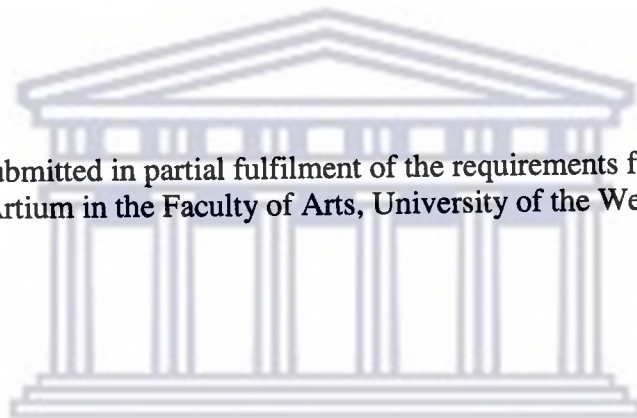


# **A PROFILE OF MULTILINGUAL SKILLS OF YOUNG ADULT XHOSA MOTHER TONGUE SPEAKERS**

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A minithesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Magister Artium in the Faculty of Arts, University of the Western Cape.



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# **A PROFILE OF MULTILINGUAL SKILLS OF YOUNG ADULT XHOSA MOTHER TONGUE SPEAKERS**

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## **KEYWORDS**

Multilingualism

Mother tongue

Xhosa

English

Competence

Shift

Self-assessment

Dialects

Code mixing

Attitudes



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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A PROFILE OF MULTILINGUAL SKILLS OF YOUNG ADULT XHOSA MOTHER TONGUE SPEAKERS**

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In South Africa, a country with 11 official languages, bilingualism and multilingualism are common language features across the population. Out of this context popular and untested claims, relating to the extent and value of these bilingual and multilingual abilities, have been made. Kathleen Heugh (2002) has challenged various popular views surrounding bilingual and multilingual education in South Africa that have become entrenched in our sociolinguistic debates, exposing the fact that there is very little or weak evidence to support these views. This thesis attempts to ascertain whether some of these claims could be verified, disproved, or possibly produce alternative perspectives. Through the use of questionnaires, a selection of Xhosa mother tongue speakers were asked to list, assess and comment on their various language skills. The four basic language skills focused on are the oracy skills of understanding (listening) and speaking, and the literacy skills of reading and writing. A profile of the respondents' linguistic abilities and attitudes has been constructed with specific emphasis on the use of Xhosa and English in different social contexts. This profile enables the identification of the languages in which the

respondents claim proficiency. It also gives an indication of whether language shift is taking place, and provides information on attitudes towards the urban mixed Xhosa dialect. The data collected has been used to indicate: (i) the kinds of bilingual or multilingual skills that young adult learners have developed, (ii) which varieties of Xhosa were mostly used in this community of speakers, (iii) which variety of Xhosa these speakers preferred, and (iv) what explanations young Xhosa mother tongue speakers themselves provided for their use of a mixed code. The analysed data has been used to give an indication of how multilingual and multidialectal young speakers actually are. It has also been used to indicate which dialects of Xhosa are most popular and which are possibly in decline. This was further used to indicate whether young Xhosa mother tongue speakers perceive language shift as a real threat, or as an inevitable and acceptable consequence of the current, modern lifestyle in a multilingual social environment. Decisions on the necessity for intervention to develop, maintain or re-vitalize a threatened variety are considered on the basis of these findings. The insights gleaned from this type of questionnaire have been used to distinguish between real attitudes and patterns of language use as opposed to popularly assumed attitudes and patterns of use.

September 2006

## DECLARATION

I declare that *A Profile of Multilingual Skills of Young Adult Xhosa Mother Tongue Speakers* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

ERICA BERNIDINE GEORGE

SEPTEMBER 2006

SIGNED: .....

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- Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a stylized classical building with columns and a pediment.

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 *Rationale*

In South Africa, a country with 11 official languages, bilingualism and multilingualism are common language features across the population. This does not mean that individual citizens necessarily are proficient in as wide a variety of languages; in most regions a limited variety of languages are spoken by large numbers of the local population (Finlayson & Slabbert: 2004).

This study is particularly interested in various aspects of language proficiency, language preference and language use of young Xhosa speakers in the Western Cape. From the most recent census statistics (Statistics South Africa: 2003) it is clear that in the Western Cape there are predominantly three official languages used by the population. These are Afrikaans, 55.3%; English, 19.3%; and Xhosa, 23.7% (Stats SA 2003).

A multilingual region does not necessarily have a multilingual population. In a community where many languages are used as first languages there often are large numbers of individuals who are proficient in a variety of these languages, though with varying levels of proficiency. There are in fact popular and often untested claims relating to the extent and value of such multilingual abilities. Heugh (2000, 2002, 2003) has for instance challenged popular views surrounding bilingual and multilingual education in South Africa that have become entrenched in our sociolinguistic debates, exposing the fact that there is very little or weak evidence to support many of these views. This paper

attempts to investigate whether some of the claims pertaining to language abilities and choices can be verified, disproved, or possibly produce alternative perspectives.

This research developed out of a project started with students in Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape where lecturers devised a questionnaire intended to be the research instrument into language proficiencies of young adults and their preferences regarding varieties of their first language. The students who eventually assisted in collecting data for this project were trained in the purpose, design and use of a questionnaire as an instrument for conducting sociolinguistic research. These students were not required to engage with the collected data as that was beyond the scope of their assignment. An outcome of this assignment was an amended questionnaire that was used for this particular project.

The original piloting of the questionnaire was done during 1998 when student assistance enabled data collection among more than 2000 respondents. The outcomes of this study were reported at the SAALA conference of July 1998, and at the PANSALB conference on completed language research and development projects in October 2002, in a paper titled: *Patterns, Perceptions, Prejudices: Aspects of Language Use of Xhosa L1 Students in a Multilingual Setting*. The research for this Masters thesis is an extension of the research started in 1998 and continued in 2000. With the tested questionnaire it was possible to collect a new, more recent set of data for answering the particular set of questions of this project.

The Western Cape has been experiencing a gradual influx of Xhosa mother tongue speakers for reasons that include political, economic and educational factors. According

to census data collected in 1991 (Van der Merwe and Van Niekerk: 1994), the proportional distribution of dominant home languages across all provinces stated that in the Western Cape 99.4% of the population spoke Afrikaans, 0.3% English and 0.3% Xhosa.

The 1996 census (Statistics South Africa: 1999) indicates that the dominant languages spoken across all the provinces, give the following results: Afrikaans, 39.8%, is most spoken in the Western Cape; Xhosa, 73.0%, in the Eastern Cape and English, 27.4%, in Gauteng. Within the Eastern Cape, 9.6% of the population speaks Afrikaans as the home language; English, 3.7% and Xhosa, 83.8%. In the Western Cape 59.2% of the population speak Afrikaans as home language; 20.3%, English and 19.1%, Xhosa.

Most recently, the census data collected in 2001 indicates that across the provinces the highest percentage of Afrikaans speakers, 41.8%, is in the Western Cape, the highest percentage of English speakers, 35.0%, is in KwaZulu-Natal and the highest percentage of Xhosa speakers, 67.9%, is in the Eastern Cape. Considering such a change in the demography of the region, it is important to consider the linguistic repertoire of young mother tongue speakers of Xhosa. What makes research into such a profile of young Xhosa speakers in this region interesting is the existence of regional dialects, as well as social dialects in this language. The linguistic repertoire and the language proficiencies of this section of the local population could be useful indicators of educational needs and of the potential to be integrated into the larger social structures of their communities.

## **1.2 Research questions**

This project was intended to collect data that would test a number of the popular claims relating to the extent and value of bilingualism and multilingualism of individuals and communities in South Africa. This research was designed to either verify such claims, or disprove them and present alternative perspectives. The particular questions considered here were the following:

- a. Is individual bilingualism and multilingualism as enormous, as underestimated and underutilised a resource among young speakers of Xhosa as a first language, as is popularly claimed?
- b. Which variety of Xhosa is predominantly used in the various social contexts of young speakers of Xhosa as a first language?
- c. Do the patterns of language use that are reported among young speakers of Xhosa as a first language, indicate a process of shift from one form of Xhosa to another?
- d. Is the pervasiveness of Xhosa-English code mixing one that younger Xhosa mother tongue speakers would discourage or not?

## **1.3 Research problem and aims**

There exist popular and untested claims relating to the extent and value of the bilingual and multilingual abilities of Xhosa mother tongue speakers in multilingual contexts. It is therefore important to investigate whether there is any evidence to support this viewpoint.



Researchers such as Heugh (2000) are beginning to interrogate this notion to find out if these views are fact or mere fiction.

This research was intended to profile the linguistic resources and experiences of Xhosa mother tongue (Xhosa L1) students who are studying in a multilingual setting. The aim was to collect data that would indicate:

- a. the kinds of bilingual / multilingual skills that learners between the ages of 18 and 24 with Xhosa as a first language, have developed
- b. which varieties of Xhosa are most widely used in this community of speakers
- c. which variety of Xhosa these speakers prefer and actually use in different domains
- d. what explanations these speakers give for the regular use of a mixed code among urban young adults

Such systematically collected and analysed data could be informative in various ways:

- a. indicating whether particular standardised forms of Xhosa are in fact 'endangered', and if so whether such varieties are already in a stage of decline
- b. determining whether language shift is perceived as a real threat, or as an inevitable and acceptable consequence of a modern lifestyle in a multilingual setting
- c. informing decisions on the need for intervention and of possible actions required to develop, maintain or re-vitalize a threatened variety of a language

- d. informing decisions on which language(s) would be best suited for use as languages of teaching and learning
- e. informing decisions on language choice in various public domains such as government, education, and the media

#### **1.4 Research hypothesis**

The hypotheses with which this research is undertaken, are based on intuitions and literature gained from teaching in an environment where a majority of the students are Xhosa L1 speakers who have relatively recently relocated from the Eastern Cape to urban settlements in the Western Cape. Such hypotheses specifically include:

- a. that young Xhosa L1 speakers are less bi- and multilingual than is often suggested, and that therefore their bi-/multilingualism may be less useful as a communicative resource than it is popularly claimed to be
- b. that in the Western Cape the respondents are largely Xhosa-English bilingual and minimally Xhosa-English-Afrikaans multilingual; other South African languages in which young adults may be limitedly proficient are Zulu and Sesotho
- c. that all young adults are proficient in the mixed version of Xhosa which they use in all social domains, specifically at school, at home and amongst peers
- d. that there is indeed a marked shift from deep-Xhosa to mixed-Xhosa in the Xhosa L1 community in the Western Cape

- e. that younger Xhosa mother tongue speakers are comfortable with the use of Xhosa-English code mixing in most social domains, barring perhaps certain specifically culturally marked occasions

## ✓ 1.5 **Research methods and procedures**

This research is quantitative in that it works with a large number of research subjects ( $\pm 300$ ) whose responses to a set of questions was analysed with the assistance of a suitable computer programme (SPSS). These questions relate specifically to self-reported language skills and attitudes. There is however also a qualitative dimension in that a representative sample of the responses was analysed and interpreted to determine patterns of language use and attitudes of respondents to such patterns. This project works with recent data and provides information on the following:

- a. the variety of languages each respondent claims to know
- b. the four language skills respondents have mastered in the various languages they know, as a preliminary indicator of levels of proficiency
- c. the different forms of Xhosa (i.e. dialectal variety) used in various societal domains, e.g. in the family, at school (in the classroom) and with peers (also at school, but in informal communication)
- d. the attitudes of Xhosa L1 speakers to the different forms of the language
- e. possible explanations for the prevalence of Xhosa-English code mixing among young urban adults

Statistics were derived by means of a computer-assisted count of the data collected by means of the questionnaire. The data will provide information such as how many respondents:

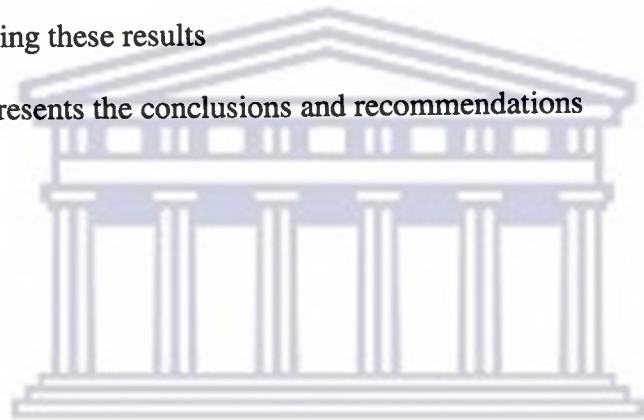
- a. know more languages than Xhosa and English
- b. admit to various degrees of code mixing
- c. indicate that they use deep-Xhosa as home language
- d. indicate that they use mixed-Xhosa as home language
- e. would prefer deep to mixed-Xhosa as language in education
- f. would prefer mixed-Xhosa as language in education

The data collected in the various sections of the questionnaire will be analysed and interpreted to provide answers to the specific research questions, and to arrive at conclusions about real attitudes and patterns of language use as opposed to assumed patterns of use. Although this project used responses from 350 participants, it is not simply quantitative in wanting to produce statistics of how many Xhosa L1 young adults know and use which forms of languages. This project produced statistics that can be used as one kind of instrument for analysing and interpreting perceived phenomena. A qualitative interpretation of elaborated written answers is therefore used jointly with the interpretation of those responses that can meaningfully be expressed in numeric terms.

### **1.6 Organisation of the dissertation**

The research is reported in the following 4 chapters that are organised as follows:

- a. chapter 2 contains the literature review in which key concepts and a discussion around the literature amassed are put forward
- b. chapter 3 documents the design of the questionnaire that was used for this study, as well as the methodology followed during the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation
- c. chapter 4 focuses on the research analysis, reporting on and interpreting the data and discussing these results
- d. chapter 5 presents the conclusions and recommendations



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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Theoretical framework and literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The title of this research project guides the literature review: A profile of Multilingual Skills of Young Adult Xhosa Mother Tongue Speakers. In order to answer the research questions and to place this research in the larger field of enquiry, literature related to a number of linguistic topics has been investigated. The first theme to be discussed is on bilingualism and multilingualism; specifically it focuses on bi- and multilingualism as a communicative resource in public discourses, and on language attitudes in bilingual and multilingual communities. The second theme is determined by the fact that in any situation where different languages come into contact, the languages are bound to influence one another to some extent. It is usually under these circumstances that the occurrence of language shift may become evident. Language shift as a general language phenomenon is investigated, specifically as it presents in the South African context, and in this particular research project, in the Western Cape region. This section will consider language shift in the most prominent public and private domains of language use. The third theme concerns the hegemony of English which becomes apparent when looking at language shift within the South African context. The fourth theme focuses on the uses of Xhosa and how this is affected by differences between urban and rural Xhosa, and by attitudes of young Xhosa mother tongue speakers to these varieties.

## **2.2 Bilingualism and multilingualism**

The following literature review will focus on bilingualism and multilingualism and how it relates to or affects language and language varieties through language contact, language shift and the hegemony of English.

### *2.2.1 Bi- and multilingualism as communicative resources*

Holmes (1992) states that sociolinguists are primarily concerned with explaining why people speak differently in different contexts. If we can analyse language within a particular social or cultural set-up, we will inevitably uncover a wealth of information about the language itself, which might otherwise have gone unnoticed. In the study of sociolinguistics, the relationship between language and society is intimately and inseparably interwoven. Holmes approaches the study of sociolinguistics by demarcating three areas of importance: multilingual speech communities, language variation reflecting its users, and language variation reflecting its uses. These three areas of study will also be the overarching areas of focus that are informative to this research project.

Clyne (1982) refers to multilingualism as 'the use of more than one language' or 'competence in more than one language'. Edwards (1995) defines it as the ability to speak, at some level, more than one language. Considering such definitions, bilingualism is the natural starting point for any discussion on multilingualism. Baker (1993) describes bilingual ability in terms of the following four language abilities: listening (understanding), speaking, reading and writing. These abilities are not equally developed with each individual as the majority of bi-/multi-lingual speakers have different levels of competence in the languages within their repertoire. Various linguists such as Mackey

(1995) have suggested that the four basic abilities can be further defined in terms of range and types of sub-skills. Apart from the four language abilities, Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) introduces the notion of a fifth language ability, namely cognitive competence: the ability to use language for thinking. For the purposes of this particular project, we will restrict ourselves to the four basic language abilities as these are most widely accepted and used in assessing levels of proficiency.

Coulmas (2005) argues that a fully balanced bilingual with mother tongue proficiency in two languages is very rare among individuals, and particularly rarer for groups or speech communities. As a result, he suggests that it would be useful to recognise different kinds of bilingualism. In this regard, he distinguishes between simultaneous and sequential bilingualism “which focuses on whether L1 and L2 are learnt at the same time, or L2 is built on L1.” (Coulmas 2005: 141). He also distinguishes between additive bilingualism “where an individual’s repertoire is extended by an additional language and subtractive bilingualism, where the acquisition of an L2 results in the replacement of the speaker’s L1.” (Coulmas 2005: 141).

According to Coulmas it is these different kinds of bilingualism that make it extremely difficult to measure bilingualism and multilingualism particularly at a group level. The major problem is that a bilingual community is made of bilingual speakers with varying proficiency in the languages involved, and not necessarily of speakers who are fully bilingual. In fact, it is “the percentage of bilingual speakers with variable degrees of competency in the languages involved that distinguishes multilingual communities from one another.” (Coulmas 2005: 142).



It is not surprising then that one distinguishing factor between Afrikaans and English speech communities, and between rural and urban communities among black African language speakers is the degree of competence in the languages at their disposal. Heugh (2002) and Plüddemann et al (2004) highlight the fact that in general, in spite of years of bilingual English-Afrikaans education, L1 English speakers tended to be less proficient in Afrikaans, than Afrikaans L1 speakers (some of whom were fully bilingual). On the other hand, research show that urban black African language speakers have higher degrees of proficiency in two or more languages, than their rural counterparts (Finlayson and Slabbert 2004, 2000, 2002; Ntshangase 2002).

It is noteworthy that proficiency in Afrikaans among L1 African language speakers is usually minimal. Similarly, few Afrikaans and English L1 speakers are proficient in any of the nine African tongues. It has been argued in the literature that Afrikaans is often associated with apartheid and its legacy, while speakers of English and Afrikaans see little value in African languages as they do not form part of the languages of the workplace discourse in South Africa (Banda 2004; Plüddemann et al. 2004; Mesthrie 2002).

Another term that is useful when considering societal bilingualism is *diglossia*, a term coined by Charles Ferguson in 1959. In the initial formulation *diglossia* referred to the high (H) and low (L) varieties of the same language. The L variety is used in informal contexts in the homes, the street, etc., while the H variety is used in formal contexts for public speeches, religious functions and schooling (Coulmas 2005). However, in

multilingual South Africa, what constitutes diglossia is much more complex, as it involves switching between languages and dialects. For instance, an urban person could switch from urban Xhosa and colloquial English, to formal English and “deep” rural (standard) Xhosa. (cf. Finlayson & Slabbert 2000, 2002).

### 2.2.2 *Language contact and language shift*

Romaine and Nettle (2000) state that linguistic diversity is the benchmark of cultural diversity. Thus, when a language or even a dialect of a language disappears or falls out of use, an element of that culture disappears as well. Language shift and language death occur as a result of various types of pressures in a community – social, cultural economic and even military. Language shift takes place when some of the domains and functions of use for a language are taken up by another language. Language death will occur when one language replaces another across its entire functional range, and when parents do not transmit the language to their children. Romaine and Nettle (2000) identify three factors that can initiate language loss: population loss, forced language shift and voluntary language shift. Language loss, however, will more likely involve an intermixing of all three these factors. In the same way language shift does not imply that language death will be the resulting outcome, but it is an indicator to take note of when assessing the health of a language or a language dialect.

Language shift, as defined by Fishman (1991), is a slow and gradual process by which the usage of one language is replaced with another. He asserts that language shift can be identified by focusing on three areas: the media used, the overtness of the process, and the domains and role relations in language usage.

The sociocultural context is the main area that this research will investigate. The particular settings that the researcher was interested in were that of home, school and family. Fishman (1991) suggests that there are general reasons for language shift occurring, namely: physical and demographic dislocation, social dislocation and cultural dislocation. It is therefore conceivable that in a country like South Africa, language shift must have taken place amongst certain language groups.

In the South African multilingual context De Klerk (2000) conducted a study amongst the parents of Xhosa-speaking children enrolled in English-medium schools in Grahamstown. Her findings were informative in terms of reasons provided for an established language shift in the educational setting within the Xhosa-English context. Of the respondents 26% chose to have their schooling in English, because they believed it provided a better education, 19% felt it was 'the most important world language', and 11% felt that English would open the way to more job opportunities. These were just some of the reasons given for Xhosa L1 speakers' choice of English as a medium of instruction. According to De Klerk (2000) language shift from indigenous languages such as Xhosa to English, is the result of powerful social, political and economic pressures.

Banda (2000) however, argues that it is "absurd to envisage a language situation that could lead to language shift and death" for indigenous South African languages.

According to De Klerk (1996), English is the preferred medium of instruction for the majority of Xhosa L1 speakers. This does however not mean that the indigenous languages will experience shift in all contexts, or that they will die. Banda argues that for the time being, ironically, the apartheid legacy of politically engineered linguistic

communities will be that which will foster the preservation of languages. Ethnic and cultural identity will continue to be maintained within these linguistic communities. Another interesting finding from Banda's paper is that according to Calteaux (1995), the younger generation of African language speakers is moving away from the use of the standardised varieties of their languages. Urban non-standard varieties seem to have more prestige and status than the rural-based varieties that underlie the standard. This confirms the findings of Finlayson and Slabbert (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) who believe that the urban varieties might turn out to threaten the standard forms of African languages in South Africa.

### 2.2.3 *Hegemony of English as co-determiner of language shift*

The shift away from the urban varieties of Xhosa is compounded by the impact that the hegemony of English has had, and the pressure it still exerts on other languages in South Africa (McCormick: 2002). The hegemony of English is a global phenomenon that all languages are faced with and must have a respond to (Braam 2005; Plüddemann et al. 2004). A major problem is that researchers are not agreed on how to go about countering the hegemony of English, with the result that the status quo continues (Banda: 2004). Bamgbose (2000) states that although there is support for the use of indigenous languages as the medium of instruction on the African continent, 'imported official languages' remain the dominant languages of instruction. One of the various reasons he mentions for this state of affairs is the fact that people have come to accept the notion that a good education can only be achieved when it is obtained in an international language such as English. Whether or not people come to conclusions such as these about a language,

through lack of information or ignorance, these are their expressed language attitudes. The South African official language policy in education as expressed by the first democratically elected minister of education, Sibusiso Bengu, is one that encourages additive bilingualism (Bengu: 1997). Unfortunately, within the mindset of the South Africans who suffered under Bantu Education, attitudes toward the African languages and Afrikaans are comparatively very different to that of attitudes toward the English language. English is seen as the language of liberation, nation building and economic upliftment (Braam 2005; Plüddemann et al. 2004; Banda 2004). Alexander (2005) states that most black people associate mother tongue medium of instruction with Bantu education, and hence inferior education, as opposed to African languages that are generally believed to be “not suitable for functions such as further education, science, technology, business, law and government” (Heugh, Siegrühn & Plüddeman: 1995, 74).

Vesely (2000) has researched the impact of English on Xhosa-speaking students in two Cape Town townships. She found that the hegemony of English strongly influences students’ attitudes toward their mother tongue. Through instrumental as well as integrative motivation, students are opting to use English more than their mother tongue, even if they are consciously aware that it is to the detriment of their mother tongue. It seems that students’ preferences are determined by what they see, hear and experience in their social contexts. The media is dominated by the English language and it seems to be the vehicle for upward social mobility. Within this type of context it is difficult to convincingly demonstrate that at least the 11 official languages have equal status under the South African constitution (The South African Constitution, 1996). The constitution

does adequately promote the equality of the official languages, but it is the implementation of the language policies that prevents the realisation of this equality.

Vesely's findings have recently been replicated by Plüddemann's et al (2004) on language policy implementation and language vitality in the Western Cape. They conclude that there is a gradual shift to English among primary and secondary school children from Afrikaans and Xhosa speaking homes. The shift is happening more quickly in Afrikaans than Xhosa speaking communities.

“In summary ... English is becoming increasingly dominant – even hegemonic – in Cape Town metropolis, and is also making inroads into the traditionally Afrikaans-dominant *platteland*. In urban (Greater Cape Town) ... respondents turn out to be much more English-oriented than census results have led us to expect ... Perhaps the most significant finding is the emergence of the beginning of generational language shift from Afrikaans to English in the metropolitan area. Many respondents appear to speak English to their siblings and parents, but Afrikaans to their grandparents.” (Plüddemann et al. 2004: 98).

These findings and sentiments are informative for my research.

Romaine (1984) states that the settings of family, school and peer group are some of the most important areas to concentrate on when looking at the transmission of language. In these settings there are varieties of discourse and strategies for interaction that can be developed, maintained and subsequently reproduced. It is generally accepted that the language varieties of home and family is not the same as that of school and the variety used among peers. This is because, firstly, the primary caregiver in the child's formative years of language development is normally the mother. Particularly in the South African setting, grandmothers also function as the primary caregivers. At home conversation arises from a setting that is guided by practical events, which happen spontaneously,

where the child could naturally be the initiator of the interaction. Secondly, at school level conversation arises from a structured context that is the opposite of how language is acquired in the home environment out of situations that prompt spontaneous conversation. The teacher initiates the conversation, while the child is expected to respond in a manner that has been prescribed by the teacher, whether explicitly or inexplicitly. As a result of these different factors in the two types of settings, one normally finds that the language variety used in the two settings is different. I would therefore expect that the type of responses in different language settings for the students answering this questionnaire would concur with Romaine's findings.

People will generally acquire their sociolects by progressing through three stages as promoted by Chambers (1995). He stated that a vernacular develops from through the life stages of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. In childhood the language of family and friends influences variety. Although the family will provide the child with its first speech models it will be replaced at a fairly early stage by the variety spoken by friends encountered at school. During adolescence it is the peer group that has the most influence on the speaker's choice of dialect. At this stage the adolescent begins the process of individuation (Chambers: 1995). In terms of language, the speaker adopts the variety that best expresses her individuality. The variety used at this stage can therefore, unsurprisingly, be the variant that is most divergent from the perceived norm. Chambers argues that during young adulthood there is a leveling of this form of extremism in terms of dialect choice as expressed in the adolescent years. Social factors such as class, education or occupation will now influence the speaker's choice of dialectal variety.

Most of the respondents to this research project can thus be expected to have had different dialects in adolescence than in childhood.

#### 2.2.4 *Bi- and multilingualism: attitudes toward various languages*

When the respondents were asked to complete their questionnaires, they were in fact involved with language evaluation of a social nature. Various language attitudes were expressed toward the varieties that respondents were asked to evaluate. Edwards (1982) states that the basis for the evaluations of these language varieties could give insight into: intrinsic linguistic inferiorities or superiorities, intrinsic aesthetic differences, and social conventions and preference.

Baker (1992) researched various issues pertaining to language attitudes and bilingualism. As he moves the focus from language attitudes toward a particular language, to bilingual language attitudes, his work was found to be particularly informative to this project. The primary definition of *language attitude* that was used by the researcher, was the one preferred by Ajzen (1988) and McGuire (1985). Ajzen (1988) states that attitude is a “disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution or event”. Language attitudes would thus refer to the abstract object, language, as favourable or unfavourable. According to Baker (1992) *language attitude* is an umbrella term that incorporates various other attitudes. For the purpose and scope of this research, the focus is mainly on the following two areas:

- a. attitude to language variety, dialect and speech style
- b. attitude to language preference



Studies by Giles, Bourhis and Davies (1979) and Giles, Bourhis, Trudgill and Lewis (1974) concluded that judgment of language variety is related to the social connotations that people have of the speakers of particular varieties. This would mean that the evaluation of language varieties will not necessarily reflect the linguistic or aesthetic quality of a variety, but rather be a social construct and a matter of preference. The domain of school represents the one setting where speakers of different varieties of a language would converge. The general practice at schools is to reflect and promote the standard variety of a language. The language variety of education is normally the preferred, prestigious variety for speakers of a language. An assumption could thus be made that the respondents' preferred variety of Xhosa would be the standard, deep variety.

#### 2.2.5 *Code switching and code mixing*

One of the outcomes of language contact is code switching. Rather than occurring by default, code switching is a socially motivated phenomenon and as such it has social meaning (Coulmas 2005). In essence, the choices a bilingual speaker makes between languages, portions of a language or portion blends of different languages or dialects, are socially motivated and can be explained (Coulmas 2005; Finlayson & Slabbert 2000, 2002, 2004; Banda 2005). A monolingual outsider unfamiliar with code switching practices might not notice any patterns and might fail to notice the languages involved; and as Coulmas (2005: 109) notes, others might incorrectly perceive such an "admixture" as a "deficient and bastardised blend."

Giles and Ryan (1982) state that an individual's evaluation of another's language behaviour is a function of the individual's own language attitudes. This notion seems to hold true of language researchers investigating certain language areas. Code switching, code mixing and bilingual borrowing are regular linguistic phenomena in multilingual contexts. Until the 1970s, only bilingual borrowing was paid any attention to through linguistic investigations. Hamers and Blanc (2000) state that it was because code mixing and code switching were considered merely as evidence of a speaker's incompetence in the two languages in her repertoire. Since the 1970s, however, these two linguistic phenomena have received substantial empirical and theoretical attention. Gumperz (1982) defined code switching as "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems". Code mixing involves the transfer of elements of rules of another language (the matrix language) to the main language (base language) being spoken at all linguistic levels. Code switching and code mixing are both language-contact strategies to aid communication. These two linguistic phenomena can occur within one utterance, but it must be noted that code mixing is embedded within code switching, and not vice-versa. On the topic of code mixing, Hamers and Blanc (2000) conclude that the use thereof can be a speaker's vehicle for expressing attitudes, intentions, roles and identification with a specific group. A large section of the questionnaire used in this research project focuses on code mixing and traces the reasons that respondents put forward for their usage thereof.

According to Marasigan (1983) contemporary linguistic study of bilingualism falls within the code-switching paradigm. She describes code-switching as the use of two languages

in the same sentence or discourse. If one focuses on code-switching as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, then one is concerned with the language choice that relates to social factors, domains, demographic factors and language functions. For the purpose of this project, we will focus on the social factors and the domains of usage.

#### 2.2.6 *Various varieties of Xhosa as indicators of language shift*

Thipa (1989) provided invaluable information concerning the differences between rural and urban Xhosa varieties, also respectively referred to as *deep* and *mixed-Xhosa*. He contends that the distinction between the two varieties is difficult to pinpoint, partly due to migration and urbanisation. Nevertheless, he described the differences between these varieties as follows:

- a. *Urban Xhosa seems to show a greater tendency to borrow from English and Afrikaans than does rural Xhosa.*
- b. *Related to the above, is the fact that urban Xhosa tends to be more innovative than rural Xhosa which tends to be more conservative.*
- c. *As a consequence of (b) above urban Xhosa is subject to more rapid change than rural Xhosa.*
- d. *Rural Xhosa can be taken to be characteristic of speakers who have been least exposed to Western influence and experience. This includes non-literate speakers.*
- e. *Red-blanketed Xhosa speakers can be taken to be representative of rural Xhosa.*

### **2.3 Summary of main conclusions**

Multilingualism and the prevalence of polylingual societies are the norm across the world. These are not new linguistic phenomena, but a reflection of the reality that is becoming more evident, especially with globalisation and the dominance of world languages such as English.

In the South African context language shift is already taking place. Speakers of Xhosa seem to be choosing English as one of the main languages when code switching and code mixing. As people try to negotiate meaning in a multilingual environment, code mixing and code switching occur spontaneously.

Xhosa is seen as the marker of culture and identity, but is not perceived as the language through which to become upwardly socially mobile as used within the public domains such as in education and economics.

People's attitudes toward language are shaped by their own experiences of those languages; by the value or worth the language can add to their quality or standard of living. If competence in a particular language provides one with a better education, better job or a better life, one will choose in favour of that language. Language loss will thus result from the voluntary shift from one language to another. This kind of shift has been documented by researchers as provided through the literature review.

On the one hand, one has the linguists' view of language as an incredible resource and marker of cultural diversity. On the other, you have non-linguists, ordinary people who may be deeply proud of their language and heritage, but are faced with social and

economic realities that oblige them to sacrifice the very thing that has shaped and defined their identity – their mother tongue.



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## CHAPTER 3

### Research design and methodology

#### 3.1 *Research hypotheses*

The hypotheses that will be tested in this research are based on intuitions gained from teaching in an environment where a majority of the students are Xhosa L1 speakers who have relatively recently relocated from the Eastern Cape to urban settlements in the Western Cape. Such hypotheses specifically include:

- a. that young Xhosa L1 speakers are less bi- and multi-lingual than is often suggested, and that therefore their bi-/multilingualism may be less useful as a communicative resource than it is popularly claimed to be
- b. that in the Western Cape the respondents are largely Xhosa-English bilingual and minimally Xhosa-English-Afrikaans multilingual; other South African languages in which young adults may be limitedly proficient are Zulu and Sesotho
- c. that all young adults are proficient in mixed-Xhosa which they use in all social domains, specifically at school, at home and amongst peers
- d. that there is indeed a marked shift from deep-Xhosa to mixed-Xhosa in the Xhosa L1 community in the Western Cape
- e. that younger Xhosa mother tongue speakers are comfortable with the use of Xhosa-English code mixing in most social domains, barring perhaps certain specifically culturally marked occasions

The questionnaire used in data-collecting is divided into four sections that focus on: (i) information on the respondent, (ii) language use, (iii) changes in patterns of language use, and (iv) language attitudes. When looking at the information of the respondents the first indicator was that of sex, which in this instance is a biological construct of either male or female. This was done to gauge how many of our respondents were male or female and whether it had any influence on their responses. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they attended primary and secondary school in an urban or rural environment. An urban environment would refer to a school that was within the bounds of a city, whereas a rural environment referred to a school in the country side or in a village.

In terms of language use, the respondent were asked to indicate which languages they knew as well as the various language skills they possessed, such as understanding, speaking, reading and writing. The four languages indicated on the questionnaire were English, Afrikaans and Xhosa as these are the three official languages of the Western Cape Province. The fourth language was Zulu as this language is mutually intelligible to Xhosa. The students were then free to indicate the other languages they had in their repertoires. The different forms for Xhosa that the researcher worked with was that of deep and mixed-Xhosa. The deep variety refers to the kind of Xhosa that is seen as formal or the standard variety, which is mostly still spoken in the rural areas. The mixed form is thus the informal or the non-standard that is a marker of city dwellers.

The most frequently used term in the questionnaire given to the respondents was that of the “mother tongue” versus first language or home language. The mother tongue language as used here refers to the language of home and family which is generally

acquired during the first five years of life. The terms mother tongue and first language can therefore be used as equivalents for the purposes of this project.

### **3.2 Sample design and sampling methods**

The original piloting use of the questionnaire was done during 1998 when student assistance enabled data collection among more than 2000 respondents. The outcomes of this study were reported at the SAALA conference of July 1998, and at a PANSALB conference on current South African language research and development projects in October 2002, in a paper titled: *Patterns, Perceptions, Prejudices: aspects of Language Use of Xhosa L1 Students in a Multilingual Setting*. The research for this Masters thesis is an extension of the research started out in 1998 and continued in 2000. With the tested questionnaire it was possible to collect a new, more recent set of data for answering the particular set of questions of this project.

The students who assisted in completing the questionnaires were part of a Language and Communication second year class in the Linguistics Department of the University of the Western Cape. Those who assisted were mother tongue speakers of Xhosa.

### **3.3 Data collection methods and fieldwork practices**

The measuring instrument used to collect data for this specific project, was a questionnaire which was piloted in the earlier studies mentioned in paragraph 3.2. The questionnaire was however slightly altered in terms of stylistics and formatting to allow



for better accuracy in the answering of the questionnaire. The questionnaire relied on self-reporting as a means of compiling a language profile for the respondents.

As stated previously, students from the second year Language and Communication class were asked to participate in the filling out of the questionnaires on a volunteer basis. Only mother tongue speakers were used as respondents to complete these questionnaires. Non-mother tongue speakers as well as mother tongue Xhosa speakers were however allowed to ask other mother tongue speakers who were interested to complete these questionnaires as well. The respondents for this project were therefore students from the Language and Communication class, students in other fields at the University of the Western Cape, as well as young adults from the surrounding areas.

In the October 2003 the questionnaires were disseminated. A maximum of four weeks were the time frame within which the completed questionnaires could be returned. Most of the questionnaires were received back during the week of the 20<sup>th</sup> of October. All of the respondents signed a consent form which explained their rights as participants in this kind of social research, which also afforded the researcher the right to use the completed forms.

### **3.4 Data capturing**

The completed questionnaires were initially weeded for gross incompleteness, duplication and for instances where non-Xhosa mother tongue speakers have completed

the questionnaires. The data was then recorded by making use of the software package,

SPSS. The four main themes around which the questionnaire was structured were:

- a. the information of the respondent
- b. language use
- c. changes in patterns of use and
- d. language attitudes



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## CHAPTER 4

### Analyses and Research findings

Following the categories used in collecting the data, the following paragraphs give a summary of the information drawn from the respondents.

#### 4.1 Profile of respondents

The data collected gives an overall view of the general characteristics of multilingual skills of a group of Xhosa L1 speakers. The data comes from a set of 350 questionnaires answered by participants with the same L1, and various other shared features related to their social and educational backgrounds.

##### 4.1.1 Biographical details

The sample consisted of 184 females (53.3%) and 161 males (46.7%). A total of 3 respondents (1.4%) did not give information on their gender. The largest percentage (23.4%) of respondents was 25 years old. The biggest proportion of the respondents was between the ages of 20 and 24.

Three-hundred respondents (85.7%) indicated their home address to be within the Western Cape, while 41 (11.7%) still quoted the Eastern Cape as their home address. One-hundred and seventy-four respondents (49.8%) indicated they had been in the Western Cape for 5 years and more, while 176 (49.2%) indicated they had been in this

region for less than 5 years. The home addresses give an indication of the regional influences to which respondents had most probably been exposed.

#### *4.1.2 School education*

Most of the respondents, 243 (69.4%), received their primary schooling in the Eastern Cape, and 88 (25.1%) of them received early schooling in the Western Cape. The same holds true for the respondents' secondary school attendance. Most of the respondents, 201(57.4%) received their secondary schooling in the Eastern Cape, while 126 (36%) received theirs in the Western Cape.

Of the respondents, 199 (58%), matriculated before the year 2000, i.e. they did not come to study directly after completing their secondary education. A smaller number of respondents, 107 (31.2%), matriculated in either 2000 or 2001, i.e. they came to study directly after completing their secondary schooling. A limited number of 37 (10.6%) respondents had reached the age of 18, but had not yet written their matriculation examinations.

#### *4.1.3 Language abilities*

In this project, for a Xhosa L1 speaker to be counted as fully competent in any language, we followed directives from the literature which state that the individual must be able to speak, understand, read and write in the language concerned. Of the 11 official South African languages, the results indicated the following proficiencies of Xhosa L1 speakers in addition to their first language: English, 340 (97.1%) respondents; Zulu, 137(39.1%)

respondents; and Afrikaans, 62 (17.7%) respondents. For all the other official languages the percentage of the respondents who indicated they had skills in all four language abilities, was below 1.5%.

Banda (2004) argues that for attitudinal reasons Xhosa L1 speakers overestimate their proficiency in English, while underestimating their competency in Afrikaans. This argument seems to have currency here.

However, interestingly, not all the respondents who identified themselves as Xhosa mother tongue speakers indicated that they were competent in all the four language abilities, as was hypothesised. It was anticipated that all the respondents would indicate that they have all four language abilities in Xhosa, but only 333 respondents (95.1%) indicated this. What the respondents indicated, was that to be identified as a Xhosa mother tongue speaker, the overriding abilities were that of speaking and understanding the language.

In summary then, all the respondents were Xhosa L1 speakers, most having English as L2. Those who indicated proficiency in Zulu or Afrikaans, most probably have these as 3<sup>rd</sup> or additional languages.

## 4.2 Presentation of results

### 4.2.1 *The language abilities of Xhosa mother tongue speakers*

The results here are largely drawn from the profile of the respondents who reported that they have all the four language abilities in Xhosa. These abilities were then correlated with their abilities in English, Zulu and Afrikaans to ascertain the extent to which they are bi- or multilingual.

Table 1 below shows that out of 350 respondents, 333 (95.1%) identified themselves as fully competent in their mother tongue. Interestingly, 10 (2.9%) respondents indicated that they have mastered only the primary language skills, i.e. they can only understand and speak the language and therefore do not estimate their literacy skills to be sufficiently developed.

**Table 1: Language abilities in Xhosa**

	Frequency	%
RSW	2	.6
RUS	2	.6
RUSW	333	95.1
S	1	.3
U	1	.3
US	10	2.9
USW	1	.3
Total	350	100.0

A slightly greater percentage of the respondents states that they are fully competent in English rather than in Xhosa. Even though it is a small and relatively insignificant difference, this must be noted, as this questionnaire was answered by respondents who view themselves firstly as Xhosa mother tongue speakers. This can probably be explained by the fact that the education policy determines transfer to English as medium of

education in the fourth school year. The respondents who reported that they are fully competent in their mother tongue displayed the following tendencies in terms of their English language skills:

**Table 2: Language abilities in English**

	Frequency	%
	2	.6
RSW	2	.6
RUSW	340	97.1
RUW	1	.3
RW	1	.3
U	1	.3
US	2	.6
UW	1	.3
Total	350	100.0

In the correlation between respondents who are both fully competent in Xhosa and English, the results indicate that 327 (93.4%) of the respondents reported to be Xhosa-English bilinguals:

**Table 3: Crosstabulation - Xhosa and English**

		Language abilities in English							Total
		U	S	RUSW	RUW	RW	US	UW	
Language abilities in Xhosa	RUSW	1	2	327	1	1	0	1	333

Only a small number of Xhosa L1 speakers indicated that they have Afrikaans in their repertoire. Only 55 respondents indicated having all four literacy and oracy skills in Afrikaans. The table below indicates that 30.7% of all the fully competent Xhosa mother tongue speakers consider themselves fully competent in Afrikaans. The following table gives the correlation between the Xhosa and the Afrikaans competencies:

**Table 4: Crosstabulation - Xhosa and Afrikaans**

	Language abilities in Afrikaans					
	R	U	RUSW	RUW	RW	US
Language abilities in Xhosa RUSW	15	12	55	49	34	14

Xhosa and Zulu are mutually intelligible languages from the Nguni language group in South Africa. It is generally assumed that a Xhosa L1 speaker will at least be able to understand spoken and written Zulu (i.e. manage basic reception tasks). It is therefore important to look at how a competent Xhosa mother tongue speaker rates his/her abilities in Zulu. Table 5 summarises the responses that indicate that of the 333 Xhosa mother tongue speakers only 135 (40%) report that they have all four language abilities in Zulu.

**Table 5: Crosstabulation - Xhosa and Zulu**

	Language abilities in Zulu					
	U	RU	RUS	RUSW	RUW	US
Language abilities in Xhosa RUSW	37	19	22	135	16	27

#### 4.2.2 *School education*

This research works with the assumption that the region in which respondents' schooling was given has an effect on the development of bilingual and multilingual skills. It may co-determine which variety of a language a person speaks, which attitude s/he has toward the mother tongue, as well as which number of other languages a person may learn and which attitudes develop toward other languages.

Table 6 below indicates that more than two thirds (69.4%) of the respondents received their primary education in the Eastern Cape, while only 25.1 % did so in the Western



Cape. Table 6.1 shows that the primary schools that the respondents attended were mostly (55.7%) in rural settings, as opposed to an urban setting.

**Table 6.1: Province of primary school**

	Frequency	%
Eastern Cape	243	69.4
Free State	1	.3
Gauteng	5	1.4
KwaZulu-Natal	6	1.7
Limpopo	1	.3
Mpumalanga	1	.3
Northern Cape	3	.9
North West	2	.6
Western Cape	88	25.1
Total	350	100.0

**Table 6.2: Area where primary school was situated**

	Frequency	%
Rural	195	55.7
Urban	155	44.3
Total	350	100.0

The following table shows that the secondary schooling of the respondents also mainly took place in the Eastern Cape, followed by the Western Cape. There is however a noticeable decrease in the number of respondents completing schooling in the Eastern Cape, while there is an increase of attendance at Western Cape schools. The respondents will more likely have moved from using the deep Xhosa at home and having more exposure to this variety in the rural setting, to using the urban mixed-Xhosa in the urban setting where they continued their education.

**Table 7.1: Province of secondary school**

	Frequency	%
Eastern Cape	201	57.4
Free State	1	.3
Gauteng	7	2.0
KwaZulu-Natal	7	2.0
Limpopo	1	.3
Mpumalanga	2	.6
Northern Cape	3	.9
North West	2	.6
Western Cape	126	36.0
Total	350	100.0

The learning centers are now predominantly (63.7) in urban settings, as is illustrated by the following table:

**Table 7.2: Area where secondary school was located**

	Frequency	%
Rural	127	36.3
Urban	223	63.7
Total	350	100.0

#### 4.2.3 *Knowledge of language varieties*

Most of the respondents, 61.7%, stated that they know different varieties of their mother tongue.

**Table 8: Knowledge of different varieties of Xhosa**

	Frequency	%
No response	7	2.0
No	127	36.3
Yes	216	61.7
Total	350	100.0

Although 61.7% of the respondents said that they speak different varieties of Xhosa, they experienced difficulty in describing these forms. Most of the respondents did not answer this question at all. Of those who gave an answer, most frequently they named the

difference between mixed and deep-Xhosa. Table 9 gives the specific terms respondents used to identify the varieties they can use.

**Table 9: Descriptions of the Xhosa varieties**

	Frequency	%
None	236	67.4
Deep	15	4.3
Deep/mix	5	1.4
Formal	16	4.6
Amahlubi	6	1.7
Mix	8	2.3
Mix/pure	24	6.9
Pure	7	2.0
Slang	4	1.1
Tsotsi	7	2.0

Table 10 indicates the variety of domains in which respondents indicated that they use the different forms of the language. Most of the respondents could again not say where they use the varieties that they had identified. Most respondents, 53.1%, once again did not answer this particular question. The obvious places where the respondents noted that they use different varieties were in the community, at home and at school.

**Table 10: Domains of use**

	Frequency	%
	186	53.1
Community	15	4.3
Church/home	39	11.1
Church/home/school	5	1.4
Church/school	14	4.0
Home	27	7.7
Home/church	6	1.7
Home/school	14	4.0
Church	8	2.3
School	6	1.7

#### 4.2.4 *Language mixing*

The respondents are all aware that it is possible to mix (refer to difference between language mixing of bilinguals and a mixed variety/dialect) different languages when talking. They note, 93.1%, that they do mix different languages when talking.

**Table 11: Mixing of different languages**

	Frequency	%
No response	1	.3
No	23	6.6
Yes	326	93.1
Total	350	100.0

When respondents gave their own reasons for language mixing they were unsure or did not know why they did so. Only 55 respondents, the highest frequency for a response to this question, believed that when they mixed languages, more people could understand them. The second most common reason for using the mixed variety was as a result of a lack of equivalent forms in the mother tongue.

The respondents' assumptions about others' reasons for language mixing were the same as their own. The highest response rate was only 15.7% which also gave the lack of equivalent forms as the reason why most people mix their languages.

#### 4.2.5 *Patterns of language use*

It does seem that respondents have moved away from the form of Xhosa which they used at an early age. According to table 12 a percentage of 52.6% indicate that they now use a different form of Xhosa, while 46% indicate that they never used a different form.

Therefore it seems that more or less 50% of the respondents are aware of a process of

language change/shift from deep to mixed, while the other 50% deny such shift. This could indicate that they learned the mixed code as L1; in this context it is unlikely that respondents learned the deep variety first and at age 18 in an urban environment are still using only that variety.

**Table 12: Change in variety used since childhood**

	Frequency	%
No response	5	1.4
No	184	52.6
Yes	161	46.0
Total	350	100.0

Similar results were obtained when the respondents were asked whether they changed the form of the language used at home and at school. Half of the respondents indicated that the variety they used at home was the same as the variety used at school.

**Table 13: Use of same variety at home and school**

	Frequency	%
No response	8	2.3
No	162	46.3
Yes	180	51.4
Total	350	100.0

Going by the theory the patterns of language use and the responses thereof, appear to pit those that went to urban against those that went to rural schools. The urban areas are undergoing faster language change than the rural areas, and hence urban respondents are more likely to have experienced language shift than those from rural areas (Coulmas 2005; Finlayson & Slabbert 2002, 2004).

#### 4.2.6 *Language attitudes*

The respondents were asked to indicate which form of Xhosa they preferred, others preferred and what they thought should be taught in schools.

The three tables below indicate that there is an interesting pattern that emerges from the answers given where the majority of the respondents stated they personally prefer the pure form of the language, while they perceive others to prefer the mixed form. It is however obvious that the form preferred for instruction in schools is the pure form, as 77.7% of the respondents agree on this matter.

**Table 14: Form of the mother tongue the respondent prefers**

	Frequency	%
No response	9	2.6
Mixed	149	42.6
Pure	192	54.9
Total	350	100.0

**Table 15: Form of the mother tongue others prefer**

	Frequency	%
No response	8	2.3
Mixed	240	68.6
Pure	102	29.1
Total	350	100.0

**Table 16: Form of the mother tongue to be taught in schools**

	Frequency	%
No response	7	2.0
Mixed	71	20.3
Pure	272	77.7
Total	350	100.0

Most respondents found it difficult to give reasons for their choice of Xhosa variety in schools. A third of the respondents did not answer the last question at all. The main

reason given by those who did answer, for the use of the pure form of Xhosa in schools, was to ensure the preservation of the language and the culture.

However, that almost 43% preferred the mixed code, and that almost 69% said others preferred the mixed code, is significant. This is in line with the findings of other studies on migration and the language contact phenomenon (cf. Finlayson & Slabbert 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004; Ntshangase 2002; Mesthrie 2002).

### **4.3 Discussion of results**

In this section I shall respond to the various hypotheses set out in chapter 3. The results given in 4.2 above are related to each particular hypothesis.

#### **4.3.1 Hypothesis 1: Young Xhosa L1 speakers are significantly less bi- and multilingual than is popularly claimed.**

Of the 333 respondents who stated that Xhosa is their mother tongue, 327 claim, on the basis of self-assessment, to be fully competent in English. It is to be expected that these respondents would be at least bilingual as most South Africans, especially those who have an African language as a mother tongue, are indeed bilingual or multilingual.

English is the most widely used second language in the country, and thus also the most important lingua franca. The language skills reported here thus indicate that 98% of Xhosa mother tongue speakers also have some level of proficiency in English. However, caution is in order here as other studies have shown that L1 African language speakers often overestimate their competency levels in English (2003, Banda 2004).

From our sample of Xhosa speakers, 135 indicate mastery of all four language abilities in Zulu, i.e. 40% claim competence in Zulu. Fifty five of the respondents claim that they are competent in Afrikaans. This gives us a figure of 16.5% claiming to be Xhosa-Afrikaans bilingual. This finding is similar to that of Plüddemann et al (2004) who found similar results among the 566 Xhosa L1 respondents they tested in the Western Cape, where 17% said they were Xhosa: Afrikaans bilingual.

The results indicate that according to the most conservative assessment, these Xhosa mother tongue speakers are competent in at least two languages, namely Xhosa and English. This would qualify them as more bilingual than multilingual in terms of language competence. A summary of the results makes this clear:

**Table 17: Competencies of Xhosa L1 speakers**

<b>Xhosa mother tongue speakers</b>	
English competence	98%
Zulu competence	40%
Afrikaans	16.5%

Notably, I have not assessed the level of competence or objectively tested the claims to proficiency in the various languages respondents reported. The self-reported information should ideally be followed up by interviews and structured language tests in another project.

4.3.2 *Hypothesis 2: Young Xhosa mother tongue speakers are largely Xhosa-English bilingual and minimally Xhosa-English-Afrikaans multilingual*



There is a direct correlation between the Xhosa respondents' proficiency in English and Xhosa. This shows that if a speaker has Xhosa as an L1, there is a 98% possibility that he or she also knows English; but this does not mean that proficiencies correlate. Correlating proficiency would mean that the speaker is a balanced bilingual, which is not the case here. The figure of 16.5 % Afrikaans proficiency, however, leads us to conclude that there is not a direct correlation between competence in Xhosa and English and Afrikaans.

There is also no doubt that the data is in line with the literature (cf. Mesthrie 2002; Banda 2004; Plüddemann et al. 2004) which shows a preference for English as L2 as opposed to Afrikaans as L2 or L3 by black South Africans.

4.3.3 *Hypothesis 3: Young Xhosa mother tongue speakers are proficient in the mixed variety of Xhosa rather than the pure ("deep") variety of the language.*

Firstly, for the full complement of respondents, 61.7%, state that they do speak different varieties of Xhosa. There is however great uncertainty about how to describe these varieties. When it comes to language mixing however, 93.1% of all the respondents indicate that they do mix different languages. Some feel they code-mix, but do not speak a "mixed code". The gap between the 61.7% who state they do speak different varieties and the 93.1% who state they mix different languages, may in reality be smaller. When the specific question about using different varieties of Xhosa is asked, 52% of the respondents state that they now use a different form of the language than when they were

younger. Also, 51.4% of the respondents claim that they use different varieties at home and school.

The respondents are thus aware that they often use words taken from English (mostly) and Afrikaans (less pervasively) when they speak Xhosa. They are also aware that they make use of different varieties of Xhosa, i.e. the pure or the mixed forms. It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that more Xhosa speakers are proficient in the mixed variety than in the standard or “pure” variety of Xhosa (Finlayson & Slabbert 2000, 2002).

Secondly, most of the respondents have received their primary and secondary schooling in the Eastern Cape. This region is perceived to be the home of the standard dialect of Xhosa and thus central to the preservation of the language. The variety of Xhosa spoken in the Eastern Cape is commonly accepted as the “deep” version. (cf. Nomlomo 2003). This version is thus the pure or uncontaminated variety of Xhosa, as seen from a prescriptive, cultural perspective.

Almost half of the respondents have stated that they do not use the same form of Xhosa now as when they were younger. The variety of Xhosa used at home and school are also different for 51.4% of the respondents. Although they had difficulty in describing or naming these differences, they indicated the terms mixed, pure, formal, informal and deep with more frequency than any other terms. There is thus a definite awareness of the

difference between a formal and informal variety of the language and consistently almost half the respondents choose a different variety to the formal one.

4.3.4 *Hypothesis 4: There is a marked shift away from deep-Xhosa to mixed-Xhosa in the Western Cape amongst Xhosa L1 speakers.*

The Xhosa L1 speakers are mostly also Xhosa-English bilinguals. In the Western Cape the three official languages and also the three languages most spoken are Xhosa, English and Afrikaans (Plüddemann et al. 2004; Stats SA 2003). Accordingly the opportunities for and the usefulness of language mixing is well established in these multilingual communities. These groups of respondents, 46%, have indicated that they use a different form of Xhosa now compared to when they were younger. More specifically, 51.4% indicate the use of different varieties at home and school. Deep-Xhosa seems to be used when the conversation involves Xhosa language teaching and learning in the classroom, but also when the respondents are speaking to their elders, such as parents or grandparents in the home environment. When they are with their peers, mixed-Xhosa will be used, and also outside the Xhosa language classroom. In addition, 42.6% prefer the use of a mixed variety of the language themselves, and they indicate that they believe 68.6% of their peers prefer the use of a mixed variety. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that there has been a significant shift away from the use of the deep variety of Xhosa to the mixed variety.

There is however still a persisting perception that deep-Xhosa is the better variety of the language, even though it is seen as “difficult” and a negative marker of “ruralness”. Only when speakers are in a specific context where this variety is required, will it be used. Nomlomo (2003) asks for the recognition of the difficulties encountered by urban learners and speakers of other dialects of Xhosa when having to speak “deep” Xhosa. He argues for the restandardisation of Xhosa to consider the popularity and developments in urban Xhosa.

4.3.5 *Hypothesis 5: Young Xhosa L1 speakers are significantly proficient in the use of Xhosa: English code mixing*

In terms of their language attitudes, 42% of the respondents prefer the mixed variety of the language. The respondents have indicated too that, according to their impressions, 68.6% of their fellow Xhosa L1 speakers prefer the mixed form. This indicates that the common form used is the mixed variety. This variety is characterised by a grammatical structure of deep-Xhosa with much English lexicalisation.

#### **4.4 Shortcomings and errors**

The duplication of some of the completed questionnaires, a questionnaire being completed by the same respondent, was an aspect in the use of this type of instrument that was picked up. A manual checking process ensured that the questionnaires used for this research were all completed by different respondents.

It also seemed that the answering to questions 3.1.2 was problematic. These are some of the questions where a written response was required as opposed to simply ticking in an

appropriate box. Some of the respondents were confused by the terms when and why, when asked about the change in the variety of their mother tongue used. It seems as if this type of question would have been better answered if the two questions contained within the instruction were given separately.

The above mentioned question, as well as those numbered 3.2.1 and 4.3.2 were difficult to capture as a response could not be accurately predicted. The richness of the answers in terms of the text that was written by the respondents, has not been captured or exploited in the analysis as the responses were mostly constructed to fit within a set of variables. The nature of the project does not allow for an opportunity to extract more accurate and richer information from these questionnaires.

Lastly, for some of the answers it was difficult to assess exactly what the respondent was trying to say as the language was cryptic and unclear. A follow-up interview could possibly have clarified the responses that were written down.

## **4.5 Conclusions**

The concluding interpretations have been structured to focus on the respondents' Xhosa-English bilingual abilities and the varieties of Xhosa they report to have competence in.

### *4.5.1 Xhosa-English bilingual abilities*

The results indicate that the respondents are mainly Xhosa-English bilingual. Those who view themselves to be Xhosa mother tongue speakers, regard themselves to be fully competent in English as well. This must be seen against the backdrop that English is one

of the most powerful languages in South Africa, in terms of education, economics and social status (cf. comments above). Not only in South Africa, in fact English has become the language of globalization and new world order, in addition to being the language of information technology (Banda 2004).

It was expected that the Xhosa mother tongue speakers would show higher competence in Zulu than was reported. Zulu is the third most spoken language by the Eastern Cape population. Only 40 % of the Xhosa mother tongue speakers said that they are fully competent in Zulu. So although these two languages are mutually intelligible, the respondents do not indicate that they are generally competent in Zulu. The low level of competence reported in Zulu could also be a result of ethnic identity. The Xhosa and Zulu people, although having mutually intelligible languages, have two distinct cultural identities. Seeing that the Eastern Cape is the heart and recognized preserve of the Xhosa culture, it can be expected for Xhosa mother tongue speakers coming from this region, to underplay their competencies in Zulu.

The Xhosa mother tongue speakers do not report a Xhosa-English-Afrikaans multilingual ability. Afrikaans only has a 16% competency amongst the Xhosa mother tongue speakers. After Xhosa, Afrikaans is the language most spoken in the Eastern Cape. One could have presumed that the respondents' abilities in Afrikaans would be far better than their abilities in Zulu. It seems that for these respondents Afrikaans was not as important a linguistic influence as it is in the Western Cape where the surveys were collected. This finding is similar to other recent studies (cf. Braam 2005; Plüddemann et al. 2004). Also,

most of the respondents were people who were schooled in the Eastern Cape, and therefore did not have exposure to Afrikaans to the extent that those respondents who were schooled mainly in the Western Cape had. Competence can also be underreported because of the perception that Afrikaans is still stigmatized as the language of the oppressor. (cf. Banda 2000, 2004).

#### 4.5.2 *Varieties of Xhosa*

More than half of the Xhosa mother tongue speakers indicate that they speak different varieties of Xhosa and also that they use a different form of the language now as compared to forms used at an early age.

The “deep” version that the respondents were exposed to growing up in the Eastern Cape is one that they are moving away from. “Deep-Xhosa seems to be preferred as the ideal for instruction in schools, although it is unclear whether this preference relates to Xhosa language instruction, non-language subject instruction, or both. The version that is used generally or communicatively is the mixed version.

There is thus a marked shift away from deep-Xhosa, to a preference for the mixed variety of the Xhosa language. The respondents find it easier to use the mixed variety and also state that they find it easier to understand. In the Western Cape in particular, predominantly English words are mixed into the Xhosa language. The respondents indicate that in the area where they find themselves now, a mixed version is preferred.

Effectively, the results demonstrate that the Xhosa mother tongue speakers are less multilingual in the strict sense of the term than had been anticipated. More precisely, these respondents are bilingual, rather than multilingual, and they have a marked preference for using the mixed variety of Xhosa. In terms of language use, the results also show is a complex diglossic situation, in which the H and L are perceived in the classic one language sense, but involves moving between the H and L of three or more languages (Xhosa, English, Zulu and Afrikaans) (cf. Finlayson & Slabbert 2000, 2004).





## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

The main findings will be expressed in relation to the results as they were obtained in testing the hypotheses on which this project was based. This project intended to collect data in order to test a number of claims concerning the extent of the use and value of bilingualism and multilingualism for a group of young Xhosa mother tongue speakers. This chapter will give an evaluation of the obtained results in terms of the literature cited in chapter 2. The hypotheses will be used to frame the discussion, followed by a focus on the problematic issues and significance of these results.

### 5.1 *Results in terms of literature cited*

The questionnaire prompted respondents to answer questions about various aspects of their use of Xhosa as L1. The results offer insights into their perception of bi- and multilingualism, language varieties, language attitudes and language shift, which will be correlated with current literature on these topics.

#### 5.1.1 *Bilingualism and multilingualism*

It was found that young adult Xhosa mother tongue speakers are significantly less bilingual and multilingual than what is popularly claimed. The respondents' level of linguistic competence is clearly confined to Xhosa and English. The results indicated that of the 333 fully competent mother tongue Xhosa speakers, 327 indicated full language

competence in English. This was the most significant indication of Xhosa-English bilingualism.

The definitions regarding bi- and multilingualism range from perspectives that are open and inclusive to more narrow and specific. These perspectives can be joined to definitions as were described by for instance Clyne (1982) and Baker (1993) in the literature review. For this particular research Bakers' description of the four language abilities as qualification for language competence was used. Using these criteria it can be assumed that our respondents are not as multilingual to the extent suggested elsewhere. The results indicated that the respondents are basically Xhosa: English bilingual. This is because the majority is from the rural areas of the Eastern Cape.

Clyne (1982) defined multilingualism as merely the use of more than one language. This definition can neither account for the various competencies one could have in a language, nor the level of ability in those competencies. If this definition was applied to our respondent's language abilities, then they would have qualified as clearly multilingual individuals. As a purely conversational tool, these respondents would be able to use the languages within their repertoire to make themselves understood by people in a multilingual context across various domains of language use. This would mean that our respondents would have the ability to have a more or less meaningful conversation with individuals who speak Xhosa, English, Zulu or Afrikaans in particular in the Western Cape context.

These respondents would however, according to their own assessment, not be able to cope with specifically Afrikaans or Zulu were it to be used for purposes other than conversational. Of the 333 respondents who indicated that they can speak, understand, read and write in Xhosa, 327 indicated competence in all four language abilities for English. The demands on those competencies increase as it has to be used for higher level skills. Elementary competence in a language would not be sufficient as an individual is exposed to higher levels of language use, as is demanded at for instance tertiary level. The results from the research indicated that our respondents are at least competent in Xhosa and English. This method of self-reporting cannot, however, attempt to reflect how skilled these respondents are in those four competencies identified. Banda (2004) argues that black students overrate their competence in English.

#### 5.1.2 *Language varieties*

From the data collected it was determined that the respondents were aware of and used different varieties of Xhosa. Researchers such as Romaine (1984) found that the different settings of home and school would produce different varieties of a language. In a child's formative years of language development, language results from a natural and spontaneous situation. Within the school environment a language is consciously taught and learnt. For non-language subjects the language is mostly a response, initiated by an instructor. This situation is one that gives rise to the differentiation of a home and school variety of a language.

The responses to the questionnaires are that the respondents, 61.7%, indicated that they speak different varieties of Xhosa, and that these different varieties are used commonly in the domains of community and home. In this instance it seems that the standard variety of the language was more frequently used at home, and the other variety in the community. It would have been expected that the difference between the variety used at home and at school would be the first obvious indicator of these varieties. The norm would also then have been that the standard variety would be used at school.

Chambers (1995) stated that that the stages of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, influence the adoption of various varieties of a language. He is also clear in that the childhood variety is influenced by friends and family. The variety used in young adulthood is influenced by social factors such as class and what is seen as socially appropriate. The interesting phenomena in this instance is that the standard variety, deep-Xhosa, is the language variety that is used at home and the non-standard variety, mixed-Xhosa, is associated with the community. It could have been expected for the respondents to associate the standard variety with the school and the non-standard with the home. This seeming contradiction of the prevalent literature is explained by the study done by Thipa (1984).

Thipa (1984) focused on the difference between the rural and the urban Xhosa varieties. Of the respondents, 69.4% received their primary schooling in the Eastern Cape. Also, 57.4% of the respondents received their secondary schooling in the Eastern Cape. Thipa states that the rural Xhosa variety in relation to the urban variety:

- a. *is less influenced by borrowing from Afrikaans and English;*
- b. *tends to be more conservative;*
- c. *is less subject to change; and*
- d. *is a feature of speakers who have been least exposed to Western influences and experience*

The language variety of the Xhosa mother tongue speaker used at home in the rural areas would therefore be the standard variety or a variety closer to the standard form than the non-standard form. Since most of the respondents were raised and schooled in the Eastern Cape it stands to reason that the home variety would in this case be closer to the standard form of the language.

Banda (2000) stated that the ethnic and cultural identity of the Xhosa language will for some time, ironically, be maintained by the linguistic communities that were artificially engineered by the apartheid government. Yet, with the rapid advance of urbanisation, it seems as if this situation will not continue to be, and most probably is not a stabilising factor in the movement away from the rural deep-Xhosa variety.

The non-standard variety of Xhosa, in this case more the urban variety of Xhosa, is one that the respondents have been exposed to later in life, or through contact with those in the community who used this variety. The respondents have moved from the Eastern Cape to the Western Cape where the urban variety is being used. This urban variety is

particularly interspersed with borrowings from English. The results have shown that 93.1 % of the respondents indicate that they do mix languages. In the Western Cape the system of language mixing will include therefore mostly English and to a lesser degree Afrikaans words and phrases. The reasons given for language mixing were firstly, because they feel that more people can understand them and secondly, because they believe that there are no equivalent forms in Xhosa. These reasons seem to be valid, especially in the light of Xhosa mother tongue speakers finding themselves in an urban environment where English is the dominant language.

### 5.1.3 *Language attitudes*

The respondents made clear that there is strong support for the position that through the speaking of a standard Xhosa variety the Xhosa community's culture and identity is preserved and protected. A total of 77% of the respondents indicated that they want the pure variety of Xhosa to be taught in schools. In practice it seems that the urban, non-standard variety is used more readily. A group representing 54.9% of the respondents reported that they personally prefer to use the "pure" form of the language. When asked what variety they think others preferred, 68.6% claimed that other Xhosa L1 speakers would elect the mixed variety. Thus although their own language preference is indicated as the one that is the stronger identity marker, respondents believe a majority of others do not share the preference. This can be interpreted as proof that the variety that is most used, is in fact the urban variety. I would assume that consideration of issues concerning identity and culture, contribute to respondents' intuitive choice for the pure variety. In reality, however, the form most widely used appears not to be the "deep" Xhosa.

Chambers (1950) contends that social factors concerning class and occupation will influence a speaker's choice of variety during young adulthood. For our respondents social factors concerning class and occupation would affect language choice. The urban variety is the more prestigious form among urban youth in a multilingual setting.

Calteaux (1995) believes that the younger African language speakers are moving away from the standard varieties of their languages. Urban varieties are perceived as having more prestige and status. Finlayson and Slabbert (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004) go as far as to state that the urban varieties might turn out to threaten the non-standard form of the language. Even though the belief in the standard variety of Xhosa as a marker of identity and culture is well established, the urban variety that is developing has become a marker of status as a person who knows his/her way around, is clever, streetwise and well informed within the urban and multilingual settings. (cf. Nomlomo 2003, Finlayson & Slabbert 2000, 2002, 2004).

The respondents made it clear that there is strong support for the position that through the speaking of a standard Xhosa variety the Xhosa community's culture and identity is preserved and protected. A total of 77% of the respondents indicate that they want the pure variety of Xhosa, deep-Xhosa, to be taught in schools. In practice it seems that they use the urban, non-standard variety more readily. A group representing 54.9 % of the respondents have reported that they personally prefer to use the pure form of the language. When asked what variety they think others preferred, 68.6% opted for the mixed variety. What this proves is that the variety that is most used, is in fact the urban variety. For issues concerning identity and culture, respondents would intuitively choose

the pure variety. In reality however the choice will be for the form most popularly used. Chambers (1950) contends that social factors concerning class and occupation will influence a speaker's choice of variety during young adulthood. For our respondents, the urban variety, mixed-Xhosa, would be chosen in an urban multilingual setting. Calteaux (1995) believes that the younger African language speakers are moving away from the standard varieties of their languages. Urban varieties are seen as having more prestige and status. Finlayson and Slabbert (1998) go as far as to state that the urban varieties might turn out to threaten the non-standard form of the language. Even though there is a belief in the standard variety of Xhosa as a marker of identity and culture, there is an urban variety that is developing and given status within the urban and multilingual settings.

#### 5.1.4 *Language shift*

Romaine and Nettle (2000) indicate that language shift takes place when some of the domains and functions of a language are taken in by another language. The urban variety of Xhosa developed within particular domains that are removed from those where the rural form of the language is customarily used. Therefore it seems safe to assume that the different forms are suited to, and associated with, different contexts. Fishman (1991) writes that language shift occurs as a result of demographic, social and cultural dislocation, but also states that it is a slow and gradual process. For the South African situation it would mean that some of our languages must be in the process of language shift, or have undergone language shift already.



## **5.2 Evaluation of the project**

The first assumption with which this research project worked, was that all respondents would indicate competence in all four language abilities, seeing that they were all Xhosa L1 speakers who had completed secondary school. This hypothesis was, however, not supported. Seventeen, 4.8%, of the respondents who identified themselves as Xhosa L1 speakers, did not report confidence in all four languages abilities. This can possibly be explained by the fact that many who identify themselves as Xhosa, are aware of their limited proficiency in the standard form of Xhosa which is a marker of cultural identity. Although not specifically tested, they would probably prove to be skilled in all four the abilities if a different definition of the language, i.e. of what counts as “Xhosa”, were to be used.

Two of the questions on the changes in patterns of language use were either not completed by the students, or answered in an unexpected and rather ambiguous way. The respondents had to give an answer to a two-pronged question, which proved problematic, as the answers were responses to different kinds of problems. The question may have been unclear, thus it was difficult to separate the answers according to which issue the respondents were addressing. This question would have produced more useful results if it had been set as two completely separate ones. The responses to the particular two questions had been intended to provide insight into the reasons and motivations why respondents changed the form/variety of their language in certain domains. Due to the apparent confusion, the responses were discarded in the analysis.

The responses that were meant to be text-rich, which would give more than pre-packaged possibilities to consider, did not give as much information as would have been useful. Most respondents focused on answering the questions that had a set of predetermined answers where they had to indicate their choice; where respondents were required to write their own comments, very few responded at all. This could have been as a result of the nature of the questionnaire as an instrument that largely required respondents to give their answers in the form of ticks in boxes. Participants may have an aversion to questions requiring self-formulated answers that require more effort, more reflection, and more writing. More effective design of certain questions may have solved this problem. Even though the questionnaire is of a reasonable length – requiring no more than 20 minutes to complete – it is also possible that toward the end of the questionnaire respondents began to lose interest to answer as completely as possible. The last page of the questionnaire contained questions that could have been seen as ambiguous or unclear for the respondents. Answers to these questions as well as to the very last (unambiguous) question were left unanswered by many respondents. Other forms of research instruments, such as interviews could have aided in obtaining satisfactory responses to these questions.

This questionnaire was a survey of students reporting on their own abilities in Xhosa. In self-reporting it is generally found that respondents overestimate their abilities. In this case one then has to bear in mind that respondents asked to assess how competent they are in a language, may have claimed more than an independent test would justify. It is nonetheless still a means through which real insights into language use can be obtained.

The bias of overestimation would be similar for all participants, thus the results will be similarly “skewed” for all. The responses, therefore still provide a platform from which the researcher could draw calculated conclusions about the use and attitude toward the language in question. A survey of this nature could, in other circumstances, be followed up by interviews and language tests to produce more accurate and authoritative results, and provide more depth. However, the scope of this project did not allow for the use of other supportive or additional research instruments.

### **5.3 Significance of the project**

In spite of the recognised limitations of information drawn from a limited sample of Xhosa L1 young adults, by means of an instrument that is not flawless, the results do provide some valuable answers to the questions set out. This project also provides a helpful basis for further research into larger issues that could not be addressed here.

There seems to be tension between the respondents’ language identity in terms of how language is linked to culture on the one hand, and to urbanisation and emancipation, on the other hand. The “pure”, standardised form of Xhosa is undoubtedly linked to cultural identity, while the “mixed” form of the language is linked to the social settings in which they currently find themselves, the reality of living in a multilingual urban environment. The pure form is a marker of cultural rootedness, while the mixed form is a marker of progress and social advancement. The tension lies specifically in whether the respondents view culture and urbanisation as two opposing forces in defining their language identity; as positive and negative forces. If the relation between culture and urbanisation can be

seen as not mutually exclusive, the pure form of Xhosa could be experienced as a language that serves a purpose other than that of the mixed form. It can be developed and used not only as a marker and preserver of culture, but also as a linguistic form that can serve in the full variety of typically urban domains such as education, the workplace, public community spaces such as religious meetings, and so on. Then it is possible for the standard form to take up its rightful place within the urban environment alongside English and Afrikaans in the Western Cape (Nomlomo: 2003).

The government has a critical role to play in the development and use of Xhosa within educational, social, and economic spheres. If government fails in this task, it would entrench the belief that the pure form of the language is mainly a marker of cultural identity (and even a dated one), but does not have a significant role to play elsewhere in societal structures. Language shift, not only from one dialect/variety to another, but even to another language such as English, would be a possible outcome of such a situation where people are formally or informally obliged to use their language differently in different domains. The role of government in enabling new or restorative practices where currently the mixed form of Xhosa is prominent, or where English dominates, should not be overlooked.

The results of the research already point to language shift as something that is not only in its early stages, but is in fact already well underway. If language shift is defined as the displacement of domains of language use, then language shift has indeed taken place among the respondents in their use of Xhosa. The language attitudes of the respondents

indicate their preference for the mixed form of Xhosa, as opposed to the pure form. Nevertheless, they consider the pure form as a variety that should be taught in schools. There seems to be an awareness of the need for preservation of the language in one domain, but also an acceptance that the pure form inevitably has lost its position as an enabling medium for young adults living and speaking in the real world.

Finally, the group represented by the respondents in this research project can only be described as bilingual, not as multilingual. The expectation that people living within in a multilingual context are multilingual themselves is a false expectation. For conversational purposes in a multilingual setting, many of the respondents may be presented as multilingual individuals. If however, we require that these respondents operate on more than the conversational level, then social and educational circumstances that assist in developing better levels of proficiency are required. To validate a claim of extensive individual multilingualism where speakers are balanced multilinguals, we need thorough and scientific reflection on (i) a widely recognised definition of the term, and (ii) well developed instruments for developing and testing the multilingual abilities required to fit the definition.

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# APPENDIX

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### I. INFORMATION ON THE RESPONDENT

1.1.1 Name: (Optional) .....

1.1.2 Surname (Optional) .....

1.1.3 Sex:  
(Mark your answer with an X)

F	M
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1.1.4 Age:

18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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### 1.2 HOME ADDRESS (Where do you stay now?)

1.2.1 Place: .....

1.2.2 Province: .....

1.2.3 How long have you been staying at this address?  
(Mark your answer with an X)

Less than 1 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	More than 5 years
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### 1.3 PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.3.1 Name: .....

1.3.2 Place: .....

1.3.3 Province:  
(Mark your answer with an X)

Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KZN	Mpumalanga	Northern Cape	Limpopo (North. P)	North West	Free State	Western Cape
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1.3.4 In which type of area was your primary school?  
(Mark your answer with an X)

Urban (City)	Rural (Country/village)
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### 1.4 SECONDARY SCHOOL

1.4.1 Name: .....

1.4.2 Place: .....

1.4.3 Province:

Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KZN	Mpumalanga	Northern Cape	Limpopo (North.P)	North West	Free State	Western Cape
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1.4.4 In which type of area was your secondary school?

Urban (City)	Rural (Country/village)
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1.4.5 In which year did you write your Matriculation Examinations?  
.....

**2. LANGUAGE USE**

2.1.1 My mother tongue is:

2.1.2 Other languages which I know:  
(Mark the situation that applies to you with an X. In the example, the informant/person can understand and speak Hindi, but not read and write it)

	Understand	Speak	Read	Write	Where and When do you use it?
E.g. Hindi	X	X			At family gatherings when talking to my grandparents.
Afrikaans					
English					
isiXhosa					
isiZulu					

2.2 Do you know different forms/varieties of your mother tongue?

 Yes  No

2.3 How would you describe/name the different forms of your mother tongue?

.....

2.4 Specify where you use these different forms.

.....

2.5 Do you sometimes mix different languages when you are talking?

 Yes  No

2.5.1 If you do mix languages, give reasons why **YOU** do this:  
(Mark the reasons you prefer with an X)

There are not equivalent words in my mother tongue (I fill the "gaps" by mixing)	
Mixing languages is more fashionable	
Mixing languages shows that you are better educated	
Mixing languages makes me feel part of an 'in-group'	
More people can understand me when I mix languages	
Other reasons	

2.5.2. Give reasons why you think **OTHER** speakers mix languages:  
(Mark the reasons you prefer with an X)

There are not equivalent words in my mother tongue (I fill the "gaps" by mixing)	
Mixing languages is more fashionable	
Mixing languages shows that you are better educated	
Mixing languages makes me feel part of an 'in-group'	
More people can understand me when I mix languages	
Other reasons	

**3. CHANGES IN PATTERNS OF LANGUAGE USE**

3.1.1 At present do you speak the same form of your mother tongue that you did as a child?

Yes	No
-----	----

3.1.2 If NO, specify WHEN and WHY you changed the form of your mother tongue in everyday communication?

When	Why

3.2.1 Do you use the same form of you mother tongue at home and at school?

Yes	No
-----	----

3.2.1 If NO, explain the difference and the reason for the difference.

Explanation of the difference	Reason for the difference

**4. LANGUAGE ATTITUDES**

4.1 Specify which form of your mother tongue YOU prefer:

Mixed form of the mother tongue	
Pure form of the mother tongue	

4.2 Specify which form of your mother tongue most OTHER mother tongue speakers prefer:

Mixed form of the mother tongue	
Pure form of the mother tongue	

4.3.1 Which form of your mother tongue do you think must be taught in schools?

Mixed form of the mother tongue	
Pure form of the mother tongue	

4.3.2 Give reasons for your answer in 4.3.1.

.....

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