

**Choice of language for learning and assessment: the role of learner identity and perceptions in informing these choices.**

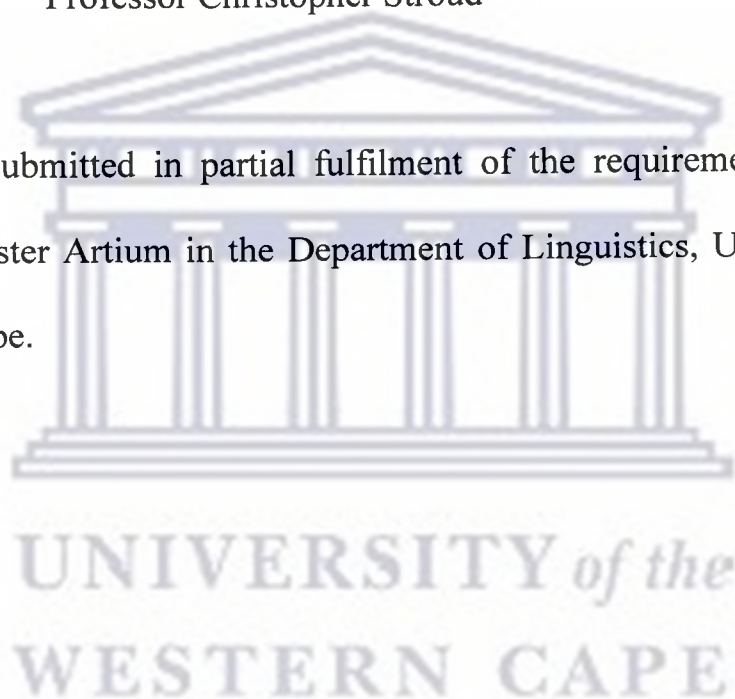
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## **Keywords**

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Language of learning and teaching (LoLT)



## **Abstract**

South Africa, like many ex-colonial contexts finds itself confronting difficult decisions about multilingualism. The South Africa constitution recognizes eleven official languages and provides for education in these languages. At present, few parents opt to put their children in African language classrooms. This study explores the case of an inner-city school in Cape Town which offered limited provisions in learning in Afrikaans and isiXhosa besides the main language English. The study elicited learners' ideas and attitudes about the viability of these languages as languages of teaching and learning through the primary use of interviews. Learners' perceptions of language are discussed within a language ideological framework that distinguishes between modernist and post modernist ideas of language in a transforming postmodern context. Among the findings are ideologically loaded discourses of how these learners undermine the use of Afrikaans and isiXhosa as languages of education in order to create or enact a certain learner identity which they deem appropriate for this context. Furthermore, downgrading of their languages is largely embedded in the need to separate languages of the home and education as some languages are more than others believed to offer social and economic flexibility.



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**Declaration**

I declare that *Choice of language for learning and assessment: the role of learner identity and perceptions in informing these choices* is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other institution and also, all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references.

Nomxolisi Jantjies

June 2009

Signature.....



## Acknowledgements

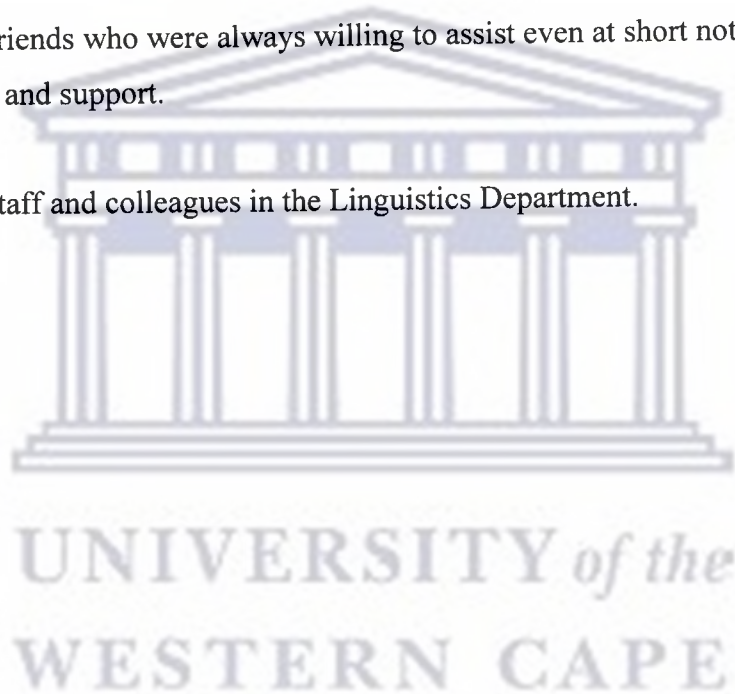
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## Table of contents

Keywords	ii
Abstract	iii
Declaration	iv
Acknowledgements	v
<b>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2. LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. The Bantu Education Act of 1953	4
2.2. Language in education policy in post apartheid South Africa	7
2.3. ✎ Concerns about mother tongue education	13
<b>CHAPTER 3. TOWARDS A THEORETICAL APPROACH</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1. Introduction	18
3.2. Language and globalisation	20
3.2.1. ✎ Perceptions of language and organisation of multilingualism	20
3.2.2. Language and identity	23
3.2.3. How to account for adoption	25
<b>CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1. Introduction	29
4.2. Site	30
4.3. Participants	32
4.4. Procedure	33
4.5. Analysis	35
<b>CHAPTER 5. ANALYSIS</b>	<b>36</b>
5.1. Introduction	36
5.2. The principal's proposal	37

5.3.	Language in late modernity	39
5.3.1.	The formation of language in a politics of transformation	39
5.3.2.	Historical and social realities	41
5.3.3.	Lack of academic register in use	45
5.4.	Linguistically mediated identities: how learners construct resistance	51
5.4.1.	Linguistic comfort zones	52
5.4.2.	Elevation of English to an easily accessible language	54
5.4.3.	Creating separate linguistic spaces and domains	56
5.4.3.1.	Language of hearth and home	57
5.4.3.2.	Separate spaces	58
5.4.4.	Xhosa usage as signalling remedialness or immaturity	63
5.4.5.	Economy of teaching/time	69
5.5.	Summary	72
<b>CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION</b>		73
6.1	Concluding remark	76
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		78
<b>Appendices</b>		89
1.	Teacher interviews	89
2.	Learners' interviews (Grade 8)	105
3.	Learners' interviews (Grade 12)	141

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a highly multilingual country where more than 75% of the population are speakers of indigenous languages (IsiXhosa, isiZulu, IsiNdebele, siSwati, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Tshivenda, Xitsonga). Languages have always been at the forefront of politics in South Africa; the Afrikaner government protected its interests by imposing Afrikaans on South African citizens against the hegemony of English and marginalizing all the indigenous languages to further its segregationist policies, thus using this multilingual reality to its own ends. English and Afrikaans were awarded official status, and these languages dominated in all official spheres of South Africans lives leaving the indigenous languages for domestic use. The post apartheid government, on the other hand, has taken advantage of the multilingual nature of the country and used it to unify and promote tolerance for each others language. In an attempt to redress apartheid's wrongs and embrace the country's linguistic diversity the post apartheid government awarded official status to nine African indigenous languages; IsiXhosa, isiZulu, IsiNdebele, siSwati, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Tshivenda, Xitsonga alongside Afrikaans and English, stating in the constitution that all these languages are to enjoy <sup>1</sup>"parity of esteem and must be treated equitably". However, to date the multilingual policy of South Africa is appearing to be increasingly more like a symbolic gesture than a practical roadmap for linguistic redress and language development. For example, even though learners today are given the opportunity to learn through African languages as media of instruction few parents and pupils seem to take up this option. Instead of embracing the opportunity to have African languages valorized and choose mother tongue education, the demise of apartheid has seen many black African language speaking parents moving their children from schools in their own neighborhoods to former white schools. Since 1994 there has been an increase in

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa – Chapter 1, Section 6 (4)

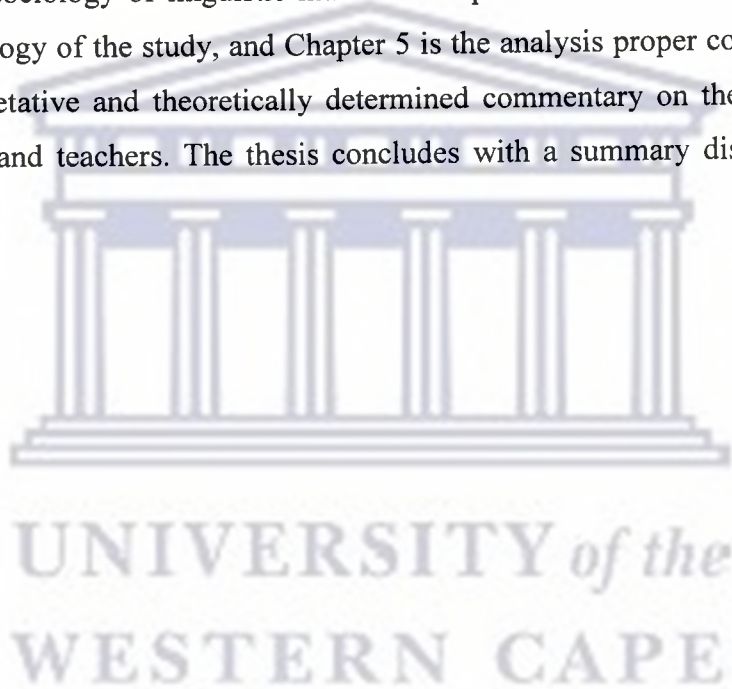


the number of children who learn through a language that is not their home language, in pursuit of a better education which appears to be taken as synonymous with education through the English language.

According to Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:1), “in multilingual settings, language choice and attitudes are inseparable from political arrangements, relations of power, language ideologies, and interlocutors’ views of their own and others’ identities”, and thus speakers’ choice of language is highly complex. This thesis is an attempt to unravel some of these complexities, and to hopefully provide information on factors influencing the learners’ choice of language for education. Given the important linkages between language, education and identity (e.g. Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004; Baker, 2006), the present study approaches language as a constitutive and performative factor in speakers’ identity work, and seeks to understand how learners construct themselves as global learners through the way they represent or practice different languages, specifically focusing on how learners voice the importance of specific language choices in assessment and learning. Practically, this work may provide information to language planners by revealing the underlying dynamics behind learners’ choice of language for education. Theoretically the study aims to contribute to the dialogue about the role of language in identity creation in context, specifically how identities as aspiring scholars are linguistically mediated.

The thesis is structured as follows: In Chapter 2, following a short historical overview and a description of the context for the study, I move on to reviewing in Chapter 3 some relevant literature on mother tongue education and language choice. The focus of this review is on literature that speaks to the issue of *English as a World language* in order to sift out information on the reasons for why speakers adopt this language in increasing numbers in so many contexts.

This slant is taken here because English in the South African context is proving to be, as we shall see, one of the main factors in parents and students de-selecting their mother tongues as languages of teaching and learning. In other words, the focus of this work is not so much on learners' attitudes toward their mother tongues *per se*, as it is on the ways in which English is constituted as the language of hope, aspiration and investment. This chapter also proposes some key analytical tools and concepts that will prove useful for the analyses, which are predominantly concerned with issues of identity and that are related to Bourdieuan sociology of linguistic markets. Chapter 4 is a detailed account of the methodology of the study, and Chapter 5 is the analysis proper comprising a close interpretative and theoretically determined commentary on the voices of the learners and teachers. The thesis concludes with a summary discussion in Chapter 6.



## **CHAPTER 2. LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

With the South African language policy<sup>2</sup> and the department of education's (DoE) language policy stating clearly the position of African indigenous languages as official languages, this research seeks to answer why it is that learners who are mother tongue speakers of Xhosa and Afrikaans tend not to want to entertain the idea of these languages as languages of education. In this introductory chapter, I will attempt to set the scene for this study by providing some historical and contemporary context on African, mother tongue, education in the South African context, and by providing a literature review of select scholarly articles on the importance of mother tongue education from research conducted within South Africa and outside the country. This will allow me to formulate a set of research questions that will be further developed and theorized in the following Chapter 3

### **2.1. The Bantu Education Act of 1953**

The current state of language in education in South Africa can largely be attributed to the country's political history. Languages in education during apartheid were used as a tool to advance the state's various agendas. With the coming into power of the Afrikaner National Party in 1948, the enhancement of Afrikaans and diminished influence of English became a priority. At the same time, English mother tongue teachers that were previously made available to state public schools were purposely removed from institutions where blacks were present, and a Department of Education that dealt specifically with black education was constructed and located in a newly formed Department of Native Affairs. Access to schools was determined by a number of factors, with the leading factor amongst many being the pupils' skin color. According to Fataar (2001), "educational development ought fundamentally to be understood within the unfolding context

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<sup>2</sup> Constitution of the republic of South Africa Act, No. 108 of 1996, section 6.

of a changing political economy and the related shifting social relations". The education introduced for black people in the form of Bantu education was to keep blacks from aspiring to social, economic and political positions that they would never be allowed to hold in society. Due to an ailing economy, "an alliance between English and the growing Afrikaner monopoly capitalist pressurized the state into aligning its public and education policy in their interest" (Fataar, 2001:14). Hence provisions for black schooling were made, and the Bantu Education Act of 1953 proposed mother tongue education in primary and higher primary schools with transition to Afrikaans and English thereafter, in order to, in the words of the author of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, Dr Hendrick Verwoerd, the then Minister of Native affairs:

<sup>3</sup>[p]revent Africans receiving an education that would lead them to aspire to positions they wouldn't be allowed to hold in society. Instead Africans were to receive an education designed to provide them with skills to serve their own people in the homelands or to work in labouring jobs under whites.

Black South Africans were to retain their mother tongues but their access to English and Afrikaans at school had to be controlled to ensure a subordinate life in society. According to Patel, the apartheid regime worked with "some 15 disparate education departments" which catered for the different population groups including the former "Bantustans" (2004:15-16), with a "per capita expenditure per learner in these systems [that] was extremely disparate and unequal" (Patel, 2004:16). Not surprisingly, the highest per capita per learner was spent in the white schools and the least in the homeland state schools. Learners at white

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<sup>3</sup> *Apartheid legislation in South Africa*. Available URL:  
<http://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/doc/HIST/Apartheid%20Legislation%20in%20South%20Africa.htm>

schools were therefore always at an advantage over learners in Indian schools, mixed race schools and learners in the former homelands.

Interestingly, research done in South Africa indicated that the first eight years of mother tongue schooling implemented during apartheid were in fact beneficial to the learner. According to Heugh (2002:24), this was because it “gave pupils time to learn their own language” while adding the second and the third language. Heugh provides a <sup>4</sup>table that shows the increased pass rate of African language speaking learners in year 1976 when they were taught in their own language for the first eight years and the decline after the transition period to English and Afrikaans was reduced to four years:

Year	African language speaking students	% Pass rate	(Overall total number of candidates, plus % pass rate)
1955	595	43,5	
<b>1976 (Soweto)</b>	<b>9 595</b>	<b>83,7</b>	
1979	1 4574	73,5	85 276 (87%)
1980	29 973	53,2	109 807 (75%)
1982	70 241	48,4	139 488 (69%)
1992	342 038	44,0	448 491 (56%)
1994	392 434	49,0	495 408 (58%)
1997			559 233 (47,4%)
1998			552 862 (49%)

<sup>4</sup> A table which demonstrates the correlation between the number of years of language maintenance with accompanying second and third language learning and academic output at matriculation level, extracted from Heugh, K. (2002:24).

The findings that mother tongue education has educational advantages are wholly in line with international research/findings on the topic. However, the increased pass rates were accidental, in that, the implementation of the Bantu Education Act was meant to hamper the development of a black child.

On June 16, 1976 South Africa witnessed uproar from students who were protesting against Bantu Education but particularly protesting against the enforced implementation of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction at Secondary school and the impoverished curriculum. The event found resonance internationally and was a vivid, although tragic, testimony to the importance for youth of the sociopolitics of education and language. The 1980's saw an attempt in educational reform to 'modernize apartheid education' (cf. Fataar, 2001), in order to pacify a selected black working class in urban areas. "Aligning education to labour demands was designed to achieve closer articulation between education and economy" (Fataar, 2001:16). However, after reducing mother tongue education to four years, following the 1976 riots the country saw a decline in the pass rate of African language speaking learners. One important legacy of Bantu Education is the stigma associated with African languages as languages of education. There is no doubt that this has contributed significantly towards the attitudes of learners and parents alike towards indigenous languages as languages of learning and their dismissal of these languages as language of value and social capital.

## **2.2. Language in education policy in post apartheid South Africa**

During apartheid "white education aimed to construct and sustain an identity of racial superiority, while black education was meant to inculcate cultural and racial inferiority" (Fataar, 2001:14). Educational reform in the post apartheid South Africa has seen the government taking measures to disentangle the education

system from the lingering spectre of inequality left by the apartheid through “uniformisation of the education system” (Pachler et al. 2008 cf. Blommaert, 2008). While during apartheid, “[e]ducation policy discourse was underpinned by the need to relate education policy for blacks to the provision of labour” (Fataar, 2001:15) post apartheid education policy discourse is framed within the mainstreaming of South Africa’s society; as opposed to the educational reform proposed in the 1980’s, the current educational reform is founded on equity and calls for mainstreaming for all South Africa’s citizens through uniformization of the education system. In 1998 the education department introduced Outcomes Based Education (which came to be known as Curriculum 2005) and equal opportunities-orientated OBE based national curriculum in 2000 (cf. Pachler et. al. 2008). According to Blommaert (2008:439) in previously marginalized societies such as South Africa the uniformization of the education system “is seen as democratic”. The move towards uniformization “means absorption into the middle class profile” (ibid). Although OBE is (potentially) a move away from older, racist models, it is nevertheless not free of contradictions in that “the western/white culture undoubtedly holds sway, clearly perpetuating differences in the quality / standard of education delivery (Pachler et. al., 2008:445). One manifestation of this is that the mainstreaming of society is often thought to be achievable through English (cf. Blommaert, 2008). This brings us to the next point of the disjuncture between the language policy and practice in the post apartheid South Africa.

Even with the establishment of the first democratic Republic of South Africa, the language in education issue has still not been resolved. After the abolishing of apartheid the new democratic government inherited a department of education fraught with unequal distribution of resources. The former white schools inherited from the former regime resources and a good reputation as schools that reared learners of good quality. Furthermore, English during apartheid had acquired a

role as the other language of power with which the Afrikaner rule could be fought. For most South Africans, Afrikaans had been ruled out as the language of education as it had been preceded by its reputation as the language of the oppressor. African languages education on the other hand had “negative associations because it has in the past been misused as a political weapon” (Macdonald and Burroughs, 1991:29). These were some of the challenges encountered by the new government

Contrary to the apartheid government that took a divide-and-rule approach to multilingualism by introducing a hierarchical scaling of languages, the language policy of the post apartheid government was geared to advancing and erasing the stigma attached to previously marginalized languages by awarding official status to those languages and using them as languages of education. On the request from the Minister of Education, the Language Task Action Group (LANGTAG) was employed to see to the successful implementation of a language in education policy which complemented the country’s diversity. LANGTAG compiled a detailed report, *‘Towards a National Language Plan for South Africa’*; on a language plan, for South Africa. The report stated that the language policy in the education sector should:

- (a) facilitate access to meaningful education for all South African students;
- ✓ (b) promote multilingualism;
- ✓ (c) promote the use of the student’s primary languages as languages of learning and teaching in the context of an additive multilingual paradigm and with due regard to the wishes and attitudes of parents, teachers, and students;
- ✓ (d) encourage the acquisition by all South African students of at least two but preferably three South African languages, even if at different levels of proficiency, by means of a variety of additive bi-, or multilingual



strategies; it is strongly recommended that where the student's L1 is either Afrikaans or English, an African language should be the additional language (McKay and Chick, 2001:395).

The Department of Education established a Language in Education Policy that embraced the learners' different linguistic backgrounds and also one that identified multilingualism as a resource. The Language in Education Policy was published in 1997 with one of its stated objectives being "to establish additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education" (Du Plessis, 2000:2).

The Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) Section 29 nr (2) states:

Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public education institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective 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 needs to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices (cf. Du Plessis, 2000:5).

According to Cummins (2000:37) "[a]dditive bilingualism refers to the form of bilingualism that results when students add a second language to their intellectual tool-kit while continuing to develop conceptually and academically in their first language". Furthermore the language in education policy states

... the governing body must stipulate how the school will promote multilingualism through using more than one language of learning

and teaching, and/or by offering additional languages as fully fledged subjects, and/or applying special immersion of language maintenance programmes (Department of Education, 1997: 8).

The choices offered by the language in education policy models, reiterate a need for an additive approach. McKay and Chick (2001:395) state that the language in education policy “assumes that the learners learn other languages (including the dominant language) most effectively when there is the continued educational use of the learners’ first language and... respect for the cultural assumptions and values implicit in them”. This is in line with international research. Many scholars view mother tongue instruction as a fundamental principle of education and language learning. Macdonald and Burroughs (1991:30) emphasize the importance of mother tongue in providing a “good start in education” as it serves as “a bridge between the child’s home and the demands of the new environment of the school”. Speaking their own languages at school allows children to express their ideas without limitations. Using the mother tongue allows learners to participate fully in the classroom, as there is no language barrier. “Once they are well equipped mentally in their first language, children can transfer their skills and knowledge to a second language with reasonable ease” (ibid, 31). Therefore, this kind of instruction encourages additive bilingualism.

Learners are not only adding a second language, however, but tapping into a cognitive resource, as acquiring a language can be considered as “stimulation towards mental growth” which “is necessary as preparation for their education and life skills” (Macdonald and Burroughs, 1991:31). Without the necessary “mental growth, the pupils fail to meet the intellectual demands of school, and thus fail year after year in school” (ibid, 31). Cummins (2000:32) reiterates that

L1 instruction in the early grades is necessary to ensure that students understand academic content and experience a successful start to their schooling.

What goes for teaching also applies to assessment. According to Flemming (2006:2), assessment in its simple form “provides information on whether teaching/learning has been successful” which implies that assessment is a determining factor on whether the learner fails or progresses to the following grade. During apartheid the system emphasized “content, conformity, and high stakes summative assessment” (Jansen, 1999 cf. Vandeyar and Killen, 2007). This according to Vandeyar and Killen (2007) is prone to teacher’s belief that “assessment is primarily about learner and school accountability”. With the introduction of the new curriculum emphasis is placed on assessment as means for providing “indications of learner achievement in the most effective and efficient manner and ensure that learners integrate and apply knowledge and skills” (Vandeyar and Killen, 2007).

With the outcomes of assessment used to indicate if teaching/learning is successful, it is essential that assessment practices mirror the capabilities of the learner. According to Setati, et. al. (2002: 134), “learner’s written work may conceal misconceptions and [...] these are more likely to be revealed in peer discussion in the learner’s main language”. Cummins (2000:57) shares the sentiments that, interpretation of these results as a reflection of the quality of the school and instruction is “... highly problematic”, in that, how can such results be a reflection of the learner’s competence when comprehension might not have been achieved in the first place since teaching is conducted in a language that learners have not gained full proficiency in.

Thus, the main goal of the language in education policy is for South African learners to retain their mother tongues while adding other languages in their

repertoire, irrespective of whether they attend a monolingual school. This is thought to be accomplished in three educational possibilities for South African school-going children; ‘immersion’ where learners adopt their second language as the main language at school, ‘initial instruction in the first language’ followed by transition to the second language, and ‘maintenance bilingualism where bilingual education is implemented at the beginning of the education and maintained through out’. This latter option is often only a reality for Afrikaans mother tongue speakers who receive instruction in their L1 and add on a second language English (Broom, 2004:507-508). In practice, classrooms display mixes and blends of these models. The languages of interaction evolve depending on the situation of the classroom; for example, a mixture of English and an African language can be used in the actual interaction between the teacher and learners to avoid discomfort or to make up for the insufficient proficiency in the language of instruction.

### **2.3. Concerns about mother tongue education**

Issues of mother tongue education are more visible and urgent today than earlier. With the democratic government abolishing apartheid’s segregated school system and allowing all racial, cultural and social groups into former mono-cultural schools (former model C schools previously attended by white English/Afrikaans and Indian) these schools now boast a linguistic and culturally diverse population of learners whose mother tongue is a language other than English. Despite Skutnabb-Kangas (2004:2) warning that being “educated in a language other than one’s mother tongue often has bad results” in terms of cognitive, emotional and scholarly development, the majority of parents across the country appear to share a common view “demanding English medium of instruction for their children” (Banda, 2000:51). Today, many South African learners are taught at school through a language that is seldom used in their

homes. Many Black parents prefer English as the medium of instruction and those who can afford to send their children to former model C schools do so. The choice of the language of instruction had been left to the parents as they are the guardians of their children until such time when the learners are able to make their own decisions, and it is apparent that the perceptions of the country's citizens do not parallel those held by the government policy makers. Although research done throughout the years indicates that children's thinking develops most quickly and easily in their first language, and the premise that mother tongue is best for cognitive development is uncontested, most parents opt for English medium (Macdonald and Burroughs, 1991:31). The post apartheid era has seen a rise in the number of black and colored students enrolling to schools predominantly attended by white children, schools where the medium of instruction and interaction is English. Pretorius (2002 cited in Stephen, 2004:170) has raised concerns that the "inadequate levels of English language competence have a major and deleterious effect on black/English second language student performance." According to Stephen (2004:170) the environment where everything is done in English is said to be overwhelming to the second language learner and such situations do not reflect the learner's "intelligence" but rather "their second language proficiency" levels.

Clearly, the question of language in education can never be viewed in isolation from the society as a whole. Research on bilingual education must be understood against the context where it occurs, acknowledging that it does not occur in a vacuum, disengaged from the emerging economy, and from ongoing social and political transformation. Many different reasons have been proposed in the literature for the de-selection of African languages, ranging from the perception among stakeholders that African language classes are under-resourced in terms of teachers and training, through the thinking that African languages do not weather well in technological domains and are generally associated with stigma

fueled by Bantu education, to the fact of the post-1994 condition, that the position of the English language was strengthened due to its positive connotations as an anti-apartheid language and as a language of social mobility in the new, transnational South Africa. These beliefs, attitudes or conditions of fact are mediated and performed on a day-to-day basis in how speakers/learners position and present themselves in relation to different languages. According to Baker (2006:137), learning a language is not just about language, but about who we are, what we want to become and what we are allowed by other speakers of these languages to become. Different languages are linked to aspiration and social mobility (e.g. Fataar, 2006) in different ways. Generally, the extent to which different speech practices and styles allow speakers to stylize themselves through language (e.g. Bucholtz, 2009) suggests that any negative attitudes that pupils and students generally may hold towards African languages, is because these languages are not considered as sufficiently stylish and up-market as other languages (e.g. Nkuna, 2006). Similar findings appear in international research, where children in French Quebec see speaking languages other than English as being 'uncool' (Caldas and Caldas, 2002). Furthermore, Bartlett (2007) remarks on how, specifically in the education domain, linguistically mediated identities are also learning identities that express or manifest the learners' orientation to self as a learner.

Recent South African work has looked into the role of identity work through language as a factor in learners' acceptance or rejection of African languages (and different varieties of English) in educational contexts (e.g. Bangeni and Kapp, 2007; McKinney, 2007). I will review this work in the following Chapter. However, according to Fataar, educational development should be understood within the unfolding context of a changing political economy and the related shifting social relations (2001: 20). In today's world, this means understanding political economy and shifting social relations in a global context. An important

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point of departure for the present study, thus, is that issues of language and identity in the South African educational contexts need to be understood in relation to *transnational* frames of reference. Increasingly, there is an interest in the role of identities on global symbolic and linguistic markets in contexts of late modernity. South Africa is no longer an isolated state, it is part of a global network where exchange of ideas has become a norm and there is frequent ✕ contact between people from different parts of the world. In a world that places value on the languages, languages that possess symbolic capital will be favored while those without will be side-lined. In today's South Africa, the way that English is valued in the *local* context as a language which offers upward mobility, and the way that aspirational identities are constructing other languages as marginal are *local enactments* of a more *global sociolinguistic dynamics*. Multilingualism is seen as a resource in the current global context, but it is multilingualism of a specific type, and in relation to a standard language "What is valued also is a mastery of a standard language, shared across boundaries and a marker of social status" (Heller, 1999:5). Multilingualism thus has to be viewed in relation to the broader global context which places languages such as ✕ English high on the scale as languages with global potential. Multilingualism that only takes into consideration national states and local community dynamics cannot do justice to the complexity of language and identity.

In this evolving social and political climate in an increasingly globalizing world, languages and their speakers are subject to many competing and contradictory forces. Fataar (2006) addresses the issue of education reform (as set out by the state), emphasizing the necessity to explore how it is appropriated in contexts where it finds itself e.g. (township on the move). Thus, more specifically, this thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

- Are there differences in how learners from different language groups perceive their Mother tongues and English as media of teaching, learning and assessment?
- To what extent do dominant discourses of transformation and mobility in emerging economies such as the South African affect the choice of language in education?
- What is the role that is played by language in constructing learners' identities in multilingual contexts?
- How the factors raised above can be dealt within language policy and planning?



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## CHAPTER 3. TOWARDS A THEORETICAL APPROACH

### 3.1. Introduction

This third chapter discusses globalization as a phenomenon, and the role of linguistic markets in relation to understandings of language and identity and with a note on language planning and policy in education. Globalization refers to the intensification of global interconnectedness, suggesting a world full of movement and mixture, contact and linkages and persistent cultural interaction and exchange (Inda and Rosaldo, 2002:2). Globalization has been conceived as ‘time-space compression’ (Harvey, 1989) and ‘intensification of worldwide social relations’ (Giddens, 1990:64) through the unrestricted flows of information, capital, people and ideologies, and as an integration of the ‘world economy’ (Harris, 1983) where the flow of commodities, peoples, technologies and ideas is the order of the day (cited in Alexander, 2006 cf. Appadurai, 1996). With the twentieth century’s technological innovations the world has seen rapid and accelerated flows of messages and the intensification of the world as a global village. This idea of the global village has tended to reproduce the role of the centre and the periphery, where the whole world is leaning towards the Western culture as a model (cf. Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 2002)<sup>5</sup>. Languages have followed suit, with the languages of the centre perceived to possess more economic power than those of the periphery. What does globalization mean for language and education? Here, this question will be explored by first reviewing studies on language education and globalization in general, and then focusing more narrowly on the implications of

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<sup>5</sup> This stance bears similarities to, what is known as the hyperglobalist stance (with a view of globalization similar to the notion of linguistic imperialism). I am aware of other ways of conceptualizing globalization (such as the sceptic and the transformationalist). However, it does seem to me that what they all have in common is an acknowledgement of a strong ‘center’ push and pull, even if they differ to what extent they recognize undercurrents of influence from the periphery (cf. Dewey, 2007).

globalization for language education in South Africa. This is motivated by the fact that according to Stroud (2007:511)

the effect of global processes on multilingual dynamics varies from context to context or nation state to nation state, suggesting that the lived linguistic and cultural realities of speakers are mediated by a significant interaction between global macro-structural political and economic institutions, on the one hand, and the local structures of state and civil society, and their ideologies and practices on the other.

In other words, in societies like South Africa one has to take into consideration the historical baggage carried by mother tongue education, the current political and socio-economic situation impacting upon language, and the place of the nation in a wider, transnational network of interconnectedness.

The presentation in this chapter will deal with three interrelated aspects of language and transnationalism of relevance to understanding issues of language, education and identity in South African schools in a transnational context. Firstly, in what way are facets of globalization redefining the way language is perceived and multilingualism understood and organized? Secondly, what are the implications of transnational/global dynamics for the how language(s) mediate identities? And thirdly, how can we understand transnational flows and multilingual encounters with respect to the actual (linguistic mechanics of) choice and uptake of varieties, registers, linguistic forms etc? This latter point is of interest in order to account for the specific local context of the South African school.

## 3.2. Language and globalization

### 3.2.1. Perceptions of language and organization of multilingualism

Transnationalism facilitates “the planet wide circulation of goods, ideas and people” (Heller, 2007: 539). The unrestricted flows of people from region to region are likely to create a situation where different languages are in frequent contact with each other. Additionally, the “new economy” is “based on services, symbolic goods and information” therefore making it crucial for communication to be at the centre. The fact that the new economic conditions, according to Heller (2007:540), place communication at the center of economic activities means that languages are increasingly seen as commodities on an international market, where they are redefined as “skill” instead of “talent”. According to Heller (2007: 544) if language is treated “like a skill, you can manage it by measuring, evaluating and, eventually remunerating it”. This accelerated contact between languages can sometimes produce situations of inequality where languages such as English are seen as having “global currency” while other peripheral languages are marginalized. Immigrants and other cross border workers seek multilingualism as means for survival in the new spaces that they find themselves in.

Wee (2008) has pointed to the importance for language education to engage with the notion of *enterprise culture*. Entrepreneurial culture is pervasive in the global economy, and refers to a situation “in which certain enterprising qualities – such as self-reliance, personal responsibility, boldness and a willingness to take risks in the pursuit of goals – are regarded as human virtues and promoted as such” (du Gay 1996: 56, cited in Wee, 2008). Because workers are expected to show high levels of interpersonal and interactional competence, and to be aware of projecting personae that fits the company’s image, communication skills and

mastery of the requisite formulaic phrases is a necessity. This leads to a *technologization* of discourse (Fairclough, 1996) that assumes that effective communicative strategies can be identified and taught. The order of the day is self-based authenticity (compared to text based authenticity, or task based authenticity) that is, teaching communicative and linguistic routines that allow the individual to perform and display confidence – and develop a personal voice to express individual meanings, and how ‘particular performances of authenticity are anchored in particular contexts of use (Wee, 2008). Education has always had strong links with the labor market, and the fact that the labor market in South Africa like in many post-colonial countries sees value in English communication skills, can be expected to resonate in the roles of language in education. As in other contexts, the recent turn of events in the new economy have placed language at the centre, and those in possession of a language in demand can exchange it for profit.

Stroud and Wee (2007) have noted how the broad late-modern societal shift towards economies of consumption and commodification rather than production has also brought with it new patterns and arrangements for learning languages and organizing multilingualism. Referring to the Singaporean context, these authors note how the modernist Singaporean state’s identification of language allocation on the basis of ethnicity with predictable of bilingualism built around mastery of an ancestral (ethnic) language and English is giving way for a life-long acquisition of repertoires and varieties from many different languages (ancestral or not) depending on the social trajectories of the speakers. Likewise, Aronin and Singleton (2008) speak of the new linguistic dispensation’ where (commercially oriented form) of multilingualism is the norm. In many cases, these recent developments are leading to a revision of notions of *mother tongue*, *first and second language*, or *foreign language*. In fact, there is even cause to question to what extent the notion of *language* itself is the best conceptual tool

with which to talk about multilingualism and 'language' learning. A number of authors (e.g. Blommaert, 2009) have shown how register or variety is a more appropriate notion to work with.

In the South African context, ongoing processes of the commodification of language within the new economy cause rifts between the language policies and practice. Applying Heller's terms in this context where learners see little or no relevance in education through their L1 indigenous languages, L2 English is seen as a 'skill' that needs to be mastered in order to get jobs, while L1 is regarded as 'talent' (cf. analysis in chapter 5). Such descriptions to these languages are redefined by the positions they hold within the South African labor market and the international market. The South African language policy instills value in indigenous languages by encouraging their use in the educational contexts; however, this is difficult to achieve when there is a language like English that is well established as a language for social and economic success. The commodification of language within this context further marginalizes the indigenous languages as they are not exchangeable in the economic market, locally and globally. English is being adopted in South African society that is characterized by ongoing transformation where previously marginalized groups are experiencing opportunities for social mobility.

According to Da Silva et al (2007:185), "in an economy which increasingly emphasizes global customer service we witness the commodification of language and its disentanglement from personhood". In the current global economy aspects of identity are no longer tied to language, in fact identities are fluid and change all the time.

### **3.2.2. Language and identity**

The socio-economic transformation in South Africa where there is a boom in the number of the black elite that translates to access to goods as witnessed in the case of South Africa can have major implications for language and identity in the context of education. Social mobility among the black middle parents lead them to seek quality education for their children, sending them to former white schools that are homogenously English medium schools, as quality education is believed to be attainable through the commodity of English. In fact, recent studies have shown how South African youth seem to value English in more integrated markets such as education (cf. McKinney, 2007; Bangeni and Kapp, 2007). In other studies on popular youth culture English is seen as also offering social capital (Nkuna, 2006; Nuttall, 2004).

This section deals with how global processes, the economics of language, feature as prominent features of identity perceptions and ideologies. More importantly it will discuss the link between language and identity of importance for education. Poststructuralist ideas of identity departs from static essentialised ideas of language and identity, and provides a better understanding on contemporary forms of identity in the diverse South African context. The current global and local climates allow for individuals and institutions to continuously rework their identities. In countries like South Africa, “where language is not only a marker of identity, ‘but also a site of resistance, empowerment, solidarity and discrimination” (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004:4), the opportunity exists to construe “interesting links between language and identity, and into those settings where languages function as markers of ethnic identity, those in which it functions as a marker of symbolic capital or a means of social control, and those where these multiple roles may be interlinked” (de Klerk, 2006:601).

Identities can be seen in poststructuralist terms in many different ways – cf. McKinney. Norton (2000:5) uses the term ‘identity’ to reference 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’ (cited in Bangeni and Kapp, 2007: 255). According to Weedon (1987), “identity ... is multiple, a site of struggle, and changes over time”. De Klerk (2006:601) makes a similar point when she notes how the socioeconomic and sociopolitical change in a society can result “... in a new range of identities being available to speakers” (cf. Da Silva, et.al. 2007:184). Generally, language has been seen as linked in various ways to identity. However, “[t]ranslational multilingualism is [...] a challenge for the forms of social organization that currently dominant ideologies underlie and help reproduce” (Heller, 2007: 547). Conceptualizations of identity, and understandings of how identities are manifested linguistically are one of the dominant ideologies that are challenged in transnational and late-modernity; accompanying the commodification of language is a deconstruction of essentialist linkages between identity and language.

One interesting model of how language relates to social categories or components of identity is that of Park and Wee (2008). Park and Wee (2008) distinguish between three important notions that are often associated the presentation of self that speakers wish to encode linguistically, namely *allegiance*, *competence* and *authenticity*. According to Park and Wee (2008:8), allegiance “describes an attitude of loyalty”. Competence is equivalent to skill or proficiency in a language. For Park and Wee, authenticity “refers to the perception that a speaker bears particular racial, ethnic, or other background attributes stereotypically understood to be essentialized markers of membership

in a specific group” (p.9).<sup>6</sup> This distinction is of particular interest here as it allows us to talk about late-modern notions of language (with its emphasis on language as *skill*, as a *commodity*, severed from ethnic etc roots), highlights a cluster of concerns pertinent to the South African context (namely the focus on the pragmatic value of English), and also permits insight into how languages are adopted (across transnational contexts), in which forms, and in what spheres or domains of society. (Of interest with Park and Wee is that they link explicitly aspects or components of identity to a macro-sociological model of language and globalization. This latter aspect of the distinction can be related to Bourdieu’s notion of market, and is discussed in the next section in more detail). In other words, this distinction provides a *prima facie* tool to manage linguistically mediated social transformation and change.

### **3.2.3. How to account for adoption?**

This section seeks to highlight how issues of language or choice of language in South African schools might be influenced by globalization, against the background of how English is being incorporated in the country in general.

Educational institutions contribute to the stigmatization of minority languages, regional dialects and the languages of the colonized peoples whilst, at the same time, provide access to other highly valued forms of bilingualism, for example, through the teaching of major European languages, as part of the foreign language curriculum” (Martin-Jones, 2007:175).

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<sup>6</sup> This distinction bears some interesting similarities to the deconstruction of the notion of native language/mother tongue by Leung et al. (1998) in terms of expertise, authenticity, heritage



Martin-Jones (2007) identifies the “relentless spread of English” as one of the challenges amongst others facing education systems world-wide brought about by globalization. As I have mentioned earlier, with the three education types in South Africa, English is at the centre either as an additional language or the first language. Post colonial countries seek English for “themselves and their younger generations” as the language is thought to create an environment that is conducive for “economic development, technological and material modernization, and human resource capital investments for current and future successful participation in the new global economic order” (Lin and Martin, 2005:3 in Martin-Jones, 2007:177). Due to the changes in “economical, political and culture conditions” (ibid) education systems are inclined to adapt, at the end of the day; the common interest shared by the state and its people to gain access to the new economy can be accessed through education. *Case study*

The actual process of adopting a global language such as English (that is how this is taken up), specifically what is adopted in different contexts, is a matter for research and contention. Well-known models are, for example, Kachru’s ‘three circles’ model which differentiates between countries in the inner, outer and expanding circles (Kachru, 1992). This model has been criticized on various counts (cf. Bruthiaux, 2003).

Another approach/model utilizes the notion of linguistic markets, and a differential value of languages on these markets is Stroud’s and Wee’s (2007). Building on Bourdieu, they show for a Singaporean case study how English is taken up across different markets in different ways. Following Bourdieu, this approach distinguishes between unified markets such as education, public administration, political institutions etc., and more or less autonomous markets, such as literature, art and other spheres of activity that are less prone to strict management in terms of economy and politics. Park and Wee (2008) extend the

approach in terms of markets by linking their three social aspects of allegiance, authenticity and competence to different types of market condition, in an attempt to account for the constraints on “where, when and how certain modes of appropriation may legitimately emerge” (Park and Wee, 2008:4). In autonomous markets; “appropriation can be highly valued because the three ideologies are understood in relation to artful performance model” (9), where the “essential links between allegiance, competence, and authenticity are weakened, suspended, or even denied”. The autonomous market that is guided by artful performance model, where performers such as Hip Hop and Rap artists, novelists, poetics etc., are not bound by rules as in other markets, and that have a reputation for representing the marginalized communities as advocates of freedom of expression and rebellion. Artful performances such as Hip Hop and Rap have always been seen as falling beyond the borderlines and not seen as contributing to the moral fibre of society. They have always been seen as rebellious and not conforming to the rules that form other markets. “Use of English in global rap is several times removed from the more unified linguistic market where the hegemony of standard/ good/ proper English prevails” (2008: 15). Appropriating an external language in artful performances will not be seen as ‘being inauthentic or linguistically incompetent’. In fact, Stroud 2004 has noted how the artful performance of a variety of immigrant Swedish, Rinkeby Swedish, is taken up into everyday speech on unified markets by middle-class speakers who have transferred these elements via their participation in autonomous markets of entertainment etc. Mixing English and other ethnic languages will not be seen as linguistic incompetence, “Hip Hop gains symbolic value ... when it distinguishes itself from mainstream language use effectively establishing it as a distinct linguistic market”. In unified markets, however, a stricter code of a language has to be adhered to at all times and all registers of that language have to be measured against that code. Contrary to the autonomous markets, the unified markets are constrained by a different kind of cultural

model, the essentialist model which “valorizes stable ties between language and identity, and actors are consequently more vulnerable to accusations of losing their identity, or of being poor users of the Other’s languages” (Park and Wee, 2008: 10).

In the analysis chapter (5), this model will underlie and structure the interpretation of what the learners are saying about language in the classroom context, particularly in terms of how they see different aspects of identity relate to uptake of different languages.



## CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Introduction

Terre Blanche, et al (2006:7) distinguishes between three dimensions of research paradigms, which are; positivist, interpretive and constructivist with the attempt to help researchers within social sciences. “If a researcher believes that what is to be studied consists of a stable and unchanging external reality, then she or he can adopt an objective and detached epistemological stance toward reality, and can employ a methodology that relies on control and manipulation of reality”. A characteristic of an interpretive methodology would constitute that whatever is to be studied “consists of people’s subjective experiences of the external world”. Such a trait of the interpretive approach aims to “explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action”. The last paradigm sets out to show how “versions of the social world are produced in discourse, and to demonstrate how these constructions of reality make certain actions possible and others unthinkable”.

This thesis deals with the relationship between the language choices made by Xhosa/Afrikaans mother tongue speakers and identity at a multilingual school. How these learners navigate within the different identities afforded by the different languages at their disposal? This particular study focuses on interpreting the role played by identity in language learning; how identities that learners aspire to influence their learning of and interest in their mother tongues and additional languages. A qualitative approach was followed for this; as such an approach permits insight into how the context aspirations and life trajectories of the pupils are mediated through their ideas and discourses about language. Not only will this approach allow deeper insights into the linguistic practices of learners, it will also contribute data of relevance to future language planning (LP) work. With previous

research on language planning and policy (LPP) focusing on the ‘macro’, in what they term the LPP onion Hornberger and Johnson (2007) are calling on an ethnographic research as means of informing language planning and policy. Suggesting that top down approaches to LPP are limiting, Chick’s (2001, 2003) suggestion that the emergence of alternative multicultural discourses he observed among teachers in South Africa was enabled by the ideological space that new multilingual language policies had opened” (in Hornberger et. al. p.512). “Canagarajah (2006: 155; cf. Hornberger et. al. 2007:510) suggests that ethnography can help build LPP models and inform policy-making: “developing policies informed by ethnography can counteract the unilateral hold of dominant paradigms and ideologies in LPP”.

#### **4.2. Site**

The research was conducted at a former model C school in Cape Town, located on the periphery of the inner city. It is attended by English, Xhosa and Afrikaans mother tongue speakers and a few learners whose mother tongues are not any of these three dominant Western Cape languages. Baker (1993:247 cf. Setati et. al. 2002:132) acknowledge that, “decisions about how to teach second language learners ... do not just reflect curriculum decisions ... they are surrounded and underpinned by basic beliefs about ... the learner’s main languages and equality of opportunity”. The Xhosa and Afrikaans learners in this school are enrolled in the ‘immersion’ programme where usually “the first language is the minority language and the learner is required to integrate into the majority language group’ (Broom, 2004:507-508). This lessens the chances to achieve additive / bi-multilingualism as set out by the country’s language in education policy.

The prime reason for this choice of school is that it was one of the few establishments known to be an English medium school that offered learners the

option of actively choosing impromptu their mother tongue for selective purposes in the curriculum. Hornberger has noted how “[i]t is important to consider how educational institutions interpret the changes in policy and how their interpretations, in turn, affect implementation” (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007:516). Although this was not the prime focus of this study, it is undoubtedly something that can be observed. In a study conducted by Rollnick and Rutherford (1996 in Setati et. al. 2002:134), they found the use of learner’s main languages to be a powerful means for learners to explore ideas. Code-switching as learning and teaching resource can be a useful. Citing from research conducted with the main focus being Mathematics, Setati et. al. believe that the learner’s first language in teaching and learning mathematics provides the support needed while the learners continue to develop proficiency in the language of learning and teaching.

In the multilingual school studied here, code switching is inevitable; therefore, it can be used as a resource for effective teaching and learning. Xhosa and English were used alternatively as languages of the classroom. When the study was initiated, it was the second year running that the XE programme was introduced to the grade 8’s and during this current year the alternate use of Xhosa and English was also implemented in the mathematics paper that these learners wrote in the June examination. Grade 12s (learners in their final year of high school) were also offered the option of alternately using Xhosa/English in their classrooms for learning and teaching.

An interesting feature of this option in the school in question is that the programme was a locally designed initiative to suit the needs of the particular learners rather than being designed by education policy makers. Also, the school is well resourced and encourages scholarship. This was an interesting choice of school because of its multicultural nature, in such context there is bound to be issues related to language or English in particular. Furthermore, the choice of

school is also motivated by the fact that former model C schools in South Africa remain privileged and attractive to many learners and their families who aspire to social mobility, and who therefore might be expected to reveal much data of interest on the role of identity in relation to language choice.

All ethical concerns were addressed by the HSRC which initiated the project. A letter was presented to the relevant authorities detailing the purpose of the project and its ethical considerations. I had gained access to the school while interning at the HSRC, collecting data for the overarching project.

### **4.3. Participants**

Both learners and teachers were invited to participate in the study. The learners that took part in this study were chosen from grades 8 and 12. The participants were particularly chosen because of their age. Grade 8's were chosen because this was where the experimental Xhosa/English classes were initiated exposing the pupils to the alternate use of these languages in the classroom. A further reason for choosing grade 8's was that this is a crucial stage in adolescents' lives as they are transitioning from pre-teens to being teenagers. At this time in life most teenagers are seeking to belong somewhere, so the actions they take are motivated by the need to be part of something or a group. Heller (1999) chose to work with high school students because they are thinking both about the culture of their institution as well as about life outside of and after school. Grade 12 learners also participated in the studied sample. The advantage of including this older group is that much of their linguistically mediated teenage identity work is behind them and they are on the threshold of leaving high school for employment or further education. It is plausible that their perception of the language options offered to them would be more determined by the realities of the economic markets.

Learners at this school hail from townships around Cape Town, suburbs and semi-suburbs. The fact that these students were attending a former white school (model C) in a comparatively more affluent suburb is witness to their aspiration for future social and economic mobility (cf. McKinney, 2007).

A few teachers were also part of the interviewed sample. The teacher demographics and language backgrounds at this school mirror those of the learners. Teachers were chosen with the specific purpose of investigating how the language teaching strategies might impact upon the learners' perception of the value of the different languages used. The four teachers that were interviewed were teachers of Mathematics, HSS and other extracurricular classes such as drama, flamenco dancing, dancing and Portuguese, with a particular focus on Mathematics and HSS classrooms where the alternate use of this was actively implemented in examination and classroom interaction. It is known from other research the mere visibility or presence of the language in a classroom or other official contexts does not necessarily lead to it being accorded a higher status. Recognising that Xhosa as an auxiliary language to aid learners might reflect negatively on the status of the language and might have negative implications for the learners' persona, as it has in other South African classrooms, especially in township schools (cf. Banda, 2000), it was therefore important to see how the language was presented and how it was received by learners in this unlikely context.

#### **4.4. Procedure**

The data was collected in the form of interviews with learners and teachers, as well as classrooms observations, especially in the HSS classroom where a lot of teaching / teacher and learner interaction occurred equally in both English and Xhosa and a more general observation of learners out of class behaviors. At the



time of data collection, the focus was on how learners use the languages at their disposal and what it meant for them to use such languages in education. The interviews were semi structured and ranged, for students, from topics such as; language preference in general and in the classroom and examination context, student's priorities and concerns with education in general, and time management. These questions allow us to glean information on how students perceive language in relation to specifically educational concern, rather than more general societal/sociopolitical considerations, or rather, how educational discourses articulate with wider sociohistorical discourses. Following are some of the thematic areas covered during interviews with learners:

- What are the learners' perceptions regarding the language of instruction and assessment, where is the place of English and where do their mother tongues fit in the education context?
- If it were up to learners to choose the languages for the classroom, which ones would they choose?
- Is the alternate use of their mother tongue and English in the classroom and in examination helping them curb the language problems that they might be experiencing, if any?

For teachers the questions touched on topics such as terminology development, their perceptions of students' needs, etc. All the interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed (cf. appendix for the full questions).

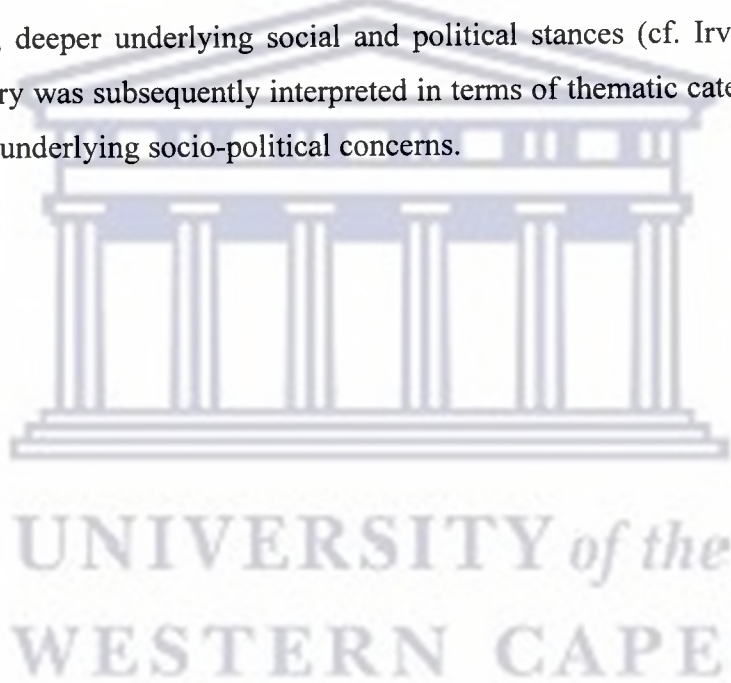
The research was carried out over a period of three months (August to October 2006) once a week on Wednesdays. However, the <sup>7</sup>overarching study was carried

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<sup>7</sup> In her recently published paper Dr Kathleen Heugh offers full disclosure of all details about the project and the school where this study was conducted.

#### 4.5. Analysis

A qualitative approach was favoured for analysing the data here, as it provides a platform for data to be interpreted in a descriptive manner. The focus was on identifying recurring themes in the learners' biographies regarding languages of the classroom; how these languages are viewed and what is hoped for in learning these languages. The same pattern was followed for teacher interviews. The assumption behind the focus on students' views about language was that commentaries about language (linguistic ideologies) frequently reveal, or are expressions of, deeper underlying social and political stances (cf. Irvine, 2006). The commentary was subsequently interpreted in terms of thematic categories that mirrored these underlying socio-political concerns.



## CHAPTER 5. ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Introduction

In the analysis, I will attempt to show that the ideas that learners have about the use of mother tongues in South African classrooms are strongly determined by their perception of language and its relationship to identities in globalized late-modernity. In other words, the analysis will focus on local enactments of global trends and themes, in particular on the ways in which learners construe, interpret and enact their responses to the initiatives of the school principal to introduce Xhosa and Afrikaans into the classroom as a teaching aid and an instrument for assessment.

Firstly, the principal's initiative is based in an idea of language where the three dimensions of identity that we discussed above are closely linked to a particular language, that is, the essentialist model proposed by Park and Wee. In other words, the underlying assumption is that if you are a speaker of a language and this language is an essential part of your identity, you are also competent in the varied uses of this language – more so than in other languages – demonstrating here an assumption of a strong link between authenticity, allegiance and competence with a specific language. What will become apparent in the following analysis of students' comments, however, is that they entertain a very different conception of language in this linguistic market, namely one where competence, skill or talent in a language is separable from authenticity and allegiance. The issue then is one where modernist ideas about language and thought are in conflict with postmodern/late-modern trends and developments.

In the following section, I will try to situate the problem with the principal's proposal in a larger context, and detail how the assumptions about language, language learning and multilingualism are formed on a modernist ideas of

language that do not reflect the sociolinguistic realities of the learners - or even of the South African school. I will then proceed to detailing the various ways in which the learners attempt to resist the proposal of using their mother tongues as a medium of education and assessment. Of interest will be to note how, many of the learners' comments can be seen as language ideological statements, where the learners in different ways remove, or downgrade, the status of Afrikaans and Xhosa as languages (for education) in order to create or enact learning personas more appropriate to their perception of what makes up a good learner, and what is needed for social mobility and fulfilment of aspiration

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## 5.2. The principal's proposal

The South African government has created spaces and institutions that are meant to be conducive to the multilingual nature of the country, where, in government institutions such as parliament, and local municipalities at least two languages dominant in the region together with English are included in the signage and official documents published by these offices in order to cater for the different racial groupings. Educational institutions in particular are usually favoured as reproducers of state (language) ideology, as they are *prima facie* universal contexts for the reproduction of national ideals (Heller, 1999). A similar view is shared by Pachler et. al. (2008: 439) that these "institutions are most sensitive to changes in society at large". As multilingualism is a sought after value in South Africa's language policy, it is therefore natural that the educational establishment, together with other institutions such as mass media, etc., promote these values. However, "[i]nstitutional discourses suggest that 'good' proficiency in English is privileged above all" (Makoe, 2007:55), and there remains an implied supremacy of English through its use in all state functions and other visible contexts.

We note that what is being played out with respect to social transformation and language is a typical disjuncture between those who see social change, mobility, economic advancement as contained in multilingual policies, and those who promote the value of global English. In other words, global discourses on language that can be found in many contexts in the world are also here manifested most clearly in the South African context of social transformation. The post apartheid language policy awarded official status to previously marginalised languages and promoted the use of these languages in education in efforts to remove the stigma attached to these languages, and thereby contribute to social transformation. This middle class school introduced Xhosa as one of the languages for the classroom, as the principal wished to introduce pupils' languages as a learning aid, in the belief that, **“there needs to be a level playing field”**, in the sense of all learners having the same rights and opportunities, and equal visibility as other students. I have provided the principals motivation below.

**The Afrikaans kids get the chance to understand the question in their own language and English speakers get it in their own language but any indigenous African mother tongue speakers ... don't get it in their own language.**

Note that the principal is *not* saying that learners are deficient in English, but that he is giving symbolic value to their home languages and making them visible. As noted above, the underlying assumption with the principal's proposal is a strong link between a particular language and dimensions of identity such as authenticity, allegiance and competence. The assumption is that if you identify as a speaker of language X (authenticity), and if this language is visible and publically available (giving rise to pride and allegiance), then you are also/will become competent in language X, and this can be translated into good (academic) performance. This modernist interpretation of language, identity, proficiency begs many questions of

how multilingualism is organized in global late-modernity, as we have note above. The proposal rests on a dislocation of language from its political, social, economic and historical context.

### **5.3. Language in late-modernity**

In this section, I will look closely at some of the modernist assumptions implicit in the proposal to use Xhosa and Afrikaans in classrooms in this school. These comprise ideas on what constitutes a language (including the conflation of the distinction between language and register); assumptions on what it means to have a language as a mother tongue; the lack of insight into the importance of scale (core-periphery) in language form; pre-conceptions on how languages are acquired, and what is acquired (as well as where to apportion blame if not acquired - novices, expertise); and the understanding of what multilingualism means in this specific context.

#### **5.3.1. The formation of language in a politics of transformation**

As noted above, 'language' is a socio-political and historical construct. In terms of the functions accorded to English, the aspirations that are layered into its acquisition, the spaces and domains in which it is inserted, the connotations (of racism, ethnicity or non-racism) that have been projected onto it, it has come to comprise a significant symbolic and material capital. In the South African context, English has been construed as one of the significant 'symbolic battlegrounds' where the tensions in social transformation are most clearly played out. On the one hand, we find the institutions' responsibility to enhance the educational quality of (previously) disadvantaged students, and on the other hand, we note that pupils and parents do not see language (read English) as a valid field for this type of

exercise of transformation. Alternatively, it could be the case that the pupils are confident that an important route to transformation is through access to and ownership of English. (Possible because of, or mirrored in, the ideological construction of different languages in different spaces)

The favourable conception of English can be attributed to the “long history of the language as a symbol language of education, culture, and modernisation, and pre-liberation resistance” to the imposed Afrikaans rule (Bangeni and Kapp, 2007:254). In the current South African context English is increasingly being seen as a language of social and economic mobility (cf. De Klerk, 2000). African languages on the other hand “are associated with a lack of social and economic empowerment and with oppression” (Broom, 2004:507). What is valued in linguistic markets (particularly unified markets) is the use of legitimate language, “the language or variety associated in the minds of community members with power and authority, and with formal and official activities (Stroud, 2002:248). Heller remarks on how

It is abundantly clear that the experience of language in the globalized new economy varies widely depending on how people are positioned both with respect to their place in it and to the related issue of their access to unequally distributed linguistic resources (Heller 2007:541).

Stroud and Wee (2007: 202) note how “[t]he class based nature of English has meant that access to it is distributed unevenly among the population” This is one reason why the school is accorded such an importance in the South African context, as it is one of the few spaces where English can be accessed – however imperfectly. The use of English on a day-to-day basis is always mistaken with being proficient in the language. However, Blommaert et. al, note that there is a gap between the English available at township schools, and the English

considered to be the most important language in South Africa (12). What is considered normal in these multilingual communities or at school may be identified as bad when in contact with the centre. What the learners have in mind is not the 'English' they articulate in their answers. Nevertheless, the English that is a cultural construct (of the imagination) exerts pressure on learners to acquire it.

### 5.3.2. Historical and social realities

As I have mentioned earlier on in this chapter, there is an underlying assumption that as mother tongue speakers of a language, these learners should be competent users in all varied uses of this language. However, what comes up in learners' statements is that their competencies of different registers in their mother tongue may not be optimal, exhaustive or sufficient for educational purposes. In fact one might even venture a claim that these learners have no *one* stronger language. This obviously has to do with the history of their language acquisition and the context in which it was acquired (Blommaert, 2009; Wee, 2003; and Stroud 2009). This is revealed in the following example in what the learners say about how they how they navigate between their linguistic resources.

**R:** Why did you decide to use the translations in the first place?

**Denzel<sup>8</sup>:** Because uhm the, I thought the Afrikaans was mixed up but then I like read through the English part then I think okay this is the same as Afrikaans and I know it's right and I know exactly what to write down on the page.

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<sup>8</sup> Note: Pseudonyms are used to refer to the different learners and to indicate speaker turns.



Interestingly, then, not only were the translations used to check or consolidate the learners understanding during examination the language they supposedly master well, that is, their mother tongue (Xhosa and Afrikaans), what we find is that the students navigate between *both* languages to confirm their understanding. They move back and forth; something written in Xhosa or Afrikaans is read in English and vice versa as learners strive to ascertain the point of meaning of a task. These learners are using the linguistics resources available to them complementarily, to *check* on their *understanding* rather than to understand.

Another interesting fact that came up with all these learners was that they would like to have language learning areas (Xhosa and Afrikaans) to be translated to English as they found these learning areas difficult especially during examination. Below I have provided an excerpt from an interview with grade 12 learners, who would like to have their Afrikaans language paper translated to English for them to use whenever they come across stumbling blocks in the Afrikaans L2<sup>9</sup> paper. The presence of English is seen as 'back up'; in this case English is shown to be the trusted language.

**R:** As a back up? Why do you say yes?

**L3:** In the Afrikaans paper maybe, in English because sometimes you don't understand it properly. Nhe?

**L4:** Ja.

**R:** You don't understand properly in English?

**L5:** That's a language.

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<sup>9</sup> By this is meant that Afrikaans is not the *main* language of instruction for these learners, even though they may very well be Afrikaans or Xhosa first language speakers

- L6: No, no, no, I mean in Afrikaans, no, why can't they do that?  
They can ... but you can like, in the Afrikaans paper they can  
put English translations there =**
- L6: = they can, yes=**
- L3: = they can do it.**
- R: Do you have an Afrikaans paper for Maths?**
- L3: No we are talking about other subjects.**
- L6: We are talking about Afrikaans.**
- R: Other subjects ok. So you don't want any translations?**
- L3: (inaudible) only in the Afrikaans paper**
- R: They won't be useful?**
- L1: ( ) irrelevant because we don't understand Afrikaans  
thoroughly. It was a waste of time; it was really a waste of time.**

These learners are more open to the idea of having Xhosa and Afrikaans language learning areas translated to English, rather than the other way around. Another Xhosa speaking pupil is of the same view that; like Afrikaans, the Xhosa language paper can be difficult at times. See the excerpt below.

- Zuzeka: Um... I could say yes in Xhosa in a way that you know  
uhm, what you call them like the opposites, sometimes  
you get confused with the antonyms and everything in  
Xhosa and they say them in Xhosa then you don't  
understand but when you put them in brackets you  
write the Xhosa word then you put antonyms in brackets  
then you get the idea that it's anton- then you get the  
idea of what you need to do ...**

Instead of having translations from English to their home languages these learners would like to have the Afrikaans and Xhosa language papers translated to English. In the excerpt above the learner refers to having difficulties with distinguishing between 'antonyms and synonyms' in Xhosa therefore would like a translation of only those terms in the Xhosa L2 paper.

These responses shed light on the learners' competence in their home languages. The above extracts 1, 2 and 3 point to the irrelevance of mother tongue competence in this context. This becomes contradictory to the implied proficiency in mother tongue, with learners resorting to English for help with their home languages. Again we need to question the notion of mother tongue and its presumed implication of 'full' or 'native-like' mastery. Considering this school context, these learners consider themselves L2 speakers of their languages; therefore the proficiency in home languages that is often referred to is probably the urban variety of Xhosa which is not often used in the Xhosa language classroom. The learners' ability to use these languages whenever it is warranted outside formal contexts is confused with proficiency. Leung et. al (1997) have noted how the notion of mother tongue or native speaker actually refers to a complex of different dimensions, namely expertise, heritage, etc.

Adding to this is the fact that a number of these learners have established a long-time *identity as learners through English*. As part of the post-1994 socioeconomic mobility that came to benefit a rising black elite, many children would have had learning careers in English medium schools. For example, one student interviewed said;

**It was easy for me to pick English because most of my life I grew up in suburbs and ah my school I never went to a black school or an**

### **Afrikaans school it's the first time in Afrikaans school so that's why I chose English**

Identities that were suppressed during apartheid are finding themselves in the shores of South Africa. It is possible for this learner to be socialised through English outside of the school context. Middle class black people after apartheid moved from townships to cities, simultaneously moving their children to middle class schools.

#### **✘ 5.3.3. Lack of academic register in use**

There is an assumption that construes language for academic purposes in particular formal and functional terms, and a related assumption that these less vernacular domains of language use will be transparent to and accessible for learners. For institutional use (such as education), the proper or the standard language is the most preferred especially for formal examinations or written form. However, learners express difficulties with this. In excerpts below learners refer to the 'big and deep words' that they have difficulty in understanding. Pupils in both these language groups emphasize that they do not have access to the standard forms of the language that they are expected to use in classroom and examinations, nor are they conversant with the register specific vocabulary in their languages. They say,

**... the terms when we translate them in Xhosa they become so deep you don't know, I didn't know the triangle in Xhosa because they are using those big words in Xhosa you know, that you also don't understand, ja.**

**... if I see Afrikaans I'll understand Afrikaans but when it comes to big words that I don't know I'll just move to the English one.**

Teachers concur that the 'deep variety' of Xhosa is often not understood by the learners. According to Miss N, the students

**... are not necessarily first language learners, their translations was very good but too much for our learners.**

The translations 'were good', which I believe means they were standard translation that could be used in an academic context, however, these learners 'are not necessarily first language learners' of Xhosa. From the teachers words it is deciphered that these learners are not authentic users of Xhosa therefore it is not surprising that they are experiencing problems with 'deep' and 'big' words. Also, the teacher's commentary provides insight on the learners' relationship with Xhosa in this context. It is clear that they are not learners through Xhosa, which means that the learners' competence cannot be expected to be like that of L1 learners. Both Miss N and Mr B have had to simplify the level of Xhosa that they use in class to make it accessible to these learners. I have provided another excerpt from Miss N below:

**Yes even with the translations I gave them the notes but then would – would translate into the level of Xhosa they understand.**

Mr B shares Miss N's sentiments that the deep variety of Xhosa which is used is not understood by learners. Mr B's commentary below:

**... they do understand Xhosa but in some cases when you used those translations you had to use uh deeper language, so they couldn't understand it now when you use the deeper language even though you're using their own language but now because they are so used to**

**speaking this ordinary Xhosa that is spoken in the streets but now when it comes to translating now the question paper there are times when you had to use the deeper language, the deep Xhosa.**

Both the teachers seem to concur on the question of pupils' competences or proficiencies in academic or formal Xhosa and Afrikaans. Note that both teachers are speakers of Xhosa and are to some extent competent users of standard Xhosa. What comes up in these excerpts is that, learners do understand Xhosa but are not competent users of the standard variety. These learners do not have access to the standard register; hence both these teachers believe that the register that these learners use on daily basis should be used in classrooms.

**what I noticed is that the person who was translating, I think he was translating using the dictionary so some of the terms maybe he was using that, whatever book he was using but I could notice that some of the terms were taken from the book. Some of the terms are the terms that are not usually used in our language but now because they had to be... it was something formal so they were used because it is a formal thing otherwise when you are just speaking ordinary Xhosa then you don't use those words and it's rare to get those words and that's why some learners could not understand those words.**

There is thus, a definite disjunction in both the teachers' and pupils' perceptions of, on the one hand, linguistic authenticity, and on the other hand, linguistic competence. Whereas the rationale for wanting to introduce Xhosa and Afrikaans in the classroom was clearly that, for example 'Xhosa speakers (authenticity) speak Xhosa better than English' (competence), this is generally not understood to be the case. We also need to note that the productive notion to work with here is

that of *register* rather than language whereby learners are doubtful in their proficiency of the academic register.

Teachers do also point out that using the 'formal' register specific terminology in their classrooms might even confuse pupils who do not know these terms. Teachers explain that the advantage of using Xhosa specifically (also Afrikaans) is that they are able to explain content in the everyday vernacular of the pupils. The standard variety is abstract to these learners especially since these are urban youths; their exposure to this variety is limited or non-existent. In the excerpt below Mr B provides examples of how the everyday vernacular is used in the classroom.

**because some of the learners here they prefer being taught in Xhosa, even though it's Maths, they prefer being taught in Xhosa but even though you are teaching in Xhosa when it comes to mentioning the terms, you're gonna mention them using the English language. I can speak the ordinary Xhosa if I say for instance, "four plus two divide by three" then I'm gonna say "ufour umdibanise notwo udivide ngo three" (four plus/ added to two divided by three). Can you see that, that word divide is still there which is the English word, of which I'm suppose to say "ufour umdibanise notwo ubahlule ngothree" *fanela ndithi ubahlule ngo* (I am suppose to say divide by) three but once I use that word 'ubahlule' *uyaqonda?* ('divide', do you understand?) Then they start losing it now you but when I say *umdibanise* in the case of addition then they understand it but 'umahlule' then 'umphindaphinde' which is multiply then it becomes vague to them it becomes ... er...**

The urban variety of Xhosa which these learners can relate to is often a mixture of Xhosa and English. English words are adopted and acquire Xhosa appropriate spelling or pronunciation.

According to the teachers the deep variety of Xhosa confuses learners, whereas the simplified, everyday vernacular of Xhosa with traces of English is more understood by the learners. Jokweni (2004) raises similar concerns that the introduction of “indigenous terms for those concepts only serves to complicate matters” while adoption of terms has its advantages as both the teachers and learners are already familiar with the foreign terms. Nomlomo (2004) supports a similar move towards adoption of terms; she believes that the often cited lack of vocabulary for scientific and technological disciplines against the implementation of African mother tongues as languages of education can be solved by these languages producing their own vocabulary through borrowing from other languages. The grade twelve learners have provided an example (see below) of how the translations are adopted in Mathematics where the Xhosa prefix ‘i’ is inserted in conjunction with the word algebra. The same word ‘algebra’ was used as an example by an Afrikaans learner where the word remains the same with only the pronunciation changing.

**R:** ... I see you have algebra, trigonometry; how are you going to translate that? How did they do that last year? ...

**L10:** BayaXhosalizer<sup>10</sup>.

**R:** but you must - How? Why are you saying that? How did they, how do they Xhosalize it a bit?

**L:** Xhosalizer.

**L:** *ialjibra* (Xhosa grade 12 learner)

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<sup>10</sup> Xhosalizer – this a colloquial term that refers to adoption of English terms to Xhosa.



According to these learners the lack of specific subject vocabulary in Xhosa is one of the reasons why they do not see these languages as viable languages of education. Although experts see adoption of lexical items as a solution to the lack of vocabulary, learners on the other hand see it merely as English words that have been given Xhosa written form. One of the reasons said to work against the implementation of Xhosa in education is the lack of scientific and technological terminology (Nomlomo, 2004, 133), as investment in literacy development in any of the African languages during apartheid was not priority (Alexander, 2003:12). This issue speaks to that of the 'intellectualization' of African languages, and how such a process can be jelled with the (more) productive use of the everyday, non-technical vernacular of learners.

Finally what we also see here is that the students do not perceive the 'translations' as bona fide translations, but more as paraphrases and convenient summaries. As we will note below, the summaries are giving another voice to the question, which is, providing an alternative perspective against which the student can test and get confirmation that they had interpreted the question correctly on the first reading. The understanding of translations as summaries

**Janine:** They are a summary Miss because they are not word for word in English then in Afrikaans they are not word for word for what they're saying in English like just a summary of what the point of the sum or [...] problems.

**Mark:** You get people who translate for instance at my church, they're like, my priest is English, ( ) when he speaks English, we are catholic, when he speaks English somebody translates but the words somebody is translating isn't actually the same as the priest's it's just

**that as long people understand what is being said. That is how I find it.**

#### **5.4. Linguistically mediated identities: How learners construct resistance**

In the late-modern situation they find themselves in, learners construct a variety of discourses of resistance around language that serve in various ways to demote or deconstruct the status of the language as a non-legitimate code for educational use. They do this in the context of striving to construct *identities* for themselves as 'good learners'. In doing so, they are locally enacting more global understandings of schooling and scholarship. One discourse found in their commentary is a language ideological positioning where Xhosa or Afrikaans are seen as nontransparent, opaque, obscure, systems not available for academic work (*linguistic comfort zones*). A second move (related to point 1) is the *elevation of English to an easily accessible language*<sup>11</sup>. A third discourse is to remove Xhosa or restrict Xhosa to particular domains, and to create special spaces (*languages of learning and home*). A fourth language ideological discourse pertains to the area of scholastic identity, and the construction of a *Xhosa usage as signaling remedialness or immaturity*. Related to this is a fifth strategy of actively *deconstructing* Xhosa as a language of education by refusing to recognize that all schools subjects are 'language subjects' in one sense or the other, and in misunderstanding what working with a language means. In performing these tactics, in creating a language ideological representational space within which they locate themselves and their identities as learners, they are also reproducing late-modern and locally specific enactments of transnational developments on language and identity.

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<sup>11</sup> Although this of course may not be the case, see peripheral normativity.

### 5.4.1 Linguistic comfort zones

Not only is English considered to be a more appropriate language of learning, it is believed to be more transparent and easier. Comparing English to Xhosa and Afrikaans the language is easier according to learners (as it is presented in the example below). Learners refer to availability of terms that you can use when expressing yourself in English.

- R:** You all chose to write the English paper. Why is that?  
Why did you choose to write the English paper?
- Janine:** It's an easier language than Afrikaans or Xhosa because most of us here speak English than Afrikaans or Xhosa and understanding it in English is better.
- Andiswa:** It's because um... the English paper you'll understand more than the Afrikaans, the Afrikaans paper and the Xhosa paper because in Afrikaans they have some words that are difficult and in Xhosa there are some word they are difficult but in English you get to understand most of the words, that's all.
- ...
- R:** But do you speak English – do you speak Xhosa at home or do you speak English?
- Vuyo:** I speak both.
- R:** You speak both but which one do you use more than the other?
- Vuyo:** English.
- R:** English, okay. .. Which language do you feel more comfortable expressing yourself in?
- Janine:** English

- R:** Why is that?
- Janine:** It's a fluent language and you don't get stuck with words you just say what you feel that comes out, unlike in Afrikaans you'll be saying something and then you don't know how to say one word that you are expressing yourself in.
- ...
- Andiswa:** English it's because in English you get more communicated with the words but in Afrikaans you don't because some a lot of words in Afrikaans they are difficult and that's why I chose English.
- Asanda:** English because you can express yourself in many ways in English I mean there are lots of words that you can use meaning the same thing in English and now so ah now you can express yourself better.
- R:** But, okay let's go back to Xhosa and Afrikaans, aren't the words as well in Xhosa and Afrikaans?
- Asanda:** Yes I can speak uh I mean Xhosa but I just can't read it out, it's hard to pronounce the words with the 'X' and all that.

In the above extract, learners stress the difference between English and Afrikaans/Xhosa in their responses. The English language in comparison with the other two languages is 'easy', 'understandable' and 'fluent'. To support their claim learners refer to the Xhosa click sound *x*. What these learners are seizing upon are typologically distinct or salient and visible features of Xhosa that are typically linked or thought to be linked to Xhosa language. Such typologically linked gestures in languages generally signal low frequency and highly marked structures in the world and such features are seen to be more difficult and less marked. By so

doing they constitute a form of *erasure* where English is seen as an ‘easy’ language. According to Irvine and Gal (1999:38) with erasure “facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away”. English is associated with flexibility (‘you can express yourself in many ways’) and is considered to be easier. Learners never mention difficulty in English; the difficulties they are experiencing are associated with their home languages. This is the learners’ way of eliminating the threat, “semiotic process involved in erasure might translate into some kind of practical action to remove the threat if circumstances permit” (Irvine and Gal, 1999:38).

Discourses on Xhosa and Afrikaans (interesting that more so for Xhosa which appears, or is constructed to be, ‘less’ of a language than Afrikaans) deconstruct the idea of mother tongues as workable languages, and construct them in the minds and discourses of pupils non-appropriate especially for education.

#### **5.4.2. Elevation of English to an easily accessible language**

The learners’ understanding of the language of learning and teaching is that such a language should accommodate everyone. Many of South Africa’s citizens are believed to be bilingual/multilingual with most having English as an additional language. Learners who say English should maintain its position as the language of learning and teaching due to the common belief that *everyone* knows English.

- Vuyo:**            **Because I think that’s the primary language in South Africa because most people can speak English more than anything.**
- Asanda:**        **It’s a common language and it’s very easy to work with instead of Afrikaans, even though the words are pretty big you’ll still figure out some way to understand the word,**

**the meaning of the word.** (Both excerpts taken from grade 8 interviews)

This understanding of English as an easily accessible resource is largely due to post-apartheid discourse that has placed English at the centre and the description often given to it as the ‘unifying language’. Learners are of the opinion that English is a ‘common language’, it is the only language that is “found and generally understood through out the country” while indigenous languages enjoy dominance in a particular province (De Klerk, 2006:597).

This tactic bears similarities to Irvine and Gal’s notion of *fractal recursivity*, where characteristics of language are elevated and projected more widely to be characteristics of a particular group that speaks it. Here, as English is considered accessible and common, this is equated in the learners’ view with wide-spread *speakership* of the language, and the fact that many speakers use it is circuitously thought to imply that it is an easy and transparent language. For example, Blommaert et. al. (2006) writes about Wesbank, a township located at the outskirts of Cape Town with multiracial inhabitants, who consider themselves to be English speaking. This township houses Xhosa and Afrikaans home language speakers, who feel obliged to use English in interactions among themselves as it is claimed to be their only common or shared language. English appears to be the most preferred language of the classroom in the High School in the area. Both teachers and learners “share ideals of upward social mobility, often crystallized in discourses on English as an instrument of spatial and social mobility” (ibid, 1). Although the communities desire to learn through English is influenced by what is happening outside Wesbank, people here have localized the English they use. Teachers at this school in Wesbank have become immune to the “errors” made by learners in their language use, and “what is commonly regarded as errors

committed against a single norm will be converted into productive mechanisms for the construction of peripheral normativity; a normativity that relates to the sociology of the periphery” (ibid). In this context there is less or no linguistic correctness, there is not enough corrective input by L1 speakers of English. This community has limited or no contact with the “prestige variety” which is needed outside of Wesbank (ibid, 12). However, when learners from this community move to institutions of higher education or job market their language skills would be taken as “indexes of poor academic literacy levels” (p. 12). Although this grassroots level of English is a norm to people in this area when in contact with the outside world, speakers from these communities are seen as not meeting the expected standards.

The laissez-faire or peripheral normative stance on English co-exists with an explicit high valuation of a particular variety of English. Mckinney (2007) points out how learners at a desegregated school attach more value to the varieties of English that are perceived to be *white*, noting that the “nature of white hegemony in the economy and the broader cultural environment, it is not surprising that varieties of English spoken by white people have come to define the standard for English should be spoken”. In Bourdieu’s terminology of legitimate languages, “discourse is a symbolic asset which can receive different values depending on the market on which it is offered” (ibid, 10). Discourse of dominant groups is always used as a model to verify the accuracy of other varieties. The psyche of black South Africans (without generalizing) still responds to superiority of anything associated with *whiteness*.

#### **5.4.3 Creating separate linguistic spaces and domains**

Above, we have seen how (modernist) ideas of language, language acquisition and competence that educational planners seem to entertain do not fit the

sociolinguistic reality of the learners. Here, we will note how this linguistic reality is molded and used to further the representation of particular identities.

#### **5.4.3.1. Language of hearth and home**

In interviews with learners, it is clear that that home languages are highly valued outside the school context. I have provided excerpts below where learners show their association of their home languages with home. From these excerpts it is clear that these learners believe that languages should be kept separate. There are languages of the home and there are languages that are associated with the school context. Afrikaans and Xhosa home are good as languages of the home while English is reserved for the academic context.

**Denzel:** I think that I'd rather take Afrikaans as a subject because uhm I like my mom, when I was small my mother taught me Afrikaans.

**L:** Because Xhosa is the best, it's the best because that I understand and it's the language I came from at home.  
(Excerpts from grade 8 interviews)

**Jade:** Yes I speak Afrikaans at home but it's not my learning language. (Grade 12 learner)

A similar finding in a study of immigrant students was that home languages were almost always constructed through an attachment to identity, loyalty to family and membership in a community (Lamarre and Russell, 2003:75). Although these learners do not show strong feelings towards their mother tongues they do



associate these languages with the home. The first learner mentioned Afrikaans as a tie to his 'mother' while the second learner mentions that he speaks Afrikaans at home but it is not his 'learning language'. Tarone and Swain (1995 cited in Caldas and Caldas, 2004: 500) "suggest that diglossia is the norm in immersion classrooms, where the immersion language, L2, is the formal language of academics, whereas the native language, L1, is the language of informal social interaction between peers, especially adolescents". In a study seeking how trilingual youths in Montreal acquired their linguistic repertoires, Lamarre and Russell (2003) point out that the first language was "always associated with an attachment to identity, loyalty to family and membership in a community". Like the youth in these international studies the learners in this research were adamant that the academic context is an English place. Most learners expressed that they would like to maintain their home languages as only that, as languages spoken at home. One grade 8 learner here (see extract above) expressed that because he learned Afrikaans from her mother he would learn the language as a subject.

#### **5.4.3.2. Separate spaces**

This section dwells on the learners understanding of languages as separate entities. From their understanding different languages do not mix. When these learners at a former model C school were asked about the language that they would like to use in the classroom and examination a uniform response was given which was;

**this is an English speaking school so most of the children understand English more than other languages.**

Again, we note here the recursive tactic of generalizing from one particular characteristic of English (its status as a school language) to general assumptions

about speakerhood – most learners understand English best. We note also how this institutions identity relies on it remaining English. Teachers themselves also emphasize this as an important feature of the school, with one teacher specifically claiming that parents’ rely on the school to deliver education in English.

**... Some parents because they send their kids to some school in town they expect the kids to be taught in English...**

English for parents represents economic advancement, and social and educational mobility. It is reported in McKinney (2007:10) that although good English seems to be attainable through education at former white English medium class schools “not all learners are equally successful in their mastery of the kind of English proficiency” needed for academic success. ‘Parents because they send their kids to some school in town’ they expect English to deliver good education.

Languages other than English are often seen as misfits at former white English middle class schools (cf. Vandeyar and Killen, 2007 and McKinney, 2009). Students concede that other language-medium of instruction options are available elsewhere and can be chosen, with one pupil stating that, if you want to use Xhosa in education then,

**You must go to a Xhosa school, like in XX**



Learners and parents are reinforcing institutional discourses of ‘good’ (former white English schools) vs. ‘bad’ (township ‘Xhosa’ schools). Learners at the ‘Xhosa School’ are enrolled in the ‘initial instruction followed by transition’ stream where Xhosa would have been used as the initial language in the first four years of schooling followed by English taking over as the language of the classroom from the fifth year of schooling to the final grade 12. The reality at such

schools has seen teachers having to resort to mother tongue Xhosa for the message to be effective as learners are believed to have low proficiency levels in the English language which is the medium of instruction as a result of minimal exposure to the language. A popular view amongst South Africans is that schools in the later transition stream, that improvise by using code switching techniques are of bad quality and are producing learners of such quality. Therefore, allowing Xhosa to be part of the classroom would mean that they have regressed. Furthermore, this would mean that they are accepting that they are lacking in their linguistic capital.

The metaphorical importance of retaining an institutional English-speaking identity is somehow reinforced by the mere fact that these schools are located outside the township. Their existence in non Xhosa speaking communities suggests their ability to deliver good education, on the general understanding that township institutions are more often than not dysfunctional. Although these learners are aware of the non-existent 'Xhosa school' they choose to refer to the other school as such, equating language with bad quality. "Most of the anglophile political and cultural leadership who opposed the Bantu education policy had come to equate all worthwhile education with the English language" (Alexander, 2003: 14). The culture of associating everything worthwhile in South Africa with whiteness is passed on from parents to the children. Retaining English as the predominant language of the school, then, would guarantee that 'township dysfunctionality' did not infiltrate its walls. Fataar points to similar view that parents seek educational comfort for their children in former white schools. Aspirations of mobility are prevalent in dysfunctional townships whereby we witness an "outflow of floating images of stability and quality that are discursively produced by schools with the changing spatial geography of the city" (Fataar, 2006:602). White education had been valued during apartheid while black education was on the opposite side. According to Fataar reform in form of housing

although had been purely intended to integrate, on the contrary it had further divided. “Schools struggle to retain their normative role as a space for upward mobility through providing quality learning” (Fataar, 2006:607). The dysfunctionality of the townships is duplicated in institutions such as the school; this further reproduces the negativity attached to township schools and the bad or poor quality learner identity of apartheid. “Parents of especially high school children who invest in the meritocratic symbolization of schooling tend to send their offspring to schools outside the area”. The use of the word ‘coconut’ which is used by others to call learners or people with the model C English, signaling their deviation from their black ethnic identity can thus be seen as a case in point. The diversity that was suppressed during apartheid has found its ways to the contours of the country. The duality of identity is one of the characteristics of contemporary South Africa. These learners differentiate between the varieties of English used at Model C schools and that used at township schools with the latter viewed as ‘bad’ English (cf. McKinney, 2007)

The move from the township to ‘town’ shows the need by parents to remove their children from the dysfunctional education system to the one that is perceived to be ‘good’. In some cases, it is almost as though students and parents entertained fears of invasion and contamination from the new multilingual dispensation. Because of the acknowledged importance of the school as a guarantee for the reproduction of core linguistic values, setting up (metaphorical) borders and containing illicit language invasions became a first-order priority. The *specific* importance of the school in the language preservation endeavour can be understood when we compare the relative ease with which we can accept the statement ‘this is an English speaking school’ with the less acceptable and even absurd statement, ‘this is an English speaking hospital’. To be an English speaking school is somewhat akin to being ‘a black journalists forum’ – it is an arena where the reproduction or deconstruction of essential social categories and identities are played out – the

school, in this case, the platform for the reproduction of coveted linguistic identities, and the 'back journalists forum' an important scene for the deconstruction of (white) racial hegemony in the press. Thus learners and their parents are defending their linguistic capital that seems to be threatened by the rapid multilingual infest that has come to dominate previously monolingual institutions. As it is apparent in Heller's (1999) study of a Franco-Ontarian school, Champlain in Canada, educational stakeholders feel a need to protect the French-Canadian nature of the school but at the same time leaving room for diversity that is embodied in students with different nationalities and speakers of different non standard/standard regional dialects of French. In the face of the new multilingual dispensation there often arises a need to protect the monolingual/mono-cultural institutions, as is often the case in many South African former model C schools/desegregated schools (cf. McKay and Chick, 2001 and Vandeyar and Killen, 2007).

Bangeni and Kapp (2007) made use of the poststructuralist theory in illustrating the interconnectedness between language and identity in relation to socio-economic and socio-political transformation. This study showed shifting language attitudes of African home language speakers in post apartheid South Africa; black learners at former schools for English mother tongue speakers constantly navigate between the different linguistic identities available to them as they commute between the township where most stay and suburbia where they go to school (cf. Bangeni and Kapp, 2007). Students in such contexts refer to the separateness of their languages where home languages are often linked to one's identity in statements such as 'Xhosa is the best; it's the best because that I understand and it's the language I came from at home' while English is seen as the language for academia. According to Bangeni and Kapp (2007: 260), "this dual (and seemingly contradictory) motivation is fairly common in postcolonial contexts". The dual desire "to be fluent in English" for academic success and the "simultaneous

allegiance to their home languages and identities reflects the ambivalent position students find themselves in as they attempt to shift between discourses” (ibid, 266).

A further interesting fact about the spatial distribution of languages is an ‘ecological’ assumption that educational spaces can only host a limited number of languages. Some students seemed to have difficulty in understanding that a school context could operate with a *plurality* of languages rather than just one uniform medium of communication for all.

**R:** So you want only English nothing else?

**L8:** I think English will be the best language because everybody will understand.

**R:** Others, what do you think?

**L9:** I think, when there’s like Afrik- like Xhosa or something, is like the first subject at that specific school they can have translations for that school.

**L1:** We do not need it. (Grade 12 interview)

Clearly, his understanding of the question was that language choice is an all or nothing choice.

#### **5.4.4. Xhosa usage as signaling remedialness or immaturity.**

In this and the following section, Xhosa, Afrikaans and English are ideologized in specific ways in relation to learner identities and in ideas of what makes for a good learner. Of interest here is to compare the voices of learners in grade 8 and grade 12, where it is apparent that grade 12 learners are much more negative to the idea of education through languages other than English, while grade 8s are potentially

more accepting of other languages. This general finding reinforces the point here that facility with English is conceived to be the mark of a good and accomplished scholar – something that grade 12 learners are more likely to consider themselves to be.

For example, a point of interest that came up in the interviews with learners was their understanding of Xhosa/Afrikaans language use as *remedial*. As I have mentioned earlier on in the introduction of this chapter, grade 8 learners seemed more welcoming to the idea of having their mother tongues together with English in some of their classes. What came up in interviews with the learners is that some grade 8 learners pointed out that they do understand English,

**but the problem is we're not perfectly like understand English but when we mix it with our language it would be easier to learn English faster.**

**R: Which language version of the paper did you choose to write, did you write the XE or the EE?**

**Aya: The XE class.**

**R: Why? Why did you make that decision?**

**Aya: Because I don't understand English clear nhe I understand Xhosa.**

**R: Is that true, is it the same for everyone?**

**Ntosh: *Amanyé amagama asiwaunderstandi* (some words we do not understand) that's why nditshuze isiXhosa (I chose Xhosa).**

**R: What other words, other words in English? Why did you make the choice to write the XE paper?**

**Xola: I think it makes it easier for me to understand *kune* like when they mix it with my language to make the page like easy.**

**R: Was it easier for all of you?**

**Ls: EWE.**

The mother tongue's presence in the classroom would aid with content of other subjects while at the same time helping with the acquisition of the target language English.

Although the principal pointed out that the code switching initiative in the classroom and examination was brought on by the need for a 'level playing field', in responses from interviews with grade 8 learners, grade 12 learners and other teachers surfaces an understanding of this initiative as being remedial, providing solutions to the learners deficiency in the English language. Although grade 8's acknowledge that they have not yet acquired full proficiency in English, grade 12 learners on the other hand are not keen on the idea of remediation; they believe that they have acquired full proficiency in English. Again their position on the matter could be influenced by them being mature grade 12 learners; their understanding is that as grade 12 learners they have sufficient knowledge of any of their subject matters over the past 11/12 years including the English language.

Furthermore, there is a shared understanding of mother tongues as *remedy*, where mother tongues are seen as aiding when learners fall short in understanding English or failing to express themselves in English (see Miss N, Mr B and learners' interviews, and cf. Mckinney, 2007 and Makoe, 2007). The grade 8 learners have expressed that they are at this school to learn English and are open to having mother tongue in their classroom to help them realise their goal. All learners seem to believe that they have acquired full proficiency in their home languages making it pointless to learn them at school except using it as aid. In both responses from grade 8's and 12's there is some contradiction, if they claim proficiency in mother tongue then there would not be a need for translation from mother tongue to English as expressed by learners in both extracts. Such views can



also be brought on by learners' need to portray an identity other than the one allowed by their home languages. These learners are constructing an identity that aligns them more with speakers of other, non-African, languages. While grade 8 learners' responses seem to identify English as the target language, grade 12 learners believe that they have acquired both home language and the foreign language English.

Although there are mixed feelings amongst grade 8 learners around the use of mother tongues with English in the classroom there is no doubt amongst these learners that they are learners through English. Learners who are learners through other languages, African languages particularly are understood to be lacking as learners or slower learners. I have mentioned above that inclusion of mother tongue in classrooms is seen as a remedy to ailing learners i.e. learners who have difficulties understanding their learning areas. According to a learner slower learners

**must remain in XE but I think it will make it easier for them to learn English when it's translated to Xhosa.**

In fact a lot of these learners had an understanding that mother tongue translations should be provided for learners with difficulties especially 'slower learners'. In the excerpt below we see another learner who is of the same view that learners who use mother tongue Xhosa at this school are have difficulty understanding in English.

**Miss N there, she mixes her languages for some children who do not understand English quite well English quite well so she makes it easier for them, for us who know English well it's quite easy.**

Therefore refusal of mother tongues can be interpreted as a way for these learners to disassociate themselves from the slower learner identity. The use of mother tongue in an educational context especially in this school which is considered to be 'English speaking' seems to discredit learners as good English learners. Makoe (2007) in a study conducted at a desegregated school in Johannesburg found that the learners' refusal of home languages at this multilingual school is brought on by the need to distance themselves from the "weak learner identity". In Makoe's study when a learner was encouraged to speak in her language in an English medium classroom it became clear that she was "positioned as lacking the necessary skills in English" (2007:64). Learners at our Cape Town school are aware of the value placed by society on English. Praise is given when a learner has managed to produce a flawless utterance in English (Makoe, 2007). Particularly grade 12 learners in this research seem more upset with the idea of remedification, if instruction in home language is introduced their 'native likeness' in English would be placed under scrutiny and the institutions' identity as 'English speaking' can be jeopardised, hence affecting their image when seeking employment and tertiary education. As I have mentioned earlier the need to defend the institutions monolingual nature lies with what is aspired to after high school. The simplification of content by using Xhosa in the curriculum seems insulting. The learners do not seem to distinguish between *remedy* and *support*.

Xhosa and Afrikaans speaking learners at this school seem to place less value in their home languages as languages of education. An interesting fact is that Afrikaans home language speakers tend to express more negative views towards the use of their language than Xhosa home language speakers. Furthermore, grade 12 learners express more negative sentiments than grade 8 learners regarding the use of their home languages in an educational context. This supports or complements the points being made here – grade 12 learners already consider themselves more accomplished scholars than grade 8 learners, and the fact that

Afrikaans learners are more 'willing' to 'give up Afrikaans can surely be credited to the fact that aspects of identity and language such as allegiance and authenticity are less firmly entrenched within this group, as shown in other studies of language shift (cf. Dyers, 2008). Learners were unanimous in their view of English as the language of the classroom and examination while Xhosa and Afrikaans were associated by both groups with the home (cf. Bangeni and Kapp, 2007).

As noted, although use of African languages is encouraged in South Africa's language policy, speakers of these languages do not see much value in them beyond their intimate domains. An excerpt is provided below with commentary which unpacks the feelings and attitudes of a grade 12 learner towards Xhosa his mother tongue and English.

**"Can't they start this thing immediately when you are in grade 1 <laughter> because we just started this in grade 11 so ="**

The learner starts by referring to the alternate use of Xhosa and English in the classroom as 'this thing'. The learner avoids mentioning the language explicitly. By referring to the language as 'this thing' the learner wishes to express that learning through his language is not important, hence he cannot even acknowledge 'this thing' as learning through Xhosa. By not naming the actual situation one distances self from the situation.

Drawing on the contrast between grade 11 and grade 1 learners, the learner is implying that learning through other languages except English in High school is an insult. It is immature and insulting at their level. The mind of a grade one learner, a 6 – 7 year old has not yet matured therefore making the 6 year old more susceptible to instruction in mother tongue without even questioning. These learners believe they have acquired full proficiency in their home languages

because they can communicate in the home language when it is warranted. Therefore, learning through the language would be a waste of time.

The comment on Xhosa is suggestively said in humor. In Stroud (2004) on Rinkeby Swedish humor is used to underplay some serious racist stereotypes. Something serious might be said in humor “thereby defusing serious criticism” (ibid, 201-203 cf. Hill, 1993). Furthermore, learners resorting to mockery can be seen as an indicator of the learners’ attitudes towards their languages. From this learner’s comment the laughter can be viewed as his way of belittling the Xhosa language, or showing that using it as a language for their classroom would be a joke, meaning, Xhosa cannot be taken seriously as a language of instruction. Mockery on their part can be seen as some defense mechanism. Learners do not see relevance in academic content being presented in their home languages. McCarty, et al. in a study with Native American children on language shift and retention found that speaking the mother tongue Navajo “stigmatizes one as uneducated and they haven’t experienced anything in the world”. Also, children who use their native languages attract mockery (2006:670). Native Americans in this study share traits with many speakers of native South African languages who associate English with the new world.

#### **5.4.5. Economy of teaching/time**

Learners believe that the use of African languages in classrooms takes up too much time. Instead of learning the relevant subject content, learners need to take time to acquaint themselves with terms that seem foreign to them. In other research conducted in South Africa it has been apparent that English is the favored language of learning and teaching (cf. Bangeni and Kapp, 2007 and De Klerk, 2006). Education in African mother tongues is often available at (former DET) schools in the first four years of schooling, preparing for a smooth transition to

English in later grades. Learning of the Xhosa and Afrikaans is seen as waste especially during the Mathematics lesson, which carries a lot of weight in the education of these learners. Generally Mathematics (particularly) and other content learning areas are considered to have more value in education than language learning areas. Below are two excerpts from learners who attest to the ‘wastage’ of time.

**Translations they do not make anything better man, they’re just a waste of time, really they are, they are just a waste of time.**

**Ls: Lesson feels like a language lesson**

**It takes up time especially if you are doing exams and you are nervous, you have to read all the staff it confuses and it complicates the paper even more ...**

The inference drawn from the excerpts above is that language, especially L2 for them does not add value to their education instead takes from the time allocated for them to learn. Even though there are differing views on this topic, both grade 8 and grade 12 learners are unanimous on the view that mathematics is all about calculations therefore use of mother tongue is irrelevant and confuses them further. Time seems to be an important factor with responses from both grade 8’s and 12’s it came across that the alternate use of Xhosa/English or Afrikaans/English is time consuming. Their utterances can be interpreted as ‘instead of learning mathematics they are acquiring irrelevant language skills’. To show the views that these learners have about their languages in relation to their learning areas I have provided an excerpt below.

**I: ... Are you struggling with Maths?**

**L: No.**

**L: Yes**

**I: is it because it's in English maybe they tried to offer to help you, if you had Maths in your own languages maybe it would help. (Inaudible noise)**

**L: Mna I think that, okay iMaths is a subject of, we do a lot of calculations but if we were to get something like iBio in that language with iwords which are quite difficult, uyabona? ...**

**I: So you are all saying that in Maths it's not working out (inaudible) for all of you?**

**L: it's not a language (inaudible whispers)**

What we get from the learners is that some subjects such as Biology, Chemistry etc are more language focused than other subjects. With subjects like Biology and Chemistry, the focus is on terminology therefore having subjects in Xhosa can be beneficial to learners. Mathematics on the other hand is believed to be numbers based and has nothing to do with language. Learners seem to emphasize it being 'not a language'. With mathematics there is an added burden of understanding both content and the vocabulary from the new language. Both students and teachers felt that an attention to language in classrooms sometimes conflicted with how they understood the nature of the discipline, and that excessive preoccupations with language and terminology detracted from the real content.

In both sections, 5.4.4. and 5.5.5., the data shows a clear link between learners' perceptions of what distinguishes good scholars from poor scholars. As Pennycook has remarked, "[p]edagogical choices about curriculum development, content, materials, classroom processes, and language use, although appearing to be informed by apolitical professional considerations, are, in fact inherently ideological in nature, with significant implications for learners' socioeconomic roles' (Pennycook, 2001:115).

## 5.5. Summary

The analysis has shown the complexity of language choice for education. I have been able to suggest that much of the policies on language education are formulated from the point of view of a modernist and somewhat traditional and antiquated understanding of the nature of multilingualism and identity in late-modernity, and the fact that this comes into conflict with a particular set of market relationships that are specific to South Africa in its late-modern transformation – and perhaps contexts in transition more generally. Modernist conceptions of the nature of language generally (that it is somehow an entity outside of the sociopolitical and cultural and historical contexts that construct it), in relation to notions such as register, and how languages are thought to be learnt have also been shown to be inadequate to account for the perspective of these learners by not engaging with their perceptions of sociolinguistic realities. Another factor that has been shown to complicate the introduction of languages other than English is the understanding of education and the role of schools that clearly place a premium on educational accomplishments that are linked to proficiency in English. And finally, the variety of language ideological discourses that reconstitute languages in fundamental ways at the same time as they mediate identity work also need to be carefully considered in any future program of African language insertion into schools. This is not just a question of the instructional instrumentality of a language, but a core facet of self-representation and local understandings of democracy, access and equity that is at stake. In the final chapter, I shall discuss selected aspects of this complex picture in an attempt to suggest ways forward.

## CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Martin-Jones (2007:165) has remarked on how a lot of “what and how questions predominated” research on bilingual education instead of “why questions” that address issues of why particular language educational models are “introduced in particular social and historical contexts?”, and, we might add, why they are resisted. It’s a necessity that mother tongue education be understood in context. One conclusion we can draw from this study is that mother tongue/bilingual education was introduced in the form it was because of the particular assumptions and ideologies about language, language learning, language and identity of a modernist bent that was current and in vogue at the time. In retrospect, perhaps we are justified in saying that Cummin’s framework for additive bilingualism has been built on a conflation of identity as authenticity with learning proficiency. This claim would merit being looked into a little closer.

One implication of the data reviewed here raises the question in this context of to what extent it is feasible to search for solutions to issues of multilingualism that equate widely different sociopolitical situations. According to Makoe (2007:67) classrooms are not isolated spaces; they are socio-political microcosms of what happens in the larger social and cultural world. Given the very different contexts of South African transformation, as well as the history of language planning in the previous era, and immigrant minority contexts on which much theorizing on multilingualism has been built, to what extent are we justified in claiming theoretical generalizations of great reach for all these diverse contexts?

In any event, the stance on language taken here as an ideological construct warns us against subtracting policies of language from the specific concrete sociopolitical, historical and cultural contexts in which they are used. From the voices of the learners interviewed here, it is apparent that language for them is



something very different than for those who are making the policies, and that an understanding of the subtle ways in which stances and statements on language are constructing the learners as aspiring and social mobile persons needs to be at the core of language planning.

Another finding that would need further discussion is the way in which education needs to be seen as a very special domain of language planning. Introducing a language – any language – into this market with its specific values and linkages with society at large is a risky endeavor; the values of schooling comprise strict measuring rods for the efficacy of a language. In fact, one could argue that introducing Xhosa or Afrikaans into educational contexts, given the complex and entangled situation of education in South Africa is bound to generate representations of the language and learner identities less favourable to its continued use. Interacting with this point is the fact that different age cohorts as well as different language groups may need tailor-made solutions to any such introduction, as their perception and understanding of language in relation to their specific social trajectories, narratives of opportunity are quite different. Introducing these languages in educational contexts is rather than promoting them and raising their status actually leading to their active construction as inappropriate languages. This is because the norms of this particular market (education) are being used by the pupils as measuring sticks of the languages, and leading to their demotion. The choice of media, particularly beyond secondary school level is not dependent on a community's wishes but is rather dictated by global academic pursuits (Moyo, 2002:1)

Speaking about the different markets that language policy makers need to consider brings out as aspect of the Bourdieuan theoretical framework utilized here and its revision by Park and Wee (2008). This thesis utilises Park and Wee's model of linguistic markets (autonomous and unified) to discuss how learners' languages

are taken up or discarded. The learners' perceptions concerning languages in education and their identities in this market were interpreted in the context of socio-political and economical transformation, taking into account the global influence which contributes largely to the changing status of languages. Park and Wee draw largely on Bourdieu's framework of linguistic markets, where legitimate languages are seen to possess more value in these markets. In the terminology of Park and Wee, the students are disconnecting authenticity and allegiance from competence – something that Park and Wee see as typical for *autonomous* markets. According to these authors, unified markets require a strong linkage between these three aspects. However, in this unified market, this is not the case – learners are actively working to disassociate the 3 parameters. Therefore the model provided by Park and Wee seems problematic in this context that in its traditional form is more integrated. Xhosa and Afrikaans learners who have appropriated the use of English, in this context seem to have diverged from the essentialist ties of language and identity. Authenticity and allegiance are seen as irrelevant in this school market. Learners continue to express the need to be taught through English which weakens their authenticity as Xhosa speakers in this market and their allegiance to these languages. Although these learners seem to disassociate these 3 parameters, the principal's perception about the learners' languages on the other hand, can be taken to represent the essentialist model which associates language and identity where there are strong links between allegiance, authenticity and competence.

The model provided by Park and Wee seems to be problematic when applied to the South African context. As reviewed in other studies, market dynamics vary across contexts. Although Park and Wee refer to types of markets, other authors have problematized the notion of linguistic market, pointing out how different national contexts are organized differently in terms of markets (see Stroud, 2002) Swigart (2000), Haeri (1997), and Woolard (1985) find Bourdieu's reproduction of a

legitimate language befitting in some contexts more than others. According to Woolard 'primary economic arrangements for everyday living exert a more considerable influence on linguistic evaluations that do social institutions such as the school'. Swiggart views Bourdieu's framework in the same problematic light, where it falls short in explaining how the position of language could itself evolve. Haeri notes how other institutions except the state have control over the official language. According to Stroud these studies see fundamental problems in the application of Bourdieu's framework that enough attention has not been paid to specific ways in which power and language are interrelated in historically and culturally distinct speech communities. This could be a field to research further.

### **6.1. Concluding remark**

In conclusion, then, it is stipulated in South Africa's constitution that all indigenous South African languages awarded official status are equal to English and Afrikaans, therefore should enjoy the same exposure given to English and Afrikaans. However, in the South African context we have a situation where English fulfills most high functions such as education, parliament, mass media, etc. and minority languages are sidelined or reserved to be languages of intimate domains such as homes. This disjuncture between practice and policy establishes English as a language of prestige therefore making it difficult for indigenous languages to establish themselves as such. This view of linguistic markets is constituted by globalised processes. Whereby languages that are seen to hold promise of global potential are increasingly used in context where they do not originate. Globalised languages such as English continue to have value as languages of wider communication, education, media, and all the institutions that are seen to be governed by more intergrated rules. While languages that seem to have less value in this new world order are continuously being pushed in favour of these global languages. The global processes have birthed aspects of identity that

are removed from its former static and traditional view that tie identity to language and ethnicity. In understanding learners identities in this context this thesis has made use of post structural theories which place the evolving languages and identities within the social, political, economic and historical changing frame. The link between language and identity is no longer clear cut, possession of a language is no longer taken to indicate or link one to a certain language or ethnic identity. In fact, languages are more defined in terms of markets where they are now commodities that are changeable. Thus, although the state's language policy is intended to promote multilingualism, this at the micro level is interpreted by the different racial groupings as being bilingual in English and the mother tongue. Mother tongue speakers believe that they have already acquired their mother tongues therefore the only thing left to do is to learn English. In the education market actors need to invest in the English language as capital so as to cash in on future returns. In an evolving third world economy such as South Africa where there is a rise of the black elite, the previously marginalized groups whose only participation in the economy was limited to being labourers English is seen as a meal ticket. Therefore, English as capital can be converted in the South African job market and in the global markets.

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## Appendices

### 1. Teacher interviews

#### Interview with Mr D (The principal and Mathematics teacher)

##### Transcription keys

...	pause of more than one second
( )	inaudible speech
< >	non-lexical e.g. laughter or cough
CAPITAL LETTERS	emphasis
,	short pause
=	overlapping
(words in bold print)	translations
<i>words in italics</i>	Xhosa words

- R: Why did you think it was important that, it was important to offer the translations in Afrikaans and Xhosa in for the Maths lesson?
- D: To me there needs to be a level playing field the kids in Matric did... er ... in Matric Maths papers in English and Afrikaans and the Afrikaans kids get the chance to understand the question in their own language and English speakers get it in their own language but any indigenous African mother tongue speakers gets it in English or Afrikaans, maybe they understand both but they don't get it in their own language and people get to understand it- they might not understand it better but at least give them a level plain field.
- R: Mm... some teachers are not welcoming to the dual medium approach due to the unavailability of learning materials in isiXhosa. How was it for you, did you experience any difficulties with the terms?



- D: I think it is, it is a problem I mean they are not as I tried to work with people at PRAESA and HSRC made available there was the people they were able to link with not necessarily, not able necessarily to give exactly the right terms, all the Maths terms in Grade 11 and there were times when they would give maybe a verbal description that talked around what something was, like an expression there were three or four words in Xhosa that stated this is what a Maths expression is or a radius or circumference but I realised the Xhosa language is also sometimes like that, the – the – the three words might be describing that in any case but there are Xhosa – there seems to be Xhosa dictionaries that can tell you a lot of stuff but those words might not be precise for what you're trying to say in Grade 11 Maths so I think there needs to be some work on terminology and then whether that terminology, the terminology might exist it might not exist for certain words but then whether the word fits in the classroom or not, whether the kids understand it I can give an example I think the words for circumference, there was 'umjikelezo' came out and the kids understood it. There was another word I can't remember what it was they didn't understand, they didn't relate to it, I put it on the board and they didn't relate to it, then I put 'umjikelezo' up and then they understood it.
- R: In cases where you experience some difficulties with the translations given to you by PRAESA and the HSRC what did you do? Did you have someone to ask or ...?
- D: Mr Buso the Maths teacher also helped with translations and there were times where I was a bit confused because he would translate in one way and the PRAESA they were really working through Elias and he was working through a friend at UWC and he wasn't necessarily a Maths guy he was just good at Xhosa so it wasn't a 100% process but, what was the question again?
- R: When you experienced difficulties was there someone else to assist?

- D: Mr Buso assisted to some extent but Mr Buso was a Maths specialist without being necessarily a language specialist, so there were difficulties in being 100% sure what the translation was and that in any case I knew later to the exam, you know there weren't gonna be translations there for the class-work, for the test and it was really only – we only had the infrastructure to give it to them in exam.
- R: Um... in ... when you were presenting the lesson in class, did it feel like it was a language lesson because you have to explain these terms in Xhosa instead of teaching Maths?
- D: I was never able to get on to the language I would give the word in Xhosa say there were many sometimes where sometimes I got the translations a bit later than I didn't work so the first time they saw some of those translations was in the exam itself but the were- , the most we did was we would put words on the board and say look, here's the heading in Afrikaans and here's the heading in Xhosa and then on that basis they could see what the equivalent terms were but we didn't get into language, language a lot of the time because I had to concentrate on the Maths.
- R: How did you work out if the translations was a success or not in comparison with the... no translations at all?
- D: I can't say this experiment told me that it was better or worse because this experiment was based on Grade 11 where the kids are in English medium for a long time and so I don't think this research is gonna be labelled research has gone far enough because we didn't have enough um..., no we didn't have enough of the translations, we translated the June exams, we translated the November exam so that is um... two sets of exams, it was in paper one and paper two in November but it... I don't think we went... you know ... how can I say that...? To say whether it was successful or not, the kids got staffing class at times that was in Xhosa they got their exam in Xhosa, English, etc. Er... it wasn't far reaching far enough where they

were getting every single question paper, every single lesson with a translation, the terminology wasn't certain enough etc. and also it was an intervention only in Grade 11 they didn't do it in 8, 9 and 10. To me we might show more if we do it in Grade 8 but also we need to have settled terminology we need to have the whole thing translated before we start and the teacher that... I mean ... I've got just, I can play with Xhosa at some facility with Xhosa I can put terms on the board and vaguely understand them and see a bit of new odds but the teacher needs to be able to work with them because you will come into class and you might not have the translation for that day you know, so I can't say that this research has been able to show a whole lot of things because it happened only in grade 11 and it happened where we weren't able to have all the materials at our fingertips but at the start the teacher wasn't able to be familiar with the materials but if you got all those things in place then the teacher has some sort of basic familiarity with Xhosa without being a speaker of Xhosa. I think it, but I regard it from what I see and what I heard from that other research and what I see for example with Afrikaans speakers, where Afrikaans will go from grade 1 to grade 12 they will all in Afrikaans and they'll only do English where they ... with English in their language class and then they'll write Matric in Afrikaans and they do well because they understood the subject in their own language so I don't say this has shown that but it's my belief that, that exists.

- R: I understand that you have to understand a little bit of Xhosa for, to do something like this, do you understand Xhosa at all because ( )?
- D: Ya, I do because I've done UNISA courses in Xhosa up to second year level I'm almost finished the three out of four modules of Xhosa 2 at UNISA and that is also done through the medium of Xhosa, you have to understand the study guides in Xhosa it self so I've had to with a tutor get into the study guides but I think if you take someone else at the school like

Mrs Luddy who is the Biology teacher who's interested in this thing and would like to be doing it. She's more limited because she hasn't got that background so I'm not a Xhosa speaker but I can read it a bit but if you got a teacher doing this kind of stuff that you have to have some basic familiarity because what happens is they completely mutilate the language and then they put on the board, they've got no idea of the click and the kids will see it visually but they will see it no more than, the teacher will lie to them possibly misspell it but if you got some sort of feel you're not gonna spell it wrongly you won't completely, you know, mutilate the language with all the clicks in the wrong place or – so, but even that the children can still see if you got the clicks wrong, if they've got the spelling right but if you're gonna get this, like if you got it from your head just put it on the board and put, you have got to have a lot of preparation before every lesson you know what your basic terms are. That is presupposed for someone like me as well but at least I know because I've got familiarity I can remember terms, I can come in and I can say the terms and I can remember yesterday's one, and the day before because I know what they mean because a teacher who doesn't know what they mean when there's a circulation of three words describing, I can't think of an example at the moment but describing something in Maths you and the... you understand the circulation then you can put it on the board the kids will help you if you're missing a little bit you know.

R: I believe Maths and other subjects like science are the area where African language speakers do bad er... they are not successful enough, so do you think the failure rate can be attributed to the lack of understanding in the English language?

D: I think it's a huge contributing factor because if I take an example Maths is one of the best subjects in which it's got the least, if you're gonna explain it simply to the students it's got the least words in it because they write in

symbols and they write in, they've got sketches and so on. If you take a subject like English no not English, History, Geography, Biology, Science where there's a lot of terms, there's a lot of explanations, they have to write explanations and they have to understand the text books then it's got a huge disadvantage if they struggle with English whereas you take Maths, they need to understand how to do, times x times x is x squared, x plus 6 is, that sort of thing, it's ... the language part of it is less so as long if they understand simple English and the teacher like Mr Buso can speak Xhosa to them, they are gonna be okay. The challenge there it's Maths itself and Maths is a more difficult subject but if you take History, you take Biology I've taught at a Dual medium school we have taught in English and Afrikaans at the same time. You start a sentence in English you carry on in Afrikaans, you go English – Afrikaans, English – Afrikaans the whole time, the kids have to know both. They write the exam in their own language and they get it in English or Afrikaans and they just switched on. Maths it's okay but I know the Biology teacher and the History teacher which struggled because they seat in they've got to give the note, now are they going to give the note in English or they are going to give the note in Afrikaans, they've got an English textbook the kids have got their textbooks so they've got Afrikaans and they've got English so they can go back to the textbook but they can at least go back to their own language. If you've got Xhosa speakers in the class they can't go back to a Xhosa language text book unless the textbook is done in Xhosa, so they seat it in an English, the Afrikaans speakers and the English mother tongue speakers go back to their own language the Xhosa speakers go back to an English text book and I know I've spoken to a learner in grade 11 speaking to her about Biology and that sort of thing and it was a struggle because the Biology ( ) all those different words and you got to note just five or six or ten lines it's already a whole lot of foreign words that English speakers have to learn mother

tongue speakers have to get into what does indigenous mean, what does (osmosis) mean these tough terminologies, I reckon kids are ..... disadvantaged.

R: Are you still continuing with the process, the translation process?

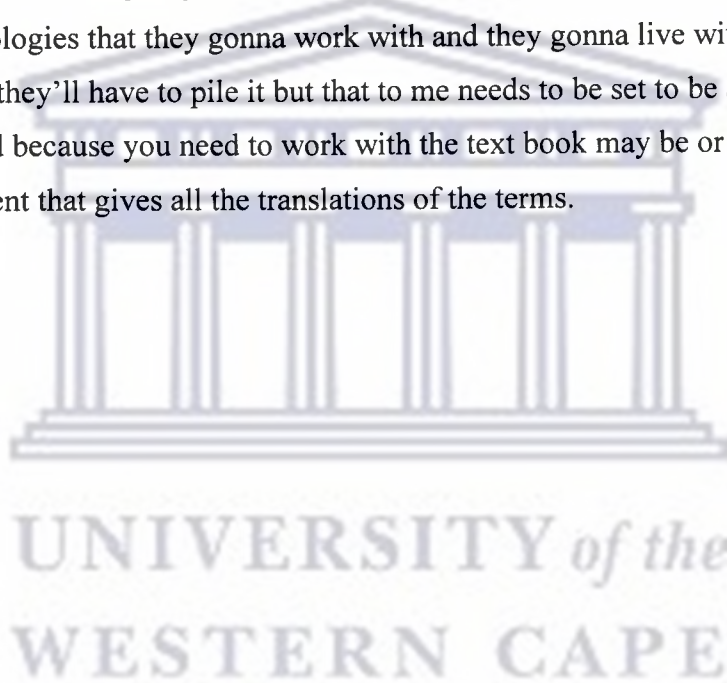
D: No, um... I was not discouraged by the idea but I feel the terminologies need to be sorted out it's extremely labour extensive to do exam when you are extremely busy as a teacher, or principal whoever you are and you still setting exams and now you gonna, I can translate them quite easy into Afrikaans but the Xhosa translations I have to, you type it in three times basically because you're typing and type and translating it and translating it and then you gonna get it to someone, you've got to get your deadlines ahead because you got to get it, give them time and get it back and still make the changes and so all you deadlines come you know, earlier than they need to be and so I mean I did it full out for the one year , I planned to carry on but I just realised in terms of the infrastructure that is there at the moment in terms of being able to do something, that there wasn't enough to push on and also it was only going to be grade 11. I think one needs more in place in terms of been able to put in deadlines get things quickly and make sure the whole year is planned out. One needs more support PRAESA was not able, in terms of what they were busy with and... er... the HSRC person was busy with other stuff and he wasn't a Xhosa specialist in any case so if it's gonna be a general thing in schools the people who are not Xhosa speakers are going to be wanting to do that sort of thing one needs to have a thing worked out where one can get ... have the right for the person to get to the Maths teacher who can do the translations and give it back to your Maths expert whatever, there wasn't enough to justify carrying on just the energy you put into it.

R: But do you believe the whole thing is the right step towards the=

D:

= I believe

passionately it is the right thing to do, it's just the matter of being able to have the support you need to do it and I think the powers that be in terms of the Xhosa language or the Xhosa terminologies or the Xhosa ... The new curriculum has come out in terms of the Xhosa, in terms of the Maths curriculum for example and we are busy with it now it's not that it's under a huge change now it's come out and it's gonna be that way I think with a little bits of changes so now that they have a settled idea of what they gonna be teaching in grade 8, 9 to 12 they could settle on some terminologies that they gonna work with and they gonna live with or maybe they'll have to pile it but that to me needs to be set to be able to go forward because you need to work with the text book may be or just the document that gives all the translations of the terms.



### **Interview with Miss N, Human social sciences (HSS) teacher**

R: I understand you were not trained through formal teaching program to teach through Xhosa, so how is the whole experience?

N: I must say it was challenging at first because some parents, because they send their kids to some school in town they expect the kids to be taught in English and we're telling them that we are going to help them along with their own language, um ... they didn't really like but then convincing them what are the advantages of you teaching them in their own language is that they can express themselves better and the kids also after sometime realised that it is helping and they enjoy it even though at times they can't necessarily write in their own language but if they can read something they can express themselves better in their own language. They also had a choice whether they should write in English or Xhosa.

R: Looking at their performance do you think it really helps to be taught in Xhosa?

N: I must say there was an improvement though it wasn't that much but from the view that were, that got one on one explanation not necessarily one on one but the whole class there was an improvement.

R: To what extent did the PRAESA programme assist you?

N: Um... they did assist they managed to get someone to translate my lessons because I don't always have time to translate and I'm not always, I'm not also very good in writing Xhosa because I am Xhosa and a Zulu speaker and ... um ... PRAESA also... um... gave us some books that were



written in Xhosa and SiSwati and they also translated our posters for the class.

R: Did you always agree with their translation?

N: Not always because are not necessarily first language learners, their translations was very good but too much for our learners, not at their level.

R: Have you ever had to rely on your own intuition at times?

N: *Yintoni ke ngoku lo nto. (What is that?)*

R: *Wenze ngohlobo lwakho. (Do it your own way)*

N: Yes even with the translations I gave them the notes but then still would, would translate into the level of Xhosa they understand and I – I, because my principal is very flexible I could, I did some of the things my own way.

R: When you encountered difficulties with the translations sometimes the English words are so hard to translate, what did you do in those ... instances?

N: I would give them, I would tell them, I would give them the English word and even if I don't have the direct translation in Xhosa I would explain it in Xhosa even if I can't give it a term in Xhosa.

**Interview with Mr B, Mathematics and Economic and Management Science teacher**

R: I believe you were responsible for constructing some terms for Maths lessons. Where did you come up with those terms?

K: No, at first, the thing is um... when we were doing the translations, I was doing EMS it was not uh Maths at that time, so the translation was for EMS.

R: And for Maths?

K: Ya, for Mathematics it came but we didn't stick to it too much you know, I remember that we... we only translated one question paper for grade 11, I just can't remember whether it was June or December but it was last year. We... the person, in fact, who was translating those, the whole thing nhe... who set the paper was Mr Damsel, the principal and I'm not sure where he got those translations but for some words he came to me to ask if maybe they were correct, if they were used correctly so I had to change some of the words, there were some of the words that were not used correctly, so I just changed those words otherwise all the other things were translated already.

R: How do you know those words, your words that... how do you know if they were the right ones?

K: The thing is you listen to the question, you read the question and you try to understand the question and ...er... there are words that you cannot use in a certain sentence, I'm not sure what example to make now but there were words that were used incorrectly, that were not supposed to be used... okay, they have got the same meaning but they are not right for that certain sentence, you know, now you need to find a word that would be suitable for that sentence.

R: You said you were translating for EMS?

K: Ya.

R: Did you also offer lessons in Xhosa for EMS.

K: I stopped teaching EMS when uh that whole thing was starting so, I changed to, I took over the Mathematics because the person who was gonna teach EMS, we had another teacher a new teacher to teach EMS and then he took over, uh but what we were doing we were separating the classes there was an XE class, there was an EE class. The EE class was for English and the XE was for Xhosa, so what we were doing there we were teaching the learners since I was dealing with, I was teaching learners who understand Xhosa only um... what we were doing there I was teaching them in both languages but if they don't understand then I translate everything to Xhosa and then they had the right to answer the question in Xhosa, they had the right to ask questions and they were also answering the questions when they were writing the test in Xhosa, depending on what language was suitable for them.

R: Did it work out for them?

K: It was working out for them for some of them because some of them could understand the question but they couldn't put it in English now it was easy for them because they had to just write in their own language which is Xhosa and so they understood it better and it created an opportunity for those who want to express them further, who want to express themselves further because they could tell you what they are trying to say and you could understand what they are trying to say, although, if they put it in English maybe it can be a bit vague it can be difficult to understand what they are trying to say but once they say it in Xhosa you understand what they are trying to say because now they are expressing themselves.

R: Let's go back to Maths, with the translations, with the paper that Mr Damsel came to you with. Did you use your background knowledge for the terms or was there a text book that you referred to for some terms, I know

there isn't, there aren't any Xhosa terms for Maths that they can use for Maths but in primary I think there were some text books in Xhosa, maybe did you use those textbooks?

K: No, not at all I wasn't using any textbooks I was just using my general knowledge.

R: You are a Xhosa first language speaker?

K: Ja.

R: You were involved

K: Ja, I was involved at first when it started because I used to attend *ii*workshops but I didn't ... er... use it in the following year because I was just involved in that year when it started and at that time I was teaching EMS and I was teaching Maths as well so I was using it in both uh=-

R: = Subjects

K: Subjects and after that in the following year I moved from Grade 8, I was not teaching grade 8 and I was not using it any more.

R: The translations in Maths do you think they were useful to the kids?

K: Ja, they were useful sometimes but I can't say they were useful in a sense that some learners, most of our learner they don't understand, they do understand Xhosa but in some cases when you used those translations you had to use uh deeper language, so they couldn't understand it now when you use the deeper language even though you're using their own language but now because they are so used to speaking this ordinary Xhosa that is spoken in the streets but now when it comes to translating now the question paper there are times when you had to use the deeper language, the deep Xhosa.

R: Can you understand the deeper language? The deeper Xhosa.

K: I do but some of the terms also I didn't understand, some of them because uh what I noticed is that the person who was translating, I think he was translating using the dictionary so some of the terms maybe he was using

that, whatever book he was using but I could notice that some of the terms were taken from the book. Some of the terms are the terms that are not usually used in our language but now because they had to be... it was something formal so they were used because it is a formal thing otherwise when you are just speaking ordinary Xhosa then you don't use those words and it's rare to get those words and that's why some learners could not understand those words.

R: Do you think it's good that they are translating for Maths and other subjects like EMS, science.

K: it can be good for maybe EMS because for a person who wants to do business, he needs to understand what those terms are, what do those terms mean in Xhosa but for something like Maths I don't think they are good because when you talk of a square root for instance you say *ingcambu* (**the root**) that's a square root in English but when you translate it to Xhosa it's *ingcambu* and then the kids they don't understand why do you compare *ingcambu* with a square root in Mathematics because they know that *ingcambu* it's the root of the tree and now when it comes to Xhosa there is only one meaning.

R: So they left out the square.

K: Ya, you know when you talk of *ingcambu* in Xhosa it's only one thing you think of, you can't take that to Maths, so things like that I could notice that now when it comes to explaining, when it comes to translating things like square root it changes the whole meaning for the kids and sometimes they could lose it, just lose whatever mathematics they had. They could end up losing it even though they understood it before because if you say the square root of 4 is 2 then they understand, *isquare root sika 4 ngu 2* (**the square root of 4 is two**) but when you say *ingcambu ka 4* they don't understand what *is ingcambu ka 4, ingcambu ka 4. Ufour akangumthi mos, ngumthi onengcambu* (**Four is not a tree, the tree has the root**) why do

we have to use *ingcambu*, you see? So those are the things that were a bit difficult that's why I say when it comes to Maths I think it can be vague, it can be vague.

R: But looking at their performance was it good or bad, did they do better when they were offered the translations or ... ?

K: Mm ... er ... the thing is it depends on which language or which language the learner followed because I can't say for instance they did better because there was Xhosa as well because it might happen that they did better of which they were looking maybe on English only. On the other hand I may say that they did bad because they were looking on English... er... they were looking on both languages. That confusion can also do something, you know? Because when it comes to translating in Xhosa now it gives a different meaning from what they understand in English, now they start now thinking differently, they start doubting being not sure whether this answer they're giving if it's right or wrong. They become unsure.

R: Are you still continuing with teaching Maths with the translations or -?

K: No. We did it that year only.

R: You didn't continue?

K: We didn't continue.

R: Why?

K: Er... as I told you nhe, I was involved in that year and after that I was not involved in this whole thing and there were no people contacting us in terms of continuing with the translations because at first there were people who use to come to us and tell us, okay, now let's do this, this time, this time let's change to this, let's try this and that, you know. We use to have workshops and we are no longer having any workshops now. So it just went away.

R: If you were given an opportunity to teach like that, use the translations again, would you do it?

K: I would do it because=

R: = would you support? =

K: =because some of the learners here they prefer being taught in Xhosa, even though it's Maths, they prefer being taught in Xhosa but even though you are teaching in Xhosa when it comes to mentioning the terms, you're gonna mention them using the English language. I can speak the ordinary Xhosa if I say for instance, "four plus two divide by three" then I'm gonna say "ufour umdibanise notwo udivide ngo three" (**four plus/ added to two divided by three**). Can you see that, that word divide is still there which is the English word, of which I'm suppose to say "ufour umdibanise notwo ubahlule ngothree" *fanela ndithi ubahlule ngo* (**I am suppose to say divide by**) three but once I use that word 'ubahlule' *uyaqonda?* (**'divide', do you understand?**) Then they start losing it now you but when I say *umdibanise* in the case of addition then they understand it but 'umahlule' then 'umphindaphinde' which is multiply then it becomes vague to them it becomes ... er...

R: So you think the whole translation thing is just confusing them?

K: In some cases it confusing but in some it is helping ... Not unless the learners can use it whenever they need it if they use it whenever they need it then it can be good, if they are not forced to, if it's a matter of choice where they have to choose whether to use translation or they still use the English.

R: Okay, thanks.

## 2. Learner interviews (Grade 8)

### Interview 1

**Note: Pseudonyms are used to indicate different learners**

**Denzel\***

R: You all chose the English paper?

Denel: Yes.

R: There's no one here who chose the Afrikaans paper?

R: Did you choose the Afrikaans?

D: I chose Afrikaans?

R: Why?

D: Because I like Afrikaans. I understand it better because I grew up in Afrikaans.

R: Now in this Afrikaans paper there were also translations, in English and Xhosa. Did you use the translations?

D: Some of it.

R: How was it?

D: It was okay.

R: Was it helpful?

D: Yes very helpful because some of the words was quite difficult so

R: you had to use-

D: English or Afrikaans.

R: Which language do you feel more comfortable expressing yourself in?

D: Afrikaans.

R: Now, looking at this paper do you think it is helpful to have questions for subjects like Maths in Xhosa and Afrikaans.

D: I think that I'd rather take Afrikaans as a subject because uhm ay like my mom, when I was small my mother taught me to speak Afrikaans.



- R: So you grew up speaking Afrikaans. Was it only you who chose the Afrikaans paper, don't you know any others?
- D: yes there is other children also
- R: How many?
- D: I think it's about 3 or over 5.
- R: Over five. Does it matter if there are translations or not in the paper?
- D: I think there should be translations because some of the words in the script is like difficult, but some children do understand Afrikaans but they need English words also to understand it.
- R: Before did you write Maths paper in Afrikaans or in Xhosa, were you allowed to have an Afrikaans paper?
- D: I don't think so.
- R: Was it - This was the first time?
- D: Yes.
- R: How many languages do you know?
- D: I know three languages.
- R: What are they?
- D: English, Afrikaans and a little Xhosa
- I: Are you comfortable expressing yourself in more than one language?
- D: Yes
- R: Do you think the translations are a paraphrase or a direct translation of the question.. do they give you just the summary ? .. Here's the paper , here's the question in Afrikaans or let's try the translated one. Here's the question and then here is the translation. Do you think this translation is just a summary of this or does it translate this word by word?
- D: I think that this translated from Afrikaans to Xhosa but I think some children also they understand a little bit more Xhosa than Afrikaans.
- R: How did you use the translations?

D: I read through it well and I kept on doing what the question paper asked me to do.

R: did you use the translations and then answer in English?

D: Yes.

R: But this is a Afrikaans paper were you allowed to answer in English?

D: Yes, some of it but I can answer in Afrikaans or English whatever I want to.

R: Did you answer in both or one?

D: One.

R: English?

R: Even though it was an Afrikaans paper.

D: Yes

r: Do you remember strategies you recall using? Which way around did you decide to deal with the translations?

D: Yes.

R: I mean which way did you decide to deal with the translations?

D: I dealt with it like in Afrikaans like because I know that Afrikaans is a easy subject for me but other children they don't think Afrikaans is a nice subject they think it's difficult.

R: how many hours was the paper?

D: I think it was one hour. One and a half

R: one and a half. Weren't the translations- the fact that you had to read English and then also read Afrikaans, wasn't that time consuming?

D: No I don't think so.

R: You managed to finish on time?

D: Yes

R: Why did you decide to use the translations in the first place?

D: Because uhm the the I thought the Afrikaans was mixed up but then I like read through the English part then I think okay this is the same as

Afrikaans and I know it's right and I know exactly what to write down on the page.

R: Now if you could make any suggestions to the minister of education what would they about the languages which should be used in examination paper and which languages should be used for answering exam paper? Any suggestion?

D: No.

R: What language would you like them to use when they, for the examinations?

D: I think rather English.

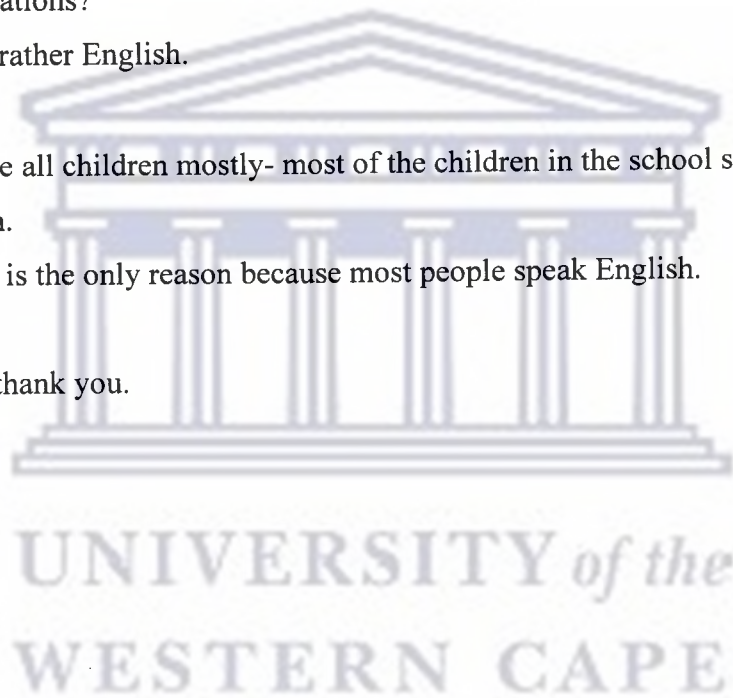
R: Why?

D: Because all children mostly- most of the children in the school speak English.

R: So that is the only reason because most people speak English.

D: Yes

R: Okay, thank you.



## Interview 2

- R: You all chose to write the English paper. Why is that? Why did you choose to write the English paper?
- Janine: It's an easier language than Afrikaans or Xhosa because most of us here speak English than Afrikaans or Xhosa and understanding it in English is better.
- Andiswa: It's because um... the English paper you'll understand more than the Afrikaans, the Afrikaans paper and the Xhosa paper because in Afrikaans they have some words that are difficult and in Xhosa there are some word they are difficult but in English you get to understand most of the words, that's all.
- R: How many languages do you speak?
- Andiswa: Two
- R: What are those?
- Andiswa: Xhosa and English.
- R: You guys how was it for you?
- Asanda: It was quite easy because um... it was English written there because and this school is an English school so most of the children understand English more than other languages.
- Vuyo: It was easy to pick English because most of my life I grew up in suburbs and ah my school, I never went to a black school or an Afrikaans school it's the first time in Afrikaans school, so that's why I chose English.
- R: But do you speak English – do you speak Xhosa at home or do you speak English?
- Vuyo: I speak both.
- R: You speak both but which one do you use more than the other
- Vuyo: English.

- R: English, okay. .. Which language do you feel more comfortable expressing yourself in?
- Janine: English
- R: Why is that?
- Janine: It's a fluent language and you don't get stuck with words you just say what you feel that comes out, unlike in Afrikaans you'll be saying something and then you don't know how to say one word that you are expressing yourself in.
- R: Did you go to an English medium school all your life?
- Janine: Yes.
- Andiswa: English it's because in English you get more communicated with the words but in Afrikaans you don't because some a lot of words in Afrikaans they are difficult and that's why I chose English.
- Asanda: English because you can express yourself in many ways in English I mean there are lots of words that you can use meaning the same thing in English and now so ah now you can express yourself better.
- R: But, okay let's go back to Xhosa and Afrikaans, aren't the words as well in Xhosa and Afrikaans?
- Asanda: Yes I can speak uh I mean Xhosa but I just can't read it out, it's hard to pronounce the words with the 'X' and all that.
- R: Do you speak Xhosa at home?
- Asanda: Yeah, I speak it.
- Vuyo: English.
- R: Why is that?
- Vuyo: Because I think that's the primary language in South Africa because most people can speak English more than anything.
- R: Now do you think it's helpful to have questions for subjects like Maths in Xhosa, Afrikaans and in English?

Janine: In English.

R: So you don't think it's helpful to have maths questions in Afrikaans and in Xhosa?

Janine: You can have it in that if some people want it but most of us want English papers.

R: Others?

?: Yes English.

Andiswa: You can have Xhosa words because sometimes in English you can't exactly get the words but like me I also speak Xhosa at home so when I look at some Xhosa words then I get to understand the words, the question.

R: And you?

Asanda: I prefer English because I understand it better and it's quite easy than the other languages.

R: Now it seems like all of you are anti Xhosa or anti Afrikaans why is that?

Asanda: That's because we understand much more better than our own languages.

R: But do you like your own languages?

Asanda: Yes I do like it but I've never been in a Xhosa school so I don't understand - well I can read it and speak it but I can only read a little of it and I know English more than Xhosa so that's why I prefer it.

R: Does it not matter to you whether there are translations or not?

Asanda: It does matter because there are other children who don't understand English and understand their own languages so it's, yeah it does matter.

R: What do you think?

Vuyo: I think it does matter because there are people who grew up with Afrikaans all their lives in Afrikaans schools like Mandela next to

my school my other cousin grew up there he needs Xhosa he can't understand English like me.

Andiswa: It does matter as I said in some English words there's ah, people can't understand English sometimes can't communicate with the words so they look into their own languages like Xhosa and Afrikaans they seem to find the real question.

Janine: For me it doesn't really matter but for others it does because I barely speak Afrikaans or Xhosa my prominent language at home and at school is English even though I'm Indian but I speak English most of the time.

R: Now tell me in your classes you were allowed to [...] - the paper had questions in Afrikaans Xhosa and English now in your classes is it the same thing does your teacher teach you in English, Afrikaans or Xhosa? What languages does she use?

Asanda: English mostly.

R: But does she translate to Afrikaans and Xhosa?

Asanda: Sometimes a little like Miss N sometimes mixes her words with English and Xhosa so that other children can understand better.

R: Okay, but mostly it's English?

Asanda: Ja.

R: Now do you think you can express yourself better in Xhosa, or English, Afrikaans or any other language?

Asanda: I can express my self in two languages Xhosa and English.

R: Now I was asking which language you feel comfortable expressing yourselves in.

Andiswa: Two languages English and Xhosa because I understand them better I can communicate in Xhosa because my parents speak it at home and I can communicate in English because I speak it here in school.

Janine: English.

R: You only speak English at home? No Afrikaans?

Janine: No.

Asanda: English and Xhosa

Mark: I can express my self in English, Xhosa and Afrikaans because I'm multilingual and I speak three languages fluently my home language is Afrikaans, it's my mother tongue I can communicate with people properly.

R: Did you use the translations in the paper, in the English paper?

Asanda: I didn't use them, I only used English.

R: You didn't use them; you ignored them you didn't even look at them.

Asanda: I just looked them but I didn't read them because I can't read Xhosa I can only speak it.

Andiswa: No I didn't.

R: You didn't use the translation.

Andiswa: I only used it in the Maths paper.

R: How did you use them? How did you find them?

Andiswa: I first look at the English one if I just can't understand the others then I went to Xhosa because some words I can read, I can read Xhosa words so I read the Xhosa words and I got the answers right.

R: But looking at the Xhosa translations were they helpful?

Andiswa: Yes.

R: And to you?

Vuyo: I didn't look at them.

R: You didn't look at them.

I understand you wrote the Afrikaans paper how were the translations there?



- Mark: It was fine maybe easier I could do it because since I understand it and everything was fine.
- R: And you?
- Shane: Me I only looked at English and Afrikaans because in Xhosa I struggle a little bit of reading there.
- R: Now did you find the translations useful? You wrote the Afrikaans paper. Did you find the English translations useful?
- Shane: Yes I did find it useful.
- R: Now are you- how's your performance in Maths?
- Janine: Mine is excellent.
- R: Yours is excellent, yours?
- L : Great.
- R: Great.
- Mark: My one was er... like she says she's excellent but my one was always there by her but it just went down and came up again last term about a while ago I started the first term ( ) I was always there at her level but when it came to now, June it was just lacking
- R: What caused that?
- Mark: It was just lack of concentration.
- R: It's not the language issue?
- Mark: No it's not the language, I just told my self I should just study and go on with the work, now I'm just going up and up I think I'm gonna get to her point.
- R: And you guys, how was your performance?
- Asanda: It was good at first but then it became more average because the work was getting more difficult.
- R: Not because of the language?
- Asanda: No, it has nothing to do with that.

- Vuyo: It was excellent at the beginning of the year and then it dropped a little bit before the exams and then it came up in the exams I got a good percentage in my report.
- Shane: Average
- L: It's average, it has always been like that?
- R: Okay, now don't you think that it has something to do with language, with the English language?
- L: No
- R: You don't think so. Okay. I have the papers here, this is the Afrikaans paper and this is the English paper now looking at the Afrikaans paper here are the questions here are the translations now looking at the translations don't you think they are just a summary of the question?
- Mark: Like for me, myself like when I look at the paper like that has English for instance Afrikaans translated to English I don't actually look at every translations because like I said I'm multilingual, if I see Afrikaans I'll understand Afrikaans but when it comes like to big words that I don't know I'll just move to the English one.
- R: So, did you do that in the exam?
- Mark: In the exam I didn't actually go to the translation, it was actually just easy because I went to the English because I had the – my exam paper for Maths was the English and Xhosa, that's why I just read the English I didn't go the Xhosa because mostly when it comes like to big words we mostly for instance English is known all over so when it comes to like the work you actually know the word in English most of the time.
- R: You wrote the Afrikaans paper right?
- Shane: English ma'am.
- R: Isn't there someone who wrote the Afrikaans paper?

Janine: You mean you wrote the English paper?

Mark: The English paper of the – the –

R and Ls: The Maths (Learners and researchers responding at the same time)

Mark: Afrikaans paper of what, exams?

(Inaudible)

R: Ok.

Janine: You wrote the English Maths paper, nhe?

Mark: Ja.

R: But looking at the English paper and the translations don't you think the translations are a summary; they do not translate the question word by word?

Janine: Yes.

R: They are a summary?

Janine: Excuse me Miss.

R: Aren't they a summary?

Janine: They are a summary Miss because they are not word for word in English then in Afrikaans they are not word for word for what they're saying in English like just a summary of what the point of the sum or [...] problems.

Mark: You get people who translate for instance at my church, they're like, my priest is English, ( ) when he speaks English, we are catholic, when he speaks English somebody translates but the words somebody is translating isn't actually the same as the priest's it's just that as long people understand what is being said. That is how I find it.

R: What do you think of the summaries, do you think they are helpful for others who are using the translations?

- Vuyo: Yes I think they help because they explain the question which they don't understand in English they can understand in another language.
- R: Now what do you remember, how did you use, how did you use the translations? Those who didn't answer me before.
- Asanda: Like, what do you mean how?
- R: How did you use them, did you use them or you just ignored them?
- Asanda: I ignored them, because I understand English better so I ignored the others.
- Vuyo: Ignored them.
- R: You also ignored them?
- Andiswa: Used some of it.
- Mark: Ignored.
- Janine: Most of the time, yes.
- R: Now, when you saw the translations on the Maths paper did you read the translations first or did you read the question?
- Janine: We are in English (laughter)
- R: When you saw the translations on the Maths paper just for – maybe let's say you were just curios?
- Ls: Yes, yes. (Learners responding all at once)
- R: Did you read them for curiosity?
- Janine: Just try to figure out the Xhosa words there but nothing came through.
- R: Nothing came through, okay. ... When your teacher uses the – is translating in your classed don't you find that time consuming?
- Janine: Maybe in Afrikaans, time is consuming because some people know Afrikaans and then he is explaining it in English for the Xhosa speaking people, it's sometimes time consuming but then you understand the work more same in Maths because we have a Xhosa

teacher in Maths and he – in Maths we do the whole thing in English but then if somebody doesn't understand it like the Xhosa speaking person he translates it to them and explains it more to them and they find it pretty easy and in our third language we ... like the non speaking Xhosa people Miss Jones will like explain it in Xhosa and she'll tell us to pronounce the words and explain it more, so then we'll get along and find out what she's talking about.

R: Don't you get bored when – you are all speaking English right? Now don't you get bored when she is translating, she's translating to Xhosa

Asanda: I get bored because she is repeating the same thing but in Xhosa because I understand the language so, it's kinda (kind of) boring.

R: Others, how was it?

Mark: For me, it's not boring for me it's like actually helping others because like for me, for instance I know Xhosa like Miss Jones also does that I know Xhosa and I know English, when she speaks Xhosa then I do understand and I do write the work down and everything you know, I don't have that thing of that I understand the work now I'm just going to sleep because it's boring me I just maybe someday it's just gonna extinguish and I'll have to remember it and then I listen to the teacher the whole time and try to help out.

R: Sometimes doesn't it feel like a language lesson more than a Maths lesson?

Janine: Ja (laughing).

R: Why is that? Tell me what happens in the class?

Janine: We've got certain words that we use in Maths like Pythagoras and triangulation and things, you translate it in Xhosa it's like you're learning the vocabulary again.

- R: Don't you pick up any words, like any Xhosa words or Afrikaans words through that?
- Mark: That you didn't understand. I do pick up words.
- R: You do pick up words.
- Mark: Sometimes.
- R: Sometimes?
- Mark: Sometimes, when I concentrate, like well, concentrating well when the teacher is speaking in Xhosa.
- R: So now you get interested in the language not the Maths that she is teaching?
- Janine: Ja.
- Asanda: No, we also concentrate in both.
- R: You also concentrate in both, okay. So you are saying you didn't use the translations. Why did you decide to write the English paper?
- Asanda: It's a common language and it's very easy to work with instead of Afrikaans, even though the words are pretty big you'll still figure out some way to understand the word, the meaning of the word.
- Andiswa: It's because in English you get uhm more easy words than in Xhosa and Afrikaans and you get – it feels like you normally speak English you get more communicated with the words like in Xhosa there are difficulties.
- Mark: Like um... you do understand everything you do your work properly I find no problem with it.
- R: Why did you decide to write the English paper?
- Vuyo: I decided to write the English paper because I thought it would be easier than the other languages, there are other words in Maths that I do not know in Xhosa and in Afrikaans but I know all the words that have been taught in the class in English.
- R: And you?

Mark: Mostly because English is more easier for me like and Xhosa and Afrikaans sometimes I struggle with Afrikaans but I like English is more easier mos.

R: Now tell me, you are going to write the exam now in December -

Janine: November.

R: Ja, in November, are they going to use the same system, are they going to have the translations as well?

Janine: We don't know this was the government one and we write the class one and we have a provincial.

R: Okay but would you like the translations in the paper?

Janine: To stay there?

Janine: Not actually.

Andiswa: Yes.

R: Why?

Andiswa: Sometimes there are difficult words in English that you can't understand like we- I speak Xhosa and I understand some words, and I would understand.

R: Would you like to be allowed to answer in your own languages in the exam, in Maths specifically?

?: No

Mark: I'd rather go with English because if I'm going to answer in Afrikaans for instance if you are going to answer in Xhosa there's gonna be coloureds that don't know Xhosa and there's gonna be Xhosa's that do not know Afrikaans. English is better because everybody knows English.

R: Okay, your teacher sometimes uses translations does she allow people to answer in their own languages?

Asanda: Yes like Miss N that lady that you were in class - there she mixes her languages for some children who do not understand English

quite well so she makes it easier for them, for us who know English well it's quite easy.

Janine: In Maths he'll say, "Say it in your language and then repeat it in English so the rest can understand."

R: Okay so you say it in your language and then?

Janine: Say it again in English so everybody can understand.

R: Now when you are in class what's the whole point of answering in your own language but translate it to English?

Janine : Maybe they feel more comfortable answering in their language understand what they're saying in their language and in English they'll maybe stutter and say what the answer is maybe like the word is too big in English they can say in a different way in Xhosa for them to understand.

R: If you could make any suggestions to the Minister of Education about the languages which should be used in examination papers and which should be used for answering exams?

Mark: I think like for exam papers we should have like all three languages like for instance mostly like in this school its mostly Afrikaans, English and Xhosa all three languages so I think we should use multilingual in our papers because we have some Sotho children but they do it in English and Xhosa, there's like few Sotho children, Sotho and Zulu a few of them, four, two of them but they do it in Xhosa and English.

R: Can they understand Xhosa?

Mark: Xhosa they do understand ( ) like they speak Xhosa with him and they try to communicate=

R =But maybe they can't write Xhosa, don't you think it would be unfair to them if – okay here in the Western Cape we're using Xhosa, English and Afrikaans we don't use Sotho or Tshwane don't



you think it would be unfair to them if our papers would in all the three languages and not in their own language?

Mark: Then that will have to- we can make a plan about that later to find out how many children speak Sotho and other children that speak like languages besides Afrikaans, English and Xhosa and organise for them papers that have their translation on.

R: And others I understand you have foreign students as well, international students.

Mark: yes, DRC.

R: What do you think in their case? What should be done?

Mark: I see they work properly in English in all their work, their subjects they're mostly in English, they speak English, everything they always speak their language when they're communicating to each other and sometimes they speak English also when they are communicating to each other.

Janine: Even though I'm not foreign but I do sp- I can speak a little bit of Hindi it would be a bit funny if they had paper written in that language even though it's not, it is a little bit of a foreign language but it's same as writing Sotho or Xhosa or anything else.

R: What do you think?

Asanda: I think English is much easier for them. English is a fluent language quite easy than the other languages so I think for the foreigners English would be easier because I don't think there's a foreigner who can speak Xhosa as well as English.

R: Now I'm asking about the Tswana and Sotho's, what do you think in their case, where we will have a paper in all three languages but not in their language?

Asanda: I can't put myself in that position because I'm not Tshwane I'm just Xhosa

- R: No I'm just asking, won't that be unfair to them?
- Asanda: It would be, to me if there wasn't like in those three languages there wasn't Xhosa then I would be quite angry but just a little bit because I understand English more.
- R: Don't you have anything else to add about the Maths classes in English or Afrikaans or Xhosa?
- Andiswa: No.
- R: Nothing. Ok.



### Interview 3

- R: You guys chose to write the XE, Maths paper, why did you make that choice?
- Yonela: Er... we didn't make that choice but the principal chose for us that to, he asked us that...
- Nande: If you want to write =
- Busi: = the XE paper in Xhosa and English or in English and English and then we made that choice because we understand Xhosa, you see? And we understand Xhosa and English and ... more than Afrikaans and English and then when we're writing Xhosa and English we're going to be better and we're going to understand more than English and English because there are words that we won't understand.
- R: Okay, ... Why did you make the choice to write the XE paper?
- Nande: It's the same like her.
- R: Do you think all learners should write the same language paper in Secondary schools in the Western Cape? =
- Nande: = No.
- R: For an example would it be best for all learners to write the same language paper in English in the Western Cape or South Africa?
- Yonela: I think only the- the people that understand the language and then they have to write the paper in the language that they understand.
- R: So, everyone mustn't write the same paper, that's what you're saying?
- Busi: Because there are people, even the blacks nhe, but they understand only English, they only read... they can't read Xhosa but they only read English so that's why I'm saying everyone have to choose and everyone has the choice to choose what they want.
- Buntu: Ja, she's right.
- R: Why is she right?

- Buntu: Yhoo,
- R: Why do you think she's right that everyone should write in the language they understand best?
- Nande: Because they understand better what they're reading that they can get the answers.
- R: You're all in the XEE class right, for HSS? If you could change now which one would you choose? Let's say we have the XE class and the EE class. Let's say now they want you to choose. Would you remain with the XE or would you choose EE?
- Busi: I think I would remain with the XE.
- R: Why?
- Buntu: Because there at EE I couldn't, *e ndiqine ulwimi. (hey, my tongue is tied)*
- R: *Thetha nge siXhosa. (Speak Xhosa)*
- Buntu: Okay, *ngoba like andinofuna nam ukuyitshintsha* because like iright *iXE* because *uyayiva na xa kufundiswa uyayiva nge- ngesiXhosa nange English amanye amagama ongawaziyo. (I also would not want to change because in XE you can understand when they are teaching, you can understand Xhosa and other words you do not understand in English)*
- Yonela: Kwi XE nhe uyakwazi ukuthi ... okay, kwiXE you can ask your teacher nhe to explain the word for you that you don't understand in English and can replace it in Xhosa and then now you can understand everything, I think XE is the better learning area.
- R: Now, do you think that when your teacher uses Xhosa to explain parts of the lesson, does this help you?
- Yonela: Yes, the most because we, that is the time that we understand everything.
- R: Do you feel comfortable with this =

- Yonela: =I do.
- R: When the teacher switches between Xhosa and English?
- Yonela: I do because it's the time that I feel the most happiest because I know the word it's going to be explained in Xhosa and then I can understand it.
- R: Others... Which languages do you prefer to use with your friends at school?
- Yonela: English.
- R: Why is that?
- Yonela: Because like I was in an English school so sometimes I don't understand Xhosa right, so sometimes I prefer to speak English sometimes.
- R: But yet you chose the XE class, why is that, the HSS, XE class.
- Yonela: We didn't choose they told us in the first, first day of the year. They told us to write a test and we wrote the test and we didn't know that they're gonna divide us into two groups.
- R: Which language did they use for the test?
- Yonela: English. So they divides us into two groups, they made EE class and XE class and then we didn't choose to go to XE but the principal and teacher, the educators chose to take us to XE class.
- R: But if it was up to you to choose which one would you have chosen?
- Busi: English. It's English because like I understand English more better than isiXhosa.
- R: Is it the same for all of you?
- L: Yes.
- Buntu: I would choose XE, I prefer XE.
- R: Why?

- Nande: Because Xhosa is the best, it's the best because that I understand and it's the language that I came from at home.
- R: What language do you use with your friends?
- Nande: SisiXhosa.
- R: Don't you have other friends that speak languages other than Xhosa?
- Nande: I do but I speak English with them.
- R: They are Afrikaans speakers?
- Nande: No I speak English with them I can't even read Afrikaans.
- R: Now if you are in a class you know that the teacher can only understand English, do you use Xhosa or Afrikaans when the teacher is close by... or let's say when you're back chat because most of you do that when the teacher is talking, you back chat. Which language do you use; do you sometimes use Xhosa because she or he can't here?
- Nande: For the honesty I don't back chat the teachers nhe, but when I'm doing that I think I'm gonna, I prefer to use Xhosa.
- R: Why?
- Nande: Because he, I know she or he won't understand what I'm talking about.
- R: Why is it that you do not want her to understand?
- Yonela: Because sometimes when the teachers are speaking another language you can't hear like... Mr M and ... =
- L: = he speaks Portuguese now, sometimes you don't know what he's saying =
- L: = When he's cross?
- R: So that's why you're doing the same thing to him?
- Nande: Sometimes that is wrong because we don't hear what he's saying.

Ls: Like Mr A\*\* sometimes he speaks Afrikaans so we don't know what he's saying.

Yonela: And that's why we speak in Xhosa when ...

R: Because the teacher is doing so?

Buntu: He swears at us or ...

R: There is no other reason for that?

Yonela: Like when the teacher is cross sometimes when the teacher is cross so the teacher speaks another language that we don't understand.

R: No, I'm asking that do you do the same thing because they do it?

L: Ja.

R: There isn't any other reason for ...?

L: Mhm.

R: Would you prefer that all your teachers can understand and speak the languages which you feel most comfortable using?

Yonela: I think they must use the language that we all understand and that is going to make us feel comfortable not uncomfortable because when the teacher is speaking Afrikaa- [tape ends]

R: Would you prefer that all your teachers can understand and speak the same languages which you feel most comfortable using?

Yonela: Yes I think that because we're all going to understand and we're going to answer in the same language that everyone will understand.

Buntu: Ja, she's right.

R: Do you feel comfortable expressing yourself in Xhosa, English, Afrikaans or any other language?

Busi: I do feel comfortable.

R: When you are using which language?

Busi: When I'm using Xhosa and English.

R: Why?

- Busi: Because I know when I'm using Xhosa to the Xhosa people they will understand, when I'm using English to the English people they will understand.
- R: Do you think it is helpful to have questions for subjects like Mathematics in Xhosa, Afrikaans and English?
- Yonela: Can you repeat the question?
- R: Do you think it is helpful to have questions for subjects like Mathematics in Xhosa, Afrikaans and English
- Busi: I think in English because everyone will understand when you are doing Maths in English
- Buntu: And Xhosa not Afrikaans for blacks.
- R: Do you think that it is useful to check the translations so that you can be sure you have understood the question correctly?
- Yonela: Yes, I think so because everyone when you – you the teacher is correcting everyone, everyone would be – I think the translation would be clear.
- R: Did you use the translations? ... Did you use them when you were writing the XE paper?
- Ls: Yes.
- R: Do you think you can express yourself better in Xhosa, English or Afrikaans or any other language?
- Busi: I think – I think you can express yourself in English because like when like is a black and a white so both of you's -
- Buntu: Both of you can understand what he is saying.
- R: Are you comfortable expressing yourself in more than one language?
- Yonela: Yes, because every one will understand the only language that we're speaking and everyone will understand only English.



R: Now, looking back at the paper, the translations, do you think those translations were just a summary or were they translated word by word?

Yonela: Yes, it was just a summary it wasn't explaining word by word because there was a side of Xhosa and there was a side of English and then in English they took the words that are tough and then they translated in Xhosa.

R: Now did this help?

Yonela: Yes it did ...to us it did help.

Ls: Yes to us

R: How did you use the translations when you were writing the paper?

Yonela: Because we didn't – sometimes we didn't understand the big words in English so we turn back to Xhosa sides and then we see and then –

R: But did the translations helped?

Yonela: Yes, the translations helped.

R: Did you read the translations and then answer in English or in Xhosa?

Yonela: We... er ... all the papers was answered in English, all the questions

R: Even though they had the translations?

Busi: The Xhosa, ya but in Xhosa side there was ... um... the question you must answer in Xhosa because there was the comprehension of the Xhosa in English paper not in Maths paper, in English there was a comprehension so we had to answer that comprehension in Xhosa because that comprehension was made for Xhosa's.

R: But in the Maths paper you weren't allowed to answer in Xhosa.

Busi: M, Mm, you were allowed to answer in English.

R: Are you fine with answering in English?

- Yonela: Yes we are fine because now it's much more to understand and =
- L: = and teachers they understand what we write=
- L: = to write clear the words, you see?
- R: Now when you saw the translations in the Maths paper did you read the translation first or did you read the question in English... first and then look at the translation s? How did you do it?
- Buntu: We read the English first and you look at the translation ... for the word that we can't understand.
- R: Do you remember which strategies do you recall using when you're writing the paper?
- Buntu: Like how?
- R: Did you read the English and then after read the Xhosa or you read the Xhosa?
- Yonela: I first read the English and then I go to Xhosa and then I went to questions and then I answered.
- R: Okay, lastly did you read the Xhosa questions to understand better or did you read them for curiosity? You were just curious?
- Nande: For me, curiosity.
- R: Why?
- Nande: Because...
- R: Was it strange to you because I believe this was the first time you wrote XE paper right? Was it strange?
- Yonela: It wasn't strange because I was happy I will – it was my first time seeing the – in the English school writing Xhosa in English from the school I went in Koeberg primary we only – we didn't have the Xhosa um... we didn't have the Xhosa teacher or the Xhosa lessons we only have the English and Afrikaans, see, now I was happy learning um... my language in English schools.

- R: Now if you could make any suggestions to the minister of Education about the languages which should be used in exam papers and which languages should be used for answering the exam papers? What would you say? If you have any suggestions?
- Yonela: I think they must repeat the XE because the XE and EE makes the people understand more and more much better.
- L: And it helps you.
- I: Is it the same for everyone, do you think it helps?
- Ls: I think it helps.



#### Interview 4.

R: Which language version of the paper did you choose to write, did you write the XE or the EE?

Aya: The XE class.

R: Why? Why did you make that decision?

Aya: Because I don't understand English clear nhe I understand Xhosa.

R: Is that true, is it the same for everyone?

Ntosh: *Amanyé amagama asiwaunderstandi* (some words we do not understand) that's why nditshuze isiXhosa (I chose Xhosa).

R: What other words, other words in English? Why did you make the choice to write the XE paper?

Xola: I think it makes it easier for me to understand kune like when they mix it with my language to make the page like easy.

R: Was it easier for all of you?

Ls: EWE.

Lolo: Ja it was.

R: Do you think that all learners should write the same language paper in secondary schools in the Western Cape?

L: I think so.

R: Or, even South Africa. Why do you think that?

Aya: So that learners could understand what is going on, you see? Yhaa I think so.

R: Do you think when they are using English, you, learners do not understand?

Aya: No we do understand but the problem is we're not perfectly like understand English but when we mix it with our language it would be easier to learn English faster.

R: You are in?

Aya: Grade 8

R: The XE class for HSS?

Aya: Ja.

R: All of you?

L: Yes.

R: Now if you were allowed to change the class, would you take the EE class or would some of you remain in the XE class?

Xola: I would remain.

Aya: I would take the EE class.

R: Why would you take the EE class?

Aya: Because at first I didn't know the XE and the EE what was going on so I thought I must go with the XE.

R: Where you allowed to choose or were you just allocated to the class?

Aya: We were not allowed to choose we were just given the class.

R: What would you choose?

Ntosh: XE

R: Why XE?

Xola: Because I want to learn Xhosa language because uhm sometimes I can't understand Xhosa other names.

R: You've never learnt Xhosa before?

Xola: I did but...

R: Where?

Xola: In –

R: Did you go to a Xhosa school before you came here?

Xola: Ya.

R: Okay, ... if you'd change which one would you choose XE or EE?

Lolo: I would remain to XE.

R: Why?

Lolo: What would I say uh there at XE I- I'm a fast learner if they are doing Xhosa because Miss NKosi is explaining in Xhosa so I –

R: Don't you guys have a problem with the English readings or - ?

Xola: No. We don't.

I: But you are in a XE class.

Xola: That's why I'm saying like they didn't give a choice to choose XE and EE because if they did I would choose EE because I think I know Xhosa better because I did like attend the Xhosa school.

R: Would it be the same for all of you?... What do you think? Hey? ... uhm Do you think that when your teacher uses Xhosa to explain parts of the lesson that helps you. Does it help?

Xola: Yes it does. You must use Xhosa and English nhe, because there are big words in English that you can't understand so the teacher can explain in Xhosa.

R: Now is it the same for Maths as well when they translate to Xhosa?

Xola: Yes, ja, Mr B\*\* do that in Xhosa.

R: Do you feel comfortable with this?

R: What? With the translations between Xhosa and English.

Xola: Yes , ja.

R: Why?

Aya: It's for the slower learners

R: What? !

Aya: Slower learners like who can't learn quicker they must learn in Xhosa and fast learners must go to EE.

R: Mh, okay, Why do you think that, why do you think slower learners should remain in XE?

Aya: No it's not like that like slower learners must remain in XE but I think it will make it easier for them to learn English when it's translated to Xhosa.

R: Which language do you prefer to use with your friends at school?

- Ls: Xhos-
- L: Xhosa and English, yhaa
- R: Why Xhosa and English?
- Aya: I think everyone here in South Africa is like, they do understand English and talk English. Yhaa . Most of the learners are Xhosa's.
- Ntosh: English
- R: Why?
- Ntosh: Because I want to learn English so that they can tell me I'm right there or I am wrong.
- Lolo: SisiXhosa.
- R: Why?
- Lolo: E -- e primary, yhoo!
- R: *Ewe ungathetha ngesiXhosa.* (yes you can speak Xhosa)
- Lolo: *Eprimary zasingayifundi kanintsi isiXhosa, so ndiyafun'usazi isiXhosa amany 'amagama andiwazi ngesiXhosa.* (In primary we were not often taught Xhosa, so I would like to know isiXhosa, some words I do not know in Xhosa)
- R: Did you go to an English school from Grade 1?
- Lolo: Ewe.
- R: If you know that a teacher can only understand English do you use Xhosa or Afrikaans when that teacher is close by?
- Xola: We use English.
- R: Why.
- Ntosh: I think like most of the teachers and the learners do understand English.
- R: Is it the same for all of you?
- L: Yes.
- R: Let's say the teacher is talking and you are back-chatting, which language do you use?
- Ls: Xhosa

R: Why do you use Xhosa?

Ls: Because she doesn't understand.

R: Is that the only reason, is it because the teacher can't understand?

Ntosh: And you don't want to make the teacher angry if you're speaking English she'll be angry.

R: But don't you make the teacher angry when you using ... yhaa

L: (inaudible) it does

R: You do, what do you do in that case then?

Lolo: I usually speak English

Ntosh: I do not backchat but when I'm like talking to the teacher I use English because yhoo you talk Xhosa-

R: Would you prefer that all your teachers can understand and speak the same languages that you feel most comfortable in

L: Yes we think so

R: Why?

Lolo: Because like it would be easier for everything if you don't like speaking English the teacher do understand he or she can speak Xhosa

R: Which language do you feel most comfortable ion expressing yourself in ?

Xola: English.

R: Why is it English?

Xola: Yhoo English I think English yhoo is the like everyone in South Africa most of the people do understand English so English

Lolo: English I think English is the important language that you have to speak so if you go to another country maybe nhe they speak another language nhe maybe they can understand English so you have to speak English

R: But are you comfortable with using English?

Lolo: Yes.

R: And Xhosa?

Lolo: Yes but not more than English



R: Why

Lolo: I know Xhosa nhe but I want to know English, it's very important to me

R: Do you think that it is useful to be able to check the translations so that you can be sure that you have understood the question correctly in the exam paper?

Lolo: Yes

R: Did you all check the translations

L: Ja.

R: Was it useful?

Aya: It is

R: Why do you say that?

Aya: It is useful because it helps most of the people who are writing the exam

R: Does it matter whether there are translations or not?

Aya: It does matter because some students maybe there's uh bombastic word , a big word that you can't understand you translate it in Xhosa

R: So you think it's better that way.

Aya : Yes

R: Are you all comfortable expressing yourselves in more than one language?

Ls: Ja, ja.

R: You all speak English and Xhosa

Ls: Yes

R: No Afrikaans?

Ls: No

L: Yes

R: Now when you, let's look back at the paper when you were writing do you think the translations were just a summary or where they translated word by word.

Ls: Word by word.

R: Why are you saying that?

Xola: Cause like it was easy there are some words I didn't know in English but in Xhosa

R: So you're saying they were not a summary

Xola: They were not a summary, word by word

R: Do you all agree?

Ls: Yes

R: Were they helpful, the translations?

Ls: Ja.

R: How did you use the translations? Did you read the English first or did you read the Xhosa and - ?

Xola: I read the Xhosa then go to the English.

Aya: I read the English first.

R: Why did you do that?

Aya: So that you can understand the word, what does it mean?

Ntosh: Read the translations

R: Did you use the translations or did you just look at them, read them?

Ntosh: We did use it

R: Do you remember which strategies you recall using when you were writing?

Ls: No.

R: You can't remember now, why did you decide to use the translations like you did?

Aya: The trans- the translation make it easier,

Ntosh: Make it simple

Aya: Simple and easy for you to understand the words so it wouldn't be hard

R: Now for every question, for every question that was in the paper – I think half of the paper was translated and the other half was not, now for every question that was translated did you use the translation? Or, you used the translation when you didn't understand?

Aya: I used it from the start to the half of the page

Xola: ( ) I was just looking at the front if at the back if I saw the name that I don't understand I was looking at the front to see if there is a name like that.

R: If you could make any suggestions to the Minister of Education about the languages which should be used in examination papers and the languages used for answering exams what would you say? Any suggestions about the languages for the exams?

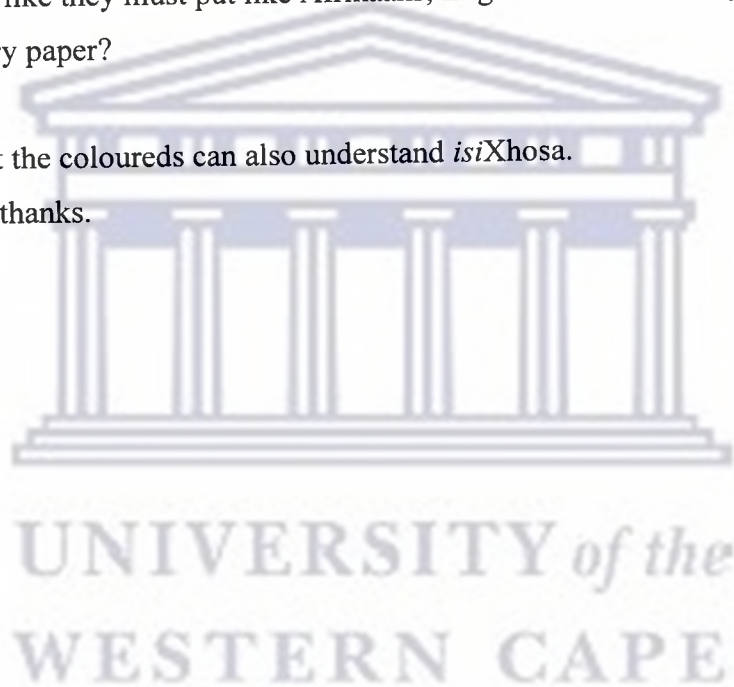
Aya: I think like they must put like Afrikaans, English and Xhosa, say together.

R: In every paper?

Aya: Yes

Xola: So that the coloureds can also understand *isiXhosa*.

R: Okay, thanks.



### 3. Learner interviews (Grade 12)

#### Interview 1.

#### Grade 12 Mathematics class with more than 15 learners.

R – Researcher

L – Learners

T – Teacher/ Principal

- R: How useful were the translations during the maths lessons that you had?
- L1: Speaking from an English point of view it was irrelevant because I don't take note of the Afrikaans or Xhosa because I won't understand as clear as I did in the English.
- R: So you never did Afrikaans at school?
- L1: No, I do, do Afrikaans at school but I feel comfortable with my first language because it's what I understand better.
- R: So you've always went to an English medium school? =
- L1: = so I've always went to the English medium school.
- R: Others? Xhosa speakers did you find it useful?
- L1: No <laughter>
- R: To all of you it made no difference? Hey? Do you remember if your opinion changed during the year? Were you against using the translations to start with and possibly more accepting of this later in the year?
- L1: I was against it really because it makes the question paper longer and you get kind of confused (inaudible) it actually takes you a lot of time that's why some of us
- R: Okay, in the classes, in your lessons how were the translations used? You didn't have ..., I mean last year in grade 11, you didn't have any translations.
- L2: Yes we did, they were in Afrikaans and in Xhosa.

- R: Was it..., did he explain a few concepts in the other languages or was it the other languages through out?
- L2: Yes.
- R: You are saying it was time consuming, you didn't like it at all... Now, during the lessons... we usually have problems with the translations, we say there are not enough words in our languages in Xhosa or Afrikaans to make up for the meanings in the English. So, did you develop the translated terms or concepts for Maths? Didn't you have anything to add to the translations given by Mr Damsel?
- L1: There were some times in class where the Xhosa speaking people, they add like, sometimes when Mr Damsel didn't know, they would help Mr Damsel (inaudible) specific words.
- R: And Afrikaans?
- L1: No.
- R: No? As you approach the exams, you are going to write exams right? Now in October, so would you like to have any translations in any of your subjects=
- Ls: NO.
- L3: Yes
- R: As a back up? Why do you say yes?
- L3: In the Afrikaans paper maybe, in English because sometimes you don't understand it properly. Nhe?
- L4: Ja.
- R: You don't understand properly in English?
- L5: That's a language.
- L6: No, no, no, I mean in Afrikaans, no, why can't they do that? They can ... but you can like, in the Afrikaans paper they can put English translations there =
- L6: = they can, yes=

- L3: = they can do it.
- R: Do you have an Afrikaans paper for Maths?
- L3: No we are talking about other subjects.
- L6: We are talking about Afrikaans.
- R: Other subjects ok. So you don't want any translations?
- L3: (inaudible) only in the Afrikaans paper
- R: They won't be useful?
- L1: ( ) irrelevant because we don't understand Afrikaans thoroughly. It was a waste of time; it was really a waste of time.
- L7: We didn't get a chance, we didn't.
- R: Sometimes didn't it feel like it was a language lesson instead of a Maths lesson?
- L7: Yes, most of the times. When we did it with the language then its most of the time just translation not Maths.
- R: So it was boring for you?
- L1: Sometimes.
- R: Now do you have any recommendations which you would like to make to the Department of Education in regard with the language of learning and teaching and examination?
- L7: Stop changing the syllabus. Yes, that's one way because it's really making us confused.
- R: So you want only English nothing else?
- L8: I think English will be the best language because everybody will understand.
- R: Others, what do you think?
- L9: I think, when there's like Afrik- like Xhosa or something, is like the first subject at that specific school they can have translations for that school.
- L1: We do not need it.
- R: so you feel like you do not need it at all?

- L9: Yes.
- R: It's a English medium school so there is no point in using other languages?
- L10: There is a point <laughter>
- R: Why do you say that?
- L10: You see as an African ... some...other words you understand them better when they are in your own language=
- L: Ja.
- R = But-
- L10: =even if most of the words you learned in English but at the end of the day you have to go back and see *uyabona* (**you see**) if there are any differences.
- R: But let's go back to Maths, let's say, I see you have 'algebra', 'trigonometry' how are you going to translate that? How did they do that last year? They used the English words. Algebra.
- L10: BayaXhosalizer.
- R: but you must --- How? Why are saying that? How did they, how do they Xhosalize it a bit?
- L: Xhosalizer.
- L: *i*Algebra.
- I: Oh, so they just include that *i*.
- L1: For me it didn't matter because I speak ( ) for English.
- R: He spoke only; he speaks only English so to him it didn't matter.
- L1: It didn't matter at all
- L: You should ask all the children at school which languages they speak?
- L: Ja!
- L1: You must go to a Xhosa School, like in Mowbray. Xhosa is their first language, won't it be better to give them Xhosa question papers so that they know they understand.
- L2: Make English a second language and Afrikaans a third language.
- R: Oh so you came to this - =

- L11: = Can't they start this thing immediately when you are in grade 1  
<laughter> because we just started this in grade 11 so =
- R: = It wasn't helpful much?
- L1: = We've been taught in English the whole year.
- R: You've always went to an English medium school?
- L8: The problem is they change the syllabus too much.
- L2: By the time we notice the syllabus has changed.
- L: We were guinea pigs.
- L: And they chase the syllabus.
- L: They experiment on us.
- I: How did they change it?
- L: They CHASE it.
- I: How?
- L11: This week we are doing algebra, next week while you're still following this, next week they are doing the other thing. We don't follow anything at the end of the day. <laughter>
- R: And also there's the language issue you have to follow the content of the subject and then you have to understand the language as well. I understand. You were saying you come here because it's a English medium school, so it's not helping because you only want to learn English when you are here?
- L: No.
- L12: We have Xhosa in the Xhosa class.
- R: No, he was saying something about Xhosa schools in Mowbray they are the one's who need the translation not you.
- L: Some of us need it.
- L1: I said uhm, I didn't say they need it, I said if you gonna have a question paper In Xhosa why don't you give it to the Xhosa school that has Xhosa as the first language because I think that it would work better for them



seeing that, that is their first language whereas most of us here are English speaking paper would do good.

L13: the thing is nhe, I get what Dirvan is trying to say about the school in Mowbray and whatever but then you must think again what if I'm a student from Eastern Cape you see and I wanna come, my parents come to Cape Town and I wanna come to an English medium school, I- I -I understand English but I can't read it and I mean then the Xhosa can help. So I mean you must also think about the – the

L1: but also ----- on which school you should go to preferably one that speaks your own language.

L13: What are you trying to say?

L1: No I'm just saying

L10: Don't fight now guys, don't fight.

L13: No it's not fighting, I'm not saying he's wrong but I'm just asking what he's trying to say, you know because I get a better picture.

R: okay let me ask something. Now you have English, your Maths class is in English right? Are you struggling with Maths?

L: No.

L: Yes.

R: is it because it's in English maybe they tried to offer the translation, they offered to help you, if you had Maths in your own languages maybe it would help? <inaudible noise>

L14: *Mna* I think that, okay *i*Maths is a subject of, we do a lot of calculations but if we were to get something like *i*Bio in that language with *ii*words which are quite difficult, *uyabona*. People who do Afrikaans they are in more advantage *kwi*Bio there are words that, I mead I usually ask Miss Ladi what do you mean by this and she explains but in the exams I don't get that, so if there was something like that in Xhosa maybe in Bio it would much easier.

- R: So you are all saying that in Maths it's not working out (inaudible) for all you?
- L: it's not a language. <inaudible murmurs / whispering>
- T: I think with Maths the teacher speaks as simply as possible, people, I hardly ever hear people complaining about my Maths class and I think the reason is I try to speak simply in English and if it is in simple English and people understand English they normally understand the explanation. I can't speak Xhosa anyway so I mean the only thing the non Xhosa teacher can do is get the translation and a few terms and that's what can help maybe Mr Buso can help me make the test and speak to them in Xhosa and explain the sum to them but as an English speaker all I can do is give them a few translations.
- L: That could help.
- I: you are saying that could help?
- L: Ya.
- I: And also you had few concepts in their languages Xhosa and Afrikaans.
- T: For half the things I mean I have sent them away and Zola and PRAESA send back something but some of them they couldn't translate.
- I: Thank you very much you were helpful.

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## Interview 2.

### Afrikaans Goup

R: Why

Jade: It takes up time especially if you're doing an exams and you're nervous you have to read all the stuff it confuses you and it complicates the paper even more because you don't understand it makes, okay you understand the work but you adapt complicated to you it makes it more difficult for you.

R: Now you're saying it makes it more difficult for you in the exam have the English right and there are the translations now do you go to the translation because you want them to make it simpler for you or .... Why do you use them in the first place?

Jade: Are you talking just about Maths?

R: Ja.

Jade: Okay, translations for Maths they are no, no because we do Maths in English and we understand it in English so I don't, for me personally I don't think that the translations is of any use to me.

R: They are not helping at all?

Jade: Mh, mm, no.

R: So in your exam you just ignore the ... in the Maths exam

Jade: In the Maths exam, ja.

R: Now at first when they introduced this translation thing how was it for you how did you feel?

Jade: It was okay I thought that we would understand better because I understand English and Afrikaans but then I just found out that it's not of any use.

R: You are a second language speaker of Afrikaans.

Jade: Yes.

- R: How would you have preferred the translations to be used? Maybe that has something to do with how you cope.
- Jade: How would-
- R: You heard Mr Damsel was explaining just now he said that the translations, he used them to explain a few concepts he didn't do everything in Afrikaans or Xhosa, so he just explained a few concepts.
- Jade: Ja, it didn't actually make sense because it was something new because primary school was an English school and high school so for me it was new to have the translations in Maths because Maths words are hard so it didn't actually matter to me.
- R: Okay, so you are saying the translation thing all of it is just bad its not a good thing?
- Jade: To me.
- R: So they were not useful at all?
- Jade: No.
- R: Do you recall when you had those lessons, did you have any arguments about the terms that were used, the Afrikaans terms?
- Jade: I didn't actually bother to argue about the terms because I didn't know, I didn't know the translations so I, I didn't want to, I didn't argue it was the first time hearing about it and whatever so I didn't actually argue about it.
- R: And the others, did they argue?
- Jade: Some of them argued, especially maybe like the Xhosa students like they put the 'I', *isi* stuff like that so in Afrikaans we didn't actually worry.
- R: okay ... so you didn't pay any attention to the translations because I wanted to ask you now about the translations if they were adequate, you though they were adequate or –

- Jade: Listening to it and listening to the translations it is because it sounds more or less the same but it's just better in Afrikaans and English
- R: Now you had the Xhosa speakers right they were saying when I was asking them about Algebra they said that in their translations they just added *i* - in front of the word algebra how was it with Afrikaans? Did they change the whole word or was it the same?
- Jade: It's the same but the sound is different. Like um...
- R: is it written differently or ...?
- Jade: Not completely differently, I think she remembers still. L\*\* how do you say algebra in Afrikaans? (calling on another learner)
- L\*\*: Algebra
- Jade: Algebra
- R: Oh so its not that far from the English word? Now in your exams, you are going to write exams now, would you like to have translations in any of your exams?
- Jade: Yes in Afrikaans to English
- R: Why is that?
- Jade: Because Afrikaans is my second language and some terms and stuff that we- that I don't understand so it makes it - , because we are not gonna be helped so I think the translation would be relevant to me as a second language Afrikaans
- R: But that's strange don't you think? I mean translating Afrikaans, I mean it's an Afrikaans paper and now you want it to be translated to English
- Jade: <laughter> it would be easier.
- R: It would be easier

- Jade: Yes but not in Maths cause you panic when you have to write maths and it's just gonna make you more nervous cause you don't understand, it complicates it.
- R: Were you allowed to answer back in your own languages in the lessons because the teacher is using the translations so=
- Jade: = yes you can but not many of us did it because we didn't understand our own
- R: = your own language =
- Jade: = the second language terms and stuff.
- R: Do you have any recommendations that you would like to make to the Department of Education...
- Jade: Only for Maths?
- R: Regarding the language of learning and teaching not only Maths but other subjects as well.
- Jade: It's a good thing that they have the translations and staff but sometimes I think they should like you are asking us now, hopefully it's gonna be taken into consideration so uhm in languages I think they are a good thing but if you are a Xhosa or Afrikaans speaking and its your first language then it should be taught to you in your language, like us English speaking first language so it's relevant
- R: But at home they speak Afrikaans right?
- Jade: Ja, we speak Afrikaans.
- R: But don't you think if –
- Jade: Because I was, I went to an English school from primary level so I understand English better than I understand Afrikaans
- R: Do you speak Afrikaans at home
- Jade: Yes I speak Afrikaans at home but it's not my learning language.
- R: So you don't have anything to add for the Dept of Education

Jade: Yes  
R: So it's fine the way it is, the language in your exam should remain English?  
Jade: Ja, it should remain English but maybe in Afrikaans just ...  
R: In only Afrikaans, where you want translations?  
Jade: That's what I want.  
R: Okay, thanks



### Interview 3.

#### Xhosa group

- R: How useful were the translations during the Maths lessons?
- Zuzeka: No, they were not useful at all. They were not helping because they wouldn't make you understand what you were given in Maths because Maths is all about calculations like the other kid said ,its all about calculation, I mean the translation won't help it doesn't help at all and how do you recognise it's in Afrikaans no are you asking like in the exam paper ?
- R: In the lessons
- Zuzek: Only last year this year we don't have any translations at all
- R: You don't have anything to add?
- Qaqamba: I didn't find anything much easy because if you don't know the equation *kakade (usually)* it's taught in English so if you don't understand it even if there is a translation that translation actually makes it even more complicated
- Zuzeka: Because you'll find it when you translate it like uh... what you call it... like triangles everything when you translate them in Xhosa they're like a sentence, a sentence or something they are not even one – you just - they confuse you more.
- R: Now, maybe at the beginning of the lessons, when you were given translations at first you didn't like it, but did your opinion change during the year? Did you find it – did you like it?
- Qaqamba: No, no it was still the same.
- R: Why?



- Qaqamba: Translations they do not make anything better man, they're just a waste of time, really they are, they are just a waste of time.
- Qaqamba: The thing is we didn't start with the translations from grade 8  
Zuzeka so we weren't really used to them so it didn't add any difference to it.
- R: How did Mr Damsel use the translations exactly? Did he use them to explain certain concepts or was it English- was it Xhosa or Afrikaans throughout? How did he use it?
- Zuzeka: Using the translations like I said in the triangles he use them to explain the triangles what they mean in Xhosa and Afrikaans ... and what else? ... That was last year grade 11 right? What else ... uhm ja the quadratic equation all those words the mathematical words he only explained those words.
- R: Now, would you have preferred the translations to be used differently?
- Zuzeka: What d' you mean?
- R: Was there some other way that he would've used ?
- Zuzeka: Not that it would've made any difference any way
- Z&Q: Except we would've preferred no translations at all.
- R: Do you think they made your Maths more difficult
- Zuzeka: Yes, complicated enough, a waste of time
- R: And, did it slow down your lesson?
- Zuzeka: What do you mean slow down my lesson?
- R: I mean in the lessons, when he was translating wasn't that time consuming or what?
- Zuzeka: It was, it was because it made it more boring.
- Qaqamba: Yes, yes, more, exactly.
- R: Oh so for you the experience was bad
- Qaqamba: Yes.

- R: They were not useful at all? During the lessons did you help to develop the translated terms or concepts for Maths?
- Zuzeka: Did we help to?
- R: To develop the terms?
- Zuzeka: Did it help? Oh no.
- R: Did you help develop the Xhosa terms
- Zuzeka: Ah, ah nothing
- R: You are a Xhosa speaker right?
- Zuzeka: I am but you know the terms when we translate them in Xhosa they become so deep you don't know, I didn't know triangle in Xhosa because they are using those big words in Xhosa you know, that you also don't understand, ja.
- R: So you didn't have anything to add to the translations you accepted them as they are?
- Zuzeka: Yes.
- R: Okay... so there were no arguments in class about the...translations=
- Zuzeka: Translations? No.
- R: Nothing?
- Zuzeka: No, we didn't argue about *it*translation.
- R: Now, as you approach the grade 12 exams would you like to have translations in any of your subjects as a back up.
- Zuzeka: Um... I could say yes in Xhosa in a way that you know uhm, what you call them like the opposites, sometimes you get confused with the antonyms and everything in Xhosa and they say them in Xhosa then you don't understand but when you put them in brackets you write the Xhosa word then you put antonyms in brackets then you get the idea that it's anton- then you get the idea of what you need

to do, so ( ) but not to translate the sentence like everything, no, just the...

R: You'd like translations in what? In your Xhosa paper or what?

Zuzeka: Only Xhosa paper, only Xhosa cause in Maths I mean you don't even get translations in Xhosa it's only English and Afrikaans and I don't think even the Afrikaans student's, I don't think they read the Afrikaans translations they go straight to English and they do what they have to do. So, only Xhosa that antonyms and synonyms things, otherwise no other language.

R: Are you going to write Xhosa in the exams?

Zuzeka: Yes

R: So that's why you want translations?

Zuzeka: Yes

R: Your Xhosa, is it difficult?

Zuzeka: No, it's not difficult but sometimes you get confused with the words like antonyms and synonyms you just mix them up like if they talk about opposites you think maybe it's antonyms then you write the wrong thing you just mix them up you know.

R: But it would be simpler in English

Zuzeka: Yes in English if, no you write them in both languages like you write the Xhosa word of antonyms then you write in bracket antonyms or something. You know what I'm saying?

R: Okay, now do you have any recommendations which you would like to make to the Department of Education in regard to the language of learning and teaching. Anyone?

Zuzeka: Mh, Mm.

R: Now, you had the translations, don't you wish sometimes you'd write in your own language?

Zuzeka: What? All languages?

- R: In your own language, don't you wish you'd write-  
Zuzeka: Like meaning in Maths, then you write in your own language?  
R: Ja.  
Zuzeka: A, a, we're not used to that so it would be more difficult.  
Zuzeka: Yes, it would be more difficult.  
R: Writing in your own language.  
Zuzeka: Yes  
R: You're doing Xhosa as a subject –  
Zuzeka: Yes, second language.  
R: Afrikaans?  
Zuzeka: No we don't do Afrikaans, you choose between Afrikaans and Xhosa.  
R: Oh so English is compulsory?  
Zuzeka: Yes, it's our first language  
R: Okay, thank you.



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