Afrikaans and Isi-Xhosa. Two qualified persons were assigned by my supervisor for transcription and translation.

Audio-taped interviews

Interviewing as a qualitative research tool according to Seidman (1998) is designed to elicit meanings of experiences. By drawing on students as participants, the aim was to gain an insight of their experiences and perceptions as they engaged and socialised with their peers in different spaces or domains (tutorials, lectures halls, on campus and off campus). Audio taping these interviews provided the researcher an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of relevant details that participants could not provide in answering questionnaires. Interviewing, Seidman (1989, p.4) writes, allows us 'to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding participants' action'. In this way I was able to capture participants' natural responses and in turn, study the transcripts, mark and label them, and organise categories of excerpts for a proper understanding of the actions and experiences of the participants.

Rubin & Rubin (1995, p. 2) insist that 'qualitative interviewing is more than a set of skills; it is also a philosophy, an approach to learning'. This approach to learning according to Rubin & Rubin (1995, p.2) is that first, 'understanding is achieved by encouraging people to describe their worlds in their own terms;' second, 'interviewing involves a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee that imposes obligations on both sides;' and finally, 'the philosophy helps define what is interesting and what is ethical and provide standards to judge the quality of the research, the humanity of the interviewing relationship, and the completeness and accuracy of the write-up'.

Focus group interviews

Four participants were randomly selected and interviewed. The reason to interview four participants was based on a few factors. First, this number is viable and these participants

are from different backgrounds -Afrikaans, Isi-Xhosa and English (Seidman, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Denzin, 1994). This selected number of interviewees falls with several sources recommended using a small number of participants for a descriptive study that includes interviewing as the instrument for collecting data.

Lincoln & Denzin (1998) suggest interviewing six participants when employing a strategy that employs in-depth conversations. Creswell (1998) cites Dukes and Rieman (1991) who suggest that it is sufficient to include two to ten participants in studies that involve interviews. One peer-reviewed study on teachers employed the Seidman approach to interviewing included two participants (Bacon, 2002). Though it has been argued that the number of participants to be interviewed as individuals range between 2 to 6 or 10, the my point of concern is that the issues that the research question seeks to address varies from researcher to researcher and this directly or indirectly determines the number of participants to be interviewed.

Individual interviews

Though focus group interview was one of the strategies used in gathering data, individual interviews were conducted to overcome some of the shortcomings of focus group interviews such as large group dynamics. Individual in-depth interviews were as such conducted with students randomly selected from different five tutorial groups. Open-ended questions were used to enable the participants to contribute in greater detail what they thought or felt about the language policy in the tertiary institution. The aim was to determine the perceptions of participants with regard to the medium of instruction and not to invade participants' privacy, most especially on issues of language practices that can be quite sensitive within a multilingual society. Thus issues of ethical considerations were taken into account at every stage of data collection to assure participants of confidentiality.

3.2.3 Data Collection Procedures

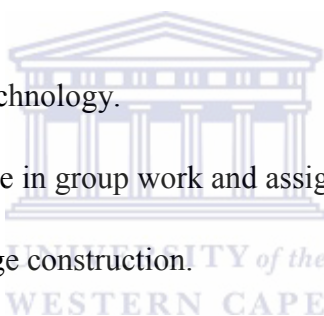
An Olympus WS-100 digital voice recorder was used to record the interviews, and field notes were taken as the interview was conducted. Transcription of the interviews is included in the Appendices. All of the data and recordings were securely stored to ensure privacy and confidentiality. The researcher provided the participants with consent forms with an overview of the study. The information and consent form is in the Appendices.

3.6 Data analysis and reporting findings

The researcher followed a qualitative approach to address the research questions. First, the transcriptions were studied to extract quotes that were representative of several emerging themes generated by the data and this was done without addressing the research question.

The researcher kept notes of impressions and ideas while the transcriptions were being made and as the interviews were studied for categories and themes. During the coding process, the researcher read the transcriptions and circled categories of interest and made a note of these and possible related themes in the margins of the pages (Seidman, 1998). As part of the analytical process, I examined the interview transcripts often to ensure the categories and themes were grounded in the data as suggested by Rubin & Rubin (1995). The themes that emerged during the coding were later reduced with a focus on overarching themes. The following themes emerged from this process:

1. Academic background.
2. Lecturing style and use of technology.
3. Interference of mother tongue in group work and assignments
4. Social identity and knowledge construction.
5. Academic writing challenges and writing conventions
6. Different accents leading to misunderstanding
7. Terminology or difficult language disempowers learning
8. Communication difficulties in different learning spaces
9. Frequent use of mother tongue in different domains.
10. Participants' view on language practices and language policy
11. Lack of discipline and academic motivation
12. Transition, social and academic changes
13. Language as a salient marker
14. Equity of access and success

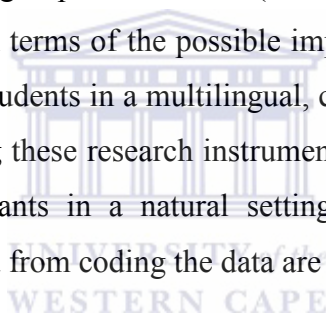


3.7 Ethical considerations

For ethical reasons, I introduced myself to participants and briefed them on the aims of the research project. I told them that their identities would remain anonymous and their free and unforced consent was always solicited. The participants were free to withdraw at any point during the interviews. I recorded the participants' discussion only if they allowed me to do so. The participants were interviewed in English but in course of the focus group interview, some of the participants from time to time turned to discuss with their peers in their own language. It was only during the interview session that I discovered that the participants had studied in different institutions such as 'model C' schools and public schools. Audio data will be destroyed once this thesis is examined.

3.8 Conclusion

A greater part of the research thus presents an analysis and interpretation of students' discourse in tutorials, focus group discussions (FGDs), and individual interviews. A conclusion is then advanced in terms of the possible implications that this study may hold for the language practices of students in a multilingual, culturally and linguistically diverse integrated institution. By using these research instruments, the rationale is to have a better understanding of the participants in a natural setting for data needed for qualitative analysis. The themes generated from coding the data are taken up in the next chapter.



Chapter 4: Presentation of Data

4. Introduction

This chapter presents the data gathered using various methods including: questionnaire, participation observation, audio recording, focus group and individual interviews, and ends with a comparison of findings from all data.

4.1 Findings from questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed and divided into two sections. Section A was designed to elicit the language practices of the participants off campus and Section B, languages practices on campus (see Appendix B).

The participants spoke Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English as well as other languages. From the questionnaire it was evident that some of the participants could speak more than three languages as indicated in the table below.

Table 4.1 Languages spoken by participants

Number of languages spoken	English only	Afrikaans and English	Xhosa and English	English, Afrikaans and Xhosa	English, Afrikaans and Chinese	Xhosa, English and other African languages
1	1					
2		52				
2			4			
3				2		
3					1	
4-5						2

As shown above, it was found that only one student was monolingual and 56 students were bilingual, that is, they could speak either Afrikaans and English (52) or English and Xhosa (4). Two students indicated that they were multilingual because they spoke English,

Afrikaans, and Xhosa. Two students spoke 4 to 5 languages. One person spoke Chinese in addition to English and Afrikaans.

Table 4.2 Participants' first languages

Afrikaans	English	Xhosa	Chinese	Sesotho
49	42	19	1	1

The findings showed that 49 (43.75%) of the students' first language was Afrikaans followed by 42 (37.5%) who specified that their first language was English. 19 (16.9%) identified themselves as native speakers of Xhosa and there was one speaker each of Chinese and Sesotho as first language.

Table 4.3 Participants' second languages

English	Afrikaans	Xhosa	Chinese	Sesotho
68	43	1		

According to the questionnaire, therefore, 68 (60.7%) of the students spoke English as a second language and 43(38.3%) spoke Afrikaans as a second language and only 1(0.89%) spoke Chinese. It is notable that only one student spoke Xhosa as a second language.

Based on the questionnaire, the participants indicated that a language was used depending on the domain as follows.

Table 4.4 Domains of use

Domain	Afrikaans	English	Xhosa	Other(specify)
at home	76(58.4%)	48(36.9%)	24(18.4%)	2(1.5%)
in the shops	52(40%)	88(67.6%)	17(13.0%)	
in the gym	38(29.2%)	76(58.4%)	12(9.2%)	
on trains or buses/taxis	63(48.4%)	75(57.6%)	20(15.3%)	1(0.76%)

at gatherings with friends	64(49.2%)	60(46.1%)	34(26.1%)	1((0.76%)
on a pleasure trip	52(40.0%)	52(58.4%)	20(15.3%)	1((0.76%)

On question number 3 relating to the medium of instruction in secondary schools, it was found that 45(34.6%) of the students studied in English and 43(33%) in Afrikaans while 8(6.1%) studied in Xhosa and English, 8(6.1%) studied in both Afrikaans and English and 2(2.6%) studied in Xhosa.

Table 4.5 Participants' medium of instruction at secondary school

English	Afrikaans	Xhosa/English	Afrikaans/English	Xhosa
45(34.6%)	43(33%)	8(6.1%)	8(6.1%)	11(8.6%)

The next question (number 4) was whether English should be the only medium of instruction that should be used in a tertiary institution. The participants' response was based on an adapted Likert value scale (-1.Strongly agree 2. Agree 3.Slightly disagree 4.Strongly Disagree 5.Disagree). I chose to structure the scale in this way to make sure that participant thought carefully about their responses and did not just tick 'Disagree'. I wanted to know the strength of their commitment to their position. 21 (26.5%) indicated 'Slightly disagree' followed by 18 (22.7%) for those who strongly agree and Agree. In a similar way 10 (12.6%) and 12 (15.1%) Strongly disagree and disagree respectively that English should be used as a medium of instruction. Overall therefore, and significantly, 54% of students disagreed with English as the sole language of learning.

Besides the fact that English was used as a medium of instruction in a tertiary institution as indicated, there was a question (number 5) that specifically required participants to indicate whether they use English on campus to communicate with students from diverse backgrounds. In answer to this, responses varied significantly showing that there was a certain degree of social interaction between students from different linguistic backgrounds as follows: 47 (59.4%) of the participants indicated that they communicate in English all the time while on campus. Another 20 (25.3%) pointed out that they frequently had discussions with their peers in English. 9 (11.3%) of the participants clearly indicated that

they use English only some of the time while on campus. This was followed by a 3 (3.9%) response from students who occasionally communicated in English. There were no participants who never discussed anything in English.

In responding to the question of their preferred language for discussing academic work with peers (question 7), 44 (61.9%) preferred using Afrikaans and 27 (38.0%) preferred Xhosa. The table below shows responses of participants in terms of English as a preferred language in this university (UWC) in different learning spaces (question 6):

Table 4.6 Student perspectives on the use of English in formal learning spaces

We should use English ONLY in this university for:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Lectures	27(31.7%)	29(34.1%)	17(20.0%)	3(3.5%)	9(10.5%)
Doing assignments	27(31.7%)	33(38.8%)	18(21.1%)	0%	4(4.7%)
Doing group work	18(21.1%)	22(25.8%)	28(32.9%)	3(3.5%)	5(5.8%)
Reading materials	32(37.6%)	23(27.0%)	10(11.7%)	6(7.05%)	7(8.2%)
Giving tutorials	30(35.2%)	20(23.5%)	18(21.1%)	4(4.7%)	7(8.2%)
Participating in tutorials	21(24.75%)	24(28.2%)	21(24.75%)	6(7.05%)	8(9.4%)
Getting and giving information from university employees in offices	24(28.2%)	26(30.5%)	15(17.6%)	4(4.7%)	7(8.2%)

Even though a good number of participants expressed their interest to communicate in English in different spaces, some equally expressed concerns about their competence in the

use of English in tutorials and lectures. 42.8% of the students indicated that they felt their English was not good enough to participate in lectures and in tutorials. In addition, 12.5% of the students expressed concerns about their accents in that they felt their tutors or lecturers did not understand them.

33.9% of the students on their part equally expressed that they did not understand their lecturers or tutors either in tutorials or in lectures.

10.7% of the student said that they did not often participate in regular lectures and tutorials because their peers often laughed at their poor English.

Most participants considered understanding to be a crucial factor in communication as a result of language barrier. The responses from students seem to indicate that the current choice of the Language of Learning and Teaching was implemented without due consideration to factors like socio-economic background and previous academic background of the students.

4.1.1 Discussion of questionnaire

Medium of instruction



The study seeks to understand how students from different socio-cultural backgrounds use their various repertoires to interact amongst themselves and with lecturers in a multilingual space. It examines the effects of the institutionalization of the dominant language and its implications for the construction of academic identities in a tertiary institution in the Western Cape. The first question was meant to identify the students' first, second or third language. As shown above, 49 (43.75%) of the students' first language was Afrikaans followed by 42 (37.5%) who specified that their first language was English and 19 (16.9%) were identified as native speakers of Xhosa and the rest of the students spoke Chinese and Sesotho.

From the findings it is indicative that Afrikaans speakers dominate in this group of first year students followed by English first language speakers with Xhosa speakers occupying the third position, yet English is the medium of instruction. This monolingual policy is in direct contrast with the multilingual reality in South Africa with citizens having a right to a language of their choice. Thus a medium of instruction that does not serve the interests of both the advantaged and disadvantaged students from different socio-economic and

linguistic backgrounds may hinder them from obtaining the cultural capital they need to access jobs and other goods.

As mentioned in chapter 2 Bourdieu & Passeron (1990) argued that linguistic capital is an important component of a broader 'cultural capital' that favours those from the privileged classes to achieve academic success while those from a low socio-economic background are at a disadvantage. Thus, the possession of approved linguistic capital is essential to academic success. As indicated by the questionnaire, most of the students whose first language is not English, would be, according to Bourdieu (1991), linguistically handicapped in that they did not possess the language that would allow them to study effectively. He argued, among other things that at higher levels of education students with relatively limited linguistic capital have difficulty in understanding the convoluted language of their professors. In this sense, 'academic language is never anyone's mother tongue, even for the privileged classes' (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p.115) and those who have to learn this new academic language through another language, in which they may not be comfortable, labour under double burden.

Therefore perspectives of language as a resource and language as an asset have not been used to meet the needs of the student with different resources and different potentials given their socio-economic backgrounds. Above all, the state fails to create a linguistic market for indigenous languages to be used as a medium of instruction in tertiary institutions of learning so as to accommodate all students based on their constitutional rights, the right to a learn in a language of their choice. The monolingual ideology undervalues the linguistic diversity of the society and the needs of the students.

Language of preference and multilingualism

From the investigation of the language practices of the first year undergraduate students, the findings indicate that even though a good number of the participants expressed their interest to communicate in English in different spaces, some equally expressed concerns about their competence in the use of English and their Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in tutorials and in lectures because the question of language proficiency and students' and tutors' or lecturers' different accents further compounded their difficulties with understanding when in lectures or in tutorials. Bourdieu & Passeron (1990) argue that teachers constantly evaluate students in terms of their use and understanding of language and that these evaluations generally find students from disadvantaged backgrounds

wanting. According to Bourdieu & Passeron (1990, p.73) the net effect of such processes is that, 'The educational mortality rates ...increase[s] as one moves towards the classes most distant from everyday language'. Alexander (2000) in his titled article, 'English unassailable but unattainable' echoes this notion of linguistic capital and language competence in South Africa as not attainable.

Phillipson (2010, p.2) has thus argued that universities need to pay attention to the student body so as to re-imagine universities as 'multilingual spaces' where learning and educating practices need to empower students to draw on their funds of knowledge.

The responses from students drawn from the questionnaire together with Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) notion of linguistic capital indicate that language both empowers and disempowers students, especially the underprivileged. Thus the 2002 Language Policy for Higher Education and the institutional language policy, although promoting multilingualism, failed to encourage the kinds of transformation necessary for students to draw on their hidden talents to overcome academic obstacles. The issue is that these students need a learning environment which encourages the use of all linguistic resources at students' disposal.

4.2 Focus group findings

The following presentation is based on participant responses during the focus group discussions. This second section addresses themes generated that tied up with the research question, aims and objectives of the research. During the focus group sessions, questions that were not fully addressed through the questionnaire because of limited space could be explored in more depth because of the open-ended nature of the questions. From focus groups the following themes were generated:

- a) Multilingualism
- b) Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- c) The impact of early transition
- d) Inequality and educational failure-educational background
- e) Inappropriateness between official language Policy and Language practice in schools and higher education.

- f) Linguistic innovation-code switching and social interaction in different spaces.
- g) Language as a barrier to communication that impacts on writing quality.

The above emerging themes reflect participants' experiences in different situations. For example, when they were asked to talk about their first few weeks on campus and their experiences, the participants in this case referred to as (students) SS1.....SS5 responded differently. As seen from the excerpt below (SS1) one student expressed the difficulties and challenges encountered in academic writing with an emphasis on referencing and referencing list contrary to what they were taught in school about bibliography. Here it is access to academic discourses and conventions that was at issue.

In contrast, the second participant (SS2) had no problem during the first few weeks on campus. But the third participant (SS3) pointed out her frustrations in lectures and in tutorials wherein both the lecturer and tutor differed on giving instructions on how to approach their task. The lack of clear instruction on the side of the lecturer and tutor added to the students' frustration as they were caught between losing marks if they took sides with either the lecturer or the tutor.

As seen in another instance, as in the case of (SS4), the student grappled with language that inadvertently led to his inability to express his ideas properly as *'so you end up not knowing what I am trying to say'*. As to why this happens, one of the participants (SS1) explained that they were taught *'how to answer the teacher in Afrikaans but here at the University, you must think in English and communicate to your tutor back, a new challenge.'*

The new environment was completely different as things were done at a much higher level, unlike at school, especially when it came to writing an essay. One indicated

'you can write anything that comes but now it's a different story, you have to do research, to support your ideas and at school, you can just write your ideas and nothing to support your ideas.'

All the participants admitted that they struggled to understand what tutors say and a further explanation was that *'some of the tutors are not from South Africa.'* Besides that they equally complained that they do not understand what some of the students say in

lectures and in tutorials. 'Ja, *the way those outside South Africa, they speak a different way.*'

SS1: Coloured speak in a different way. Even us (Xhosa) so, like don't understand each easily, yep'.

So issues of intercultural communication lead to misunderstandings:

SS1: Even though we are speaking English, we are not speaking the same way.

At the level of difficulties in lectures, the participants had both positive and negative responses.

SS2: I don't have any difficulties. I enjoy M's class a lot. The only problem is, kind of late in the day, I fall asleep.

SS3: I would say in my Language and communication class, the lecturer kind of, elaborate ..., I suppose his high level of... He is got too much knowledge, stuff that we don't know.

The participants indicated that they had study groups and that in these various groups they discussed in their mother tongues. The general response indicated that these students were comfortable discussing in their study groups in the mother tongue for a better understanding. The question that followed was: In what language do you explain when there is misunderstanding?

The students responded in favour of the mother tongue. This was expanded in the focus group discussion below.

A question was asked about the languages students used at home and their responses showed that some spoke exclusively their mother tongue and others spoke two languages as indicated from the excerpt below:

Researcher: What language do you speak when you are at home?

Luyanda: Xhosa

Female student-1: Afrikaans

Female student-2: Afrikaans and English

Male student-1 English

As this discussion continued, the researcher asked the students to say how often they went to the student centre and to indicate what languages they used to communicate while with their peers. Again the students responded differently

SS1: *...I speak Afrikaans with my friends but if I am with an English speaking person, I speak English to accommodate them.*

SS2: *Xhosa. ...It depends, on the situation. But most of the time in... in Xhosa*

In order to solicit more information from the students, a question followed about the language policy of the tertiary institution which they currently attended. They responded in different ways relating to the multilingual nature of the institution and the nation as a whole as follows:

Female student -1: *I think the lecturers, it's okay in English because we are too diverse to accommodate everybody but with our tutorials we in a smaller groups so we can at least find, Afrikaans tutors who can explain to us in Afrikaans so we can understand the topics and staff better]*

Female student-3: *If a test I think they can put Afrikaans, and in Xhosa and in Afrikaans put in Afrikaans and in English like put in different languages in one paper, almost like the Matric exams. We have two[different languages in one paper.*

Female student-1... *ends up in a debate. ... are too diverse, we can't just think about people in South Africa that comes to UWC to study. What about like we have Chinese people here, and people from Zimbabwe, Nigeria that speak different languages. What about them?.*

Male student-1: *That's why I think it should just be English*

Luyanda: *English is fine*

In Focus Group Discussion number 3, the students had contrary views or continued generating different ideas as seen from the following excerpt:

SS: *I think you have the right to be taught in your own language of preference but it create chaos, it's like now you have to get tutors who will speak Xhosa, Afrikaans, Zulu or whatsoever. I think they are using English to accommodate all the students.*

SS: *To me, English is alright but in tutorials they have to have someone who can speak for people who speak Afrikaans if the lecture is in Xhosa in order for them to relate.*

They were asked to choose a language that they would like to use if asked to participate in a public debate about students' academic problems in their institution.

SS-1: *For me English is alright or even Xhosa can be alright, it is a debate, depending on the audience how they gonna feel and how to send that message because if it is Afrikaans people somebody gonna speak. But English is the normal one, you can, even if it is in school with different races, it is easy to relate to the people because you will prepare as if it is not my language and we prepare what is expected of them.*

SS-2: *I prefer my language-I prefer Xhosa.*

SS-3: *Even for me I prefer my language but for a speech I prepare if you don't want to make a mistake because I know I have to go to a debate.*

SS-1: *If you speak in your language it will limit the audience if you had to speak Xhosa, it is only for Xhosa.*

SS-2: *... my language, there is no need to even prepare. You can just get up and do it but if it is another language I have to think and put a lot of things*

SS-3: *Personally I will choose Afrikaans because when you debate you debate but because like, it's not just Afrikaans people like it's gonna be different Mother tongue, you gonna do it in English*

Researcher: Okay. So, if you were given the chance, would you discuss in Afrikaans?

SS-3: *yes, in Afrikaans*

SS-1: *I use my Xhosa*

Researcher: why would you do that?

SS-2: *I can express myself better*

The Focus Group Discussion ended with participants expressing their feelings about their previous schools where they studied which they regarded either as an advantage or a disadvantage to their present situation in the university.

Researcher: Do you see where you studied as an advantage or a disadvantage in terms of studies in this university?

SS-1: *yes, an advantage*

Researcher: *Can you explain that?*

SS-1: *Because in my case, I was in a model C school [a school formerly for white learners only]*

Researcher: *Model C school, what does that mean?*

Ss: *Stands for private schools [sic, they were state-funded]*

Researcher: *so?*

SS -1: *The type of work they give to students, it doesn't seem different from here, the workload, because I was use to that, and everything is more English than Afrikaans. It is easy for me.*

SS-2: *It was a disadvantage to me. Even in classes ... In our class we speak Xhosa....it was a disadvantage to me.*

Researcher: So you studied more in Afrikaans, so where you studied was a disadvantage?

SS-3: *It is a disadvantage*

Researcher: Why do you think studying in Afrikaans was a disadvantage to you, now?

SS-3: *Because here we have to use English all the time and there at (school) we only studied. English as a subject, during English periods*

Researcher: After that?

SS-1: *We use Xhosa. So it is a disadvantage. Workload is much more now than it was when I was in school because it must accommodate people were not so clever*

like....so ya the workload is much more, like, a kind of like.. more difficult....)

SS: *And you can't have a friend here who is different from your home town, who you can discuss and, study with, language comes as a challenge if you don't understand each other.*

Researcher: And what about you?

SS-2: *Me? It was a disadvantage, because I was in a school where drugs was used, most students come there 'high', and teachers were only.....so it was more corrupt, the school was corrupt... they were few teachers, so students can just do what they want. To me it was a big disadvantage.*

Researcher: In terms of medium of instruction, did you study in

SS-3: *Afrikaans. And in an English class, it was still an Afrikaans teacher, so it wasn't much control in the school.*

Researcher: So about your teachers, were they bilingual, or multilingual in the sense that they speak more than two languages in class?

SS-3: *Bilingual*

SS-2: *And in my school, a few were multilingual. History teachers could speak more than four languages, can speak Dutch*

Researcher: What about you...?

SS4: *Yes .., in high school it was Xhosa. .. everything .., they translate in Xhosa. Even if they teach me in English. They know I am going to understand and they translate it, and then here, compare my situation with someone who studied at English school, for example, so obviously they will be a big difference in terms of language because here most of the academic side they use English, you don't have a choice, so it was a disadvantage because of the background, and I didn't feel then it can become or cause me a disadvantage but now....So I told myself now that I can't let my child studied in Xhosa. I rather take my child to an English school so that things can go on smoothly at tertiary level.*

The student further commented on circumstances in under-resourced rural schools where they studied while wondering if things would be improved years later, as seen in the excerpt below:

SS5: *... maybe 10 years back in that site of the rural area, other areas have advantage of computers and stuff even the library but in our time, there was nothing like that, we only see it when come here. They catch us off guard.*

SS4: *I studied in Afrikaans schools and here I studied in English. All books are in Afrikaans. I studied in that –assignments and so on. I also think some words, like pronunciation of some words; I have to go back to the dictionary to look meaning of certain words. So, I am struggling. But I think we will get there.*

The above findings are further discussed in relation to the research question, conceptual and theoretical framework as follows:

4.2.1 Discussion of focus group data

In this case, using focus group interviews elicited diverse views about language of preference in educational situations which indicated that, particularly in a multilingual society, the wisdom of a de facto monolingual language policy is highly debatable.

Academic discourses

Zamel (1998, p.187) defines academic discourse as ‘a specialized form of reading, writing, and thinking done in the ‘academy’ or other schooling situations. She also explains that ‘each discipline represents a separate culture community’ (p.187). Her point of argument is that when students enter into an academic community, they have to learn how to choose the right vocabulary and the proper expression in different contexts, how to behave in specific situations, and to understand the culture of the community. Language requirements differ across disciplines. Within the context of higher education, particularly in the Faculty of Education at entry level, students are expected to carry out research, theorise concepts, criticise, analyse and write academic essays in academic language. Therefore a mastery of specific academic discourses is important no matter in which discipline students are registered. But then when students with different language proficiency levels meet in a study programme, it becomes a problem how they write, socialise and interact with their peers, tutors and lecturers in a given space that requires knowledge construction. In

analysing core ideas that emanate from the focus group discussions, I draw on different conceptual frameworks for a better understanding of the language practices of the students.

Language choices in multilingual contexts

The entry of students with different linguistic backgrounds into a de facto monolingual institution, at least in terms of teaching practices, provides us with an opportunity to investigate how these students merge their pre-existing linguistic repertoires with those they acquire in the new monolingual context in which they are immersed, how this integration shapes the different proficiencies in their language repertoires, and how this impacts on them in different social positions.

In a practical situation, no one would want to engage in an academic discourse through a language in which he or she is not competent. In a similar way, excerpts from the focus group discussion indicate that the students had language choices or a language of preference that they felt more comfortable to engage in academically and in different scenarios. To determine this, the researcher asked the students to indicate the language that they used in doing assignments and group work. Their responses were followed by explicit explanations.

Female student: *Afrikaans ... I think it's better; it's most definitely better in your mother-tongue. You'll explain it in your mother-tongue then afterwards you will, like use English because that's the medium of instruction.*

Male student: *With my friends I use Xhosa most of the time when I talk but I translate it to English when I write.*

There is no doubt about it that the students who preferred doing their tasks in Afrikaans and Xhosa were more resourceful in their first languages than in English. Thus in a multilingual institution students should be allowed to draw on their linguistic repertoires in order to engage in academic work. In this way Phillipson (2010, p.2) maintains that universities as multilingual spaces should create

a safe space for students to discuss difference and similarity (language, cultural and other), to develop their expertise in critical analysis through being exposed to a range of perspectives and to reflect critically on their own assumptions and values.

He emphasises that writing is a craft that takes many years to perfect and the need for sustained attention on collaborative writing ventures can build students' identities as multilinguals or multi-dialectals (Phillipson, 2010, p.2)

In the context of a poststructuralist framework, it is true that language is a marker of the individual's multiple identities in multilingual socio-economic and social contexts as well as institutions such as education as seen in the above interaction between the interviewer and interviewees based on the medium of instruction. Language use serves to position those who speak English as a second language in particular ways. In consonance with this, (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) argue that in this situation, the focus is not just the 'objective' identities of individuals but how certain aspects of their identities are construed subjectively by others (as 'legitimate' or 'illegitimate').

Language of preference at home

As presented in the findings from focus group discussions, students indicated the language(s) spoken at home as follows

Researcher: What language do you speak when you are at home?

Male student-1: *Xhosa. When I'm home I speak Xhosa only... most people are speaking Xhosa. So if you are speaking English ... you trying to show them that you are better or yabona. So it's better to speak Xhosa.*

Female student-1: *Afrikaans*

Female student-2: *Afrikaans and English*

The responses from the students re-emphasise the position of mother tongue both at home and within the context of education. The question of cultural identity is further highlighted through a male student's remarks, as he is caught between the colonial ideology, one of assimilation and being perceived as thinking of himself superior if he speaks English as against expressing himself through his own language, Xhosa. Such perspectives are inherent in poststructuralist paradigms that treat language as multidimensional and subject to negotiation across contexts (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). Constructionist perspectives too conceptualise identities as an interactional accomplishment produced and negotiated in discourse (Wodak, 2001).

However the complexity of the situation on campus is evident in the response of the second female student above who speaks Afrikaans and English as home languages. This points once more to the dangers of 'binary' thinking in allocating a given language to a given cultural group.

Language, new space and academic challenges

Communication can only be effective when those involved clearly understand each other. This process can be achieved through language whether verbal or non-verbal. In the second focus group students clearly pointed out some of the problems they encountered through language in a new space and the challenges they faced in different spaces with their peers and tutors as well as with lecturers, such as referencing, lack of knowledge of academic discourses, etc., as evidenced above.

The shift or transition from post-secondary or high school to the university can be a huge challenge both to the privileged and underprivileged, from rural to urban areas, for those from a low economic background and for those from rich homes as well as those from advantaged and disadvantaged communities. This is a problem not only associated with students in South Africa; it is a global problem that everybody is directly or indirectly linked to. In an attempt to understand the challenges faced by these students in their current institution, Lea (1998, p.2) points out that:

Learning in higher education involves adapting to new ways of knowing: new ways of understanding, interpreting and organising knowledge.

Besides the challenges of the new academic environment, other students' crucial problem as shown above related to insufficient knowledge of English which was felt disempowered them academically. Again Lea (1998) emphasises that academic literacy practices -- reading and writing within disciplines -- constitute central processes through which students learn new subjects and develop their knowledge about new areas of study. These new subjects that need to be learnt become problematic to the students in the context of their new situation because English is the exclusive institutional language policy. Many students' comments express frustration at not been able to express ideas explicitly. This second language medium of instruction impacts the struggling students pedagogically, because they cannot draw on their hidden resources through the language medium in use. Language is potentially empowering for people as they constantly build on previous

encounters with the words in their unique search for meaning and value (Corson 2001). In a similar way, Carol (2008, p.6) argues that ‘all human languages are essentially equal in terms of their ability to express the entire range of their speakers’ thoughts and feelings’, but drawing on Bourdieu, she points out that linguistic markets are inevitably hierarchical, giving different values to different languages and people’s competence in them (Bourdieu, 1991).

The new status quo so far has introduced a range of new language education policies, all aimed at addressing crucial problems in schools and in tertiary institutions. However choice of language as medium of instruction is still a problem in tertiary institutions.

4.2.2 Conclusion

From the findings and discussion, it is evident that focus group discussions enabled the researcher to explore issues and clarify how the participants, first year undergraduate students thought about their language practices and the profound impact of studying in a second language in a tertiary institution on their academic attainment. The above focus group methodology is a facilitating way of soliciting information even from those who do not read or write well. Focus group discussion encourages better participant participation from those who do not feel comfortable when interviewed individually.

4.3 Presentation of individual interviews

Individual interviews were conducted, audio taped, transcribed and translated where necessary. Some of the questions raised in the questionnaire and further discussed in the Focus Group were explored in greater depth. Each interview session lasted 45 to 60 minutes (See Appendices for transcripts). The findings are presented below and followed by an analysis of emerging themes.

The interview started with the researcher being anxious to know what language or languages the students read and spoke at home and what language they used as a child. The following excerpts highlight different issues that emerged from the interviews.

Researcher: What language or languages do you read and speak?

Thomas: *Emm English and Afrikaans but I prefer speaking Afrikaans at home and with my friends most of the time but my medium of instruction at school was English.*

Researcher: Why would you prefer to speak more in Afrikaans than in English?

Thomas: *because my home language is Afrikaans, so predominantly when we are around like family and friends it's mostly Afrikaans speaking people. So when you are around people that speak a certain language obviously gonna like fall into what they are speaking.*

Researcher: What languages do you read and speak?

Joy: *I use both English and Afrikaans, speak and read*

During the interview, Joy indicated that she used Afrikaans as a child and studied in an English medium class (called 'English First language'); she drew the attention of the researcher to the fact that her father used to teach her and her sister English. Joy further indicated that her mother used Afrikaans as in the following excerpt:

Joy: *My father used English and my mother used Afrikaans. At school I was in an English class.*

Researcher: What language do you speak at home?

Joy: *I speak English with my nephew so, I use both languages, my father likes to speak English and he is the one who taught me and my sister.*

On campus Joy spoke English with her friends and those friends that spoke Afrikaans eventually adapted and spoke English with her. In addition Joy acknowledged she usually thought in Afrikaans, though it depended, and at time she mixed both Afrikaans and English as indicated below:

Joy: *I speak English, my friends speak mostly English. Some speak Afrikaans so they adapt to speak English.*

Researcher: In which language do you usually think?

Student: *like I said, it depends, if I speak Afrikaans, I think in Afrikaans and at times I mix English and Afrikaans.*

Joy immediately recalled and reminded the researcher of doing the above while she was busy with her assignment in the following lines:

Joy: *Wow! It depends though, like last night, like, I'm busy with an assignment and obviously it has to be in English so if you read a book, like if I read a book and I*

have to think about what I'm reading about, what I'm going to write, I'm obviously going to think in English But if I'm like sitting around to myself then I'll think in Afrikaans, it's like that.

Joy added that she often found herself switching from English to Afrikaans and vice versa while in a conversation with her friends.

Joy: Ja most like of the time, I do that, I code switch, go from English to Afrikaans and back...it's like whaw! You can speak good English and both like Afrikaans, and at certain times is if I start a sentence in Afrikaans and then I can't get to a word then I'm like I know the word in English so I just say it in English and then they will understand what I'm saying so.

There was a shift in focus and the interview then focused on the individual students' experiences during the first few weeks on campus, later in tutorials and in lectures. From the following excerpts different students' expectations were elicited. The first interviewee, Anrich started with a kind of setting the pace before actually responding to the question. His response drew on issues that are highly relevant in the exploration of language practices of the first year undergraduate students.

Anrich: Dominic, my experience of the first week on campus {sighed}, of the few weeks, I had a great experience actually of the environment around the campus and like in my situation, I'm from rural place and my first exploration of the campus or my first introduction, say, my view of campus, my first approach was very nice because it was a new environment. There's a variety of cultures, people that I've met and I mean it was nice for me. I'm here for a purpose of graduating. And I have a lot of opportunities to do that, so I think that is all from me that I'm gonna deliberate on this question, that it was a nice environment for me, I'm here to succeed to my future.

Anrich indicates that his difficulties were getting sources for assignments and so on. His second problem was language, English in which he expressed his desires in preference to Afrikaans. But at the same time he pointed out that there are many cultures on campus. He equally complained of the workload and time management as some of the constraints.

But for Aisha *'It was cool, it was fun like, and was ready to get into a new life, campus life whatever. And mmm was ja it was like, I couldn't wait to start.'*

Aisha's expectations and hopes were soon dashed when the University expected so much from her when she started writing essays

Aisha: *Wow! You know, especially with EDC111, like I say I'm not a fan of writing, I didn't like essays [and like university they expect a certain type of quality when you write.]*

Besides she moved into introspection and drew a line between school and university in terms of academic challenges:

And at school it was different like you could just write anything you did not even need to do research about it, but here it was like you have to go and do a research about and it has to be in a certain way that was like very difficult for me.

On areas of difficulties in tutorials,

Anrich *personally did not have difficulties with tutorials ... actually was where to explore your misunderstanding of the work that you have done in the lectures.*

But for Joy it was about the accents and pronunciation of some of their tutors given that they are from different countries, and academic essays:

Joy: *At times we have tutors from different countries, others speak so fast and you cannot hear that person when speaking even South Africans, so they speak fast.*

Joy: *The academic essays were the first challenges I had, my essay on EDC111 was a bit tricky and finding your way around campus though it was not difficult with academics, just that you have to start reading, the amount of pages of essay.*

Aisha raised the issue of accent and pronunciation by drawing a line between foreign students or tutors or lecturers and South African English as follows:

Aisha: *Yes, the accent is the problem. I won't blame them if they don't understand what I am saying so I will understand a foreign student because I speak South African English they will speak their way so it becomes difficult at times.*

The next questions related to how students from diverse backgrounds worked in their study groups and particularly how they discussed their essays when there were

misunderstandings with their peers. The interviewees' responses were captured in the following excerpts:

Aisha: *I never worked in study groups, we do not have its just at tutorials e.g. in LCS i.e. Language Communication and Society, each will give input and try to see if we all understand.*

Lesley: *English but if someone is Afrikaans I speak Afrikaans so that the person can understand and if I don't understand I would go to someone else but English is the language.*

In this investigation the researcher was interested in knowing how these students socialised and interacted when at the student Centre, a very large hall on campus. Students went there to sit, relax and play some games. One participant indicated he never got around but when he was there he communicated with friends and listened to those who speak in their own language that he did understand.

Lesley: *I respect all culture and languages so if it's the case then the next person but I will tell them, its ok but they should not mind if I speak my language. But if I am interested on what they are saying I will ask them to translate for me.*

The question of teaching in mother tongue and the position of English as a medium of instruction had different responses. The first student responded as follows:

'Though some do not understand English at all...it will be difficult for the institution to introduce all languages, it will be a chaos'

To another student, *lecturers should' ...make the life of a student easy.'*

The findings from the interviews conducted on an individual basis indicated that students had different opinions when it comes to choosing the most suitable language, particularly English they considered suitable when they were involved in a public debate. The following responses were registered:

Researcher: *What language would you choose if you were to participate in a debate about students' academic problems in this institution?*

Lesley: *Both English and Afrikaans coz you don't always have English words so I will use Afrikaans.*

Anrich: *In this institution...I would prefer Afrikaans because you see, my experience of presentations on campus was in English and some of the times I hesitate about saying things because I struggle to think if it's the right thing I'm gonna say now. While if I were to do it in Afrikaans without hesitation.*

Anrich further emphasised his reasons for choosing to debate in Afrikaans as follows:

Now I would prefer that I do it in [Afrikaans because I'm used to [Afrikaans and it would feel very normal. I'm not a shy person I would speak for everyone, I would do my presentations. I would do my speeches as long as it is my language that I prefer that is Afrikaans.

In investigating the language practices the researcher tried to find out about the students' backgrounds in relation to where they studied. The responses were similar to those expressed by some participants during the focus group discussions that their previous schools did not prepare them adequately for university. Aisha's response was her testimony of where she studied and the impact of the school on her now.

Aisha: *Jup, emm for me personally, I would say it's actually it's a bit of kind of both!*

Researcher: How?

Aisha: *because I was at ... you know ex 'model C' school. There you always get top class education and everything was like up there but!*

Researcher: But what?

Aisha: *At certain points in time it was like I say they never taught us plagiarism... is a big deal or if you do research you have to do like thorough research or project or stuff like that was never like really looked at. So it's actually a bit of both worlds.*

Anrich was very open and expressed his feelings: *'I see it as a disadvantage'*

Anrich: *I come from is Afrikaans medium and the teachers there is very far from university life actually or university expectations... I would say my teachers or the teachers (unclear) didn't prepare me well enough me for university life.*

He pointed out that his primary medium of instruction was Afrikaans and that the school could have implemented '*English programmes in school to improve the children's (students) English skills*' but admitted '*although it's second additional language as a subject English on (in) our school*'. However he demonstrated that:

Anrich: *...that is why I would say when you come from rural areas English is a barrier actually because you are not used to the language...there's a problem in the sense that those of you who studied in rural areas and those who studied in urban areas, urban schools are much more better.*

The next section focuses on data interpretation guided by themes that emerged from these interviews.

4.3.1 Discussion of individual interviews

Poststructuralists acknowledge the vital role language plays in shaping and reshaping the identities of individuals involved in every form of interaction. Bourdieu (1991) defines such linguistic practices as a form of symbolic capital in a speech community; this capital needs to be evenly distributed to avoid creating discrepancies and if a more standardised language or official language is recognised as a medium of instruction by an institution, such as in tertiary education, that can well as disempowered the underprivileged academically.

The fact that some families such as Joy's use two languages in the home points to poststructuralist notions that neither society nor institutions are fixed, and to the role of perceptions about the symbolic capital attached to certain languages. Parents *want the best of both worlds for their children's education: they certainly want admission to the mainstream and high-status culture of literacy that is the chief output of regular education, but they also want schools to recognise 'their own things' – their own cultural values, language varieties, traditions, and interests* (Corson, 1998, p. 203).

Joy's father was concerned to give her linguistic capital in English.

In a conversation with the students on the question of language practices and what it entails for them to study in an integrated institution like UWC with a monolingual medium of instruction brought into the limelight a lot of complex issues, such as how identities are challenged and affirmed in a multilingual educational context. Here I bring into focus

emerging themes such as: code switching, hegemony and identity information. The rationale in employing these concepts is to have a clear understanding of language choices and their pedagogical implications for learning and teaching in a diverse population as in the following excerpts:

Researcher: In what language do you often discuss your assignments with your friends?

SS: *Like I- I'll speak Afrikaans [most of...]*

SS-2: *because it's just I feel [comfortable and it's like their language, their first language mother tongue, is as Afrikaans as well so obviously we speak to each other in our mother-tongue but if we are like obviously at one point we like switch to English]*

The above discussion on language choices takes us into past historical influences, the preference of languages that directly or indirectly could be linked to Apartheid influence on ideology of languages that was used as a strategic tool for separate rule and development. In spite of the diverse nature of the institution, the students preferred their mother tongue, Afrikaans, to discuss assignments and occasionally code switched into English. This use of language could be seen as a testimony of social group that is closely linked to ethnic identity as a result of language.

Despite this, the notion of one Afrikaans-speaking identity was contested by students. The student's statement that '*Ja ... I code switch... from English to Afrikaans and back*' indicates students do not always accept the identity to which they are assigned, either by their families, communities or educational institutions, otherwise there would not be cases of code switching. Evidently, the conclusion can be drawn that some students challenge the assumption that there is always a relationship between language and ethnicity.

In the data gathered for this research from different sources, particularly from one on one interviews, code switching and identity are central as in the discussion that follows:

Researcher: Do you often find yourself switching from English to Afrikaans when you are conversing with some of your friends?

Student: *Ja most like of the time, I do that I code switch go from English to Afrikaans and back.*

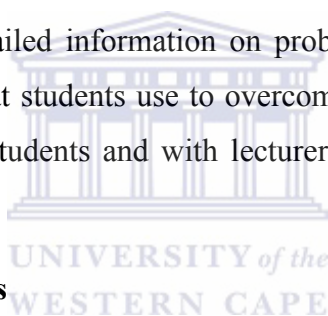
Researcher: Why does that happen?

Student: *It's like at certain points I would do like to feel... whaw! You can speak good English and both like Afrikaans, and at certain times is if I start a sentence in Afrikaans and then I can't get to a word then I'm like..., I know the word in English so I just say it in English and then they will understand what I'm saying so.*

Apart from these informal uses, Gumperz (1982) and Myers-Scotton (2006) posit that code switching is often used as a means to assist in learning new knowledge in a classroom situation and at some points to clarify or eliminate any misunderstanding when the accurate meaning of a word is not known in the communication process. This strategy allows students to draw on useful sense-making resources (Amin, 2009).

4.4 Follow up interviews

As a way to solicit more detailed information on problems encountered in lectures and tutorials, and the strategies that students use to overcome them, I decided to conduct oral interviews with some of the students and with lecturers. This provided us the following findings as presented below:



4.4.1 Interviews with students

Problems encountered in lectures

Students had challenges in different subjects. 14 had problems in Language and Communication Studies (LCS), and 1 each in Geography, Business Management, English, and Mathematics— 6 had problems with accents, 2 as a result of terminology and 1 had difficulties speaking. These students used different methods in solving their problems: 7 contacted their tutors; 10, their lecturers; 8, their peers, 5 consulted dictionaries and translated words into their mother tongue.

Difficulties in tutorials

All the students struggled in the tutorials and one of the strategies used to solve the problem of misunderstanding was using another language or mother tongue. 24 students indicated that they contacted their tutors when they had difficulties, 5 contacted their lecturer, 12 asked peers, 5 used dictionaries for terminologies, 3 code switched.

Other languages used in doing assignments

29 students indicated that they used only English and 22 acknowledged that they used other languages, preferably their mother tongue according to the nature of responses. Most examples indicated the regular use of dictionaries for terminology and for translation for better understanding.

The students who used languages other than English reported that they used their language to discuss with their friends.

'I do use other language with friends when we discuss the assignment'.

Another student said:

'I interact with my friends with other languages and as we are doing [it] group work'.

Some of them use the internet, dictionaries and consult their peers. This student's response is as follows:

'Yes, I do. When writing an assignment I have the word in Afrikaans. I go search for it in the dictionary to find the English word'. 'I think in Sotho and translate into English, make use of Sotho friends, discuss with them and also use the English dictionary'

Ways of using home language(s) to learn more effectively

The above question was to sample students' opinion as to whether or not home languages could help them learn more effectively in the institution, 45 students indicated that home languages would help them learn more effectively while 9 students said that it would not be helpful but argued that;

'The institution should maintain home languages and English. I study without difficulties in my home language. I can improve and do well in research because I will easily do research.'

The 45 students who preferred home languages almost all used the expression *'for better understanding'*.

4.4.2 Interviews with lecturers

Linguistic repertoires

The lecturers interviewed were all South Africans and were personally targeted so that they could tell me something about the linguistic repertoires of the students that they teach in tutorials or lectures. The second reason was to find out from these lecturers, who are multilingual, whether they do encourage students to draw on their repertoires in any academic spaces.

A lecturer of the Academic literacy model (EDC 111) whose home language is Afrikaans acknowledged that the students in her lectures speak Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. She further pointed out that English is the second language although students come from home language English classes mostly and communicated through English medium predominantly. The lecturer on her part encouraged students to draw on these repertoires when they engaged in academic work. She said that at times she asked peers to translate or explain. In line with these findings one of the lecturers explained that students are allowed to code switch and use their mother tongue as the students are much more empowered in their own language.

Another lecturer involved in teaching Academic Literacy and Afrikaans to first year undergraduates argued that she did not encourage students to deviate from the main language of instruction into using another language though she did not rule out the use of another language for a better explanation where necessary. As a lecturer she would use Afrikaans only on the rare occasion when students indicated that they still did not fully understand the explanation in English (concepts, etc.) or when they asked to be allowed to express themselves in Afrikaans. Under such circumstances the lecturer admitted that she would translate immediately into Afrikaans and gives African Language speakers the opportunity to discuss in their mother tongue, and then somebody who understood English better than the rest would translate into English.

4.4.3 Discussion of follow up interviews with students and lecturers

Linguistic diversity

Phillipson (2010) while reviewing Martin's paper on 'creating multilingual spaces' underscored the fact that such a paper represents a wake-up call not merely for the United Kingdom, the context from which the examples are drawn, but for any education system

that promotes subtractive learning through an imposed language on a nation. In a similar way and in the case of South Africa, most tertiary institutions have institutionalised a de facto English Medium of Instruction policy, instead of a multilingual medium of instruction, in defiance of the multilingual and multicultural nature of the country that has recognised eleven official languages (currently twelve – Sign Language for the deaf also). This concept translated into simple terms and to enhance the understanding of a speaker of an indigenous language in South Africa who is preparing for university studies would mean one or more of the following:

1. Studying in one's home language
2. Studying in the same medium of instruction as in school
3. Studying in the same language that one speaks always with the immediate family at home, or
4. Studying in the language that parents and children used in one's childhood.

Findings from the interviews and other data have shown that language is still a problem in tertiary institutions. This is a reminder to language policymakers to see the place and consider the importance of multilingual education because the linguistic repertoires of multilingual students are all too often ignored or treated as problematic. The findings therefore allow us to question the place of linguistic diversity in an education system. In this way Phillipson (2010) again argued that most educational institutions ignored the linguistic diversity that these students bring into higher education and points to the ways in which this is contributing to their exclusion and marginalisation in English-medium institutions (p.1). The findings equally highlighted the numerous problems students encountered in different content subjects.

Thus, this greater range of obstacles faced by students in both tutorials and lectures as a result of language barriers raised the question of how participatory and inclusive teaching and learning practices are. The findings equally provided enough evidence that learning in a home language helped students tremendously in their studies but the greatest problem is whether institutions would ever react timeously to the demands of a culturally and linguistically diverse student body.

A student expressed the thought in the following excerpt: that *'The institution should maintain home languages and English. I study without difficulties in my home language(s). I can improve and do well in research because I will easily do research.'*

Lecturers who were interviewed indicated that they allow students to draw on their linguistics repertoires in any academic spaces. They thus tried to recognise multilingualism as a resource or an asset rather than a liability because of their daily and constant engagement with students indifferent spaces. However, this encouragement cannot be taken for granted in all learning spaces on campus.

4.5 Audiotapes of tutorial discussions

Mother tongue and code switching

The University in the Western Cape is an integrated tertiary institution with a huge student population from diverse backgrounds, thus justifying the institution's choice of single medium of instruction, English, so as to accommodate all the students. While the Constitution (1996) enshrines the importance of being able to read, write, and think in their first language for all citizens, the institution in practice promotes a language policy that favours the language of a minority. Heugh (1995, p.452) argues that such a policy leads to artificial inequality among languages that takes root and the gap between the dominant language and the others widens.

By choosing tutorials as a research space, I hoped to have an insight into how students used their linguistic repertoires to construct academic identities in and outside of the formal learning context. As discussed already, most students chose to use their mother tongue when discussing assignment, group work and also in tutorials. This goes together with code switching as a way of explicit communication and above all, this by implication means that these students tend to group themselves with those of the same cultural background. In this way, tutorials become a space where students have the opportunity to express themselves in a way to be understood. This again shows the complexity of how identity is positioned in relation to knowledge construction.

The following excerpts highlight what transpires during tutorial sessions between students or between students and tutors. This is EDC 101 module for Academic Literacy that is taught by an Afrikaans tutor. This module prepares students for teaching practice. The attendance taken by the tutor gives a good background of a multilingual academic space

with speakers of Xhosa, Afrikaans and English although interestingly the tutor states that it is an Afrikaans class:

Tutor: *This is my Afrikaans class actually.*

Researcher...*Ok*

Tutor: It's only two or three English speaking. Onverwag is not coming back.

Pietersen: *Lewis is Afrikaans. Juffrou sy kom more.* [*Lewis is Afrikaans miss. She'll be back tomorrow*]

Tutor: Mkahdi is Xhosa. Manial?

Manial: Afrikaans Tutor:

Tutor: *Mayekiso is IsiXhosa. Meyer. **Juffrou Meyer nie hier nie?*** [*Miss Meyer is absent*] Muller?

Muller: Afrikaans

From the excerpts, more of the discussion by the tutor is in Afrikaans, not because the tutor could not give instructions in English but because the students have Afrikaans backgrounds. Afrikaans is followed by the English translation.

Tutor: *Yes... Yes the second gewees* [*it was the second*]

Tutor: *Goeiemore, Good morning. Molweni, Huh? Miss Muller you were not here last week still sick. By die huis n bietjie gewees?* [*Were you at home for the day?*]
Wie was nie hier verlede week nie? [*Who was absent last week?*]

Girl: [Murmuring in Afrikaans]

Tutor: *Wie was nie hier verlede week nie?* [*Who did not attend class last week?*]*Just give me an indication who was not here.*

Tutor: *Al die gesiggies lyk bekend* [*All your faces look familiar*]

The irony is that despite an institutional discourse that advocates monolingualism, these tutorial and learning groups are multilingual and use a range of language resources in the acts of teaching and learning (Creese & Blackledge, 2011). However, in each space, only

certain linguistic identities are recognised and drawn on. Different ‘linguistic regimes’ (Blommaert, 2005) are created in each space where different languages are valued in different ways.

4.6 Discussion of participant observation

Code switching, translation and the use of mother tongue in tutorials occurred frequently among students and tutors. According to Baker (2006), code switching can be used to emphasize a particular point, to substitute a word in place of unknown word in the target language, to express a concept that has no equivalent in the culture of the other language, and so on. However, what I observed was that most of one tutorial was delivered in Afrikaans but followed by the English translation as:

Tutor: Yes maak gou die deur toe. [*Yes you may close the door*]. Ok.

In this same class the students were instructed to read an extract about Adam, a six year old in class seven whose behaviour was unusual. The following excerpts re-emphasise the concept of code mixing and translation:

Tutor: *Ok. Now the case study is about (pause) a boy who misbehaves. Now you are the educator, you must now say how you are going emmmm. How you are going to emmm...deal with that situation. Ok. Let us get into four groups quickly. These tables were in groups and now they are...**Ons kry n lekker groepie hier, kom nou julle** [*Let us form a nice group here, come students*] emmmm*

Thus code switching as seen in this particular scenario facilitates learning and teaching.

When the attendance roll was read, the students answered by indicating in terms of their home language as follows:

Tutor: *Bartman, No. Bellah- English. Bell, English?*

Bell: *Afrikaans*

Tutor: ***Ek wil net julle huis taal hê né** [*I only want your home language*] Beukes?*

Beukes: *Ja*

Tutor: *Afrikaans*

Beukes: *English*

Tutor: Cloete, Ek dink Cloete is seker Afrikaans (Assumes) (Cloete is probably Afrikaans)

Emmm..... Demas

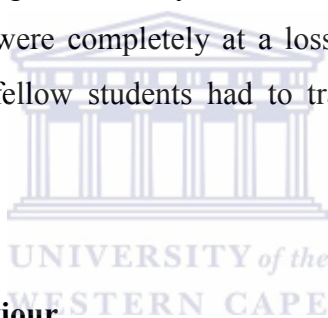
Demas: Afrikaans

Tutor: Afrikaans. Duimpies, kom nie terug nie, het ons gesê. [We said he is not returning]. EmmmmHopley

Hopley: Afrikaans

Tutor: Afrikaans. Johannes

In tutorials there are more intellectual arguments with the tutors as there is one on one interaction but at the same time as in the above tutorial where Afrikaans is the dominant language of instruction, tutorials could become a site that disempowers some students. As evident from the attendance register read by the tutor, there were two English speaking students. These two students were completely at a loss in this group work discussion. I discovered that one of their fellow students had to translate for them what was being discussed.



Field notes

Culture and pattern of behaviour

To join a new discourse community is to have the potential to learn new language resources, new practices and new identities (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). By participating in students' daily activities in the context of tertiary studies, I realised that students do not only become socialized in the language practices of the institution but get equally engaged in some social practices that could be linked to cultural identities. During one of the early observations I was somehow taken aback when I realised female students were smoking. This was a kind of cultural shock to me because in my culture, smoking is a man's social activity. Thus my first few weeks in the field were full of surprises. This kind of behavioural pattern is a norm that enabled me to see from the inside 'how people lead their lives [...] what they find meaningful and how they do so' (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p.1).

From observing around the hall where students had lectures that morning I moved into the lecture hall itself where I was lucky to observe about 495 first year undergraduate students

ready for their Academic Literacy model otherwise known as EDC111. My point of interest was on aspects of communication and interaction among the students and interaction between students and lecturer, given the diverse student population, whether active participation was in their home languages. My keen interest was kindled by the fact that some of the students that I sat very close to were speaking in Afrikaans and some in Xhosa in a very low tone as lectures were going on. I could not understand and I could not even write down what they said. So I am merely reporting on what happened that morning. In the same lecture that morning, the lecturer asked the students to highlight their experiences on campus so far. Some of the students responded with a lot of enthusiasm, some with mixed feelings and some were not sure, but what was quite exciting was the issue of code switching when one of the students started in English but concluded in Afrikaans. Such code switching practices were a common feature of student responses in lectures.

4.7 Conclusion

From the general investigation it appears that students, lecturers, and tutors all encounter enormous difficulties with language at different levels. For many students it was evident that they encountered difficulties in using English in academic discourses. There was a disconnection problem as these students exited from post-secondary schools to tertiary institutions, in terms of their proficiency in English. As a result of these disconnections, students from different socio-cultural and diverse backgrounds used their various repertoires to interact amongst themselves and with lecturers in multilingual spaces. This resulted in the practices of code switching and code mixing as well as translations of assignments among the students studying in the second language. Therefore, in investigating the practices of multilingual students, the research question ‘how do first-year Language Education students use their linguistic repertoires to construct academic identities in and outside of the formal learning context’ has been answered and my conclusions will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter5:Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of the study was to discover the ways in which first-year Language Education students used their linguistic repertoires to construct academic identities in and outside of the formal learning context. Inspired by the common understanding in this country that successful education is the most valuable resource in a knowledge economy, the study takes as its premise that the possession of this resource runs the risk of being compromised through learning and teaching practices that do not draw on students' linguistic and other funds of knowledge.

At the dawn of the 21st century many countries are reforming their public education systems to enable the younger generation to meet the challenges of globalisation. But the question is, how do societies equip children from a young age to adulthood to take their right place in the changing global world and yet to retain a strong sense of identity?

At the core of this awareness is that language is socially embedded and a means through which one's identity is established. Therefore language either connects or disconnects individuals in every social interaction in a larger society. In the context of education, and particularly within the context of academic disciplines, language plays a central role used as a means to disseminate and transmit knowledge to a larger society. This is the dilemma in which South Africa currently finds herself within the context of a new political landscape setting after the death of the apartheid regime. Thus from a historical point of view, the apartheid era where language was used as a political tool to create divisions among people has led, in reaction, to policies in which all languages are equal in theory but only English, and some may argue Afrikaans, is valued in education. This has had profound effects on the education system of the nation. Mazrui (2003, p. 567) posits that 'a university has to be politically distant from the state; secondly, a university has also to be culturally close to society; and thirdly, a university has to be intellectually linked to wider scholarly and scientific values of the world of learning.' Taking equal account of all three of Mazrui's points would give us a much more flexible and open approach to language policy.

It is this possibility that has inspired me to investigate how students make use of their linguistic repertoires to socialise and engage in their academic endeavours.

5.2 What are the multilingual language practices of first year students in formal academic interactions in the lecture hall or tutorial space?

In this integrated institution in the Western Cape, the medium of instruction is English, a language spoken by a minority. Afrikaans speakers dominated in this institution but were not taught in their language as one would expect following the Majority – Minority equation that the majority always wins. Moreover, Xhosa-speaking students were rarely engaged in their own language by tutors or lecturers but did use this language among themselves for the purposes of advancing their learning and understanding. Overall the investigation revealed that there was a complete dominance of English at the expense of indigenous languages. This practice deviates both from the spirit of the university's (2002) Language policy and of the national Language Policy for Higher Education (2002), and has direct pedagogical implications for learning and teaching especially for those whose first language is not English.

First, the university's language policy although encouraging the use of other languages wherever possible, fails to fully recognise that citizens have a right to learn in a language of their choice. Data from the findings showed that these students who previously studied in their home languages were bound to study in English. In study groups and in working on assignments, in order to minimise these challenges in English, students translated from English into their mother tongue or alternatively discussed the work in the mother tongue depending on the particular group of students and also according to the number of students in a particular group. As a result of the profound difficulties students encountered emanating from the use of a second language for academic purposes, many used code switching, a practice institutionally not recommended but intellectually rewarding as it allowed students to tap into their various linguistic resources.

Code switching, though often debated by scholars for its practicality and its pedagogical value, was indisputably accepted on campus as a means of facilitating the communication process with others. Lin (2005, p.46) describes student and teacher code switching practices as

local, pragmatic, coping tactics and responses to the socio-economic dominance of English in Hong Kong, where many students from socio-

economically disadvantaged backgrounds with limited access to English resources struggled to acquire an English- medium education for its economic values.

The above description squared with the South African situation in all respects. There is no doubt that the students who preferred doing their tasks in Afrikaans and Xhosa were more resourceful in their first languages than in English as their second language and also a language of academic discourse that was unfamiliar to them. Thus code switching as evident from the findings offers increased tutorial or lecture participation and creates a solid point of connection between the dominant language, in this case, English, of the tutorial or lecture and a language in which participants have excellent proficiency.

This practice of recognizing only one language as the official language on campus therefore can be seen to work in favour of the privileged.

5.3 What are students' informal language practices on campus?

Many participants revealed that on campus they invariably mixed and switched languages to accommodate other speakers both informally and in learning spaces. Thus, code switching is a resource that students used as a means to build new knowledge in a classroom situation and at some points to clarify or eliminate any misunderstanding about the exact meaning of a word, and so on. Such strategies allow students to draw on useful 'sense-making resources' (Amin, 2009).

5.4 What is the relationship between the language practices of multilingual students and their negotiation of academic identities in different spaces?

As a result of limited second language proficiency, students made use of their linguistic repertoires to construct academic identities in and outside of the formal learning contexts. Most students choose to use their own first language(s) when discussing assignments, doing group work and also participating in tutorials.

As observed in tutorials for example, features associated with particular varieties of English such as accents had implications for learning and teaching as misunderstandings could not be avoided. Such issues support the use of code switching as a way of communication during social interactions.

5.5 What are the perceptions of lecturers and students' as to the use of English as a medium of instruction in an integrated tertiary institution?

Students displayed positive attitudes towards English for different reasons but at the same time expressed the wish for bilingual tutors to always assist in situations where there is a breakdown in communication either on the part of the tutor or lecturer. To some, in spite of the challenges they face while studying in English, they still argue that English be maintained as a medium of instruction.

Lecturers have different views about the medium of instruction. One of the lecturers who was interviewed recognised multilingualism as a resource that students should be allowed to draw on in any academic spaces while another did not encourage students to deviate from the main language of instruction. The differences in opinion and ideologies of language from both students and lecturers with regards to multilingual practices signals the difficulty of bringing about change in determining an acceptable medium of instruction in favour of one or more indigenous languages. In this way of thinking, Creese & Martin (2003, 2008) argued that it is important to explore the ecological minutiae of interactional practices in classrooms and link these to ideologies that pervade language choices and language policy (cited in Blackledge & Creese, 2010, p.202). Moreover, such diverse perspectives on multilingualism create and 'open up' ideological and implementational space in the environment for as many languages as possible' (Hornberger Nancy, 2002, p.30).

5.6 How do first-year Language Education students use their linguistic repertoires to construct academic identities in and outside of the formal learning context?

Given the diverse nature of the country and its current language policy and practices, it is but a truism that most of the students are bound to face some academic challenges when they transit from post-secondary schools into universities. From the findings so far the challenges with which multilingual students are plagued relate largely to language and academic discourse.

One challenging question was how students, tutors and lecturers related academically when they were from different backgrounds. Findings as evident in questionnaires, focus group discussion, and individual interviews with students, and oral interviews with students and lecturers all proved that students struggled with different aspects of spoken and written language. As learning strategy and in order to overcome academic challenges, students

often resorted to their mother tongues when they had an assignment and in study groups. Interviewees indicated that in writing essays they had to translate first into their first language and thereafter wrote back into English. Thus carrying out mini-research tasks and writing standard academic essays with English as the only medium of instruction created an extra burden. That raised yet another serious factor worth consideration. From participants I observed in different academic spaces, students grouped themselves with those that shared a common language and this directly linked to issues of identities in which it was frequent to see Xhosa students working with Xhosa peers and Afrikaans speakers identifying with those from the same group. In their different groups as in cases of doing group work, they used their linguistic repertoires in order to facilitate academic task. While this strategy might help in the short-term, it would also be important for tutors and lecturers to devise tasks that require students from different backgrounds to work together and, for example, to use the opportunities afforded by new technologies to overcome linguistic barriers within groups so that students can both use their existing repertoires and develop new ones..

Overall, it is clear that students from different socio-economic, language and educational backgrounds struggled academically as a result of the monolingual medium of instruction. It would be timely to revisit the university's current language policy in order to more fully acknowledge that multilingualism is a norm and a resource that needs to be exploited in the students' interests. The relevance of 'third space' in this research is that when students from diverse cultures and academic backgrounds converge, they have to associate, build relations and interact, but without a productive hybrid cultural space, the potential offered by rich diversity is often lost.

The concept of 'funds of knowledge' (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992) offers a new conceptual framework for informing effective practice for diverse students. The potential of this approach lies in its ability to identify what is, rather than what is not; and to engage with individuals, rather than assumptions and stereotypes (Gonzalez, 2005).

5.7 Overall conclusion

Linguistic diversity in the education system of the nation can be a huge resource if multilingualism is fully encouraged by allowing students and teachers to draw on their various repertoires. A monolingual medium of instruction is the current default practice as

many have argued in favour of English as a lingua franca, as a language of opportunities and a language of international scholarship. Such a practice in institutions is in direct contrast with the multilingual reality of South Africa which by implication suggests alternative approaches to institutional discourses in two or more languages. For example, in this study tutorial interactions allowed identity positioning and became a space where students with a limited knowledge of English explored their talents through an indigenous language or through code switching.

Field (2008, p.77) argues that students' identities are constantly being negotiated within all forms of schooling and that this negotiation may take place in more than one language and 'reflect the symbolic and material resources of the different social groups'. The kind of multilingual practices identified in this research can build a sense of belonging, contribute to evolving identities, and narrow the memories of the racial practices of the past. Creese & Blackledge (2011, p. 1197) suggest that in such situations, 'participants' awareness of "language" or "code" is backgrounded, and "signs" are combined and put to work in the message being negotiated'. Multilingual practices can lead away from a focus on 'languages' as distinct codes, to a focus on the agency of individuals in making meaning.

5.8 Recommendations

Language policy in Higher Education

One's first language is one's asset. The overall findings showed that most students at this university are bi- or multilingual and in this way well equipped to study in two or more languages. This supports the country's language policy for higher education that in principle allows for multilingual language practices and the development of African languages as languages of instruction.

The Language Policy for Higher Education should thus encourage the use of linguistic resources in formal learning spaces to the greatest extent possible. Even though many lecturers do not speak the languages of their students, it is still possible to allow multilingual practices. New technologies offer increased scope for the use of a range of languages in different academic tasks.

Teaching and learning

Students need a learning environment that allows for ‘flexible bilingualism’ to capture ‘the heteroglossic nature of communication’ (Creese & Blackledge, 2011, p. 1197) in the context of this university. Code switching in spite of the controversy surrounding its usage in formal academic settings, has been shown here to be a valuable resource for learning and teaching in a diverse environment.

Above all, introducing indigenous languages into the tertiary education system of South Africa alongside English is a dream that can be gradually achieved in spite of the question of getting the equivalent of certain terminologies in indigenous languages. This is the continuing challenge for policymakers if multilingualism is to be treasured as a resource for learning and the construction of knowledge. A more dynamic and vibrant academic environment could be created to accommodate all students from different linguistic and educational backgrounds.



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Information on language use on and off campus (5 minutes)

A. Language use off campus

1. How many languages do you speak? Please list them here.

2. What language or languages do you speak in the following domains? Please tick one or more boxes for each place:

	Afrikaans	English	Xhosa	Other(specify)
at home				
in the shops				
in the gym				
on trains or buses/taxis				
at gatherings with friends				
on a pleasure trip				

3. What was the medium of instruction at your secondary school?

B. Language use on campus.

For questions 4 to 7, please tick the ONE most suitable answer for each question:

4. English should be the only medium of instruction that should be used in a tertiary institution:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree

5. I use English on campus to communicate with students from diverse backgrounds

All the time	Frequently	Some of the time	Occasionally	Never

6. We should use English ONLY in this university for:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
Lectures					
Doing assignments					
Doing group work					
Reading materials					
Giving tutorials					
Participating in tutorials					
Getting and giving information from university employees in offices					

7. Even though I can speak English, I often discuss academic work with peers in:

Xhosa

Afrikaans

Others-specify

For this question, please tick all boxes that apply to you.

8. I do not often participate in regular lectures and tutorials because:

I feel my English is not good enough.

I feel my tutor or lecturer does not understand my accent.

I do not understand my lecturers or tutors

My peers often laugh at my poor English.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.



Appendix B: Focus Group discussion

Date: 15.03.2011

Researcher=Rr

Students=Ss

Venue: GH 3

Question 1.

Rr: Tell me about your few weeks on campus.

Ss: Like me when I am out of campus I can prefer certain languages like my mother tongue-Xhosa but when I am on campus I have to speak to different people, like when I am with this lady (student in the group) I will speak to her in English, if I am speaking with him (student in the group) I speak Xhosa.

Ss:It depends on context of situation.

Ss: It is still the same thing, for example if we are here on campus, first of all you see the people, you see the coloured people to accommodate them you have to speak English, otherwise if you speak Xhosa, my home language they will feel irritated but if I speak with my brother and sister speaking Xhosa, it is easy for them to understand even in a group discussion.

First few weeks on campus

Ss: It was a new environment. I have to speak in English.

Ss; It is a new way of experience, everything is far different, even the lecture.

Ss: The only problem I got confused is the information, and how the information is passed to us.

Ss: In tutorials, sometimes it is hard to express yourself in English but it would be easy if you don't have to say it in English, yah, you know what I mean.

Ss: For example, in tutorials, I don't have a problem... is whereby I understand a certain subject I was lectured in the hall because most of the time when we are lectured it sounds like, you see, somebody is like preaching because is just rushing for the time. My experience is that I get understanding in tutorials than in lectures, I just follow up everybody there in the lectures, I think if somebody has the experience, he feels that you know what he is saying ,preaching, preaching, and flying and flying and even making problems, maybe, for example you know what I mean.

Ss: And in the lecture hall, you don't have the chance to argue what he is saying but in tutorials I can argue against your information till I understand each other. And in the tutorial, the tutor gives us that opportunity.

Ss: I struggled to understand the lecturer and not the tutor.

Question 2

Rr: Do you struggle with other students to understand?

Ss: Not all because when other students struggle to say something, the tutor repeats that information for us to understand.

Rr: Why do you think the tutor has to repeat that?

Ss: I think he wants to make sure that everyone understands the question.

Ss: Sometimes I feel too shy to ask the question and the tutor helps. And the next person may ask.

Rr: What kind of difficulties in Lecture?

Ss: The problem is notes taking and they ask you to download notes from e-learning find something else and for us we think it is better to get the notes from the lecturer, says or that particular thing because speaking is not the same like writing. And sometimes the lecturer may say something that is not on the slide and not easy to memorise everything. And sometimes the student next to you is doing funny thing and divided attention.

Study group

I don't have a study group but where I am staying I have and we will take one question and answer our way. I study with my friends. First we use Afrikaans.

Question 3

Rr: What language do you use to talk or discuss your assignments?

Ss: Most of the time, I study almost with a Xhosa people. So, most of the time I use Xhosa to try to make clear and understandable. We discuss the idea in Xhosa but write in English.

Rr: Ok

Ss: Like misunderstanding of an assignment, we interpret in our language and go back to English. It is not easy to discuss in English. Like my colleague says it is easy but it is not all that easy to translate from Xhosa to English because of the sentence structure.

Question 4

Rr: How often do you go to the student centre?

Ss: I do not often go there but I go there at times just to relax. There I use my first language-which is Afrikaans. But if there are English people, English students I will speak in English to accommodate them.

Language policy in this institution.

Ss: You should have the right to be taught in your language but that would create chaos because now you have to because now you have get tutors for English, Xhosa and Afrikaans. I think that, that is why are using English as a medium of instruction.

Ss: Different backgrounds and cultures.

Lectures: 3 languages for assignments, exams, books?

Ss: I don't think, I understand that question, lectures in three languages? Impossible!

Ss: For me English is alright

Language for assignment

Ss: On my situation when we have an assignment, most of the time I studied with Xhosa people to try to make it clear. So when you have an assignment, we just discuss that assignment and when you go to write in English.

Ss: For me, we have to interpret that assignment in Afrikaans. But it is not easy to discuss in English but yes, we feel more comfortable in Xhosa.

Ss: But the other thing is that if we understand in Xhosa, particular topic, and then the next thing is ,we write down in English as we discuss in Xhosa, we understand it, it gonna be easy to write but we don't ...

In that respect it is easy to translate from Xhosa but it is not all that easy because of sentence construction because you know it is in Xhosa but when it comes to construction in English that is where difficulties come in

Question 5: How often do you go to the student centre?

Ss:I go there not often but at times to relax .I speak Afrikaans with my friends but if I am with an English speaking person, I speak English to accommodate them.

Question 6: What do you think of the language policy for tertiary institution like this one?

Ss: I think you have the right to be taught in your own language of preference but it create chaos, it's like now you have to get tutors who will speak Xhosa,Afrikaans,Zulu or whatsoever. I think they are using English to accommodate all the students.

Ss: To me, English is alright but in tutorials they have to have someone who can speak for people who speak Afrikaans if the lecture is in Xhosa in order for them to relate.

Question 7: What language would you choose if you were asked to participate in a public debate about students' academic problems in your institution?

Ss: For me English is alright or even Xhosa can be alright, it is a debate, depending on the audience how they gonna feel and how to send that message because if it is Afrikaans people somebody gonna speak. But English is the normal one, you can even if it is in school with different races, it is easy to relate to the people because you will prepare as if it is not my language and we prepare what is expected of them.

Ss: I prefer my language-I prefer Xhosa.

Ss: Even for me I prefer my language but for a speech I prepare if you don't want to make a mistake because I know I have to go to a debate.

Ss: If you speak in your language it will limit the audience if you had to speak Xhosa, it is only for Xhosa.

Ss: To me, in my language there is no need to even prepare. You can just get up and do it but if it is another language I have to think and put a lot of things before you say it and memorise.

Question 8: Do you see where you studied as an advantage or a disadvantage in terms of studies in this university?

Ss: yes of course. In my case, like I am studying even with my tutors in high school it was Xhosa for example. In High school, everything they teach me, they translate in Xhosa even if they teach me in English they know I am going to understand and they translate it, and then here, compare my situation with someone who studied at English school, for example, so obviously they will be a big difference in terms of language because here most of the academic side they use English, you don't have a choice, so it was a disadvantage because of the background, and I didn't feel then it can become or cause me a disadvantage but now....So I told myself now that I can't let my child studied in Xhosa. I rather take my child to English school so that things can go on smoothly at tertiary level.

Rr: Thank you.

Ss: Ya, I think my colleague has said everything. Even at the time of study, maybe 10 years back in that site of the rural area, other areas have advantage of computers and stuff even the library but in our time, there was nothing like that, we only see it when come here. They catch us off guard.

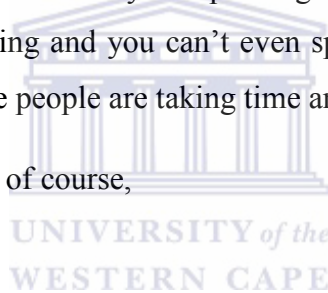
Ss: I studied in Afrikaans schools and here I studied in English. All books are in Afrikaans. Afrikaans, I studied in that –assignments and so on. I also think some words, like pronunciation of some words; I have to go back to the dictionary to look meaning of certain words. So, I am struggling. But I think we will get there.

General comments:

Ss: I think English is the right one. Most of the languages, you can use Xhosa but really most of the things might be English even if you are doing business you can deal with English because English is money culturally, in our background.

Everything is alright but some people when they are speaking English they know that they are people on transition, and not quick on learning and you can't even speak like you are speaking to English people and must understand that these people are taking time and think about what that word mean.

Ya, English at the end of the day, yes of course,



Second Focus Group Discussion

Date: 01.04.2011

Appendix B: Focus group discussion.

Venue.S26/27

Researcher= Rr Students =Ss

Question 1:

Rr: Tell me about your first few weeks on campus. What were some of the most difficult things for you?

Ss): I would say the first week was demanding and getting to know all the different referencing because at school I was thought something about bibliography and when I came here I thought something about referencing and referencing list.

Ss:I don't really have a problem.

SS: I have an issue like Michael says one thing that we have to do and the tut says a different thing in literacy you have to do this and that but when it comes to the tutorial, the tutor has different instructions, then you don't have to know which way to go because you are like think of what my tutor say and you lose marks because you didn't do as Michelle says.

Ss: I do have because of language. I could have an idea in my mind but I do not know how to express my idea properly, yeah, so you end up not knowing what I am trying to say.

Rr: Why do you think this happens?

Ss: Can it be because you were taught in Afrikaans like, for example, you were taught how to answer the teacher in Afrikaans but here in the University you must first think in English to communicate back to the tutor, a new challenge to me.

Ss: The level of the university that, like the way, things are done at a much higher level so like, eh, what can I say? You can't just like at school things were different especially when it came to writing an essay, you can write anything that comes to but now it's a different story, you have to do research.

Rr: You have to do research

Ss: To support your ideas and at school, you can just write your ideas and nothing to support your ideas.

Rr: Ok, that is fine. Do you ever struggle to understand what your tutor says?

Ss: Like pronunciation

Rr: The issue of accent?

Ss: Yes

Rr: why do you think this is like that?

SS: Because you are not from South Africa.

Rr: Ok, so?

Ss: All laughing

Rr: It is not about me but what she says is about tutors in general.

SS: In general,

Rr: Some of the tutors are not from South Africa.

SS: That is the beginning of diversity

Question 2:

Rr: That is true. so, do you ever struggle to understand what students in the tut say?

SS: Not necessarily so

Rr: why you think this is?

Ss: Like Michelle. We are a diverse group of people.

Rr; ok

Ss: And like we don't sound like, especially with, eh, some speak a different language and I say something he is not going to understand what I say, the type of English because his first language is like a different language, then, he first has to think about it before he answers me back.

Rr: ok

Ss: Even the way you speak is different.

Rr: Different? Why do you say so?

Ss: Ya, the way those outside South Africa, they speak a different way.

Rr: That is true

Ss: And coloured speak in a different way. Even us (Xhosa) so, like don't understand each easily, ya

Rr: So there is the problem of misunderstanding at the level of communication.

Ss: Even though we are speaking English, we are not speaking the same way.

Rr: That is true

Ss: Yah

Rr: Let's continue;

Question 3

Rr: What kinds of difficulties do you have in lectures. Can you give me an example?

Ss: I don't have any difficulties. I enjoy Michelle's class a lot. The only problem is, kind of late in the day, I fall asleep

Ss: Laughing, and laughing.

Ss: I would say in my Language and communication class, the lecturer kind of, elaborate too much on one thing, then you don't know what to do, I suppose is high level of ,eh.

Rr: High level in terms of?

Ss: what he knows.

Ss: It is almost like he doesn't know how to explain to us. He is got too much knowledge, stuff that we don't know.

(Noise from outside)

Ss: what do you call that?

Ss: Semantic noise

Rr: Ok, your knowledge of linguistics

Ss: Ya,all laughing

Ss: The slide? The slides, it is just reading, it bores us. Ok, you feel like I am not gonna to lectures if that is what lecturer does, I can just download and read myself.

Ss: Exactly

Question 4:

I would like to know a little about how you study in groups

Ss:I study alone

Ss; me, we study in a group, like sometimes she asks me to explain something, and then I don't understand something I ask her to explain.

Rr: How do you explain? What language do you use for explanation when..?

Ss: In Afrikaans, something that we both understand, eh, ya, except for the term and stuff we have to read from book, I understand better.

Rr: Ok, so you explain in Afrikaans for a better understanding.

Ss: All (Yes)

Rr: what language(s) do you use to talk about assignments?

Ss; English

Ss: with whom?

Ss: With your friend?

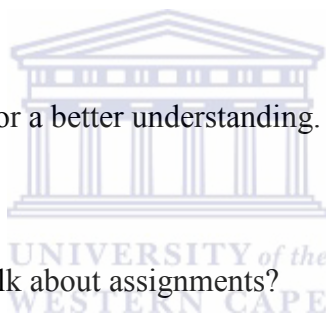
Ss: I use Xhosa to understand. But I translate to English.

Ss: Both of you use Xhosa, are you friends.

Ss: yes (Laugh)

Rr: Why?

Ss: For a better grasp.



Question 5:

Rr; When there is a misunderstanding over an assignment question, what language or languages do you use for this? Why?

Ss: Afrikaans

Ss: I think, it is much better in your Mother Tongue. It is most definitely better in your mother tongue, then afterward you use English, it is a medium of Instruction (MoI).

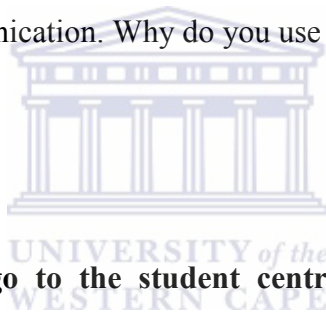
Ss: It also depends on who you are speaking to, because I if have a Xhosa friend, and I am gonna speak English and Afrikaans. I can't speak Xhosa, I can't speak Afrikaans.so it is English.

Rr: So better explanation is done in your MoI?

Ss: It is a language you both understand

Rr: That is true. Language of communication. Why do you use this language?

Ss: You understand much better.



Question 6: How often do you go to the student centre? What do you do there? What language/languages do you use for this? Why?

Rr: How often do you go to the student centre?

Ss: Everyday...laughing...laughing. Sometimes to relax

Rr: What language do you use?

Ss: My first language, Xhosa.

I use Afrikaans and English

Rr: How about you?

Ss: Xhosa. And for me I do use English with someone who is not Xhosa. It depends, ya, on the situation. But most of the time in...

Rr: Most of the time in...

Ss: In Xhosa

Rr: Okay, what was your medium of instruction in Secondary school?

Ss: Eh, we had like double medium of instruction but English as the first as the first.

SS; English and Afrikaans,

Ss; English and Isi-Xhosa

Ss: You didn't ask me

Rr & Ss: laughing

Language use in a gathering

Ss: Afrikaans

Ss: Only English

Ss: Afrikaans most of the time. When I am at home I speak Xhosa because you know what, if you can try to English, like, like most of the people are speaking Xhosa, so if you are speaking English. I don't know how to put it but, you seem like you are trying to show up to them that you are better.

Ss: All laughing. So it is better to speak in Xhosa

Question 7:

What should be the language policy for this institution?

Ss: I think the lecture is ok in English because we have diverse population to accommodate everyday but in tutorials we are in a smaller group we can find tutors like Afrikaans tutors to explain to explain to us in Afrikaans.

Rr: okay/so that

Ss: We understand the topic better in Afrikaans.

Ss: If it is, I disagree because in Afrikaans, I put a bit of English, I put a bit of Xhosa, I put a bit of different languages

Ss: It is almost like three exams we have three different languages on one paper.

SS: Like she says, eh, it will end up in a long debate because we are too diverse. You can't just think about people in South Africa only what about like; we have Chinese here, like from Zimbabwe, Nigeria speaks different languages, what about them? They are not gonna understand Xhosa, or like Afrikaans, they gonna choose to do it in English, so can just, you can't think about South Africa. Think about...eh....

Ss: English is fine

Rr: okay

Rr: About Languages in their schools

SS: We were exposed to English at School. We had to take English as a subject so we do not understand the language, and if you go anywhere else in the world you gonna have to speak English because you don't understand the medium of instruction.

Question 8:

What Language would you choose if you were asked to participate in a public debate about students' academic problems in your institution?

Ss: Personally I will choose Afrikaans because when you debate you debate but because like, it's not just Afrikaans people like it's gonna be different Mother tongue, you gonna do it in English

Rr: okay. So, if you were given the chance, would you discuss in Afrikaans?

Ss: yes, In Afrikaans

Ss: I use my Xhosa

Rr: why would you do that?

Ss: I can express myself better.

8: Do you see where you studied as an advantage or a disadvantage in terms of your studies in this University?

Ss: yes

Rr: Can you explain that?

Ss: Because in my case, I was in a mother C school.

Rr: Mother C school, what does that mean?

Ss: Stands for private schools.

Rr: so?

Ss: The type of work they give to students, it doesn't seem different from here, the workload, because I was use to that, and everything is more English than Afrikaans. It is easy for me.

Rr: Okay

Ss: It was a disadvantage to me. Even in class, we...

Ss: In our class we speak Xhosa....it was a disadvantage to me.

Rr:So you studied more in Afrikaans, so where you studied is a disadvantage?

Ss:It is a disadvantage

Rr: Why?

Ss: Because here we have to use English all the time and there (school) we only English during, like, English as a subject, during English periods

Rr: After that?

Ss: We use Xhosa. So it is a disadvantage.

Ss: Workload is much more now than it was when I was in school because it must accommodate people were not so clever like....so ya, the workload is much more, like, a kind of like more difficult.

Ss: And you can't find have a friend here who is from different, who you can discuss with him, study with him, language comes as a challenge if you don't understand each other.

Rr: And what about you?

Ss: Me? It was a disadvantage, because I was in a school where drugs was used, most students come there "high", and teachers were only.....so it was more corrupt, the school was corrupt. so teachers were there, they were few teachers, so students can just do what they want. To me it was a big disadvantage.

Rr: In terms of medium of instruction, did you study in

Ss: Afrikaans. And in an English class, it was still an Afrikaans teacher, so it wasn't much control in the school.

Rr: So about your teachers, were they bilingual, or multilingual in the sense that they speak more than two languages in class?

Ss: Bilingual

Ss: And in my school, a few were multilingual. History teachers could speak more than four languages, can speak Dutch.

General opinion

Ss: Medium of instruction is ok. It is just sometimes the words and stuff. Sometimes you don't understand the words.

Ss: I think now, if varsities, like, an schools work together especially like in, from grade 11 to 12, now when you have to make that transition at the end of grade 12, you have to go to university, then they should like, eh work with government, decide, tell us before ahead of time how things gonna be at University. They should teach us like referencing convention and all of that like the minor things that are important here, they should teach us like that like they can't speak teach at the end of like you write your final exams and they only tell us about minor things like you have to circle things, papers and stuff like that, they should do beforehand so that when you come here, you should be ready for this.

University things should be practical and less theoretical because I think they are putting too much pressure on theory and is not practically driven. I think as we are studying to be teachers, I think we should go much more into schools and get opinions from learners and interview the students.

Thank you for your appreciation.

Appendix C: Individual interview with Student Date: 10.07.2011

Venue: Writing Centre

Researcher: I am going to mention two or more situations in life where you use language; the essence of this is to get an understanding of what students think about English as a medium of instruction in this institution.

Researcher: What languages do you, read and speak?

Student: I use both English and Afrikaans, speak and read

Researcher: What was the language you used as a child?

Student: my father used English and my mother used Afrikaans at school I was in an English class

Researcher: What language do you speak at home?

Student: I speak English with my nephew so, I use both languages, my father likes to speak English and he is the one who taught me and my sister.

Researcher: On campus how do you communicate with your friends?

Student: I speak English, my friends are most the English some speak Afrikaans so they adapt to speak English.

Researcher: In which language do you usually use to think?

Student: Like I said, it depends, if I speak Afrikaans, I think in Afrikaans and at times I mix English and Afrikaans

Researcher: Let's have a discussion on your first few weeks on camps, what were the most difficult things you faced?

Student: The academic essays were the first challenges I had, my essay on EDC111 was a bit tricky and finding your way around campus though it was not difficult with academics, just that you have to start reading, the amount of pages of essay

Researcher: What kind of difficulties do have in tutorials?

Student: At times we have tutors from different countries, others speak so fast and you cannot hear that person when speaking even South Africans, so they speak fast

Researcher: With your friends, do you ever struggle on what they are trying to say?

Student: Yes, the accent is the problem I won't blame them if they don't understand what I am saying so I will understand for a foreign student because I speak South African English they will speak their so it becomes difficult at times

Researcher: What kind of difficulties do you have with lecturers?

Student: They go fast at times, don't upload things one is learning; there are no extra classes for us to learn, for example. IsiXhosa so they expect you to understand things easy immediately.

Researcher: How do you work in your study groups?

Student: I never worked in study groups, we do not have it just at tutorials e.g. in LCS i.e. Language Communication and Society class, each will give input and try to see if we all understand.

Researcher: What language do you use to talk about essay when there is misunderstanding in essay?

Student: English but if someone is an Afrikaans speaker, I speak Afrikaans so that the person can understand and if I don't understand I would go to someone else but English is the language.

Researcher: How often do you go to student centre?

Student: I have never been to student Centre, it's a case, I tell myself, I am going to student centre but I never get around

Researcher: When you are there with friends what language do you speak?

Student: English

Student: If your friends insist in speaking another language that you do not understand?

Student: I respect all culture and languages so if it's the case then the next person but I will tell them it's ok but they should not mind if I speak my language but if I am interested on what they are saying I will ask them to translate for me.

Researcher: What medium of instruction should be used in teaching?

Student: English because its mutual language though some do not understand English at all, some it's difficult to interact with others and it will be difficult for the institution to introduce all languages it will be a chaos

Researcher: Do you think lectures should be in at least three languages?

Student: If it's possible, yes, because should understand us student even it's in the notes and can make the life of a student easy

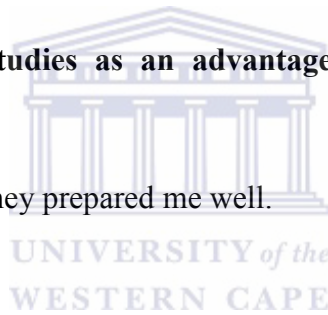
Researcher: What language would you choose if you were to participate in a debate about students' academic problems in this institution?

Student: Both English and Afrikaans coz you don't always have English words so I will use Afrikaans

Researcher: Do you see where studies as an advantage in terms of your studies in this institution?

Student: Yes, in terms of language they prepared me well.

Thank you



Second interview

Date: 19.08.2011

Venue: Writing Centre

Interviewer: What language or languages do you read and speak?

Student: Emm English and Afrikaans but if I like I prefer speaking Afrikaans at home and with my friends most of the time but my medium of instruction at school was English.

Interviewer: Ok, that's the language you studied in High School?

Student: Ya, High School

Interviewer: Ok, why would you prefer to speak more in Afrikaans than in English?

Student: Because my home language is Afrikaans, so predominantly when we are around like family and friends it's mostly Afrikaans speaking people. So when you are around people that speak a certain language obviously gonna like fall into what they are speaking.

Interviewer: Ok

Interviewer: What language did you speak as a child?

Student: Afrikaans

Interviewer: Afrikaans, ok so we discussed that one about home. In which language do you usually think?

Student: Whaw ! It depends though, like last night I had like, I'm busy with an assignment and obviously it has to be in English so if you read a book, like if I read a book and I have to think about what I'm reading about, what I'm going to write, I'm obviously going to think in English. But if I'm like sitting around to myself then I'll think in Afrikaans, it's like that.

Interviewer: In Afrikaans, that's great. This issue your first week on campus. How was it like? Can you tell me something about your first few weeks on campus?

Student: As in...

Interviewer: How was it like?

Student: Like my experiences?

Interviewer: Ya

Student: Emm, that was orientation right. It was cool it, was fun like. I was ready to get into this new life on campus life, whatever. And it was like, I couldn't wait to start.

Interviewer: I can imagine that. What were some of the difficulties that you faced during the first few weeks?

Student: Wow! You know, especially with EDC111, like I say I'm not a fan of writing, I don't like essays and like university they expect a certain type of quality when you write. And at school it was different like you could just write anything you did not even need to do research about it, but here it was like you have to go and do a research about and it has to be in a certain way that was like very difficult for me.

Interviewer: Ok, that's fine. So in terms of tutorial and lectures what were the difficulties that you did encounter? Did you encounter difficulties in tutorials?

Student: No, not really.

Interviewer: Ok

Student: If I have, like a certain problem I would like either ask a tutor or I would go and read up on it to make sure now ok this is what they expect from me or this is what I need to do something like that.

Interviewer: Ok, what of lectures, difficulties in lectures?

Student: Sometimes it would be like we overcrowded at like in first semester especially, we were like overcrowded in certain venues and then, at one point if you sit at the back in the class, and you wouldn't really like hear the lecturer in front then you would like zoom off into your own world or start talking to your friends and do your own things, that was like you're not concentrating at one point anymore.

Interviewer: Ok, this issue of language in lectures or in tutorials when students ask or say; asking their friends questions or discussing in lectures, what language do you often hear students discussing in?

Student: Ya like, there are different languages, like in the psychology class last semester, there was a Chinese, there was a Chinese and he was like speaking Chinese to his friends and he kept quiet, he

turn around and asked us like what does that word mean and we tell him in English and he would type into his laptop and would give him the meaning in Chinese. And there were Xhosa students; there was like Sotho people like (unclear) one of my classes as well.

Interviewer: Friend ok, so in lectures or tutorial you have students from different background?

Student: Ya,

Interviewer: Ok, and in this situation if you happen to say meet someone who's not from where you were born, how do you communicate?

Student: Ya, whaw! Obviously in English because that is like what do you call the common language?

Interviewer: Like lingua-franca.

Student: Lingua-franca

Interviewer: Ok that's great, Ok. How do you go about doing your assignments with friends, that is to say. In what language do you often discuss when you have assignments to do with your friends?

Student: Like I'll speak Afrikaans most of the time

Interviewer: Why?

Student: because it's just I feel comfortable and it's like their language, their first language mother tongue, is as Afrikaans as well so obviously we speak to each other in our Mother-tongue but if we are like obliviously at one point we like switch to English.

Interviewer: Ok, for someone who's learning?

Interviewer: Do you often find yourself switching from English to Afrikaans when you are conversing with some of your friends?

Student: Ya, most of the time, I do that. I code switch, go from English to Afrikaans and back.

Interviewer: So, why does that happen?

Student: Well for me, it's like at certain points I would like to do that, feel like it's like whaw! You can speak good English and both like Afrikaans, and at certain times is if I start a sentence in

Afrikaans and then I can't get to a word then I'm like..., I know the word in English so I just say it in English and then they will understand what I'm saying.

Interviewer: Ok, that's great. Ok the very last question I would ask. What would be your recommendations in terms of language policy for this institution? What language would you say should be used as a medium of instruction?

Student: Obviously I would say English because, like, if you go out into the world, most of the people, if you have to use a Lingua-franca it's gonna be English because that is the language that comes first, not everybody can speak like isiXhosa or like Chinese even you just choose to speak English to each other.

Interviewer: English. Ok that's fine. So, the very last one. I understand that you and some of your friends studied in different schools; do you see where you studied as an advantage or a disadvantage to you in terms of your studies in this university?

Student: Ya, emm, for me personally, I would say it's actually it's a bit of both because I was at Model 'C' school. There you always get top class education and everything was like up there but at certain points in time it was like I say they never taught us plagiarism is a big deal or if you do research you have to do like thorough research or project or stuff like that was never like really looked at. So it's actually a bit of both worlds.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for coming and thank you for participating.

Venue: Writing Centre

Appendix D .Individual interview Joy (student)

Date: 19:08:2011

Researcher: We are going to look at language. I am not going to take much of your time. In this case, I am going to mention two or more situations in life where you use language, the essence of this is to get an understanding of what students think about English as a medium of instruction in this institution.

Researcher: What language do you read and speak?

Student: I use both English and Afrikaans to speak and read

Researcher: What was the language you used as a child?

Student: My father used English and my mother used Afrikaans at school. I was in an English class

Researcher: What language do you speak at home?

Student: I speak English with my nephew so, i use both languages, my father likes to speak English and he is the one who taught me and my sister.

Researcher: On campus how do you communicate with your friends?

Student: I speak English, my friends are most the English some speak Afrikaans so they adapt to speak English.

Researcher: In which language do you usually use to think?

Student: Like I said, it depends, if I speak Afrikaans, I think in Afrikaans and at times I mix English and Afrikaans

Researcher: Let's have a discussion on your first few weeks on camps, what were the most difficult things you faced?

Student: The academic essays were the first challenges I had. My essay on EDC111 was abit tricky and finding your way around campus. It was not difficult with academics, just that you have to start reading, the amount of pages of essay.

Researcher: What kind of difficulties do have in tutorials?

Student: At times we have tutors from different countries, others speak so fast and you cannot hear that person when speaking even South Africans, so they speak fast.

Researcher: With your friends, do you ever struggle on what they are trying to say?

Student: Yes, the accent is the problem I won't blame them if they don't understand what I am saying so I will understand for a foreign student because I speak South African English, they will speak theirs, so it becomes difficult at times.

Researcher: What kind of difficulties do you have with lecturers?

Student: They go fast at times, don't upload things one is learning; there are no extra classes for us to learn e.g. isiXhosa, so they expect you to understand things easy immediately.

Researcher: How do you work in your study groups?

Student: I never worked in study groups, we do not have its just at tutorials e.g. in LCS i.e. Language Communication and Society class, each will give input and try to see if we all understand.

Researcher: What language do you use to talk about essay when there is misunderstanding in essay?

Student: English but if someone is an Afrikaans speaker I speak Afrikaans so that the person can understand and if I don't understand I would go to someone else but English is the language.

Researcher: How often do you go to student centre?

Student: I have never been to student Centre, it's a case, i tell myself, i am going to student centre but I never get around.

Researcher: When you are there with friends, what language do you speak?

Student: English

Researcher: If your friends insist in speaking another language that you do not understand?

Student: I respect all culture and languages so if it's the case then the next person but I will tell them it's ok but they should not mind if I speak my language but if I am interested on what they are saying I will ask them to translate for me.

Researcher: What medium of instruction should be used in teaching?

Student: English because its mutual language though some do not understand English at all, some it's difficult to interact with others and it will be difficult for the institution to introduce all languages it will be a chaos.

Researcher: Do you think lectures should be in at least three languages?

Student: If it's possible, yes because they should understand us students even if it's in the notes and can make the life of a student easy.

Researcher: What language would you choose if you were to participate in a debate about students' academic problems in this institution?

Student: Both English and Afrikaans coz you don't always have English words so I will use Afrikaans.

Researcher: Do you see where you studied as an advantage in terms of your studies in this institution?

Student: Yes,

Thank you for your time



Appendix E: Individual interview

Date: 19.08.2011

R-Researcher and Enrich-En

Venue: Writing Centre

Researcher: Can you tell me about your first few weeks on campus?

En: My experience of the first week on campus {sighed}, of the few weeks, I had a great experience actually of the environment around the campus and like in my situation, I'm from rural place and my first exploration of the campus or my first introduction say, my view of campus, my first approach was very nice because it was a new environment. There's a variety of cultures, people that I've met and I mean it was nice for me. I'm here for a purpose of graduating. And I have a lot of opportunities to do that, so I think that is all from me that I 'm gonna deliberate on this question, that it was a nice environment for me, I'm here to succeed for my future.

Researcher: So, did you have any difficulties in those few weeks?

En: Yes.

Number 1.

To adapt to the place, it was a new environment and for me I must learn where I can get my sources, where I can get everything that I would need in order for me to do my assignment and stuff that was my first hesitation.

Number 2.

Was the language which is English? I don't have a problem with English, but if language was my concern that I would prefer that Afrikaans must be also language that lectures must use to educate Afrikaans children (students) but I understand the circumstances because we have a lot of cultures here on campus that is why they must use one language which is [English] That is all understandable for the children or for the students on campus, sorry. But the difficulties was to adapt to the circumstances to know where my sources , also adapt to the language to, and I did also learn when I go home there's a lot of work for me because I must grab a dictionary [to see what the word is actually intend to but for me it is part of my effort to be successful in my assignments [to go back to dictionary and to understand what is actually wanted from me and through I also get explored into language English which means it upgrade my level of speaking English, to do this. But that's basically it was all my difficulties was that, emm I must find my sources and I must adapt to language. And my other difficulties the work is extremely a lot (the work load) is very much and

then my situation I'm an education student I do specific modules, modules and my module is in the education course. My modules like in Social Science and Life Orientation. There is a lot of module that you get in that package. Its 4 modules where the other children who do languages and stuff don't get so much modules; which means that a lot of modules that I do is more work than other education students which keep me busy for a long time. And the other difficulty that I want to discuss is that, I find the problem that I don't have enough time to manage my assignments because I really want to do my best in one assignment or in one particular assignment but I don't have the time because I must also give attention to the other assignment. I must attend to that because I would say that the time we have is not manageable for your assignments.

Rr: English, ok

Rr: ok (laughing slightly)

Rr: work load was (unclear)

Rr: time management

Rr: Thank you so much, I see you have really expressed and pointed out a good number of difficulties that you have encountered. Ok still in line with difficulties, did you have difficulties with tutorials can you give me an example.

En: Other difficulties, I would say actually no. I don't I didn't actually have difficulties with tutorials because my view of tutorials is to guide you actually and tutorial was for me actually where to explore your misunderstanding of the work that you have done in the lectures and like for instance tutorials is there to assist me. I'm more interested in tutorials than going to lectures because the tutorials are for individual help and so on and that is what I have experienced in tutorials .I would say tutorials are actually excellent for me because through my knowledge I did my best to ask questions and difficulties of my work that I'm struggling with.. That's why I would say that tutorials are actually good because it was difficult for us to understand the workload. That is, tutorial was real good because my experience of tutorials was a positive source for me to get my information and to manage my assignments.

Rr: Ok in tutorials, do you ever struggle to understand what the tutor says?

En: Maybe I'm the only one who deliberate on this, like in the positive way but through my experience I didn't have a problem with tutorials I wouldn't say that I didn't understand the (unclear) ya the tutor , the person who is responsible for the tutorials and so forth. My experience of the Tuts

is for me great man, and I go to the Tuts to actually understand what was said in the lecture and my knowledge of the specific tutors I go to who was responsible for the Tut. I didn't have a problem with them. Ya

Rr: Ok that's fine, ok besides that, do you struggle to understand what other students in the Tuts say?

En: Emm, {pause} Ya, there was. Sometimes I struggle to actually understand.

Researcher: Why do you say that?

En: The difference is that most of the students here are from Cape Town. They do English as the first language and English is my first additional language. Now the problem is the levels of English speaking is different because students in Cape Town are used to English speaking. English is their language that I must come to adapt to and learn also. I can speak English; but my English speaking is just for defend and to communicate. My English speaking is not so good like the high level word types and so on like the children of Cape Town speak. That was the communication lacking between us. But in order for me; I'm the type of person that ask to understand and that is why in most cases I did ask the fellow student to elaborate on what they mean there and so on. And that is how did I managed my lack of the language but I would say I did have a problem with that because the children or student on campus that is used to English use smarts higher level English words and in order for me to understand it was also a struggle and a problem to adapt to that and to tell and make it much more easier for me to understand such English.

Researcher: Ok, that's good, fine, ok what about lectures. What kinds of difficulties do you have in lectures?

En: lectures?

Researcher: Yes. Can you give me an example?

En: I can tell you overall now. My experience of lectures, some of the lectures are great; some of them are not because in my view, Dominic you see I'm a [technical person. I'm not actually theoretical; now the thing is my course theoretical stuff that I must do and I think you see if I had a choice to go to a career that was very technical for me; for example, maths and other staff I wouldn't hesitate about register because it theoretically. Even the lecturers use high level English and in order for me I must go back and go fetch a dictionary and so on to get the meaning of what actually the lecture was all about. But overall I don't have a problem with the lectures; because my

view of the lectures is just to explore what we do in this module and the tutors is there to assist you to reach excellence in the module.

[**Researcher** laughs –

Researcher: To get a meaning

Researcher: That's fine. I understand that you have assignments. How do you; let's say what language do you use to talk about your assignment when you meet in a group with friends or when you meet a friend to discuss?

En: Usually Afrikaans

Researcher: Why do you use Afrikaans?

En: Because I choose group members so that I can communicate with in English and Afrikaans also. But luckily for me in some cases I have students that are good in English and can also let's say English speaking person that can also speak in Afrikaans. But I prefer you see to sometimes I want to say something, while I would say in Afrikaans. I would say in a perfect way but because I speak English, the pronunciation of what I want to say is very difficult for me to put my words in order to say a specific thing I want to say. That's why I would like to work with English and Afrikaans speaking people because I can explore more into Afrikaans and translate into English.

Researcher: One question, how often do you go to the student centre? Or what do you do there when you go to the student centre and maybe what language do you use when you are at the student centre?

En: The student centre, Dominic I would tell you now I don't actually go to the student centre off purpose. When I go to the student centre it's for a purpose rather it's to go to print, rather it's to go to bursaries or rather I want to purchase me money and to buy me staff or go to café to get something for me to eat that is my purpose to go there or to buy airtime or to the bookshop. But I'm never in the student centre to socialize there; I'm always there on a purpose to do my staff [there and then I go. But when I go there I communicate. If I go to the café so or what I go to the if I go to the shops and so on I communicate in Afrikaans because there is Afrikaans speaking Cape Town people but my overall language in the café is where I met my friends and so on is English(and speaks softly).

Researchers: Ok that's great. So, what do you think of the language policy of this institution. What I mean is in this institution the medium of instruction is English. What do you think about that, what is your view about that?

En: I would prefer, maybe it would be (unclear) to do this in order to implement this on campus. But it would be a big effort. But my view is, I know it would be a concern about finances and staff. But my view is, I think every child or every student here on campus deserve to get education in his particular language. And I would prefer that if there is a English and Afrikaans speaking lecturer that he would give lectures modules in English and Afrikaans and why I say so Dominic, is because I think there is a better advance to get your lectures in your particular language because if you get the lectures in your particular language you don't need to adapt or to go for research and so on you have a broadly idea of what the lecture is all about. Where English is concerned like if you get the lecture in English you will just understand roughly you don't understand broadly while the English child understand the thing broadly and intensively. But in my situation for that child who can speak English it's not so much effort to go back and elaborate on what is wanted from him. But for me I must go and make sure I understand what is wanted from me before I go over to work, you see. And I would prefer that the campus (institution) must make arrangements to give children or students here on campus lectures in their particular language. I don't know how much effort that should be, but it should be like that because we live here in a democratic country and my view of a democratic country is you must deserve the language you want to learn if you want education. I understand that the thing is, we are a multicultural population here on campus that is why English must be used. But the question is, how good does everyone understand English? For me I come from rural area where we just speak Afrikaans, and you wouldn't believe me, my first arrival here was actually my interest to speak in English because I never speak that language before and that is why it's difficult for me. I don't know how long it would take but I'm busy doing my best to overcome this problem. But I think you see about this question is that the campus or the university must arrange the lectures in languages that is spoken on campus so that the children can get the education in the particular language that they prefer.

Researcher: Oh with amazement

Researcher: That's good, thank you so much; another question is, what language would you choose if you were asked to participate in a public debate about student academic problems in this institution?

En: In this institution ... I'm honest with you; I would prefer Afrikaans because you see, my experience of presentations on campus was in English and some of the times I hesitate about saying things because I struggle to think if it's the right thing I'm gonna say now while if I were to do it in Afrikaans without hesitation I would say everything that I want to say about my comment about the particular topic you see. Now I would prefer that I do it in Afrikaans because I'm used to Afrikaans and it would feel very normal. I'm not a shy person, I would speak for everyone, I would do my presentations. I would do my speeches as long as it is my language that I prefer that is Afrikaans.

Researcher: That's great, thank you. One of the questions you just made mentioned; that you studied in a rural areas and I understand that all your mates and including you studied at different schools. Do you see this as an advantage or a disadvantage in terms of your studies in this institution?

En: I see it as a disadvantage.

Researcher: why do you think so?

En: ...you see, the thing is where I come from is Afrikaans medium [and the teachers there are very far from university life actually or university expectations. Now out of my experience ,I would say my teachers or the teachers I was(unclear) didn't prepare me well enough me for university life, ... Afrikaans was the primary language in my school and I would say they can at least implement English programs in school to improve the children's English skills. Although there is second additional language as a subject English on (in) our school. But I would say they must arrange programmes to improve student's English skills because that would make so much easier for the children there to come and adapt to the circumstances because it's not such a big gap (problem) to do the programmes in order for the children(students) to be good in English. But from my experience there was only such an English class that we have as a subject. We didn't have it to improve our skills. That was basically to do your essays and so on and to write about a particular stuff and so on. But the thing is there's never time to actually improve to get to get actually good in English. You just do the subject because they want it from you. And that is why I would say when you come from rural areas English is a barrier actually because you are not used to the language. You all study the language as a subject but if you come here you must come and learn English from the start so that you can communicate and write in English.

Researcher: ok, communicate, and then write better.

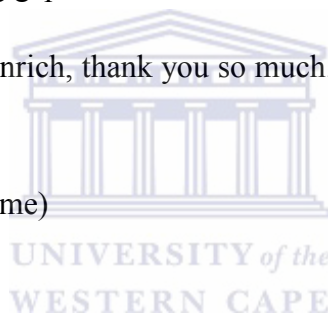
En: Yes better, much better because you see Dominic, urban is a big difference from rural. We did have an assignment on culture and family. This assignment was based on, how does culture and inter-culture help in the education system you get? There are diverse people on campus or education institution that is why you must use English, you see. Now especially in urban you get a lot of cultures here that is why most of the schools are English you see. But in our rural towns there in the Northern Cape which is the coloured people the Afrikaans medium, so my thing is Afrikaans is also English actually is the primary language around the global, English is the primary language, now Afrikaans and other languages is just .. now sub-languages. So to say now, this sub-language Afrikaans is now the primary language in our rural township that's why I would say urban they use the primary language global is more preferable in order for you to adapt to English if you were a coloured people or coloured person or so. But I would say urban schools give you more advance (advantage) for you in order to practice and overcome this barrier.

Researcher: That's true, there's a big gap...

Researcher: {laughing that's great Enrich, thank you so much. I really appreciate your participation, thank you so much.

En: It's a pleasure **Researcher...** (name)

Thank you



Appendix F: Oral interview with students.

Name of respondent:

Date:

Name of interviewer:

Educational background:

Name of institution attended:

Gender:

1. What is your mother tongue.....?

2. What was the medium of instruction in your School ?

3. What Language do you mainly speak at home with your immediate family?

.....
.....

4. What language did you and your parents mainly use when you were a child?

.....

5. What is your opinion: Students should have the opportunity to receive lectures in both their mother-tongue and English in this institution. Please provide reasons:

Mother tongue-

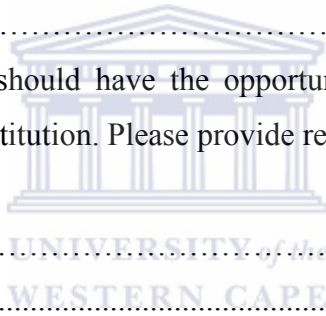
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English:

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5. Do you think your school prepared you well for university studies? Explain briefly

.....
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.....



6. What challenges do you face as a first year undergraduate student in this institution? Please list these challenges:

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.....
.....
.....

7. Do you use other languages other than English when doing assignment? Motivate your answer.....

.....
.....

8. What Languages do you speak fluently and explain a problem you have to people you encounter every day?

Thank you for your time



Interview questions for lecturers and tutors

Date:

Tutor group and module.....

Home language.....

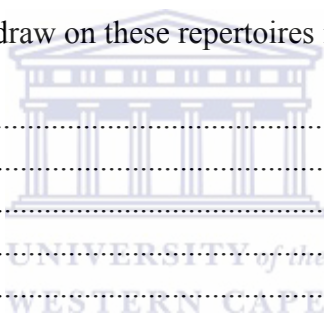
Other languages.....

Gender.....

1. Could you tell me something about the linguistic repertoires of the students in your lecture/tutorial?.....

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.....

2. Do you encourage students to draw on these repertoires in your lectures/tutorials/assignments? Could you give me examples?.....



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3. If not, could you explain.....

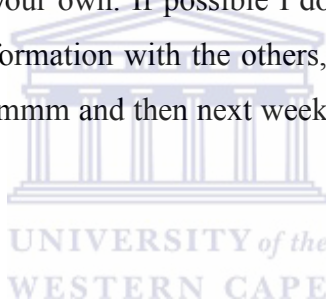
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Thank you for your time,

Tutor: Yes. Yes the second *gewees* (*Yes it was the second*). **Goeiemore**, (*Goodmorning*) Molweni, Huh? Miss Muller you were not here last week still sick. **By die huis n bietjie gewees?** (*Where you at home for the day?*) **Wie was nie hier verlede week nie?** (*Who was absent last week?*)

Girl: Murmuring in Afrikaans

Tutor: **Wie was nie hier verlede week nie?** (*Who did not attend class last week?*) Just give me an indication who was not here. **Al die gesiggies lyk bekend.** (*All your faces I do recognise*) Ok. Now remember I said to you last week that emmm... we will take your poster and share those information with everybody today right. So I would like you to know this hour it go's like that. Ok so what I'm going to ask you now is too just in your own. If possible I don't know how you are going to work that one out, emmm... share your information with the others, because we are really running out of time and it sounds like revelations. Emmm and then next week (pause) did you get the course for the rest of the year? Semester Huh!?



Students: No

Tutor: On my list there is no lecture next week. Have you received that information?

Girls: No

Tutor: No! Ok emmm... I'll just double check ok, but emmm ,Mr Dinnie should have mentioned it on Monday, but now he didn't. So I will just make sure what is going to happen that's all that I am saying ok. Right, now listening to Mr Dinnies' lecture yesterday those things were quite straight forward. Don't you think so, can't say yes or no?

Boy: Yes

Tutor: They were quite self-explanatory. Right Noel?

Boy: (Softly) yes mam

Tutor: Right so we are not going into his emmmm lecture and unpack it, but what we are going to do. We need to divide into groups quickly. While in the groups, I'll do the register and then, I'll hand-out the case study and then you are going to analyse the case study. I'll guide you how to analyse the case study. How does one analyse any text? You look for? **Oe... nou is julle** (*Now you are*) unnaturally quite. **As jy enige text wil ontleed, dan soek jy vir wat?** (*If you want to analyse any text, then you look for. What are you looking for?*)

Students (Muttering) Key words

Students: Key words! Ya! (Yes) You look for key words even if you want to answer a question. And a question is like e.g. Define the corruption in South African government, what are the key words?

Boy: Corruption (out loud)

Tutor: And define also, ok. So you are not going to describe it. You are to define it. Give a definition of what? of corruption, ok. So those are your key words. So this is what you can do with this case study. Yesterday lecture was about emmmm. What was yesterday's lecture about?

Boy: Discipline (girl softly in the background discipline)

Tutor: In the?

Students: Classroom

Tutor: Ok. Now the case study is about (pause) a boy whose miss behaving. Now you are the educator, you must now say how you are going emmmm. How you are going to emmm...deal with that situation? Ok. Let us get into four groups quickly. These tables were in groups and now they are...**Ons kry n lekker groupie hier, kom nou julle** (*Let us form a nice group here, come students*) emmmm..... Mr Dominick just excuse me I mix my languages.

Dominick: No there's no problem (laughing slightly)

Girl: (Softly) **Juffrou kan ek die deur toe maak** (*Miss may I close the door*)

Tutor: Yes **maak gou die deur toe.** (*Yes you may close the door*) Ok, but I'll explain what I am saying ok; and that there was a group right lady. There was a group, come face one another. Sweetheart, were you here last week? For those people who were not here last week. Remembers you guys must now give 200%. Miss Lemmers **200 persent harder né, moet julle werk** (*And Miss Lemmers 200% for you also, that includes everybody*) excellent.

Class: Laughing

Tutor: Let's see, are you going to join them sweaty? There's one, yes. **Maak maar die deur toe.** Come sit this side too. So you can face Safiek. There you go, ok. There's one there. (Class chatting amongst themselves). Right, start reading immediately. I might have an extra one. Does each group have one at least? So there's another one. Here begin immediately, because this hour flies and here's another one ok.

Girl: You want me to

Tutor: Take one ok emmmm (long pause). Students Mr Dinnie mentioned corporal punishment and there is a school law against school punishment. There is one from the government and all other divisions which we not going to go into.

(Tutor's cell phone ringing. She exits the class to talk on the phone outside)

Tutor: Ok, I also mentioned that there are some common beliefs regarding corporal punishment (pause) then he gave you some ideas to strengthen the classroom management. Some ideas (pause) then he gave something next for those people who take down some notes. Right, ok and he mentioned at least eleven techniques. So you must now see what are you going to do with the title, who is he?

Girl: (Softly matters) Adam

Tutor: With little Adam. He is only seven years old. Look at his offences underline, highlight his offences. See what techniques you are going to apply to get him to co-operate and while you guys

are doing that Mr Dinnie wants your home language. Emmmmmm (long pause) (taking register)
G.Abrahams is here. G.Abrahams!

Girl: No

Tutor: Ok Absent. J. Arendse. Not here?

Girl: No

Tutor: Bartman, No. Bellah- English. Bell, English?

Bell: Afrikaans

Tutor: **Ek wil net julle huis taal hê né** (*I only want your home language*)Beukes?

Beukes: Ya

Teacher: Afrikaans

Beukes: English

Tutor: Cloete, Ek dink Cloete is seker Afrikaans (Assumes) (Cloete is probably Afrikaans)
Emmm..... Demas

Demas: Afrikaans

Tutor Afrikaans. Duimpies, **kom nie trug nie, het ons gesê.** (*We said he is not returning*) Emmmm
Hopley

Hopley: Afrikaans

Tutor: Afrikaans. Johannes

Johannes: Afrikaans



Tutor: **Is julle Afrikaners?** (*Are all of you South Africans?*)

Students: (Murmuring) then start to laughing.

Tutor: Did you hear that a comment passed by? Antjie Krog, the famous poet and writer. She played with the language a little bit and she says that it is so strange in this country if you live in Europe you are a European, but if you live in **Afrika dan is jy 'n Afrikaner né, in Afrika dan is dit mos 'n Afrikaner**, (*Africa then you are consider as an African, right*), but if you are not white and not coloured and you live in Africa then you are Africans. Have you heard that one? And there's no translation for Africans, because if you say it is an African, **dan beteken dit dat jy is 'n Afrikaner en hy is nie een nie**. (*Then you actually are an African, and he is not considered a African*). You see how we can play with words, play with the language anyway I thought that was strange. Keys!

Keys: Afrikaans

Tutor: Afrikaans. Lambers!

Lambers: (Softly) Afrikaans



Tutor: Afrikaans. Lewis. **Juffrou Lewis** (*Miss Lewis*)

Boy: **Lewis is Afrikaans. Juffrou sy kom more.** (*Lewis is Afrikaans miss. She'll be back tomorrow*)

Teacher: Mkahdi is Xhosa. Manial?

Manial: Afrikaans

Teacher: Maykeso is IsiXhosa. Meyer. **Juffrou Meyer nie hier nie?** (*Miss Meyer is absent*) Muller

Muller: Afrikaans

Tutor Emmmm Noble

Noble: Afrikaans

Tutor: This is my Afrikaans class actually.

Dominick: Ok

Tutor: It's only two or three English speaking. Onverwag is not coming back. Pietersen

Pietersen: Afrikaans

Tutor: Also Afrikaans. Solomons

Tutor Tubah is IsiXhosa, but his not here.

Tubah: (Softly) I am not absent miss.

Tutor: O! Sorry you look so different emmm.Are you here? You were absent last week?

Tubah: Yes miss

Tutor: Emmm Ok van Heerden, Afrikaans?

Van Heerden: Yes

Tutor Visagie, C

Visagie: (softly) Afrikaans

Tutor: And Vessel

Vessel: Afrikaans

Tutor: **Is jy oek Afrikaans?** (*Are you also Afrikaans speaking?*) Ok, ok have you guys have time to read through this? Ok. Let's read together (Reading the text to the class). **Adam is sewe jaar oud, ok.** (*Adam is seven years old*). So your first key word is **sewe**, seven years. **Hy het problemme met lees, spel en skryf, maar hy't, maar hy het 'n net en is bekwaam as it by wiskunde kom.** (*He has problems with reading, spelling and writing; however he is proficient in maths*)He doesn't like reading, spelling and writing, but he loves his maths. During the non-maths lessons, you as the teacher have noticed that he spends a considerable amount of time, on tasks when he frequently disrupts the other students. What's the key word there?

Boy: Disrupts

Class softly saying disrupt

Tutor: And when does he do it?

Boy: Frequently

Tutor: When it's not..... Ok. This is worse in the afternoon than in the morning. Remember in the first semester. We looked at the different subjects and when you draw up, say now e.g. the teacher gives you the principle gives you four teaching subjects. So you draw up with the (stuttering) with your emmmm. What's this, your grade group, you draw up the time table. Obviously you not are going to have all your maths lessons in the afternoon, because they call that the grave yard session. Who wants to listen to a heavy maths lesson in the afternoon? Have your maths lessons in the morning when you are still, when you are still jelly fresh. This is worse in the afternoon than in the morning. He is in a class of 6- and seven year olds. So he is with his peers. He spends most of his play time with younger children, ok. And he is seven (pause), frequently a pair which includes Adam is quite during play times doing such things as interfering with passes by from an out of bounds area. Out-of-bounds is another key word. So that is very tempting for him to go there where he is not supposed to go. Two days ago, I told a two-year old emmm... and I realised my mistake immediately after I uttered the words. I said don't touch it. So what did the child do?

Class: He touched it

Tutor: Emmm So I must like Mr Dinnie said yesterday, don't give negative instructions. Emmm, and don't make a noise, don't through papers around, rather say keep the class clean. Ok. Emmmm... out-of-bound areas on the playground which are close to the street. So that's the reason why that is out-of-bounds rummaging through the rubbish bins for food or cans. Now listen to this. He doesn't do it, because he is hungry. He does it to swap for other items students or just to engage in fights. Where **nogals?** (*Where do you think this happens*). In and around the toilets. Now after every interval that very same Adam is coming back and sitting in your class, ok. He seems to be amused by the trouble he gets into. Ok (pause) **Hy's verbysterd dit verbaas hom. Dit laat hom goed voel.** (*He is confused and surprised at the same time. This makes him feel good*). Usually saying when challenges

that he doesn't know why he behaves in this appropriate ways. That's the easy way out. Giving example

End.



Appendix I

Informed consent form (student)

Title of the research project:

Investigating language practices and identities of multilingual students in a tertiary institution (UWC): implications for teaching and learning

Researcher: Awah Dominic

Contact email: pennfor77@yahoo.co.uk

As a student at the University of the Western Cape, I hereby acknowledge the following:

1. The researcher has explained to me the purpose of this study. He also explained to me that all information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only.
2. I have given permission for him to interview me and if necessary to use or audio and video recordings.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any stage.
4. I understand that the institution and all participants in the study will remain anonymous.
5. I understand that audio and video recordings will not be used in any public forum such as a conference without my permission for the extract/s to be used.

Signed:

PRINT NAME:

Date.....

Place: Bellville.....

Informed consent form (lecturer/tutor)

Title of the research project:

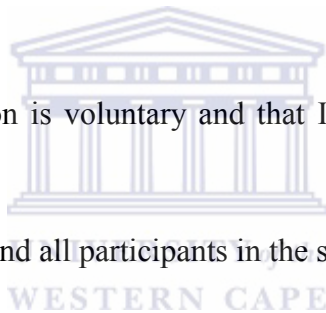
Language practices and identities of multilingual students in a Western Cape tertiary institution:
Implications for teaching and learning

Researcher: Awah Dominic

Contact email: pennfor77@yahoo.co.uk

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Signed.....

PRINT NAME.....

Date.....

Place: Bellville.....