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2011-04-28
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Master of Arts in Community-Based Counseling Psychology Research report

Exploring the influence of the (in)ability to read and write in Setswana on the entholinguistic identity of a group of Batswana graduates working in Johannesburg

2009

University of the Witwatersrand

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not been copied from someone else's work, nor has it been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university. All the sources that have been used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

_____

Morongwa Bernice Mokoena

30 November 2009

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to the Lord God Almighty, for giving me the courage, wisdom and ability to complete this challenging year. Without you, my strength would have failed me. Thank you for being my unshakable rock and foundation. Secondly, to all the graduates who were involved in the study, I am grateful to you for allowing me into your homes and offices to share your thoughts and ideas. To my parents, my siblings and their spouses, thank you for believing in me, loving me, encouraging me and carrying me in your prayers, and for shaping a person that I will always be. Your unfailing faith in me through the challenges of the year will never be forgotten. To my other family, Tower of Grace, and to all my friends, I know that I can never thank you enough for being my source of support in this year. May you be rewarded for your care and love. To my therapist, Ms Melody Ncguka, your containment and skills were not just a source of strength and support, but a true reflection of professionalism, insight and empathy. To Hector Motau, for having sincere faith in my gifts and for being a visionary that you are, I have been inspired to do my best in life. To my husband, Surp, you have been my best friend, my biggest fan, and my consistent cheer leader. Thank you for celebrating my smallest victories with me, and for carrying my weakest moments. Your sacrifices and willingness to let me pursue my dreams have been the greatest gift I got this year.

To all the MACC staff members, thank you for your consistent concern, care and guidance through both good and bad times. You have taught us well. To the super MACC team, who have grown to be my friends through the year. This load was much more lighter because you were there. Your motivation, courage and empathy got me through the hard times. Thank you for not giving up and for walking this path that only we could understand. You are the best!

Lastly, to my Research Supervisor, Professor Norman Duncan, I have grown just from watching you express your expertise in a professional, yet warm manner. Your mentorship, commitment and passion for academia have inspired me to use my potential and believe in my capabilities. Thank you for patiently grooming my skills through your leadership.

Dedication

I dedicate this research to the beautiful South African communities in their diversity. The richness of their cultures, wisdom and spirit of humanity have carried this country over centuries of hardships and victories. May this work bring to the surface the dormant self-determination in those communities that have been wounded by challenges, and inspire them to create and utilize their unique knowledge in determining their lives.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter Organisation

1.1 Introduction

Being able to speak one's mother tongue is more than just an ability to verbalise one's thoughts through the language of one's mother. It is an expression of one's roots, a statement about which group or community one belongs to, and a unique construction of objects, experiences and practices that have carried one's history, culture, beliefs, customs and rituals through dire social distresses (Nyamende, 2008). However, language is not just core to the construction of such valued constructs, but they also construct the language in turn. For these reasons, language is seen as key in constructing identity, because it structures the way we see society and culture. The mother tongue, however, is not the only marker of identity, as it is intertwined with other complex constructs that complete identity of individuals, groups and communities. Language has a broader use than just being an identity marker, for instance, it can be seen as a source of affiliation, as well as a resource in a person's life history, thus encompassing a person's chance, context and choice (both conscious and unconscious) that all make up his or her identity (Leibowitz, Adendorff, Daniels, Loots, Nakasa, Ngxabazi, Van der Merwe & Van Deventer, 2005). In addition, one's mother tongue as a marker of identity is even stronger when that language is marginalized (Leibowitz, et al., 2005). Consequently, identity that is mainly defined by language cannot be simply termed linguistic identity, but a term ethnolinguistic identity is used instead to refer to the use of language and all that it is bound to it in expressing one's identity. This term is much broader and accommodates many other aspects that people use to define their identity, which often cannot be separated from language.

It is important to consider that language is not just used orally in everyday social interactions. This is especially true in this information age, where people have to draw on different oral and written languages and literacy in their daily lives, in order to comply with institutional policies and practices that impinge on their daily practices (Pahl, 2008). This makes one's ability to read and write languages important, as the inability to do so can lead to exclusion of certain communities or individuals in every day participation in

social activities. The workplace, as a place of economic activity in which most South Africans participate on a daily basis, becomes crucial in determining which skills people must acquire. If the mother tongue forms the core of a person's ethnolinguistic identity, then the ability to read and write this mother tongue should be important as it could affect the individual's ability to interact with others both inside and outside the workplace. In South Africa, English is still the most dominantly used language in the workplace, and thus requires that the employees become literate in it (Alexander, 2005). Whether one sees literacy in the language that is used in the workplace as a skills-focused functional need (independent from one's ethnolinguistic identity) or as a culturally embedded concept that is naturally contested (ideological view), the effect of people's ability to read and write in their mother tongue on their ethnolinguistic identity can only be informed by the speakers of that language. This research was aimed at exploring that effect, given that Setswana as one of the African languages is also marginalized in the workplace which is dominated by English.

1.2 Chapter Organisation

For the sake of structure and easy reading, this research report has been divided into five chapters. *Chapter One* consists of the introduction of the research topic and short background information that informed the choice of this topic, and alludes briefly to what the reader can expect throughout the report.

Chapter Two builds on the background information given in the introduction by looking closely at the literature that is relevant to the study. The literature review focuses mainly on the different areas of focus in research on language, namely the education system and the workplace, as well as the aspects of language constituting the main focus of this research. Finally, different arguments by researchers, linguists and authors are compared and contrasted in order to reflect the complexity of language as a key aspect of people's ethnolinguistic identity.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology that was followed to conduct the research, and addresses questions of validity and ethical considerations that the reader might have

concerning the research. The procedures and criteria used in the selection of participants, as well as the methods used in data collection and analysis are described and the rationale for their use elaborated on.

Chapter Four discusses critically the themes that were identified from the participants' responses. While the research responses produced a rich diversity of themes, only themes that are relevant to answering the research questions are discussed. These include broad language themes (such as construction of language and the mother tongue, and the participants' construction of language use in the workplace) and identity themes (such as the role of language in identity, how the participants' ability or inability to read and write Setswana affects their ethnolinguistic identity.

Chapter Five covers the critical interpretations of the findings, the researcher's views on the subject, as well as the recommendations that are informed by the findings of the study. Critical thoughts on the research results are explored, and the limitations are explained, in an attempt to encourage further research in the area of ethnolinguistic identity and language. The chapter sums up the research with a summary and conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Language plays a central role in the definition of people's personal, social and cultural identity (Alexander, 2005). Since the first language that children learn to communicate with is their mother tongue, the mother tongue forms the basis of the formation of identity. Additionally, as explained by Alexander (2005), language is so deeply intertwined with the economic and social structures that its fundamental importance seems only natural. With the dominance of English in this age of globalization and urbanization and its effect on the workplace, the use of African mother tongues is threatened. Although many social scientists equate the use of English over one's mother tongue to cultural suicide, some writers argue that this is not necessarily the case. English is said to be functioning as a lingua franca, and is a primary language of government, business, and commerce (Gough, 1995). A trend that has resulted in the globalised economy is that many black children are schooled in English and are not literate in their mother tongue. The purpose of this research is to look at the impact of such illiteracy in mother tongue on the ethnolinguistic identity of some of those blacks who are working in Johannesburg, using Setswana as a language under study.

First, this chapter looks at the definition of identity, followed by the history of English and Setswana in South Africa. Previous research on language and ethnolinguistic identity, both in the education system and in the workplace follows the history of English and Setswana. Definitions of concepts used in the research then follow, and lastly different debates about the role of language in ethnolinguistic identity are explored.

2.2 Definition of identity

Identity is difficult to define, given that it makes use of different kinds of characteristics that mark who one is or that distinguishes one from others, and often has to do with belonging to a certain group (Mlama, 2002). Mhlahlo (2002) sees it as "that which denotes a specified person, belonging to a specified people, place, sex or sexual preference" (p. 4).

One person may refer to himself as an African, which is identity based on race, culture or geography, but the same person can define himself as an "urban" person, based on the kind of environment they live in, or as a Christian, indicating their religious beliefs, or as a Zulu, which could indicate both his ethnicity and his mother tongue. Because identity is based on fluid and constantly changing factors such as culture, social groups, religion, nationality, language etc., which are often too difficult to define, it becomes a fluid concept that can be based on any aspect that an individual views as important in his/her life. In this regard, Vlasselaers (2002) sees identity as a complex notion that is neither homogenous nor permanent, but made up of a tension between remaining the same over time for one thing and changing over time for another. Identity is also defined on an individual as well as collective level. On an individual level, it is dynamic, constructive and context-bound in nature, because a person's definition of the self is based on a system of mutually related self-representations, relating both to others and to the world. In other words, individuals are part of a society in which they belong to different subgroups in which they share common sets of reality constructs with others, and communicate and interact with them. Thus a person could belong to a religious group, a corporate organization, a community club, all of which do not correspond with a person's culture. A person may occupy different positions within society. Individual identity is thus inextricably related to social identity (Vlasselaers, 2002). On the collective level, group identity can be formed by a collective of individuals based on the sociality dimension in interpersonal relations, such as belonging to one group of friends. Community identity, on the other hand, is seen to exceed both individual and group identity in space and in time, and it is more abstract in that physical presence or nearness is pushed into the background. One form of this kind of identity is ethnic identity (Vlasselaers, 2002). Before we look at the research conducted in South Africa on ethno-linguistic identity, we will first look at the history of English and Setswana in South Africa.

2.3 The History of English in South Africa

Contrary to popular belief that the first English speakers only arrived in South Africa in 1795, Gough (1995) reports that a group of English sailors was wrecked on the Natal Coast in the late 17th century, and settled in the present region of the coastal KwaZulu

Natal amongst the native inhabitants who received them amicably. With time these sailors learned the language and customs of the local people. While some were rescued a few years later from the adventurous yet comfortable life they seemed to have, a few remained behind, forming what could possibly be regarded as the first permanent settlement of English-speakers in southern Africa (Gough, 1995). This happened about a hundred years before formal British colonization. From 1795 onwards, more and more English speakers came to South Africa, with the numbers increasing largely by the 1800s. In 1870, the discovery of gold and diamonds, together with the global industrial revolution saw increased immigration of British English speakers, and the emergence of a stratified urban society. In 1822, the English language was made the sole official language of the Cape Colony, replacing Dutch (Gough, 1995)

In 1910, when the former Boer republics were joined with the Cape Colony and Natal in the Union Act of 1910, Afrikaans was made an equal and joint official language with English (Banda, 2000). The economic power was still with English-speakers, but there was an increase in English-Dutch bilingualism as Afrikaners started entering the urban job market and the government as civil servants. The Afrikaner nationalists soon became hostile towards their language being secondary to English, and this led to the language struggle that made language loyalty the biggest social division within South African white society (Banda, 2000). While the division was widening, the use of English among black South Africans was increasing owing to the availability of state and mission schools, as well as the increasing interaction with English speakers in the ever-growing cities and the work places (Banda, 2000). English at the time experienced two - almost conflicting - sources of support. Firstly it was perceived as a language of political power and thus highly regarded by European colonists (apart from a strong Dutch/Afrikaans movement that existed at the same time). Secondly, later it was perceived as the language of the struggle in resistance to Afrikaans, which was seen as the language of Apartheid (Gough, 1995). This was especially due to the Apartheid laws enforcing the teaching of Afrikaans and the subsequent 1976 Soweto riots.

The increasing English dominance came to change when the Afrikaner National Party came to power in 1948. Banda (2000, p. 53) reports that the National Party (NP)

proclaimed ‘confrontation with all things English…and attempts [were] made to enforce Afrikaans over English in every sphere of public life’. The new NP government used education as one of its primary weapons to advance Afrikaans and reduce the influence of English in South Africa. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was swiftly implemented by incorporating mother tongue into the education system, while systematically replacing the role of English with Afrikaans. The system received strong opposition from both blacks and whites, but was enforced in both the educational field and through social segregation. One other way of enforcing this system was a deliberate removal of white English-speaking teachers from the Bantu education system, thereby denying black children English-speaking role-models and well trained, experienced teachers. Black children were denied entry into traditionally English-medium Universities, thus confining their encounter with English to the classroom with teachers who were themselves products of deprived learning experiences with little knowledge of teaching methods or competence in English from training colleges, because colleges also had their English teachers removed, and had suffered the same fate as the schools (Banda, 2000). Thus, all these factors, including the lack of consultation with people other than the Afrikaner policy makers, the forceful removal of experienced teachers, the lack of funding, and the general lack of interest in black education that accompanied the system culminated to the collapse of the English dominance (Banda, 2000).

Banda (2000) further maintains that because mother tongue education was introduced through a negative policy of Bantu Education that ultimately led to failure and mediocrity, blacks associate their mother tongues with mediocrity and failure.

2.4 The History of Setswana in South Africa

The Tswanas (Batswana) are a tribe who immigrated into Southern Africa from East Africa in the fourteenth century (South African Information [SA Info], 2001). Batswana history is characterized by continual dissension and conflicts that led to the breaking away of tribes from the main tribe, over various disputes, including chieftain ascendancy. The break-away group would then be led by a dissatisfied relative of a chief in the main tribe, and settle elsewhere. Often the name of the man who led the splinter group was taken as

the new tribe's name. Batswana are mainly found in South Africa (three fourths) and Botswana (one fourth), the country named after them. There are today 59 different tribal groups in South Africa who now accept the overall name of Tswana (SA Info, 2001)

Batswana are closely related to the Sotho (of Lesotho and South Africa) and share a bond in similarities in language and cultural customs, as well as a claim to a common ancestor, Mogale. Because of political reasons and the similarities between the languages of the Batswana, Basotho and Bapedi (who now live mainly in the Limpopo Province), the three have generally been considered as three languages under the general term 'Sotho-speakers" in South Africa (SA Info, 2001)

Setswana was the first Sotho language to have a written form, and was first written of by Heinrich Lictenstein in 1806, in his writing *Upon the Language of the Beetjuana* (as a British protectorate, Botswana was originally known as Bechuanaland). The Batswana did not go unaffected by the English missionary workers who were growing in numbers in Southern Africa. Dr Robert Moffat from the London Missionary Society arrived among the Batlhaping Tribe of the Batswana in Kudumane in 1818, and built Botswana's first school. The school led to him realizing that he had to use and write Setswana in his teaching. He therefore started on a long translation of the Bible into Setswana in 1825 (SA Info, 2001).

As English grew in Southern Africa, many Setswana speakers inhabiting the areas learnt the language. The first Motswana (speaker of Setswana) who contributed to the history of written Setswana is Sol D T. Plaatje, a journalist, linguist and politician who worked as a writer and translator. With the help of Professor Jones, Sol Plaatjie wrote *Tones of Secwana Nouns* in 1929 (Malimabe, 2000). Sol Plaatjie was one of the founding members of the African National Congress, and was a political activist fluent in seven languages. He played a huge role in translating the work of English writers like Shakespeare into Setswana (SA Info, 2001).

For many decades the Batswana migrated to new lands, setting up chiefdoms at will before the Government of South Africa made boundaries that obliged them to settle permanently in certain areas. As part of the apartheid practices, the land where the

Batswana were allowed to settle became a homeland, which was later given independence as the national pseudo-state of Bophuthatswana, which means literally ‘the tying together of Batswana'. This state was not recognised internationally, and ended with the fall from power of President Lucas Mangope in 1994, and the re-incorporation of Bophuthatswana into the Republic of South Africa (SA Info, 2001).

The history of the Batswana shows a high level of acceptance of the English influence (which can be easily associated with the language that taught them how to write) and the prestige associated with English. Although African languages had not been recognized by the apartheid government, in the ‘independent homelands’ (established as part of the apartheid policy of ‘separate development’), English rather than Afrikaans was typically utilized by homeland authorities as an official language, together with one or more African languages of the region (Gough, 1995). Thus, English could have possibly represented all things positive to Batswana, including the ability to read and write it first, then extending the skill to their mother tongue later. And as mentioned earlier, English was used by politicians such as Sol Plaatjie as a weapon and form of resistance against colonialism and apartheid.

2.5 Previous research related to Ethnolinguistic identity in South Africa

Most of the research that has been conducted about the use of the mother tongue has mainly focused on the integration of the mother tongue in the education system (Lafon & Webb, 2008). According to Dyers (2000), such studies are mainly focused on attitudes of blacks towards their mother tongue, and have been conducted by various authors in different years. Dyers (2000) refers to studies written of by Chick in 1992, Webb in 1992, Bosch and De Klerk in 1994, Mawasha in 1996, Heugh in1995, McCormick in 1995, Barkhuizen in 1996 and Chick and Wade in 1997. These studies focused on different aspects of languages, including language use, behaviour, code-mixing, borrowing and preferences, among others (Dyers, 2000). Language attitude studies often include studying languages in general, motivations to study first or second languages, the status of language, its speakers and varieties, language shifts within communities, and loyalty

towards one's own language or non-standard dialect thereof. According to Dyers (2000), most of these studies do not deeply take into account the link between language and identity, except for the study conducted by Chick and Wade in 1997, which showed that some isiZulu speakers would speak English as a way of indexing some English identity (as a mark of educational background and status) while still maintaining their own ethnic identity. Dyers' (2000) study, as well as that conducted by Bekker (2002), were also conducted within the academic settings, although they have useful insights for this study.

Dyers (2000) found in his longitudinal study of isiXhosa speakers studying at the University of the Western Cape that the respondents saw English as a dominant but not a dominating language, and did not believe that isiXhosa was threatened by English. His research also showed that respondents had developed multiple identities that they used in different domains of use, especially domains of necessity (education and employment). Domains were defined as institutional contexts where certain languages were more appropriate than the other, and answered the questions of who was speaking what language to whom and when? (Dyers, 2000). The respondents showed some rejection of Afrikaans, and responded negatively to the idea of standardizing Nguni languages (Dyers, 2000).

Bekker (2002) found that most of the language-attitude studies conducted in South Africa had conflicting results, especially because they were used to serve the academic, political and ideological convictions of the researchers. Bekker (2002) criticized the studies of being too descriptive, and not sufficiently explanatory (why people have certain attitudes), and conducted a study with students from UNISA (assessing UNISA's new language policy that allows anyone to be taught in the language of their choice). As part of this study he constructed an attitude scale which he believed future researchers could use to take into account the complex and multidimensional nature of language attitudes. He emphasized scientifically accurate methodology rather than just descriptions.

A few studies that better link language and ethno-linguistic identity were conducted by Christopher (2006) and Bekker (2005).

Christopher (2006) found in his research conducted on the sociohistorical analysis of censuses conducted in the country, that personal identity in South Africa has been at the centre of politics since 1910, when the Union was formed. As a result, language has always been of importance, along with race, religion and citizenship, in censuses conducted in South Africa. Furthermore, language and citizenship were researched on a racial basis in these past censuses, a practice which was aimed at forming a united white nation and to the formation of ethno-linguistic homelands. With the dawn of apartheid, race and language were merged in the quest for ethnicity, as the 9 African languages were divided into different populations or "national units" (Christopher, 2006, p. 123). Such categorizations presented some challenges as the apartheid government for instance, did not know how to place the isiNdebele speakers, because their speech variation could be placed either in the Southern or Northern grouping. Another problem was that of attempting to create a Ciskeian ethnicity out of one isiXhosa national unit. This African ethno-nationalism remained until 1994, when the first democratic South Africa was voted into power. Thereafter the 1996 and 2001 population censuses included all of the 11 languages as official, and resurrected some long lost languages such as the languages of the San and Khoi populations (Christopher, 2006).

Another useful study was conducted by Bekker (2005) on language attitude and ethno-linguistic identity in South Africa. Bekker (2005) used sociohistorical data and research results from his study in 2002 on South African's attitudes towards languages, and came up with critical reviews that indicated that all African languages in South Africa seem to be in the same state of persistent functional deficiency and underdevelopment. He used isiXhosa as the central language for his study, and found that the isiXhosa speaking group, who had been seen as an ethnic group did not desire to be a nation on their own, as their ethnicity did not meet the criteria for nationalism. Bekker (2005) criticised the earlier work of language attitude researchers such as that of Edwards done in 1994, saying the isiXhosa speakers themselves saw the formation of their homeland as racial segregation enforced by the apartheid government. For isiXhosa speakers, the homelands of Transkei and Ciskei were created on the basis of place of birth and the language that they spoke, and because such definition (by the apartheid government) of the isiXhosa ethnicity had little basis in reality, resistance to such groupings was in the form of non-ethnic Black

nationalism and a broader non-racial nationalism (Bekker, 2005). The research study also revealed that the creation of ethnic groups had been based on myths of linguistically and culturally homogenous communities, thus undermining the more organic social groups (in the form of tribes with different descendents) that had existed. In these events a concomitant creation of languages was claimed to reflect the identity of the ethnic groups, even though smaller social groupings within the created ethnic umbrella have been found to be more cohesive than others (Bekker, 2005). Bekker (2005) criticized research into the area of ethnolinguistic groups (Including research done by Louw-Potgieter & Louw, 1991; and Dyers, 1999) of not paying enough attention to organic cultural, historical and societal divisions, and thus maintained that ecological status of isiXhosa and other African languages could not be adequately determined if such factors were not considered. He explained that his research created more questions than answers, and called for ethno-linguistic researchers to be more critical and open to factors that inform language (Bekker, 2005).

Although Louw-Potgieter (1991) has been criticized by Bekker (2005), her research has valuable insights relevant to this study, in that it looked at how languages change when they are spoken by different social classes of people. In this study, social categorizations and social identifications were considered linguistic categories because of their close relationship with languages, given the South African history. Louw-Potgieter (1991) used an Afrikaans group as a sample to illustrate that even such linguistic categories are unstable differentiations and have blurred boundaries, and thus do not necessarily reflect similarities of the speakers of such a language. Even though the Afrikaans group was seen as one group, Louw-Potgieter (1991) demonstrated in the research that the members of such a group saw language, culture, fate, background, history and identity as essential characteristics of their group category, but there were divisions within the bigger group that were based on political affiliations, and different groups emphasized different aspects to varying degrees. For instance, although a category label of Afrikaners was used, some valued skin color and religion more than others, and thus Louw-Potgieter (1991) urged social scientists to not accept such ethnolinguistic categorizations at face value, without critical analysis. She used the ethnolinguistic Social Identity Theory to explain why

different linguistic groups would remain loyal to their groups, and why others would leave their groups to adopt a new language.

The closest study to this research, that links language, identity, teaching and learning, was conducted by Leibowitz et al. (2005) at a Western Cape university. The research was done with 64 staff members and 100 students, and showed that language is a key component of identity in a higher education institution, whether it is seen as a discourse or as proficiency in the dominant medium of communication. The respondents saw language as a marker of identity interwoven with other aspects of identity, and said it influenced their individual acculturation and integration into the academic community. Language was seen as both a resource (that can either facilitate or hamper one's interaction within the institution) and a source of identification, as 61% of staff used it as a marker of their identity. Other markers of identity were academic discipline (57%), gender (53%), race (51%) and religion (47%) (Leibowitz et al., 2005).

Although education is undoubtedly the strongest system through which language literacy can be transferred and taught, focusing solely on the use of the mother tongue in education ignores other contexts in which language can be developed, particularly the working environment. The view here is that people acquire education, not as an end in itself but as a means to an end. Some people generally want to be educated to fulfill their self-actualisation needs, but most do it so that they can create for themselves a comfortable life in the future, which is normally done through the workplace. This means that the language in which one learns and gets educated becomes important and has to be consistent with the language which is used in the end to which education is the means, the workplace. Because language is so intertwined with identity, it becomes important to look at the effect of using the language of schooling and working (English) on people's identity at the workplace.

Two research studies closely related to the use of identity in the workplace are those conducted by van den Heuvel (2008) and Lotriet, Matthee and Mazanderani (2009). From 2003 to 2004, van den Heuvel (2008) conducted a qualitative research study on the African Management discourse that has emerged in South Africa, in order to gain in-depth knowledge on the discourse and contribute knowledge to the political and cultural

contexts in which South African organizations operate. Lotriet et. al. (2009) analysed the South African government's discourse on indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in order to highlight that technology is neither neutral nor universally beneficial, but is rather negotiated within specific socio-political contexts and alternative systems of knowledge. This study was done through thematic analysis of speeches of government officials, which were central in the governmental discourse and the development of the official policy document on the IKS over a period of seven years (Lotriet et al., 2009). What was surprising with both these studies, however, was how they both spoke about reinforcing the "African identity" without addressing the language issue, even though language appears to be such an integral part of identity formation.

Another study that had the same error of not considering language was that conducted by Mayer and Louw (2009), who researched a certain international organization (in the automotive industry) in South Africa, and found that identity was at the centre of organizational conflicts in the branches of that organization located in South Africa. Their qualitative content analysis of the data found that the multiplicity of individual identities (informed by different backgrounds) in the workplace led to people's individual identities being seen as patchwork identities, while people are forced to construct in their interactions some organizational identity. This, according to Mayer and Louw (2009), could lead to the formation of synergies or conflicts, but often led to conflict because of the different values held by people. Although this study saw identity conflicts playing themselves out through communication, it was mostly about honesty in communication, and about being assertive or aggressive, respectful or disrespectful. However, as informative and useful as this study seemed to be, issues of the use of language were not addressed. This was possibly because it was taken for granted that English is spoken and accepted passively by the employees, especially in international organizations like the one researched. The use of language thus might have not seemed important to investigate as a possible facilitator of some conflicts of values and identities in the workplace.

Another case study research was conducted by Mayer and Boness (2009), by studying some factors that the Coloured management members in the Eastern Cape deemed as central to identity. The most important aspects of identity that came up from the research were mainly individual identity, followed by race, and then national identity. Social identity was fourth in line, followed by political identity, then religion, global belonging

and lastly, work identity. What was thus striking about this study was how the formation of work identity was the least important of the formations of identity in management, even though much research on identity in organizations have revealed shared organizational identity as an attractive resource (Mayer & Boness, 2009). Once again, the research seemed descriptive and not able to answer why the management under study did not value organizational identity as much as it is desired.

From the above research, it is evident that much more studies on ethnolinguistic identities have been conducted in the academic settings than in organizational settings. Where research on identity is conducted in organizations, it is often to highlight the relevance of identity in the construction, de-construction and management of conflicts (Mayers & Boness, 2009). However, Mayers and Boness (2009) also point out to research studies that have shown that identity in the workplace is essential for organizational success, can enhance pro-activity, serves as a major tool in managing critical incidents in the organization, and provides a major force for activation, prioritization and deployment of core capabilities of the employees. While all of these are good functions of identity to measure, the core facilitator in the formation of such identities seems to be omitted in these studies. The issue of language as a possible facilitator of the desired organizational identity is not given attention, and some theorists would like to combine different linguistic groups' identities into an umbrella word "African identity", as if Africans (regardless of their diverse identities) speak one language that they all understand. When talking about African renaissance and rebuilding African identity in the workplace, little attention is given to what language will facilitate such processes, and if it is English, how that could affect the outcome of identity building because of its possible effect on individual identity.

2.6 The importance of this study

South African organizations are faced by challenges of merging identities from different social identity groups, which may be experiencing identity crises, which then spill into organizations (Mayer & Boness, 2009). It is important that language be looked at as the

facilitating means through which proposed organizational identities are to be built, mainly because the bond between language and identity is widely assumed to be significant in South Africa. Da Silva (2008) maintains that the nine official African languages are still referred to as black languages, as opposed to English and Afrikaans. Speaking a certain African language in South Africa is perceived as a way of making a statement about ethnicity. This link between language and identity has been used by Nongongo (2007, p. 24) as ethnic identity, which she defines, citing Blommaert, as "an identity expressed through belonging to a particular language community". However, ethnolinguistic identity, and not ethnic identity is the focus of this study, and it will be defined in the next section.

Because South Africa has a history of diverse language groups that were isolated from each other in the workplace, merging such different social identities could become a challenge to building organizational identities. Although the focus of this study is not to determine why South Africans find it difficult to form such identities, it is possible that the individual identities held by the workers targeted in this study might indirectly give the reader a good idea of why it might be difficult for workers to give up their individual identities for collective work identities. While language and race were the main divisive tools used by apartheid government to define social groups and identities, language and not race, is the focus of the study. Using language allows for wider coverage than race, and should give the reader some deeper level of understanding of potential conflicts even among black employees, and not just between blacks, coloureds, Asians and whites. As already put by Mayers and Boness (2009), quoting Nutall and Michael (2000), "South Africans are schizophrenic about their identity" (p. 45), and authors such as Alexander (2002), also quoted by Mayers and Boness (2009), speak of "an identity crisis in South Africa" (p 45). Being schizophrenic about one's identity could be alluding to how protective and defensive one becomes when it comes to preserving their identity. If the individual identity of employees is important in their functionality in the workplace as suggested in the section above, then language, as one of the main aspects of ethnolinguistic identity could be indirectly important to the speaker's functionality. It is for this reason that this study focuses on the literacy in one's mother tongue on the functionality of the employees, via the employees' ethnolinguistic identities. Because development is a key need for South Africa at the moment, and more indigenous ways of

knowing are encouraged to facilitate that, ethnolonguistic identity, through which some indigenous knowledge is shared within a particular language community, becomes important, especially in rural areas. Given the poverty and underdevelopment of rural South Africa, and the attempts for community development approaches, Nel (2002) emphasizes that the cultural and linguistic embeddedness of local indigenous knowledge may make local knowledge "the only real route through which community development can be communicated effectively" (p. 105), which makes language an important issue of focus. However, the same cannot be said for urban South Africa, where western ways of knowing are encouraged; the most obvious way being the use of English (and its practices, values and beliefs) among employees. The study could also, by illustrating what value the workers give to the mother tongue, also indirectly indicate to the reader how the urban working environment might not be conducive for indigenous ways of knowing. It is for this reason that the study was conducted in Johannesburg, the economic engine of South Africa, which could be requiring the use of English in the workplace.

Setswana will be used in the study as a typical mother tongue that defines a certain language group that is also considered to be dominated by English. Even among the Batswana (Setswana speakers), issues of language have become a contentious issue. Research shows that in a typically urban Setswana speaking township, very few people speak standard Setswana as advocated by the Department of Education's language policies (Cook, 2008). A case in point is that of Tlhabane near the Rustenburg mines, where people use an array of complex non-standard forms of Setswana that reflect the current political, cultural and economic realities in the urban South Africa, and deploy and shape these varieties of Setswana in a way that strategically suits their environment (Cook, 2008). Thus the viewing of standard Setswana as the one used in schools creates a gap between Setswana as set in the education policy and the practically used form of Setswana. Cook (2008) notes that 'street' Setswana in this case incorporates lexical items from other languages such as English, Zulu, Afrikaans and Tsotsitaal, and these varieties are all linked by the fact that they index the speaker's 'urbanness', an important part of peoples' identity as modern South Africans. For this reason, participants were recruited who spoke Setswana variations, and considered themselves to belong to the Setswana language group. The respondents did not have to speak a certain 'standard' form of Setswana.

It is the formation and meaning of the ethnolinguistic identity that is the central focus of this study, and the people who are central to this identity formation are not policy developers or linguistic theorists, but the employees who actually use the language and about whose organizational needs policy developers discuss and hypothesise. Policy decisions made in this regard often are not fully informed by the views of South African workers, but by studies conducted with other groups. And studies conducted are often general to African languages and not specific to our South African languages and contexts (Van Damme & Neluvhalani, 2004).

2.7 Definition of concepts in the study

2.7.1 Language community

The term language community was used to refer to Setswana speakers and will be used alternatively with the term Batswana. The language community member will be any person who knows how to speak Setswana as a mother tongue, although they might not know how to read or write it. They must however identify with speakers of the language. The person thus has to come from a home where Setswana is said to be the mother tongue or home language. The Setswana they speak does not have to be standard in form, but can be a variation of Setswana, as explained in the urban variations in the section above.

In referring to African languages mentioned in the research, a pre-fix has been inserted to all of them for consistency. For instance, where respondents mentioned ‘Tswana’, ‘Xhosa’ or ‘Zulu’, these languages have been changed to ‘Setswana’, ‘isiXhosa’ and ‘isiZulu’. Where a community of the speakers of the language are referred to, ‘Zulus’, ‘Xhosas’ and ‘Tswanas’ have been changed to ‘amaZulu’, ‘amaXhosa’ and ‘Batswana’ respectively. In singular terms, the speaker of the language has been changed to ‘umuZulu’, ‘umuXhosa’ and ‘Motswana’ respectively.

2.7.2 Ethnolinguistic identity

Ethnolinguistic identity will be used as it was used by Louw-Potgieter (1991), who used the term to refer to the attenuation or accentuation of one's own language based on the strength of one's identification with one's language group. Simply put, this means how much one either upholds or downplays one's mother tongue based on how much one identifies with one's language group. She based this term on Social Identity Theory as used by Giles and Johnson in 1981. This definition will be used in this study, to indicate that Setswana as a language is a means of social identity. One would wonder why a term linguistic identity is not used, and why ethnolinguistic identity is used instead.

As already alluded to in chapter one of this report, when people identify with a language, they also identify with practices, beliefs and values that are associated with that language, hence the use of the term ethnolinguistic identity. Although many African groups share some beliefs, practices and values, there are some aspects of a certain language community that are peculiar to it because of the unique use of language in that community to construct such aspects. This can be seen, for instance, in how certain languages can use a term that is unique to them to describe a state of emotions, a set of circumstances, or a belief that cannot be as easily captured and named by other languages. Similarly, there are certain objects, types of food and tools that are unique to certain language communities that cannot be translated in any other language, except for being given a description. Such unique entities of different language groups are passed on from one generation to the next to preserve their unique cultural practices and beliefs. However, the oral mode of passing on of such entities from one generation to the next has been slowly replaced by the need to be able to read and write it. Because we live in a society that emphasises literacy and education, being able to read and write one's mother tongue becomes an important form of expressing one's ethnolinguistic identity. Literacy has become important in determining one's success in the workplace. However, that literacy does not necessarily emphasise African languages, but English. Because the use of language cannot be divorced from practices that are created by such a language, it is envisioned that the lack of use of Setswana in its written and read form could affect the workers' ethnolinguistic identity. This can often be measured by the amount of practices, beliefs and values that replace an

employee's ethnolinguistic identity at work that flow over to their social world outside work. The measurement can further be determined by the employee's feelings about their limited use of such aspects of their ethnolinguistic identities and how confident they are about their knowledge of aspects of their ethnolinguistic identity. In a nutshell, this kind of identity (expression of belonging to a certain language community) is assessed by how people's attachment to their mother tongue and all that it represents is changed by their ability or inability to read and write the language. When its speakers cannot write or read the language, their identity to the group of Batswana might be affected, and the study seeks to determine that impact of the (il)literacy in Setswana on the respondent's identification with Setswana language community (Batswana).

2.7.3 The theory of formation of ethnolinguistic identity

Louw –Potgieter (1991) used the Social Identity Theory (SIT) to explain the role of language in social identification. She holds the view that speech and language are made up of varieties and styles that are indicative of the social groups we belong to. Louw-Potgieter (1991) believes that ethnic groups whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages (as was the case with African languages in South Africa before 1994) use evaluative perceptions to assess their own languages against the dominant languages, and this evaluation might serve as a predictive indicator of ethnolinguistic vitality. Ethnolinguistic vitality is a decision based on evaluative perceptions to either shift from the use of mother tongue to the dominant language (social mobility) or remain loyal to your mother tongue because of creative cognitive strategies used to view one's mother tongue and the dominant language in a new light (social creativity). The ethnic group(s) can also reject the dominant language through some form of social resistance because they view it as illegitimate and unstable, which leads to the use of the language of their preference (social change). An example of social change is the Soweto riots of 1976 that led to the exclusion of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in the black schools and the inclusion of a preferred language (English) (Louw-Potgieter, 1991). Factors used in the evaluative process of ethnolinguistic vitality include status factors (wealth, social status etc.), demographic factors (number of ethnic members and their distribution in South

Africa) and institutional support factors (e.g. the extent to which Setswana has formal or informal support such as at work and educational institutions) (Louw-Potgieter, 1991).

2.8 Different arguments about language use in literature

Literature shows that the role and use of language in South Africa is a highly contested and debated issue. There are those who see the dominance of English as ethnic and cultural death, others see it as another form of domination by the language of the colonialists, and others see it as a mere ecological mistake of destroying diversity. On the other side, some theorists believe that we need to be informed by the practical needs of society, seeing that research has proven that South Africans are in favour of English and not mother tongue education. Others argue that ethnicity is a product of colonization and thus ethnolinguistic identity should not even be used as a reason for mother tongue literacy. Others see ethnic identity as a form of tribalism that further extends the apartheid mission of dividing the African societies. These different views and arguments are discussed below, first those that oppose the dominance of English, and then those that are proponents of English dominance and do not view it as a negative thing.

One author who at least considers the role of language in the proposed building of African identity is Mlamla (2002). He sees the concept of African identity as defining identity based on the African culture. However, the African culture is a highly contested issue, characterized by what Mlamla (2002, p 16) refers to as "lost, split or confused identities". Mlamla (2002) maintains that even governments have not yet reached the point of defining culture, have no cultural policies in place, and tend to reduce the promotion of African cultures to traditional dances, museums, antiquities and sports such as football (even though this is not a sport indigenous to Africa). Mlamla (2002) sees language as the only feature that gives African society its cultural identity, given the way Africa has learnt to foster and nurture foreign capitalist and imperialist forces through television films, arts, education and religion. This thus makes mother tongue education and use in the workplace important.

This view however, is challenged by those who see mother tongue as not favoured by its speakers, as mother tongue policies would like people to believe, even if it was to be

considered and taught. An example is that of Setswana, which was spoken mainly in the old Homeland of Bophuthatswana. Currently in the North West Province, Setswana has been emphasized less and less over the years in the education system, while English as a medium of instruction has been introduced earlier and earlier in the schools' curriculum (Cook, 2008). This has been due to the pressure that students and their parents have put on the education system to provide earlier access to English so that the students can have a real chance to be proficient in the language of economic advancement (Cook, 2008). This has naturally led to parents increasingly sending their children to English-medium schools with the goal mentioned above in mind. Thus we find an increasing number of Setswana-speaking graduates who had never been taught to read and write in their mother tongue. In a study conducted by the Socio-Economic Surveys Division of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) between 2003 and 2006, there was a consensus among the 3000 respondents that mother tongue education was best for early school education (Rademeyer, 2008). According to Rademeyer (2008), the research results showed that although there was consensus about the need for mother tongue literacy at primary level, there was still a meaningful public alliance to English. Banda (2000) argues that this is to be expected, and puts it in these words:

> As long as the actions of policy makers and those in the corridors of power suggest that a particular language (in this case English) offers opportunity for education, job opportunities and accessibility to communication, economic, political and industrial success, then language policies enacted to promote other languages will be futile. It is hardly encouraging to say to black learners, 'learn through your mother tongue because it is the language of your ancestors and it is the language of your culture'. Such an argument is becoming a less attractive prospect in this global economy than the need for status and socioeconomic mobility that is perceived to be offered by English. Given such a situation, it might require a great deal of motivation to make black children see the functional sense of learning through the medium of African languages (Banda, 2000, p. 55).

Banda (2000) further found that standard forms of African languages used in schools are based on rural or regional standard forms. The younger generation thus finds African languages less appealing because they associate them with "rural languages". In this regard a study was conducted by Cook (2008) in Tlhabane, a township situated close to

the Rustenburg mine in the North West Province. Tlhabane was built as a labour reserve in the 1900s, and is located in the heart of a historically Setswana-speaking territory (Cook 2008). Because many mine labourers from within and beyond South Africa have migrated to Tlhabane, it is common to find people speaking one variety of Setswana at home, a "purer" variety of Setswana at school (and English), a lingua franca at work designed to accommodate workers of different ethnic and national backgrounds, as well as a language used in interactions with peers. The people of Tlhabane thus can speak three or four 'languages' in one day, using different urban varieties (non-standard forms) of Setswana (Cook, 2008). This multilingualism and multidialectalism is often overlooked by the language policies at schools, with educators policing the boundary between standard and street Setswana, and often marking urban varieties wrong in the schools' national examinations (Cook, 2008).

Another view also against the emphasis of the mother tongue is held by Balfour (2007), who proposes bilingualism. Balfour (2007) believes that additive bilingualism (where first the mother tongue is taught, and English added with advancement in primary school) proposed by the government might not even suffice. This is because of the highly unlikely event that children will have access to only one language in their early learning years. Thus bilingual education might be more favourable than mother tongue education at a young age. Because of the tendency of people to move, the weakening ethnic and tribal identities, the diaspora of culture and the effects of colonization and decolonization, bilingualism might not be developmentally efficient for a multilingual environment, but it could be a pre-condition for a meaningful engagement with multilingualism. Furthermore, there is no coherent research basis which stipulates how to best implement mother tongue education, even if the ideological base for mother tongue education can be shared (Balfour, 2007).

Other theorists argue against multilingualism, saying that within a context of multilingualism, African languages are not given the same chance of usage as English at the workplace. They argue that this kind of multilingualism is harmful if it does not address the inequality and non-representativeness of supposedly "equal and official" languages in the workplace. One author who holds such a view is Alexander (2005). Alexander (2005) argues that because African languages are not languages of power, they have been marginalized in the name of multilingualism. Using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of

the evolution of linguistic markets, he stresses that the smaller the number of people proficient in the legitimate variety, and the more widespread the perception of the value of that variety in the relevant population, the greater the profits of distinction. In other words, this form of multilingualism has led to social distance between the elite and the masses. Quoting Toffelson (1991), Alexander argues that "the great linguistic paradox of our time is that societies which dedicate enormous resources to language teaching and learning have been unable – or unwilling to remove powerful linguistic barriers to full participation in the major institutions of modern society" (Alexander, 2005, p. 5). Toffelson (1991) further believes that English literacy in this case remains a barrier to employment, education and economic well-being due to historical political forces. He blames language policies for requiring certain language competencies, yet simultaneously creating conditions which ensure that vast numbers of people will be unable to acquire those competencies.

Alexander's (2005) argument echoes that of Wright (2002), who sees language as a resource with the potential to attract social motivation associated with the utilization, development and the exploitation of that resource. Wright (2002) criticizes the South African discussions around language policy of treating language as a mere form of social identity, political redress and cultural reconstruction, while ignoring the economic life of language. To Wright (2002), language is an economic resource, because individuals seek language skills whose financial benefits exceed financial costs, and which present the most economic relevance or social power. Thus language, just like culture, tends to follow an axis of power (Wright, 2002). English seems to be presenting these benefits more than any other language in South Africa. The declining numbers of undergraduate students registered in courses where tuition is offered in all African languages (offered only by the University of South Africa), may be seen as a reflection of the decreasing economic benefits of African languages. The number dropped from 25 000 registered students in 1997 to 3000 in the year 2000 (Wright, 2002). Wright (2002) believes that the reason for this decrease, in the moment that the government advocates for language equity more than ever, is economic in nature. Because individuals are attracted by incentives, they tend to choose English above African languages because of its economic possibilities in the globalised world. The mother tongue, on the other hand, is acquired through natural

intergenerational means in the home, and is not valued unless someone creates an economic value for it, by making it a scarce resource. Wright (2002) compares this economic concept of demand and supply, with the clean air that we breathe. It is taken for granted, until it is polluted and clean air becomes scarce. Only when clean air becomes scarce do people start to think about preventing air pollution, and how to best preserve clean air. This is something similar to the value assigned to African languages. Because people take it for granted that they will always have their languages at home, they seek out English as a scarce resource. African languages could only be given economic value, for example, through excellence of expression, literary art and poetry that gives it both cultural and economic value. Wright (2002) argues that the formal economy of South Africa is the main magnetic pull for the linguistic ecology. Social inequalities are then heightened as more ambitious African parents pressurise their children to pursue literacy in English, in order to attain better job prospects and higher earning power in future. Those who do not have the means because of our political history (which are a majority of South Africans) then are left disempowered to compete in this economic activity (Wright, 2002).

Alexander (2005) holds a view similar to Wright's (2002) view of the centrality of formal economy in language ecology. He believes that once the mother tongue disappears with time and educational advancement, the most debilitating effect is that speakers of the language begin to lose faith in the value of their mother tongue (Alexander, 2005). This is borne out of the view that the specific language in which the production processes take place becomes the language of power, and if one does not command the language of production, one is automatically excluded and disempowered. What then happens is what Alexander (2005) calls the *Static Maintenance Syndrome*, a willingness by African people to maintain their first language in primary contexts of family, community, primary school and religious practices, and not have the faith that these languages can develop into languages of power. The view is supported by the current government's Curriculum 2005, which was understood, although not explicitly stated as such, to encourage teachers, government officials and curriculum advisors to apply the mother tongue in the foundation phase, followed by a switch to English in Grade 4, which is a year earlier than had been the case was under the Department of Education and Training (DET) systems prior to

1994 (Prinsloo, 2006). Alexander (2005) believes that "unless African languages are given market value, i.e. unless their instrumentality for the processes of production, exchange and distribution is enhanced, no amount of policy change at school level can guarantee their use in high-status functions and, thus eventual escape from the dominance and the hegemony of English" (p. 9). His suggestion is that fundamental language policies should be directed to the increased use of the mother tongue, where relevant, in the public service and in the formal economy. He advocates for an articulated programme of job creation and employment on the basis of language proficiency as an organic affirmative action programme (Alexander, 2005).

Another critical view held by those in opposition of English dominance is Skutnabb-Kangas (2001), who says that Africa and Asia have fought against colonization powers, and that the use of their native languages was at the centre of their demands over many years, as an expression of autonomy and self-determination. Cultural knowledge, encoded in the diversity of the world's languages, is a prerequisite for maintenance of natural resources, and wars in the world, as well as colonization, have been mainly centred on the control of identities and natural resources (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001). Skutnabb-Kangas (2001) uses the term the "dying of languages" (p.215) to refer to this diminishing use of other languages. However, the pleas of dominated ethnicities seem to be unheard in the world. About 90% of the languages spoken worldwide are predicted to be eradicated in the next hundred years, i.e., they might be extinct and no longer taught to children. This estimate is held by the pessimistic realists among linguists, who believe that we might have only 10% of today's oral languages as vital, non-threatened languages in the year 2100. Even the optimistic linguists think that only half of the existing languages will be dead, or on the death row by then (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001). This dying of languages is, according to Skutnabb-Kangas (2001) a threat to the existence of linguistic, cultural and spiritual diversity, just as the extinction of certain plants is a threat to environmental diversity of rain forests. In the same way that biologists talk of "red books" that threaten biodiversity of plants, animals, and other living species, so the dying of languages is a threat to diversity. The languages die if they have a few speakers, a weak political status, and if it is no longer transmitted to the next generation by teaching it to the children (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001).

Against this perspective are those that view the dominance of English not as a threat, but as a language that was used (and seen) as a language of liberation and black unity (English as lingua fanca, as opposed to Afrikaans, which has been perceived as the language of the oppressor). English basically is seen as a vehicle that made communication among Africans easier in the fight against Apartheid. This view further argues that few Africans currently reveal complete language shifts to English away from African languages. While English functions as the language of prestige and power, an African language is typically maintained as a solidarity code (Gough, 1995). According to the census figures, while 33% of Africans have knowledge of English, only about 1% cite English as a home language (Gough, 1995). This then shows the importance of English as a functional language and not as a replacement of indigenous languages. In further emphasizing the importance of English as a lingua franca, studies such as those conducted by the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) are normally cited. In 2002 PanSALB did a national sociolinguistic survey and it was found that English was the most frequently used language in interaction with supervisors at 40%, followed by Afrikaans (28%) and isiZulu (11%) (Olivier, 2009). In wider educational settings the language of tuition was mainly English (80%), followed by Afrikaans (16%) and isiZulu (6%). The results further showed that the African group understood English more than they understood other African languages, and thus a lingua-franca was needed to help facilitate communication between these groups.

The above explanations for the preference of English over the mother tongue have not gone unchallenged by professionals such as the environmental educationalists, Van Damme and Neluvhalani (2004). These authors are of the view that globalization does not have to dictate to South Africa or any African country how to learn in their own countries. Their approach to cultural preservation is rather broader than just language and education, as they are advocates for restoring the South Africans' belief in their own indigenous ways of knowing (thus broader learning and teaching). They believe that the dominant research findings about the attitude of black South Africans towards mother tongue education are not surprising, given the fact that our concern for education as South Africans has shifted from that of the relation between education and society, to the concern about the relationship between education and the economy (Van Damme & Neluvhalani, 2004). They describe this as follows:

> [There is a]…trend in South Africa where the new education system is increasingly being co-opted to ensure productivity and reduce poverty (it has a strong market motive). And in the context of considering institutionalization of indigenous knowledge in educational reforms driven by market logic, we may well be dealing with a form of cultural violence, which Odora Hoppers (2001b), citing Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), defines as entailing processes in which subordinated groups are involved through politics, modernization and other social process (Van Damme & Neluvhalani, 2004, p.356).

Some writers have argued that identity is a socially constructed concept that has brought many divisions, prejudices and discriminatory acts into our society (Mhlahlo, 2002). It is reported to be anthropologically constructed by geography and other physical characteristics such as skin colour, height and facial characteristics. It is these characteristics, coupled with language, that have been accused of bringing wars and inhuman practices within societies, where people who do not fit the criteria enough are excluded from society. Mhlahlo (2002) further explains how such tribal groupings of people have led to power inequalities, where certain tribes felt they were superior to others for some reason. The better option to these divisions, according to Mhlahlo (2002), is to see people as mere human beings, and this he believes was seen in how South Africans determined to join forces and fight a common enemy of apartheid, even when they were from different ethnicities. Mhlahlo (2002) sees ethnicity as a product of colonialism and apartheid, that was used to divide Africans so that they could be isolated and weakened against social injustices, and if such constructed identities as ethnicity are endorsed, they will indefinitely divide humankind.

However Skutnabb-Kangas (2001) sees the source of division to be the very thing that not being taught mother tongue did compromise, namely, ethnic identity. Skutnabb-Kangas (2001) believes that maintaining one's own language represents autonomy and self-determination to most African countries. This could be because language and its constructs have always been at the centre of identity of social groups. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2001), if such self-determination needs are not met, whether culturally, economically, regionally or politically, a mobilisation of sentiments often labeled "ethnic conflicts" result. This is particularly true where linguistic and ethnic borders coincide with

economic, or other boundaries, where linguistically and ethnically defined groups differ in terms of relative political power. Using one's own language thus represents cultural autonomy, and thus others argue that granting education- and language-based rights to minorities can and should often be part of conflict prevention (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001). Such rights, include the right to learn one's mother tongue fully and properly, both orally (when this is physiologically possible) and in writing.

In summary, the role of language in ethnolinguistic identity is a highly contested issue in South Africa. It is complicated by the oppressive political history of the country, economic opportunities presented by English, and the little economic value of African languages. These factors combine with many others to create social magnets towards English more than mother tongue education. For some writers, this represents a threat to cultural diversity, self-determination and a form of disempowerment of communities whose languages are not "languages of economic production". But for others, the dominance of English is just a functional necessity that cannot threaten people's attachment, affiliation and identification with their language. Research that has been conducted in the field of language has already confirmed positive attitudes towards English literacy and negative attitudes towards the mother tongue. Some studies are said to be based on ulterior motives, political and economic agendas, while others are criticized of being descriptive. Studies conducted in the workplace often treat ethnolinguistic identity of African employees as one "African identity", thus treating them as homogenous, and they do not pay special attention to the role of language in building the employees' organizational or individual identity.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

According to Watkins (2008), research can focus on the tangible natural, or on the social world where concepts are more abstract than tangible. The differentiation between the tangible and abstract worlds points to the positivistic, quantitative research and phenomenological, qualitative research. This however, does not mean that conducting research within the social sphere has to be only qualitative, to the exclusion of quantitative research. In fact, a complete understanding of many topics would require that both types be conducted (Watkins, 2008). An argument is made by Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005), that sustained debates between the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms are rather divisive, causing polarization in research that produces "uni-researchers", researchers who restrict themselves exclusively to either of the two approaches. They see this as counterproductive to the advancement of social and behavioural research, and advocate focusing on similarities and synergies between the two, thus producing "bi-researchers" who are pragmatic in their approach (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Although the argument is valid, this study was conducted using only the qualitative approach, mainly because of the highly limited nature of the resources available to the researcher (time and finances), as well as the objectives of the research. It has already been demonstrated in the literature review that quantitatively, many South Africans have proven through research to be in favour of English as a language of education and work, and that the language is used widely in the workplace. The objective of the study was to explore the meanings attached to diminishing use of Setswana in the workplace, and thus justifies the use of hermeneutics. In addition, factors that need explanations and respondents' thoughts and feelings about dynamic issues like the mother tongue are often best informed by qualitative insights (Willig, 2001).

The section after this introduction gives the reader a brief explanation of the approach that was taken in designing this study, and outlines the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the study. The next section consists of a presentation of the research questions that informed the study, followed by a description of the procedures and criteria followed to select the research participants. This is followed by a section on the factors

that informed the number of participants selected. The process that was followed in conducting the interviews is then outlined, after which the data analysis method and approaches followed to ensure validity are explained, in the same order as they are mentioned. The chapter ends off with an elaboration of research ethics that were followed throughout the study.

3.2 Research design: qualitative approach

Qualitative research is often concerned with meaning, and is interested in how people make sense of their world and how they experience events (Willig, 2001). For this reason, there are many interactions between qualitative methodologies, postmodern theories and social constructionism stances (Jankowski, Clark & Ivey, 2000). What is a common thread between these three is the ontological view that reality or what is known is a product of some form of constructionism. This study lies more on the social constructionism perspective, namely that meanings of decreased mother tongue use in the workplace is constructed by persons as they interact within different social contexts. Epistemologically, this approach assumes that knowledge about these meanings exists within the conversation between the knower and the known, and that the relationship between the knower and the known is characterized by interdependence, reciprocity and mutuality. The research then typically focused on the quality and texture of respondents' (knowers') experiences (known), as opposed to the identification of cause and effect in quantitative research. The study looked at people in their open systems, i.e. within naturally occurring settings such as their homes or work environment, where conditions continuously develop and interact with one another to create constant change that can only be explained and interpreted by the people in such settings (Willig, 2001). This approach might be challenging those who are more for the empirical, quantitative approach, concerning whether validity of the qualitative approach can be ensured, given the dynamic nature of concepts studied. An approach taken to ensure validity in this study will be discussed later in this section.

3.3 Research questions

The two main questions that were answered by the research:

(a) What is the influence of being or not being able to read and write Setswana on the functioning at the workplace among of a group of Batswana graduates working in Johannesburg?

(b) What influence does this (in)ability have on the ethnolinguistic identity of a group of Setswana-speaking tertiary graduates working in Johannesburg?

3.4 Selection of Research Participants

A qualitative study focuses more on the depth or richness of data and therefore samples are invariably selected purposefully rather than randomly. Purposeful and snowball sampling where used in this study. The researcher made use of a key informant who grew up in Soweto to identify the first respondent who meets the criteria. The first respondent was then requested to suggest others whom the researcher should contact. This snowballing method of sampling was used throughout the study.

Qualitative samples are generally not representative of the population under study. In this case for instance, the respondents who were interviewed needed not represent Batswana from all over South Africa, as the aim was to explore and study subjective meanings associated with the ability or lack thereof, of reading and writing one's mother tongue. Both Setswana speakers who can and those who cannot read Setswana were included in the study for the purpose of qualitative comparisons, even though the division in numbers needed not be equal. The cut-off level for illiteracy in Setswana was having not done it beyond grade 5.

Although the study included both male and female respondents, the selection criterion was limited to those aged 20 to 35 years. The reason for this is that most of this cohort would have finished their high school in the new South Africa and thus have had to study at tertiary level under the new educational system, which is crucial because the respondents would have been educated from a similar kind of curriculum, and mostly would have been governed by similar governmental standards and policies of the new South Africa.

3.5 The respondents

The number of respondents interviewed was determined by data saturation; meaning that when no new information emerged from the interviews, the number of interviews conducted was considered adequate. However, the research was conducted with a minimum of 10 respondents in order to elicit information from a realistic number of respondents. This implied that from conducting 10 interviews, the interviews would continue as long as new data emerged, to a maximum of 15. Although qualitative research does not need to be representative of the population under study, there are certain circumstances that could have necessitated the increase of the research sample. The circumstances under which the number would be increased were if the researcher found a gap in the amount of information provided by the respondents to analyze a certain theme or address certain questions, or if reference was made in the interview to a case that presented unique information that could be included in the study. For instance, if a respondent compared the use of language in his/her work environment with a friend's that is completely different from the interviews already conducted the researcher could pursue an additional interview with the friend to include such unique views in the study. At the end, 10 respondents were interviewed. Below is a table that shows other characteristics of the respondents:

Participant (Pseudonyms used)	Tumelo	Lerato	Khumo	Kagiso	Thato	Bontle	Refilwe	Neo	Kutlwano	Lesego
Age	24	24	27	29	26	23	23	26	28	30
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female
Career field	Tele-communications	Motor industry	Education	Academic (university)	Financial (Bank)	Economics	Accounting (Auditing firm)	Engineering	IT services	Engineering
Position held	Consultant (sales)	Financial consultant	Educator	Communications and publication officer	IT specialist	Consultant (Market analysis)	Tax consultant trainee	Technician	Business owner	Engineer
Able to read and write Setswana	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

3.6 In-depth Interviews

Qualitative research is concerned with describing, explaining, exploring and interpreting phenomena, and often the variables are personally constructed and context bound, thus unrestricted and not predictable. Thus, qualitative interviews qualitatively make use of flexible guidelines (Watkins, 2008). The reasons for not using focus groups were that respondents' views would most probably be influenced by the views of others, and would thus not give the researcher a chance to look at each respondent's case and meanings of identity as unique. In-depth interviews were used instead, to give the respondents a voice in this study. Wilhelm, Craig, Glover, Allen and Huffman (2000) acknowledge that "interviewing requires knowledge of methodology and practice of the craft and suggested both should occur initially in a non-threatening learning situation" (p. 267). They also maintained that one becomes a better interviewer only by interviewing. Probing techniques were used to encourage respondents to give the fullest responses to questions without influencing their answers. Other skills used in enhancing the quality of interviewing were suggested by Wilhelm et al. (2000), namely, establishment of rapport through verbal acknowledgement and facial expressions, judging when to interject a question and at what points to probe for further information, and developing a set of questions prior to the interview. The researcher constructed a list of unstructured and semi-structured questions that were used as a guide and not as a constraining tool, thus allowing respondents to discuss issues beyond the questions' confines. The following characterized the in-depth interview modalities and procedures:

a. An interview guide was developed in consultation with the supervisor in order to ensure that all relevant information areas were covered

b. Respondents were recruited and interview appointments made with those meeting the selection criteria and willing to take part in the study.

c. An appropriately qualified interviewer (researcher) with experience and fluency in English and Setswana conducted the interviews.

d. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim for the purpose of analysis.

e. In the event where the participants would not want to be recorded, provision was made for the responses of that particular respondent to be written down and later analysed. There was fortunately, no respondent who did not agree to being recorded.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis

Once the fieldwork was completed the recorded discussions were transcribed to allow for thematic analysis. This is a specialized process where recurring themes are identified, categorised and analysed (Willig, 2001). Thematic analysis minimally organizes and describes the data set in (rich) detail. Additionally, it interprets various aspects of the research topic. This is thus not a mere analysis of the data, but a holistic illumination and understanding of data that points out reasonable insights not obvious at first glance. This method avoided linear interpretations where variables are mechanistically related to each other and demonstrated the richness, depth and complexity of the topic under consideration.

Thematic analysis can be a realist method, which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants, or it can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society (Willig, 2001). It can also be a 'contextualist' method, located between the two poles of essentialism and constructionism, which acknowledges the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining focus on the material and other limits of 'reality'. Therefore, thematic analysis can be a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of 'reality'. For this study, thematic analysis was used in the contextual sense, looking at the experiences that individuals have had regarding the use of mother tongue and English in the workplace, and what those experiences mean to them. The social contexts were also briefly examined (such as the home or social context) where the respondents mentioned them voluntarily, so as to see how they may have shaped these experiences and what they meant to the respondents. Such social contexts included where the respondents were born and raised, the reasons

they did or did not learn to read and write Setswana, and if the ability to read and write Setswana was seen as important in the family, among friends or in other social contexts, such as churches and community organizations.

3.8 Addressing validity

Validity is often an issue of concern for qualitative research practices. Validity in this instance centres on the extent to which the researcher forces data into pre-existing categories and theoretical frameworks through the use of preconceived ideas and assumptions, especially if the researcher has a pre-existing sense and idea of the phenomena under study (Jankowski, Clark & Ivey, 2000). There are generally three common methods used to address validity, namely triangulation (the use of multiple sources of data), bracketing (making preconceived ideas explicitly known beforehand) and self-reflexivity (thinking about one's and respondents' experiences and understanding of the phenomenon under study and the researcher's on-going sense-making process). The other method suggested by Janwoski, Clark and Ivey (2000) is that of "not knowing", which does not suggest that the researcher is devoid of prior knowledge about the subject under study, but that the researcher is guided more by curiosity than by known values and ideas, and constantly asks him or herself, "what more do I need to know in order to step into this person's shoes" (Jankowski, Clark & Ivey, 2000, p. 244). In this study, bracketing, self-reflexivity and "not knowing" stance were used to ensure maximum validity. Throughout the research process the researcher asked challenging questions to whatever stance was held by the respondent to compare the respondent's views with what the researcher knew to be existing literature information, to see what contrary arguments would arise from the respondents, thus encouraging critical thinking from the respondent. This implies that at the outset, the researcher took the not-knowing approach of simply wanting to hear the respondent's views without merely reinstating and confirming her prior knowledge, but later, after allowing the respondents to feel safe and interact on a researcher-participant level footing, embarked on a collaborative and egalitarian emancipatory dialogue. This empowering approach is seen to be a space in research conversation where the researcher and the researched become "the changer and the

changed" and vice versa (Jakowski, Clark & Ivey, 2000). It allowed for what the same authors call the fusion of horizons, where new knowledge was actively co-constructed by the researcher and respondents' collaboration and mutual participation, but the respondents always had the final word with the meanings assigned to concepts in the whole process. Self reflexivity is a central tenet in qualitative research, which is based on the assumption that researchers are active constructors of information and not passive, objective processors of information (Jakowski, Clark & Ivey, 2000), and thus fits well with the not knowing approach and bracketing used.

3.8.1 Researcher Reflexivity

Although researchers are generally expected to be objective in working with the data obtained in their research, the fact that researchers are human subjects with values, experiences and beliefs makes pure objectivity an impossible goal to attain (Willig, 2001). This is particularly true in a qualitative study like this one, where the researcher provides the interpretation of the research data. The values, beliefs and experiences that have shaped the researcher into the kind of person he or she is inevitably determine the choice of topic studied and the kind of lens used throughout the study, from formulating questions to interpreting, analyzing and reporting the responses. The purpose of reflexivity is to acknowledge the influence of such subjective factors. Below is the brief description of the researcher's background that has shaped her beliefs, values and experiences.

I was born and raised in a Setswana-speaking village called Taung, in the former Bophuthatswana homeland, currently the North West province. Setswana was my first language until Grade 9. When I completed middle school and had to go to high school, I went to an English-medium school as an incentive for having done well in Grade 9. I attended Kimberley Girls' High School, where I did not do Setswana until I matriculated in 1997. In high school, I took particular interest in Afrikaans, an interest which was developed earlier by my mother, who was an Afrikaans teacher. After completing high school I completed both my junior and honours degrees in Psychology at the University of Pretoria. Tertiary education did not require me to use either Setswana or Afrikaans,

instead, I was almost coerced to do English in my first year at university. I started having questions about the need to study in any other language but English.

Of the jobs I have had since 2002, there are two research jobs that have shaped my beliefs about languages that could particularly affect the outcome of this study. The first one was where I worked as a Project Coordinator in a HIV/AIDS prevention community research project in Mamelodi. The project was a collaborative study between University of Pretoria and Florida International University in Miami Florida, USA. There my literacy in Setswana made my job so much easier. Besides generally managing the project, I translated most of the intervention manuals and assessment questionnaires into the Mamelodi dialect (which is a mixture of Setswana and Sepedi), and got one person from Mamelodi to change and adapt a few things where my Setswana was not typical of the township dialect. The second job was in a market research company as a project manager. There, the value of my literacy in Setswana could not have been more emphasized. The company often did national research for many well-known companies. As a project manager I would always be given the North West province to moderate focus groups in Setswana, write out or translate, double check or back-translate Setswana materials (transcripts, discussion guides, questionnaires etc.). At this company I had a colleague who had gone to an English-medium school from primary school and had never learnt to read and write in her African mother tongue. Although this was generally not a problem at work because we often could get external transcribers and translators, my colleague was generally disadvantaged in that she could not do the translating and transcribing herself, and often had to get another project manager to double-check any translated materials because she did not know how to read or write any African language. The idea of an educated black worker who could not read or write her mother tongue fascinated me and I wondered how many black graduates like that were out there, how they felt and experienced the workplace, what they were doing, and how this influenced ethnolinguistic identity, hence my choice of this topic.

Although Setswana has been experienced as a valuable tool in the workplace in my line of work, especially market research, my interest was sparked more by my questioning how attached or detached one felt towards one's mother tongue if they didn't know how to read

and write it. In my experience, as the years progressed, Setswana became even more valuable to me and I felt more attached to it. This seemed to increase with my further progress in my studies. I wondered if this was the case with many people, since with further education, people tend to use more and more of English and less and less of their mother tongue. The less I used Setswana in my career and studies, the more I felt a certain respect and valuing for it, possibly because it meant that I had something that some of the current Setswana speaking learners could possibly not acquire. I will thus have to make a conscious and deliberate effort to open myself to possibly opposite views from some respondents about the relevance and value of Setswana to their ethnolinguistic identity and their workplace, and to report these findings in as neutral and unbiased a voice as possible. Being able to set one's beliefs aside and accept the respondents' opposing views is a valuable art in professional, academic writing that every aspiring researcher needs to have. I consulted with my supervisor to ensure that my questions, analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data remained objective.

3.9 Research Ethics

Conducting research with human subjects presents ethical challenges that need to be addressed by the researcher. Such challenges include the respondents' right to dignity and privacy, as well as ensuring a sense of psychological wellbeing throughout the study (Willig, 2001). The ethics guidelines provided by the Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and the University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) were adhered to throughout the study.

In order to adhere to these ethical imperatives, the respondents were issued with three forms that they needed to read, and two of which they had to sign as a way of agreeing with the terms in the form. The first form was the respondent information sheet, which outlines the purpose, time and place of the study, the responsibility of the researcher towards the respondents, the freedom of the respondents to choose or refuse to be a part of the study and their right to withdraw from the study at any point should they wish to do so without any negative consequences. The information sheet provided the respondents with a clear indication of the kind of information they would be requested to give, and how the

researcher would ensure that processes of (through interviewing and recording), storing, analyzing and reporting of this data is kept confidential and anonymous. Only general information about the respondents could be mentioned where applicable e.g. referring to a respondent as a 27-year-old male engineer originally from Kimberley, working in a private company in Johannesburg. No identifying information was given that could jeopardize the respondent's job security or compromise him. It was pointed out that the information would not be used for any other purpose besides the research, and that if an opportunity to publish the information presented itself, this will not be done without the participant's full consent. It was also indicated in the information sheet that no risk was envisaged from participating in the study.

The next form was the informed consent form that stated that the respondent had gone through the information sheet above and had sought the necessary clarifications from the researcher, so as to fully understand the purpose, scope and nature of the study. The respondent thus gave his informed consent to the conditions of the study and signed it. The last form to be completed was the one that explains the reason for the recording of the interview and how the researcher would handle the recordings to ensure confidentiality. The participants were made aware that any part of the information that they might want deleted from the recordings would be deleted. They were also told that the recordings will be destroyed after the degree for which the study is conducted has been awarded. This is important in giving the respondent a sense of security because the researcher literally left with the respondent's voice on recording, which might be anxiety provoking. The participants were given the researcher's contact numbers just in case they found themselves in some unforeseen negative circumstances directly as a result of taking part in the study.

Chapter 4: Research results and discussion

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if the ability to read and write one's mother tongue or lack thereof impacted on the ethnolinguistic identity of Batswana graduates working in Johannesburg. The findings revealed that most of the people do not consciously analyse their use of language, but take it as an everyday practice that needs no scrutiny. Issues of identity are not what lay people consciously think of when they use language, even among the working middle class of society. This was apparent in this study, where the use of Setswana in Johannesburg is limited, due to the dominant use of English in the workplace. Although the findings cannot be generalized to the whole Setswana speaking community, they could be important in helping us understand the effects of the limited use of the mother tongue in the workplace on employees' ethnolinguistic identity. Although the themes are presented separately, it is important for the reader to note that they do overlap significantly at some points. Attention was paid to the different forms of language use.

This chapter is divided into two main sections; section A looks at aspects of language while section B is made up of themes that are specific to ethnolinguistic identity. The language aspects covered in section A include the respondents' constructions of language, mother tongue, the use of English and the use of Setswana in the workplace. Although they do not directly answer the research questions, these themes are important in giving the reader an idea of the respondents' views of these language aspects; what they are and what factors inform the use of some languages instead of others in the workplace. These factors are important because they could indirectly inform people's attachment to or detachment from their mother tongue. What was also important was the fact that respondents were asked for any ideas they had on how to bring about changes in the use of Setswana in the workplace, if they felt that there was a need for that change.

Section B more directly answers the research questions and is thus crucial in the interpretation of the research results outlined in chapter 5.

Section A: Language

4.2 Constructions of language

By "constructions of language", the researcher refers to the different ways in which language and the mother tongue are defined. In other words, whether they are defined by their purpose (functionality), or by the underlying meanings they serve (ideology). This was measured through determining what people immediately associate the words language and mother tongue with, without giving it much thought. Contrary to expectations, the indication from the research was that the mother tongue was not the first thing that came to people's minds when they thought of language. The two most dominant constructions of language were related to communication and variety of languages. Identity, culture and minority groups were each mentioned only twice, while mother tongue was mentioned by one participant. The mother tongue was similarly not constructed to mean identity except by one participant. The dominant construction of the mother tongue was that it is the language that one was brought up with and thus speaks at home. A slightly different view to this was that it is the language that your parents speak, which was mentioned twice. It was only later, when they were asked of the specific role of the language in identity that the respondents spoke of issues of identity. This finding is in contradistinction to the study by Leibowitz et. al (2005), which found that language was the key component in defining people's identity. One would think here that if identity was that closely linked with language, it would have been associated with language spontaneously. However, in this study the association between language and identity was only made when prompted.

4.2.*1. Language is a means or tool of communication*

Some respondents simply thought of language as a means of communication, although some had more complex definitions than others. Only one of the respondents thought of non-verbal forms of communication as a language. This view of language is important as

seeing it as a tool means that it is viewed in terms of its function rather than as an expression of one's identity.

> Communication and between two people or a group of people. (Thato)

> What comes to my mind, it's communication, ja that's about it. It's a way of communicating with other people. (Lesego)

> Without it I don't think, because even the people who cannot verbally speak, I think they use their own sign language. So I think language is a a means of communication, it's a tool of communication. (Khumo)

The view was also evident in the reasons provided for English dominance in the workplace. This is consistent with the findings of Gough (1995), which constructed particularly the English language as a functional lingua franca. It was later postulated that many black people do not know other black languages and thus need English as a language that will facilitate communication. This should be borne in mind as this function might influence their views of the effect of language on their identity.

4.2.2 Language is a sign of variety in South Africa

Language seemed to remind some of the variety of languages in South Africa. Variety could be associated with several things. It is often associated with diversity, signifying difference. This difference could mean a threat to one's own language and identity, while for others it could mean availability of a broad range of languages to choose from and thus represent flexibility in social interactions. Both of these views seemed to be evident in the findings, as will be seen later in this chapter. However, what was interesting was that wherever the minority or majority status of language was mentioned, it was linked to variety.

> I think about the languages that we have in South Africa, different languages, we have so many. And there is that whole minority group, which I think they say Batswana fall under because it is not widely used, unlike IsiZulu. (Lerato)

> Well, when you mention the word language what comes to mind of course is people in their diversity you know… For example I work with people from Côte d'Ivoire and there are certain

> words that I could understand that this is my language you know, means the very same thing that it means in their own language. (Kutlwano)

> I am thinking of South Africa with a lot of languages. We have I think currently about eleven languages hmm I am not sure if, well there's recently another language which is Koi San language which is not included and I think there was the whole debate about that so ja, so that's basically it. (Kagiso)

This could be an indication that although there are a variety of languages, they are not equal in some people's point of view. This finding could suggest that difference or diversity does not necessarily mean equality. In this regard, Alexander's (2005) argument is that even in the midst of multilingualism, there is some form of domination, which was also evident in this study. Thus in a nutshell, the two dominant spontaneous constructions of language present it as a tool of communication and that is not necessarily neutral nor immune to other societal inequalities. This was evident in that to some respondents the mention of the word led to thinking whether their language is official or not, minority or not etc. There seemed to be an implicit spontaneous comparison of one's language to other languages.

4.2.3 Mother tongue: "You have to know the language your mother speaks"

Most of the respondents saw the mother tongue as a language that is spoken in one's home, the one they first learnt to speak and with which they are brought up. There also seemed to be a suggestion that because you grew up speaking the language, you would be knowledgeable in it, or there would be a certain expectation of your level of knowledge in the language.

> Mother tongue is a language that you are well groomed at, that no matter what, from what perspective a person might communicate with you will be, you will perfectly understand what the person is saying. (Khumo)

> Mother tongue is your language, from your birth, where you were born, the language you speak, the language your mother speaks and obviously you have to know the language your mother speaks. (Neo)

This suggestion is important as it could inform the views on people's ability to read and write in their mother tongue. There was however, one participant who mentioned that one does not have to know the mother tongue more than other languages, and called the language one is most knowledgeable in first language. He defines first language as the language that one speaks most of the time and is most literate in. Thus, to him, the mother tongue was the language mostly spoken at home, but he did not have to be most literate in it.

> Mother tongue ja, I think there is a difference between mother tongue and first language now, because I think first language would be something that you can express yourself more with, like something that you are more literate in, like something you can read and write with and ja something you speak most of the time, ja that would be your first language but I believe mother tongue would be something that, let's say you were born into, kinda setup. (Tumelo)

The exception to the rule, where one participant believed that one can be more literate in a language other than the mother tongue is crucial, because it could reflect the weakening link between language of expression and identity, given that proficiency in an additional language affects one's way of thinking about the world and knowledge (Leibowitz et al., 2005). Leibowitz et al. (2005) also use the word mother tongue to mean first language, and use them interchangeably. It is ironic that the term "first language" is used in the education system to refer to the language one learns in depth and will thus be more fluent and literate in. A question to ask is whether those who learn English as a first language in school that is not their mother tongue structure their world differently from their peers who have not learnt English first language at school, since language structures our view of society and culture, which in turn shapes identity (Leibowitz et al., 2005). This question will be answered later in the findings.

4.3 Constructions of English use at the workplace

4.3.1 English is the most dominantly used language in the workplace

This subheading refers to how the participants make sense of or understand the use of English in the workplace; its dominance or non-dominance. English emerged as arguably the most dominantly used language in the workplace. All of the respondents said they use it the most. Although all the respondents reported using an additional language informally,

in their communication with clients and staff junior to them, only English was reported to be used in written form. Other languages reportedly used most commonly were Setswana, IsiZulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans and IsiXhosa. The most prominent reason for the dominance of English for most respondents seemed to be the economic value of English. The next most dominant reasons given were perceptions of the language, accommodation of variety of languages and the fact that English is a universal, international or global language. The other reason given was that people have grown accustomed to the language and thus keep speaking it. When looking at these reasons, it is clear that the economic value, perceptions and the predominant use of English that force people to conform are reasons linked to power, status and prestige, attributes which are associated with English and not the mother tongue.

4.3.2 Economic value is the reason for English dominance

The economic reasons associated with the dominance of English varied from the fact that people who give you a job are English-speaking, to the fact that it is used to administer businesses, and that it opens up many opportunities to work overseas as businesses target global clients.

> The fact that if I can speak English I can get a better job, because the people who offer you that job are English. Look at, I don't know where it started from, but I think, for me, that's how I see it, the fact that if I can speak English I can get a better job, or I can get a better education. (Thato)

> It's made dominant because it's been drilled into people's heads. So that's how the economy can be driven because the more English you can speak the better you can negotiate business deals because you will always be able to understand all these terms and you will be able to understand all the things that are happening because they are done in English. (Refilwe)

> I think it also had that thing that we're living in a global village now and there aren't many opportunities anymore in South Africa so I am going to live overseas now. How is that going to help me with my Setswana, how is that going to help me? (Lerato)

This confirms Alexander's (2005) belief that if a language is not used for production, it is disempowered, while the one used for production becomes the language of power. Leibowitz et al. (2005) also mentioned that the attitude towards a language is influenced by the power and prestige associated with that language. This was also confirmed by

Louw-Potgieter (1991) and Wright (2002), who argue that one's own language is evaluated against the dominant language based on prestige, status and power. For instance, Setswana was seen by some as not very helpful in making them access opportunities available globally. These reasons seem important as they could be compared with the suggestions that the respondents gave on ways to develop Setswana in the workplace.

4.3.3 Perception is a reason for English dominance

Some respondents felt that English is perceived as a superior language because of its association with being educated, wealthy, knowledgeable and civilised.

> I think it's more, some people, it's being ashamed because its associated with, if you can't speak English it means you are not civilised. I mean why can't I be proud to speak Setswana? (Thato)

Those who believed it came from certain perceptions seemed to locate these perceptions in history. What is common among these perceptions of English is their associations with periods of domination, apartheid and colonisation. One respondent already quoted said English had been "drilled into people's minds". This could mean that people have no choice but to comply with the language used in their everyday lives at work. Thus they are forced to learn English to be productive in the workplace. However, this historical basis was slightly distorted as the aim of apartheid was not to promote English, but to demote it and replace its dominance with Afrikaans, as was seen in the history.

> It comes from that past regime that, where the white person was better, everything that was done by the white person is better, some people still have that mindset that if you do everything that white people do, it will be better, you will get better results, you will have a happier life. (Lerato)

> For different reasons, but I think most people, especially when you have much older parents, they, they believed back then that when a person speaks English they are educated and when a person is fluent in English they learn it, they know a lot, you know. (Bontle)

> Ok I don't know why English especially is dominant but according to apartheid and all the people coming from the north to the south, I know some other languages because of, with difficulty because of them. (Neo)

As was mentioned by Banda (2000), the process through which Afrikaans and African languages were introduced in apartheid was rejected as this was forced on people who had already accepted English through colonisation (a much gentler process than apartheid, because people gained economic and educational benefits from complying with the dominant language use).

4.3.4 Functionality and English dominance

Other responses given for the dominance of English related to more practical considerations. These were the fact that we need it to accommodate diversity in the workplace and the fact that it is universal. However, as already mentioned, this accommodation of the variety of languages cannot be divorced from the inequality of languages in the workplace. This inequality was confirmed by the negative view of the use of IsiZulu and Afrikaans in the workplace. The view of English as a lingua franca was also held more by those who did not see the non-usage of Setswana as an official language as necessarily a bad thing.

> It's mainly English, it's mainly English because of, we have uhh people of different cultures. (Kagiso)

> As much as we can want any other language to be elevated, if we say we are a rainbow nation you know, and we have got different people within this country that dwells in, it would be difficult to please any person you know we will have a very busy system (Kutlwano)

> There's a lot of people that don't understand it (referring to Setswana). And I think the official languages here are English and Afrikaans. (Lesego)

For one however, the fact that Afrikaans was used as an official language seemed to go unquestioned, although she felt that the employees could not use Setswana because most people do not understand it. Given that most blacks in Gauteng do not understand or are not conversant in Afrikaans (owing to the resistance in history), and that most of the employees at this company are black, the possibility is that many of the employees do not understand Afrikaans. Afrikaans was reportedly also used in company documents, even

though it can be hypothesised that many of the employees cannot understand it. A question to be raised here is how much the choice of the dominant language use (English) in the workplace was based on the number of people who understand English. This is especially important for those who mentioned that they had to convey instructions in Setswana to let their juniors understand them better. Where respondents work with clients and often have to speak an African language, one wonders if there would be a need to explain and use another language if English was a language that everyone understood. This reiterates Toffel's view as cited by Alexander (2005) that the dominance of English is a linguistic paradox as it presents a barrier in the workplace for those who do not understand it. The reader should also bear in mind that the participants could have possibly been speaking from a perspective that people they work with are educated like them. Thus the view that most people understand English could be based on the perspective of educated employees, even though not all employees are educated. Needless to say, even some educated African employees seem to struggle to reach the level of fluency required in the workplace.

4.3.5 Habitual use is a reason for English dominance

An interesting finding was that the habitual use of English as a reason for its dominance was only given by those who had not studied Setswana in school. The notion of habitual use suggests that people get used to speaking the language at school with their friends, and end up speaking it even outside school. This finding could indicate that even though in literature and in research, respondents like to think of languages taught at school as separated from what is spoken at home, the two often are inseparable and interact more than it is expected. Because children spend most of their waking hours with educators in schools (more than with their parents), they will find it easier to use the language they speak more often (English) in their social circles than the language spoken at home.

> Then all of the sudden when a white person comes in, immediately, without thinking about it we switch to English. And then not even when he is there even if he is not there, we do tend to speak English because then we are used to it and that's the way we communicate. (Bontle)

> You don't even think buy the way I am Motswana and I am not speaking Setswana right now, and this guy is Motswana and we're speaking English. It's like something that happens automatically something that you have learned for a very long time, you know, it happens automatically. (Tumelo)

> Because we are so accustomed to English, we're so accustomed to it and we have this thing that, oh my goodness where am I going to start you know. And I think it's also very technical, languages are very technical they have got break downs. (Lerato)

Du Plessis and Louw (2008) found in their research on challenges faced by pre-school teachers in the Pretoria CBD and Sunnyside that parents were pressurizing preschool teachers to ensure that their children become fluent in English and are thus ready to begin schooling in English-medium schools. It could be hypothesized that if parents want this as badly as the research suggest, they might encourage their children to speak English in their homes. This is contrary to what most people believe, namely that it is often easy for parents to force their children to separate their school language from their home language, or that parents do not allow their children to speak English at home. Wright (2002) also confirmed that parents are more and more replacing mother tongue with English in their homes. As seen with some of the participants, children can grow up speaking the language and get accustomed to speak it in the workplace without consciously realizing that they do not speak their mother tongue.

4.3.6 Rebellion against languages other than English and Setswana

Although some of the respondents saw English as a dominant language in relation to Setswana, it seemed as though its dominance was seen in a more positive light than the dominance of other languages over Setswana. Of particular importance was the spontaneous comparison of Setswana to IsiZulu, while about three respondents compared Setswana to Afrikaans.

> Ok let me just speak the truth. Umuzulu will always want to speak his IsiZulu, but he will always want to speak his IsiZulu, so with me, there is a little rebellion I think. This IsiZulu speaker knows that I don't know IsiZulu, it's like you must, here in Joburg, you must know IsiZulu. But with me, if I don't understand that person then I won't speak to him in his IsiZulu. It's either I speak

> Setswana, you find that I understand what he is saying in IsiZulu but I will choose to speak Setswana because everyone has their own language." (Neo)

> I don't know if maybe it's because it's Gauteng or what, most of them are IsiZulu speakers. So what I would do is that, call me a stubborn person or what, when someone speaks to me in IsiZulu, I prefer to speak in Setswana, cause I don't know IsiZulu. (Thato)

This acceptance of English and rejection of other languages has been explained by writers such as Nyamende (2008) as a "tendency, borne of our discriminatory judgment… to reject our inheritance, picking out only the portion of it that we are used to." (p. 130) Nyamende (2008) also asks: "how many claim: 'these languages are all my personal inheritance' and yet inwardly they resist accepting those languages that they cannot speak as part of their lives, adhering, instead, to the former apartheid stereotypes as the only thing meaningful to them in this scenario?" (p.130). The inheritance referred to here is seen to be the fact that all the languages are available to be learnt and used by South Africans in any setting and at any time, officially and unofficially.

The main reason given for not speaking Afrikaans, where it was mentioned, was that the respondent did not know it. IsiZulu on the other hand, was mentioned by six respondents, four of which thought it was dominant because IsiZulu speakers do not want to speak other people's languages, while three felt it was because IsiZulu speakers were harder and domineering in character, a trait which two of these believed was founded in the fact that they won most historical battles.

> "When you check Amazulu, they are regarded as the violent people, it's the stigma that comes with us the black people. That ag Batswana, because we are polite, because we know how to live with one another and we won't just disrespect someone and bad mouth them. But Amazulu, when they come, they've got a different approach. So they, I don't know, they just dominate." (Khumo)

> "I'm giving you some instruction and it's not well understood, I give it in Setswana, and if it's not understood it's my problem cause I had to give, to make sure that everybody understands it. I have to give it in either English or Afrikaans, but I can't speak Afrikaans." (Lesego)

> It's difficult for me, I can't speak Afrikaans properly so it's a touch and go thing, a bit, I don't want to speak it at all, that's the thing. I feel like it's the same thing such as I would have been speaking

> my home language and everybody else not understanding. I feel it's unfair for someone to just speak their language without taking into consideration other people." (Refilwe)

These reasons confirm Nyamende's (2008) sentiments that attitudes towards languages are still informed by the apartheid discourses, and Banda's (2000) view that English is seen in a positive light as it was used to resist apartheid. However, what was evident was that the respondents who went to school in Johannesburg were more tolerant of IsiZulu than those who studied in the North West. This was shown by a higher level of preparedness to speak IsiZulu to their friends and clients, as opposed to their counterparts who reported that they insist on speaking their language and will not speak IsiZulu. Only one of those who did not do her high schooling in Gauteng said she was trying hard to communicate in IsiZulu, mainly for the sake of the learners she was teaching. One also held a very different view from the rest that the dominance of IsiZulu was rather maintained and perpetuated by the perception that it is dominant in Johannesburg. This respondent said people will speak IsiZulu for instance, with any black person they come across in Johannesburg, only to find that the person is not Umuzulu. It was interesting that this could be seen as a problem when people seem to think that others do not know Setswana and automatically speak English, which is not seen as a problem.

4.4 Constructions of the use of Setswana in the workplace

The subheading above refers to the thoughts and perceptions participants had about the dominant or non-dominant use of Setswana in their workplace. The use of Setswana was looked at in formal use (written in company documentations or used to conduct formal meetings etc.) versus informal use (used only in social interactions to converse).

4.4.1 The client is king; I speak what he/she wants me to speak

Seven respondents reported using Setswana mainly informally at work with colleagues and clients, while two sometimes used it in giving colleagues junior to them instructions. Those who used it most of the time to give instructions used it when their juniors seemed to misunderstand English. Where Setswana was spoken in informal conversations with colleagues, there seemed to be tendency to slip back into English.

> Some of my colleagues are black but we tend, we sometimes do dwell in other languages like IsiZulu, Setswana, Sesotho whatever, but then we find ourselves mostly speaking English. (Bontle)

> Setswana obviously I speak when I am with my colleague there, let's say her name is Mpho then I say eh Mpho, then we will speak in Setswana but from time to time we will start speaking English again for some weird reason, but it happens like that. (Tumelo)

Five respondents' use of Setswana is mainly informed by the client or learner that they serve (mainly South African clients), while the one business owner said he had given his IT business a Tswana name. However, it was reported that some clients would still prefer to speak in English, even when given an option to speak their African language. An interesting theme that came up was how people who are multilingual tended to choose a language to use with the client based on the client's name. In other words, if a client has an IsiZulu name, they would speak IsiZulu, if they have Setswana name they would speak Setswana.

> For example I will call a guy from Neotel and immediately he says he is Thabo, I change the code, I speak Setswana you know, I speak Sesotho immediately, he says he is Sphiwe I speak IsiZulu you know. So many a times it disturbs people you know, because I fail to understand why they continue to speak to me in English. (Kutlwano)

> But sometimes you find clients that you can hear this person is Motswana, but when you try to assist in Setswana they want to go to, they want to speak English and you can hear that this person is struggling in English, and I'm trying to help them in a language that can suit them but still he feels that, I think it's that thing in the head that English is the language that people understand and people and your message will be heard if you speak it in English. (Lerato)

The least frequent use of Setswana seemed to be with the respondent who works in a predominantly Afrikaans business, and has to liaise with international clients. For her, Afrikaans was mostly spoken informally amongst colleagues and she thus had to speak English most of the time. What seemed evident was that the informal use of Setswana, although seen as adequate and legitimate, could be maintained by terms often associated with it. Often African languages are referred to as the 'mother tongue or home language'.

These terms themselves are not neutral, as they could suggest that the language does not belong in the workplace but at home, or where the mother is.

4.4.2 Non-use of Setswana doesn't feel good; informal use is not enough

There were mixed feelings about the use of Setswana only in informal conversations at work. However, the most frequently mentioned feelings were negative, namely guilt, inferiority (feeling that your language is not recognised), sadness, anger, and powerlessness, in order of prominence. These were mentioned by five respondents. It should be borne in mind that some of the negative feelings were not always people's initial responses, particularly the feeling of powerlessness. The feeling of powerlessness was mentioned after identity was introduced, as will be discussed in section 3.7. The respondent had expressed neutral feelings before then, and changed from neutral to negative.

> I still haven't decided that though because sometimes I feel as though there is nothing you can do at the moment. At this point it's a powerless situation. (Refilwe)

> It makes you actually see it, you see it, it's proof that we are the minority group and everybody here wants to communicate in IsiZulu or in English or Afrikaans. It's sad that we're not recognized, we're not recognized. (Lerato)

> Batswana generally cause I don't think it's just in the workplace many people speak English in most places. So I would feel clearly, even in the workplace or outside work check my friend who is just chilling and living a comfortable life, we would speak English and obviously we would feel guilty because we would never like chill like this and say hey what can we do to further our language? (Tumelo)

The mixture of feelings is consistent with different research findings. For instance, Leibowitz et al. (2005) found that African students and staff felt excluded and were more conscious of their minority status, and felt coerced to adapt socially to the dominant culture of the University because their language was not spoken. Neutral feelings could be indicative of an acceptance of the situation without seeing a need to question, analyse or

challenge it, or they could indicate a mere gratefulness, like those who felt good, that they can at least speak their language in a place where it does not belong. Four respondents reported neutral feelings, although two of them had negative feelings mixed with neutral feelings. Three people reported positive feelings.

4.4.2.1 Reasons for negative feelings: Non-use is a threat to preservation of Setswana

The participants who had negative feelings about the limitation of Setswana to informal use in the workplace are those who indirectly thought there is a need to speak it more and possibly also in the formal work, as suggested by the need for instance, to have Setswana names for computers. The two most dominant reasons given for negative feelings about the non-use of Setswana were the fact that the language would eventually diminish in importance, as it would not be passed from generation to generation, and the fact that its history will be forgotten. Feelings of guilt also seemed to be mostly associated with the fact that respondents were not working hard enough, had lost interest in their language, were too relaxed. The next most important reason was that of preserving the language for communication purposes, followed by the need to use the history of Setswana (i.e. how Batswana in the olden days created words) in developing the language for economic growth.

> English is the basis that everyone speaks, but it does sadden me in some sense that I cannot pass on that language to my kids. You know, the beauty of it, you know, the, and you know there's just so much pride when someone knows where they come from. (Bontle)

> The other bad thing is that when you speak hmm when you dilute it. You, you end up losing those those hmm the pureness if I would call it that way, ja it can mean that your language can you know slowly fade away slowly change. (Kagiso)

> I think that's why I say if we can preserve our language, like if I could understand that Batswana named certain things, and how they named them, and then I would be able to name a computer without saying computerer (direct translation from English). (Thato)

These participants share Skutnabb-Kangas' (2001) view that languages diminish if they have few speakers, no political power, and are not transferred from generation to generation. The importance of not losing the history of the language was predominantly

seen in the light of preserving cultural identities, the beauty of the language, its values and principles. These were rather aesthetic qualities that Nyamende (2008) would attribute to taking pride in one's own language, by taking ownership of it. He argues that "as we enter the twenty-first century, it is essential to ensure that we bring our languages with us; the languages that have, for many generations of dire social distress, borne our culture: our customs, rituals, history, beliefs, etc. But, in addition, we need to examine the pride (or absence thereof) with which we talk about these languages" (p. 126).

4.4.2.2 Reasons for neutral feelings: Unprohibited informal use is adequate enough

These are responses of participants who seemed uncertain of how they felt about limiting the use of Setswana to informal use. Although the title says neutral, the term is used to indicate the uncertainty and not the feeling. As it will be seen, the reasons behind the "neutral" feelings were not neutral. Two of those who felt neutral said they were not prevented from speaking their language anyway, and were thus satisfied with the current use. One of these said she was not supposed to use Setswana anyway as it belongs at home, while the other one said it would not be fair to speak to people in Setswana if most people did not understand it. All these reasons could very well be explained by the notion of social creativity, but in the reverse order. Whilst the Social Identity Theory suggests that people often make up reasons to use their language and not the dominant one (social creativity), in this case the opposite seems to be true. The respondents seemed to find reasons to rationalize their lack of use of Setswana in the workplace. It seemed as though speaking the language was viewed as a privilege and not a right, which could in some way confirm the belief that the language does not "belong" in the workplace.

> How do I feel? Look, I can't complain. I'm not supposed to be using it anyway. (Lesego)

> I feel as though, sure it could be used but practically speaking it honestly can't be used with clients, with documents and the work that's done. (Refilwe)

> Well in Gauteng I haven't really been in a situation where it's only IsiZulu speakers or it's only Batswana, that's why we end up speaking English but I think it would be best if, depending on whether everybody understands that language, and I haven't been in that situation where someone said I must not speak Setswana. (Thato)

4.4.2.3 Reasons for positive feelings: I am grateful I can speak Setswana, even if it is informally

These participants were not uncertain, but grateful to be able to speak the language without being stopped, either to help their juniors with understanding or just for conversation. Three participants said they felt good about the use of Setswana only at the communicative level. One said it was because she was not stopped by anyone from speaking Setswana, another one saw it as a good tool to use in making a learner understand better in their language, while another one saw it as an opportunity to communicate with other people in a language that they understand.

> You know sometimes uhm yes I can express myself very well in English, but here and there, there are limited words that you know, when I speak Setswana I can reach into a kid. Like it's a there's a sense of connection between me and the kids of understanding. (Khumo)

> I think it's fine. I think it's fine to use my language in the company it's my mother's tongue I won't change it because I work in a company like this, and we use English too much. I can't say I'm not supposed to speak Setswana, I speak it… Because there are only older men working in the lower class (referring to maintenance jobs and cleaning), it's difficult for them to speak English sometimes but at least when we speak Setswana they can understand (Neo)
>
> It's a good thing in that it helps you to, to communicate with other people because if you are here in Gauteng and you start speaking a deep Setswana people will not understand you therefore it has a negative impact on your communication skills. (Kagiso)

These reasons also reflect happiness about using Setswana merely orally. However, it could also point to the importance of other languages in the workplace, where the use of another language is important for understanding the work (in terms of teaching or giving instructions). This makes some people grateful to have an additional language that they can use, even if only orally, as it makes some of the work easier. This fact has been confirmed by Balfour (2007), who argues that some theories of language acquisition and research have proven that learning in one's mother tongue enhances performance, as opposed to learning in a second language.

4.4.3 The need to use Setswana in the workplace

Although nine out of ten respondents believed that Setswana had a role in the workplace, five of these believed it should only be used in spoken and not written form. Four of them thought it was relevant both in written and spoken form only in some industries. The reasons for having it in spoken form only included financial and administrative costs, as well as the fact that it would not be understood by many employees. This signals another form of intellectualization or reverse social creativity as explained by Louw-Potgieter (1991).

> Maybe you're thinking if you know maybe we should start using Setswana, then you start thinking of the work behind it like obviously you would have to rewrite the processes in Setswana and re-write whatever we have and maybe we can speak it more but rewrite it. We can already understand English" (Tumelo)

> Well the publishing industry as such is quite a profitable industry more especially when you publish academic books for scholarly books, let me say so. Because we were surveying the market in the whole of the North West as well as some other parts of Gauteng. The books that we published you know, they serve that market." (Kagiso)

> I think depending on which province you're in, those province provincial languages should also have a fair chance in the workplace. I mean I don't see why if we have a meeting as black people only we can't just all speak in that language that people understand. (Thato)

Nyamende (2008) feels that the restriction of African languages to only certain fields are not enough as even industries like publishing, translation or interpretation are in the hands of people who might not necessarily believe in multilingualism as advocated by the PanSALB.

One respondent felt that the language had no use because it lacks enough business words. Wright (2002) would agree that African languages cannot compete with English in the workplace. However, this respondent was interestingly the one who seemed to be using Setswana the least in her workplace, because she liaises mostly with international clients. Ironically, this respondent also seemed to have changed her mind about the need for

Setswana in the workplace after identity had been discussed with her, as will be seen below.

> That would be more of an administrative nightmare and a problem, ja but I feel as though if we were to develop it just for the country to be at the same level as English just in this country, then it might be a lot better but then still have English as the international language... (Refilwe).

The fact that most of those who feel that Setswana can be used think of the use in spoken and not written form might imply that little more work needs to be done as all the respondents already said they were using it in verbal form. Thus although some believed Setswana could be used, they were skeptical about its written form given the challenges. One suggested that it be introduced in all businesses in different provinces where they are spoken predominantly. Nyamende (2008) argues that this is no different from apartheid's plan to segregate people, and that a diffusion of languages could be more advisable, especially in areas like Soweto, where people from all language groups in South Africa are found. Language diffusion refers to making all languages available so that they are not limited to their past geographical regions (Nyamende, 2008). Wright (2002) on the other hand saw this provincial language promotion as a way of catering for both local and global economic needs. By promoting the language locally, the needs of the people served in such provinces are met in their language, but the use of English as an additional language also allows that local business to compete nationally and internationally.

4.4.4 Identity sparks change of opinion about the use of language

A very interesting observation made was that after introducing issues of identity into the interview, some respondents changed their minds about the need for use of Setswana in the workplace. The following were some of the changes after discussing issues of identity. One respondent, who mentioned not having a problem learning IsiZulu in order to serve people better, mentioned later that she would not want to be identified or seen as a Zulu speaker as a result of her speaking IsiZulu. Another example was Thato, quoted above on provincial promotion of languages. Her view changed from provincial use to virtually any industry in South Africa. The other respondent, who reported using Setswana the least when compared to others, also reported negative feelings although she initially could not

decide how she felt, and was neutral. The sudden change in perception creates curiosity in terms of the reasons for the change. In my opinion, the reason could be closely linked with what these respondents perceive the use of language to be. An intriguing point to mention is that all three of them believed English was dominant because of its economic power, and this could be one of the implicit reasons for the change of mind about the need for Setswana in the workplace. However, the change could also have been brought about by the fact that the discussion on identity had sensitised them to issues related to their own identity. For instance, in this change of mind both Khumo and Refilwe associate speaking another language to who they are, as can be seen in their quotations below. Khumo associates it with becoming an IsiZulu-speaking person while Refilwe thinks she is not English speaking, although it must be mentioned that she used English more often than other respondents in the workplace.

> And when coming to relating with other cultures they, hey (sighs) Gauteng is mostly dominated by, in Gauteng it doesn't, is mostly dominated by IsiZulu, so. Well speaking from, (long pause) because right now as a Motswana, I would not, as a strongly based Motswana I would not want to be changed to become an IsiZulu speaking person or what not and what not. (Khumo)
>
> Look at the confederation cup, those guys from overseas, they can't speak English, they speak their own languages, there is a translator. Why is it that if someone from South Africa or Mafikeng enters Miss SA, and is not able to speak English, why can't there be a translator? (Thato)

> I feel as though you're fighting and to some extent because the only time you can use your language and the only time you can be sure that hey I'm actually different, I'm not English speaking, is when you're speaking to someone else who speaks Setswana with you and that's that. (Refilwe)

This speaking of another African language seems to be a threat to one's ethnolinguistic identity, and this could be explained by Leibowitz et al. (2005), according to whom identity is often associated with home language. In other words, speaking English is not associated with identity like African languages, and that is why speaking another African language would be a threat to one's identity while English is not.

4.4.5 Parents precipitated the lack of use of Setswana in the workplace

When asked why they thought Setswana was not used in the workplace, most responses given by participants had to do with the role of parents in the matter. Of the five that believed it was because the parents did not teach their children Setswana, three explicitly mentioned parents who take their children to English schools. Two of these saw this in a negative light while one saw it as not necessarily a bad thing. Two of the five that saw parents as having a role in this said parents were too busy focusing on their careers and making money, and thus do not have the time to teach their children Setswana. This reason crystallises the fact that Setswana is seen to belong at home, to the extent that parents are seen to be responsible for teaching Setswana and not teachers.

> It's a choice from parents guided by the fact that they want to give you a better education, because of the perception that you can get a better education from a private school. And you cannot necessarily blame them for not learning how to read and how to write their mother tongue. (Kagiso)
> But then you get other people that say no, at school they say he can't speak English properly so he has to practice at home so we have to speak with him in English. And it's sad that children can't speak Setswana (Lerato)
> If you grew up in a family where your mother is like because I did not go to a multiracial school, I want my child to speak English perfectly through the nose, to a point where if a child speaks Setswana she would hit her and say no don't speak Setswana, you understand. I want to be proud of my child, that my child can speak English 100%, I have taught her, she is very educated. (Thato)

Alexander (2005) called this restriction of the mother tongue to the home the *Static Maintenance Syndrome*, maintaining one's language in primary contexts of the home, church and primary school. The next prominent reason proffered was that Batswana were often not speaking their language because they want to accommodate other people (as already seen in reasons for the dominance of IsiZulu). This meant that they felt that they had a trait that the majority thought IsiZulu speakers do not have and thus do not accommodate other people. This seemed to be one of the prejudices often attributed to different linguistic groups playing itself out in the workplace. In this regard, Mayer and Louw (2009) explain how such ethnic perceptions, interpretations, expressions and intensions that started off outside the work environment spill over into the workplace, and

have a potential of causing conflicts. However, not everyone felt that accommodating other people was simply because of different cultures. Three of the four felt that Batswana were merely conforming to societal pressures to speak other people's languages, mainly because they were not the majority. This would be consistent with Leibowitz et al's (2005) findings already discussed. One respondent said society makes the speaking of languages other than English look bad. Another reason that was given for the lack of use had to do with the fact that few people in the workplace were exposed to Setswana and thus spoke the language used in the work environment (English). Two respondents said we simply do not have enough business words in Setswana to use in the workplace.

4.4.6 Suggestions on promoting the use of Setswana in the workplace

4.4.6.1 Parental role in promoting Setswana

One would expect that reasons that are given for the non-formal use of Setswana in the workplace would inform suggestions on how the language could be promoted in the workplace. This was the case, as six out of ten respondents saw the teaching of the language by parents to be important. However, two of these explicitly mentioned that the language must be taught at home and not at school, while three thought is should be taught both at home and at school. It was rather startling that even though English dominance was seen to be brought about by the economic power, and no one mentioned that it was because it was taught by the parents at home, most respondents thought by being taught at home by parents Setswana would be promoted. In other words, it was argued that isolating Setswana even more from the workplace and keeping it at home would grow the language. However, most of these combined this suggestion with economic power.

> I don't think they have to go to that multiracial school in order for them to get work because of English and stuff you can learn English even if you are still learning Setswana at school. (Neo)

> I feel that it's not a role of the academics system you know to impart the knowledge of mother tongue. (Kutlwano)

> At school, like these days in some schools there is no Setswana. In Gauteng, especially here in Ekurhuleni, there is no Setswana. It is IsiZulu or Sesotho. So it's my responsibility to teach my child Setswana, if I want him to know Setswana. (Lesego)

4.4.6.2 Institutional empowerment of Setswana

The second most dominant way of promoting Setswana mentioned was to give it institutional power. Among the five that suggested this, one had said it would be a waste of time to introduce the languages in the schools while universities and the workplace did not accommodate Setswana. She had a rather radical view that Setswana could only be as powerful as English if it was to be made the medium of instruction in schools and in business administration. This sentiment was shared by two other respondents.

> We in South Africa, we don't insist on that. We don't insist that if you wanna do business with us you must at least know one African language. There are a lot of BEE people. Do you think when Motsepe speaks to all these people, does he insist on. (Bontle)
>
> If you want to write your whole matric finals in Setswana I fail to understand what you're going to do in university because there is no Setswana university where they are just teaching you in Setswana. It will still bring you back to my issue of developing a language and improving on it because then that's the problem we will be sitting with our languages here that we couldn't we couldn't possibly go to the JSE and start brokering deals there because in Setswana I doubt you can say we can do hedging and foreign exchange. (Refilwe)

Alexander (2005) would agree with this, except that he did not see policies that make the language a medium of instruction to be enough, but called for more use of African languages and their centralization in economic production. Other suggestions that were closely linked to his view included having clients demand services in Setswana as this would force companies to accommodate the clients' preferences, and finally, a suggestion was made to simply market Setswana products and services (e.g. tourist attractions and media). Two of the suggestions integrated the creation of new words in order for Setswana to be effective in the workplace.

4.4.6.3 Increased exposure to Setswana

The final suggestion was to give people more exposure to Setswana by getting entertainers and prominent political figures to speak it (those who can) and publishing information in different languages. This approach would thus argue that if people do not see the language enough and it is not in the public eye, it will not be seen as important. Thus, basic awareness would be thought to increase the importance of the language. Banda (2000) argued along the same lines about politicians and prominent public figures being influential in portraying a message that all languages were equally important.

> You would find in most of the publications which are done, it's predominantly English Afrikaans and IsiZulu, then uhm Setswana or actually South Sotho. uhm that's my experience actually here in Gauteng they should interchange you know, sometimes when a publication is published it can be in Tswana and sometimes in South Sotho. They don't recognise the fact that there is a Tswana who lives in Gauteng and speaks Setswana and they actually sort of use, they associate you for example a lot with Southern Sotho, where as you are not. (Kagiso)

> So maybe if people of the likes of Motlanthe would speak in Setswana people would be forced to listen you know, they would be forced to listen because that's what he chooses to speak at that time. (Lerato)

Section B: Ethnolinguistic Identity

4.5 The role of language in ethnolinguistic identity

Where respondents were asked about the role of language in identity, the responses suggested different levels of identity in which language was involved. Although this question was phrased in a way that it asked about language in general, the respondents automatically explained the role of the mother tongue, and some did not see English as a language they identified with. This once again confirms a finding by Leibowitz et al. (2005) that identity is often associated with the mother tongue, the language spoken at home. The different levels of identity ranged from language merely saying one came from

a certain place, belong to a particular group of people that speak it, to a function of being able to relate with others on a deeper personal level.

4.5.1 Language is a sign of belonging to a certain type of community

For these respondents language does not only say one is a Motswana, but is able to let one make a conclusion about the geographical origin of a person, given the different languages spoken in different geographical areas, as well as the different dialects among the broader Batswana community. Thus language would first make a distinction between ethnic groups of different languages, and then further demarcate between different dialects spoken by Batswana, which often tells where one comes from. It then appears that language is useful in as much as it informs other aspects important in the formation of one's ethnolinguistic identity (such as where one comes from).

> It tells us where your origins are, it tells us whether you're Nguni or Sotho, or you're Tswana you know. And yes it even tells us where you come from you, might be a sowetan but then it tells us of your roots you know there is a perception that if you are Umuzulu you must have roots somewhere in Natal. (Kutlwano)
>
> Most people say uhm, they can tell what a person's culture is, through the language that they speak and where they are from and everything. Because now when I speak Setswana, and a person who grew up in Rustenburg, our Setswana dialects are different. The accent is also different. (Bontle)
>
> If I rock up to Mafikeng right now, I know cause I go there from time to time, they can pick up immediately that no, this one, he is not from here, although that's why I say Setswana is evolving somehow, its changing. (Tumelo)

This is consistent with Louw-Potgieter's (1991) findings that linguistic categories are unstable and often have blurred boundaries, and there are other essential characteristics that linguistic groups seem to use to further differentiate themselves from other subgroups. In this instance, geographical location or history seemed to be important. However, although this theme was significant it was mentioned only four times, which could indicate that language could be one of the important aspects that define where one belongs, but not the only one.

4.5.2 Language is a tool of cohesion

The role of language here was seen in the light of it bringing people who belong to the same language group closer to each other, regardless of their geographical origin. However, there was a very thin line for some between cohesion and separation as language brought people closer to each other but pushed them further from other language groups.

> For me as a teacher yes, because I mean I am teaching this somebody to become the best of who that somebody is, not what I am but help him to become the best of who he is. If I'm standing in front of Tswana learners, yes I am definitely good, I am definitely going to help them to excel, to be the best at, you know, to reach deep in their soul, reach deep into their being, you see. (Khumo)

> But the bottom line is that we are Batswana you know. So somehow there is that excitement when you meet Motswana, that he or she is Motswana you know. (Kutlwano)

> I meet somebody in town, there are IsiZulu speakers or something and they are shouting at him and then maybe I hear him speak Setswana, I would stand up for him, I don't know. The thing is cause I feel, I feel like you know this guy is one of me, he is one of us, he is one of something of me. (Tumelo)

In this regard Mayer and Louw (2009) expressed that employees' identities in the workplace could be a source of synergies or of conflict, but often led to conflict in the workplace. Identity could however, serve as a major tool in managing critical incidents in the organization, and provide a major force for activation, prioritization and deployment of core capabilities of the employees (Mayer & Louw, 2009). This seems to be supported by a quotation above that learners can be reached better when a language they identify with is used. Some respondents indicated that language gave them cohesion in a sense of having pride in one's language, and giving one a deeper connection to others either formally at work or informally outside work.

4.5.3 Language is a tool of separation

Here language was seen in two ways, first in that it can literally separate people and make them relate better with people of the same language, and secondly in that the different dialects might lead to discrimination among Batswana speakers, as some dialects have greater status than others. What was also evident was how one respondent saw this

separation to be more prominent in rural areas, where people speak one language, although this speaking of one language was seen by many respondents as preserving the language's 'pureness', because languages in Johannesburg are mixed and thus lose their 'purity' (even though languages are never really pure).

> Like you know, especially people who come from rural areas neh, like obviously in varsity you meet a lot of people who come from Polokwane or whatever, whatever, and they tend to gravitate to people that speak the languages that they speak. And then now you will have a Xhosa clan over there, you'll have Sepedi clan over there, Setswana clan over there and everything. And the sometimes it's, it's when you insist on speaking your language, you kinda, I don't wanna say you kind, but you kinda place yourself in a particular box, right, and say I'm going to speak Setswana, if you wanna speak to me you will speak in Setswana. (Bontle)

> To some extent depending on which dialect, cause I remember also when I was growing up there was low class Setswana, middle class, like if you spoke a certain kind of Setswana it meant that you were not civilised. When you spoke a certain kind it meant woow, you are civilised, you see. (Thato)

Mhlahlo (2002) argued that identity was an anthropologically constructed concept based on geography, physical characteristics and language. These qualities were then used to perpetuate divisions, prejudices and discriminatory acts in society. These findings confirm this belief, especially because the respondents that originally came from outside Gauteng seemed to experience feelings of superiority based on the pureness of their Setswana over Gauteng's mixed languages. Some frankly believed that if you grew up in Gauteng, you cannot possibly know your culture well and your language in its purest form. Those who grew up in Gauteng, seemed to see 'pure' Setswana as somehow being rural and thus not urbanized. For instance, the pureness was often associated with grandmothers or having old parents from rural areas. Nyamende (2008) emphasises this by saying that currently educated people associate African languages with illiteracy, ignorance and backwardness.

4.6 The effects of language use at work on the ethnolinguistic identity of the respondents

This is probably the most important of all the themes in answering the research questions of this study. The above findings point out to two important facts; first, although respondents are all working and seem to view their careers as important, the fact that only one of them mentioned money and two mentioned goals or profession as either important building blocks of identity, or how they define their identity, implies that respondents might not view identity as something related to their workplace. Secondly, this is important, as it relates directly to views on whether one's identity in the workplace is affected or not even if certain important building blocks of their identity are not accommodated.

However, this study was based on the ethnolinguistic identity, that is, one's spoken language as an indication of belonging to the Batswana language group. Based on the notion of ethnolinguistic identity, used in this study to refer to the use of Setswana (in its written and read form) being an indicator of one's sense of belonging to the Batswana group, the following results were obtained: five respondents believed that not using Setswana in the workplace did not affect their ethnolinguistic identity, while four felt that their ethnolinguistic identity was affected. One was more in the middle because to her it would depend on the environment. She said it would only be affected if one was living among Batswana. This could be seen to mean that her ethnolinguistic identity is not affected, seeing that she does not work or live among Batswana in Johannesburg. This thus brings the number of those who felt that their ethnolinguistic identity is not affected to six, which could be seen as the main answer to the research question. However, it must be borne in mind that the six where all literate in Setswana (had studied it formally), and only four respondents in the study had not studied Setswana.

4.6.1 Reasons for the (in)ability to read and write Setswana not affecting ethnolinguistic identity

The first important finding to mention would be that none of the respondents felt that they would not be disadvantaged in any way if they did not know how to read or write their mother tongue in the workplace. The two who said they had been disadvantaged

experienced the challenge in their churches, where people were generally understanding and lenient with them. The most dominant reason given for the lack of effect on people's ethnolinguistic identity was mainly the fact that using English was just a professional tool required for the workplace, and could not be identified with as a language. For these respondents, the workplace or the professional world was seen as different from one's personal world. This finding raises questions about organizational identities.

> When people get to work in the company and do not speak Setswana, although they know that they are Batswana, you can understand that that person is not, he doesn't come from Europe. He is not an English person, maybe he is a South African but the only way, I wouldn't speak another language, I would stick to English, I am talking about the professional way, I would stick to English…It is different, your home and and community are different from the workplace, you meet up with many cultures out there, and it doesn't mean when you speak only English you oppress your Setswana. (Neo)

> No, you can still find a Motswana in the United States, but that doesn't change the person obviously there are some uhm practices which hm one would not be able to make when you are in a different place. There are some things that I am unable to do when I am here that I am able to do when I am at home, like speaking my language, my mother tongue. (Kagiso)

> Because here you've been speaking English with your boss, your client the whole day and now you just want to relax. And speaking your language it's, with another person it's like you're switching from another world to another world, do you get me? You are becoming you. There you are becoming a professional somebody but when you sit with your friends speaking your own language, you are becoming you. You are detoxing, you come refreshed. (Khumo)

The findings echo those found by Chick and Wade as reported by Dyers (2000). These researchers found that IsiZulu speakers spoke English as an indication of their educational background and status in the workplace, while still maintaining their ethnolinguistic identities. For some, language was just part of defining one's belonging to a community but not everything. For these, even if one went abroad and never used Setswana they would still remain Batswana. This once again shows the diminishing faith in the role of language as a key feature of identity, probably owing to its changing nature. Language was seen as separate from other aspects that define one's ethnolinguistic identity, namely,

culture, history and "roots". As already mentioned, these appear to be more stable, constant and reliable than language.

4.6.2 Reasons for the (in)ability to read and write mother tongue affecting ethnolinguistic identity

A highly intriguing finding of this study should be mentioned here, that all of those who felt that their ethnolinguistic identity was affected by their limited use of Setswana at work had not had formal training in Setswana, that is, all of them had not learnt to read and write it. However, because they had not been disadvantaged in the workplace for not being able to read and write Setswana, it could be deduced that the effect on their ethnolinguistic identity does not come mainly from their workplace, but from other social settings as well. It was also interestingly among these respondents that feelings of guilt (3 out of 4), anger (2), sadness (1), and powerlessness (1) were expressed at the limited use of Setswana in the workplace. In this light then, it could be said that their reported effects on the ethnolinguistic identity could be a result of both the workplace and many other factors outside work. Some of them reported seeing on television how negatively people were viewed for not being able to read and write their mother tongue. Others felt it would be disrespectful to speak English to their grandparents in the North West, a sentiment shared by those who came from the North West. This points out to an important fact that it is not only those who speak Setswana that are at a disadvantage, but also those who do not speak the language, particularly in areas where Setswana was historically dominant (the North West).

> If I spend most of my time at work then it means that I am not speaking my language for most of the day, which means I am getting better in another language and getting worse in my own language, you're getting better at another language you are getting a bit, not getting a bit, you're getting worse at your own language which is part of your identity. (Tumelo)

> I think when you live in Joburg, things like language and culture and whatever is not something that you hold dear. And I think that is what people in Joburg miss a lot because now we see people going back and saying ok fine I wanna know uhm where I come from, I wanna know more about my language, I wanna know more about my culture. (Bontle)

> It's still your culture, there is nothing more sad than loosing yourself completely. I mean we have already lost ourselves in the fact that we don't do things the same way culturally as they used to,

> our ancestors used to. That's already a sad thing on its own, we already have this diluted Setswana in Soweto as well so rather keep something alive something that says you know what, this is who you are, your ancestors were this, and tell your children later on that this is who they are. (Refilwe)
>
> I think they will be greatly affected (those who cannot read or write Setswana) because now it plays quite a huge role in in in identity. You say oh I am Motswana but you can't even speak your own language how you going to say 'ja, ke Motswana' (in Setswana). Are you going to say "ja I'm Tswana" (in English) and that's it? You can't even say 'nna ke Motswana, ke tswa..' (I am Motswana, I come from..) cos you can't even construct a sentence in your own language which I think.. it will really have a huge impact on your identity. (Lerato)

It should be noted as well that these participants also referred to the use of Setswana in its spoken form, probably because they used English more often in their workplace and social circles as well.

Chapter 5: Interpretations, critical reflections, recommendations and conclusions

5.1 Interpretations

These research results seem to confirm the views held by some authors mentioned in the literature review, particularly the views of Alexander (2005), Banda (2000) and Gough (1995).

First, the fact that most of the respondents saw Setswana use in the verbal form and in informal conversations at work as enough, and did not think it necessary to use Setswana in written form could be an indication of what Alexander (2005) called the *Static Maintenance Syndrome*, that is, the maintenance by African people of their first languages in primary contexts of family, community, primary school and religious practices, and the belief that these languages cannot develop into languages of power. The reason for this could be two-fold. First, the reason could be linked to the respondents' perceptions of Johannesburg. They feel that Johannesburg is not their home, even if they stay here, it is for work. Although it was not summarised as a theme, some of the respondents mentioned (certainly more than five of them), that Johannesburg is made up of people who have come here to work, and referred to the areas where they came from (or where they had grandparents) as home, mostly in the North West. As a result, many respondents reported that Setswana was mixed here, and if they wanted to speak or hear pure Setswana it would be "back home", mainly in the North West Province. In some cases, the main reason for the reported need to preserve Setswana was so that they could speak it "back home" and not be disrespectful to the elders by speaking mixed languages.

This leads to the second reason that people's sense of belonging is not related to their workplaces, although they spend more time in Johannesburg. This was evident in how they thought being professional was separated from their personal identities. If speaking English means being professional for them, then one could conclude that Setswana was not seen as a professional language, nor was it seen to have potential for being

professional, even after the government has suggested that it is one of the official languages in the country. Thus, one can argue that their ethnolinguistic identity is not affected because they have a well developed ethnolinguistic identity from home that is not affected by what happens in the workplace. However, the fact that this ethnolinguistic identity would be developing outside the economic domain is a point of concern because it would make it difficult to promote Setswana institutionally and economically. In other words, if Setswana belongs in the rural villages of the North West, the suggested economic development of Setswana will be difficult to attain if the people who could be key in developing the language do not see it as their role. The fact that language development was seen as the work of parents and people who work directly with languages and rich business people echoes what Banda (2000) said:

> As long as the actions of policy makers and those in the corridors of power suggest that a particular language (in this case English) offers opportunity for education, job opportunities and accessibility to communication, economic, political and industrial success, then language policies enacted to promote other languages will be futile. It is hardly encouraging to say to black learners, 'learn through your mother tongue because it is the language of your ancestors and it is the language of your culture'. Such an argument is becoming a less attractive prospect in this global economy than the need for status and socioeconomic mobility that is perceived to be offered by English. Given such a situation, it might require a great deal of motivation to make black children see the functional sense of learning through the medium of African languages (Banda, 2000, p. 55).

In a nutshell, if Setswana will only have "professional use" in the workplace if it is promoted by business people, it means language is linked to economic power. Thus if the language is not used professionally in written form, it is because it has no economic power. Rightfully, one respondent asked why she had to study Setswana if it was not going to help her in tertiary education or at work. And although the four that said their ethnolinguistic identity is affected, two of them said they would still have gone to the same English schools if they were to go back in time, because they had received a better education and good career opportunities. In other words, there was no difference between

those who had learnt how to read and write Setswana and those who had not, in their use of Setswana in the workplace, because none of them had had the need to use Setswana in written form, except for the one educator and one respondent who had worked as a publisher. Perhaps the most challenging reality given by one of the respondents on the plight of African languages can be summed up in this long but worth quoting explanation.

> There's something that Nelson Mandela says in his book "long walk to freedom". He says a black man is free now, you know, but now the greatest struggle that we have, it is to liberate his mind. And I find that it is a challenge that we face today. Well it's true that colonisation indoctrinated the language, they engineered the whole language. But now, for the fact that it was done by colonisers, it doesn't mean it's not good. And it doesn't mean that it's wrong. There are things that the colonisers did, and some of those things were brilliant ideas, brilliant concepts. They made the world a simpler place to live in, they made communication easier for the whole, for the rest of Africa, you know, and all of that. Now, now that we're, or we have freedom or we're democratic states, it doesn't necessarily mean that everything that was orchestrated by the colonisation system is wrong. Some of those ideas are brilliant ideas. For example look at the language English, if you look at it, it's a brilliant concept on its own. You can imagine, how many African countries do we have today? And all of us, we can have a single medium of communication that we can speak. It doesn't make sense, even if it could have been Setswana, even if it could have been Tsonga, even if it could have been French, but the fact is that we need that medium. And it's not only by whites. For example, let's look at independent countries like China, they still use the very same language. You know, or you look at many other countries that are not English, and that were not even colonised, but are still, because they've embraced the whole brilliancy in the concept that we need to have platform at which we can communicate. You know, it's like, it's like Egyptians, they produced Christianity, and they made sure that it's standard, they penetrated different continents, and almost the world as a whole you'll find the Catholic Church. And they introduced the concept of God, the concept of church, the fellowship, of all that. So the whole point is that there are things that there are things that happened during our colonisation that we, well are not good definitely, they are horrible. But some, they work, some they're brilliant ideas. And we have to be realistic, we have to accept the fact that they're working and they're making a difference. Today you can hear Mugabe speaking and you can hear him addressing at a conference. Today we've got people that come into South Africa and we have conferences, where people have to address people from different states in English. It's a working concept, why change it? If you want to change it come up with something that will work better than that. And if it's working better, then it's ok, you know. So you know it's not the matter of of of you know, it's the mind that still says I'm colonised, you know, English has to go, you know. (Kutlwano)

This firmly held strong argument could be true to a certain extent, but the fact that the choice of English as a lingua franca is not neutral could be raised. Having a lingua franca does not necessarily have to lead to the replacement of other languages by English, especially if the speakers of such languages are concerned about the diminishing use of their language. It seems like the unquestioned acceptance of English as a lingua franca by some is informed by what Louw-Potgieter (1991) called social mobility, where people of a certain language group decide to move towards speaking a dominant language based on an evaluation of the opportunities the language offers (ethnolinguistic vitality). In this instance all factors normally used to evaluate the need to move seem to have been applied, namely wealth, social status (the fact that English seems to be associated with being educated and wealthy), demographic factors (the fact that most people are not originally from Johannesburg but come here to work) and institutional support factors (e.g. the fact that Setswana has no formal support both at work and in educational institutions). Thus even issues of convenience (the fact that people do not have time to learn other languages because they are too busy working hard to make money) are benefits that English seems to offer. This theory in essence covers different areas in which language could be developed, and suggests that if such factors are not offered by a language, the language is not attractive enough to its speakers.

Although social mobility towards English was evident, there seemed to be social creativity towards other languages, particularly IsiZulu and Afrikaans. It is very ironic that in some of the respondents' companies, Afrikaans was the dominant language, but was not used more often than English. If language use is so closely linked to economic power, and the statistics show that most of the South African economy is held by White Afrikaans speaking people (Slabbert, 2000), one would expect that most of the South African organisations would speak Afrikaans at work. While some mentioned that their documents at work were written in Afrikaans, most employees still speak English. This could be as a result of social creativity, where most of the employees have used unconscious cognitive strategies to view Afrikaans in a new light. For instance, most of the respondents simply reported that they did not know Afrikaans, which gave them a good enough reason to not use it. The same reason was given for IsiZulu. However, some respondents' reasons for not wanting to speak IsiZulu implied that it was a threat to their ethnolinguistic identity

(not wanting to be seen as Umuzulu by speaking the language, rebelling against its dominance etc). Needless to say South Africa has a history of social change, where learners from schools in Soweto resisted against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Gauteng generally is known for its resistance against Afrikaans (Gough, 1995), which could be traced back to the 1976 social change riots. If some of the reasons given for the dominance of IsiZulu and English are historical (colonisation, apartheid, etc), it means that the dominance of English is not neutral, but it is informed by historical events that seemingly have long-lasting effects. Thus some cognitive strategies seemed to have been formed to resist using other languages, while English was readily accepted for reasons seen to be organic and practical, even though it is deeply embedded in historical events, as much as IsiZulu and Afrikaans were.

A concern raised by those who had negative feelings about the lack of use of Setswana in written form was that as it diminishes in the workplace, where people spend most of their time, it will diminish intergenerationally. If English is highly esteemed at the expense of other languages, then it creates a concern. As Skutnabb-Kangas (2001) explains, Africa and Asia have fought against colonizing powers, and that the use of their native languages was at the centre of their demands over many years, as an expression of autonomy and self-determination. Cultural knowledge, encoded in the diversity of the world's languages, is a prerequisite for maintenance of natural resources, and wars in the world, as well as colonization, have been mainly centred on the control of identities and natural resources. This is a crucial but possibly unconscious process where as much as what belongs to me and what I identify with is not good enough or does not have the potential to be economically powerful, then I might not have the potential to be economically powerful either. Unfortunately, the masses in South Africa do not see English as a neutral functional tool of communication as some respondents suggested, but see it as associated with all kinds of benefits. Thus it is not just the mentality of people that says people are colonised, but the actual opportunities presented by knowing English, and the refusal to use any other language over English and the mother tongue.

Besides the fact that the lack of use of African languages in the written form reduces them to "languages learnt at their mothers' knees", when African languages threaten to be on

the verge of extinction, this gives birth to insecurities on matters of ethnolinguistic identities, as already seen in the results. Although human beings are highly adaptable, and can adopt different identities as the situation requires, there seems to be a different kind of attachment to people's languages that informs their ethnolinguistic identity. For instance, in the study, those that had learnt to read and write Setswana could be said to have a more secure sense of ethnolinguistic identity than those who did not. One could argue that ethnolinguistic identity is not central to the workplace, where career or organizational identities can be formed. This is not necessarily true, as it has already been illustrated that career identity is often informed by employees' ethnic and individual identity (Bimrose, Brown & Barnes, 2008). Although many of the respondents seemed to be functioning well and did not have problems with competency (because they are realistically able to communicate in English), the fact that some had to use Setswana to help their colleagues understand the instructions meant that some employees would not have acquired enough English skills to be competent in the workplace, and thus need to be allowed to use their mother tongue to be competent in the workplace.

Another important factor is that of exclusion or inclusion implied in the responses based on whether one knows English or not. For instance, a concern was raised in the study that if a person does not know English, their choices become limited. One cannot work anywhere, and is not allowed to enter certain fields like modeling for instance. This was seen to be particularly a South African problem, because unlike some countries, South Africa would not send their representatives to world events if they are not fairly fluent in English. Other countries would do that, for instance, one often sees the Brazilians soccer coaches in international events and international models in beauty pageants who do not know English and often work with translators. This means that the knowledge of English in South Africa determines how much people can demonstrate their self-determination, talents, and strengths, and not their mother tongue, because we in South Africa have used English as the determining factor of participation or exclusion from it. Secondly, to some participants, having to break away from the world of work was seen as "detoxing", "becoming yourself", probably because one just came from a place where they did not belong. Not using one's language in the workplace can thus be seen to temper an employee's sense of belonging. A sense of belonging has been proven to be important in

identifying with a place of work (Bimrose, Brown & Barnes, 2008), and thus the lack thereof is not beneficial for organisational identity formation. For these reasons, there is indeed a need to develop African languages in the workplace, in order to create a realistic sense of belonging for African employees in their place of production. I could not agree more with Nel (2002), who believes and emphasizes that the cultural and linguistic embeddedness of local indigenous knowledge may make local knowledge "the only real route through which community development can be communicated effectively" (p. 105).

In summary, the use of language is not neutral, but a hidden discourse or unconscious communication of identities underlies it, and requires critical questioning of the preference of English by African speakers. It is also a means of excluding those who are not knowledgeable in English, which perpetuates existing inequalities in society. The diminishing use of African languages could mean that they are on the verge of extinction, a process which could create anxiety about people's ethnolinguistic identity, as suggested by the results of the study. Issues of convenience, practicalities and costs of developing African languages might be pertinent, but the difficulty of developing African languages to the same level as English seem a bit exaggerated, more like a red herring for not wanting to reverse the effects of colonization.

5.2 Critical issues

Some respondents saw the use of English as not a very important aspect of their identity, nor as a threat to their ethnolinguistic identity, because they believed that language was important, but not the only important aspect in building a person's ethnolinguistic identity. Some respondents felt that people's ability or inability to read and write their mother tongue does not affect their belonging to the Batswana community, because being Motswana involves both language and other cultural practices. However, basing their ethnolinguistic identity on the ability to speak the language and cultural practices was also met with some criticism. For instance, this culture was seen to be controversial as some history has been lost over the years. An example was made of how some of the respondents were raised and told not to do certain things at home, but were never told

reasons for this. Hence cultural values did not make sense to some respondents. Another point that was made was that historically, names, clans and cultural practices were complicated. In addition, where the cultural importance in their workplace was probed, the use was seen by some respondents in the light of occasional events, such as when there was a heritage event at work. Thus to extend on Mlama's (2002) argument about the inadequacy of culture-based identity, merely speaking the language and not writing or reading it excludes the employee's expression of ethnolinguistic identity in the workplace, if the person's ability to read and write it affects the employees' ethnolingistic identity as suggested by the results of the study. Moreover, some respondents alluded to the gender inequalities perpetuated by culturalpractices. My hope is not that English be eradicated or replaced, because it does indeed have prominent importance in the society, but that African languages be developed to the same level to ensure that they enjoy the same respect and stature as English to ensure maximum self-determination even for those who are not knowledgeable in English.

5.3 Recommendations

The dominance of English and the undisputed need to be able to read and write in English did not just come as an event, but as a systemic process. This calls for a systemic approach to the development of other languages to elevate them to the same level as English. This recommendation is based on a model of intervention that combines Urie Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory and Serrano-Garcia's social community approach. Urie Bronfenbrenner developed a theory of systems, which was based on the theoretical underpinnings of a Social Ecological Theory developed by Charles Darwin (Visser, 2007). Bronfenbrenner demonstrated that social events and happenings were a result of an interaction between different settings, with which the person and those around him are in direct contact. Such systems include the family and school (micro-system), the sets of linkages between micro-systems (mesosystems), the policy makers who indirectly affect the individual but are not in contact with him (exosystem) and the larger cultural and societal influences (macrosystem) (Visser, 2007).

The social community approach acknowledges the historical determinants of social reality, but emphasizes the human subjectivity in social constructionism. The approach advocates for finding solutions to social problems, and the aim is to alter unjust and oppressive situations by generating knowledge, carrying out research and developing interventions. Dissemination of knowledge is considered essential for empowerment. Social change is is achieved through consciousness and collective action. Here people's subjectivity in creating their own reality is contained in broader socio-historical processes (Visser, 2007).

My recommendations are based on a few assumptions. First, English dominance is useful in the global economy, but it is problematic in that it is viewed by speakers of Indigenous South African languages as the only means to prosperity. This equals oppression, because people are forced to separate their ethnolinguistic identity from the workplace, and thus could possibly be working not as holistic individuals at the workplace. This would then affect their self-determination and consequently their performance in the workplace as already seen in the literature review. Secondly, as much as we would like to see human beings as people who are not driven by survival (because that sounds like what would drive animals, an instinctual need for survival), the reality is that most people plan their lives around surviving in the world. The nature of the environment, especially in Gauteng is that people work hard to earn more, and will conform to what is needed to attain their goals. Thirdly, consistent with the systemic theory, the problem of the irrelevance of African languages seems to indicate a problem of the whole system in the country, and by intervening in only some settings would not be adequate to address the problem at all levels, although one good intervention at one level could affect all other levels.

The fact that language is a broad and all-encompassing category of human behaviour cannot be overemphasized. Functions such as speaking, listening, writing, reading, problem solving, discriminating, perceiving, recalling, all directly involve language (Gxilishe, 2008). The importance of language literacy goes hand in hand with communicative competence (the ability to use language adequately as one's contexts require), which is based on pragmatic and sociolinguistic knowledge (Gxhilishe, 2008). Being able to read and write one's mother tongue can thus be seen to enhance communicative competence. However, because the workplace has been so dominated by

English that the need to use other languages is seen as extraneous, factors used to evaluate the need for social mobility need to be targeted (convenience, status, wealth, institutional support etc.).

My recommendations suggest that all the suggestions given by the respondents are important, although a few variations would be suggested. On the micro-level, families and schools should be given equal responsibilities to foster the notion that one's mother tongue is just as important as English. Educated parents would do well to speak their mother tongue and be proud of it as much as they are proud to be articulate in English. This does not only apply to African languages, because Afrikaans is also a South African language. Those who speak it at home should not be made to feel guilty because it was seen as being the language of the oppressor. To some extent we do not choose the family, tribe and clan we are born into and it is thus unfair to make other people feel obliged to forsake their identifications with their home language because it is viewed negatively by society. As Leibowitz et al. (2005) put it, identity is a combination of chance, context and choice. As much as we might choose to be proud of our mother tongue, no one chose to be born into a family that speaks a certain language, and therefore no one should apologise for speaking any language.

The education system is the main vehicle through which language literacy (ability to read and write) is taught. Samba (2008) gives reasons for the importance of teaching the child to read and write in the mother tongue. Those are given below:

i) It follows the basic principle of working from the known to the unknown, i.e. learning first in a known language (L1) and later moving into the unknown (L2);
ii) It enables learners to express themselves in a meaningful way and therefore participate in their own learning processes;
iii) It prevents cognitive overload in learners, since they are concerned with only one thing at a time, that of learning to read and write in a familiar language instead of having to negotiate both the reading skill and the new language;
iv) It reinforces learners' self-esteem by validating their cultural identity.

Through allowing families and schools to celebrate languages in their diversity, self determination needs will be met culturally and educationally. This suggests that the

exosystem level, which makes decisions (education policy makers), should be informed by the views of ordinary families, schools and people. Samba (2008, p. 2) sums up the importance of education policy in this way:

> Language is the most important factor in the transfer of knowledge and skills. Therefore, initial language acquisition must be meaningful. Some policies enable both learners and teachers to operate in a language which is alien to most of the learners and creates a situation that makes initial literacy in a second language an almost impossible objective. Learning to read and write in a foreign language at foundation stage dilutes the cultural heritage and places a low educational value in African languages. Kelly (1995) describes this situation as a misguided policy that leaves countries culturally impoverished and the outcome is neglect of linguistic heritage and a definite relegation of African languages to a place of little importance in educational system.

The use of the "alien" to refer to English has been used by Alexander (2005, p. 9) as well, who says:

> Transmitting a tedious and alien literacy curriculum, often in a poorly understood language, has also hindered the literacy development and creativity of teacher trainers and teachers. It helps if adults, who have the task to motivate children to read and write, are people who have a vibrant relationship with reading and writing themselves. What chances have our teachers had to engage with print in their own languages, either as children, or adults? It is not too harsh to say that holding back the development of written children's literature in African languages has contributed to crippling the development of effective literacy teachers.

At this point, it could be added that this value put to the African languages need not end up at the foundational level of education, because this is the very thing that undermines their value in higher education, tertiary institutions, and eventually in the workplace. The focus of development should be both on the entire education system and on the workplace, because the education system prepares people for the workplace. The education system is the most 'convenient' place to value African languages, seeing that some parents do not have time to teach the mother tongue at home. This would then leave people no excuse

around issues of time, as there will be continuity between the language spoken at home and the language taught at school. Educational institutions could also accommodate the change by allowing mother-tongue education up to university level. This would address the factors of status and wealth that are only associated with English. The system can allow people to be educated both in English and the other tongue up to tertiary level. If Afrikaans speakers in apartheid managed to run universities in Afrikaans, the same could be done with African languages. This makes research of this kind a good source of information to consult for policy makers.

Perhaps the parents put the educators under pressure because they themselves see in their workplace that having a better education (meaning schooling in English) yields better results. This calls for recommendations in one area that has been neglected the most, the workplace. Conscientisation is needed both among the management, business owners and employees that it is in their interest that people's expression of identity (through the use of their mother tongue) be allowed in the workplace. In this regard, Bimrose, Brown and Barnes (2008) emphasize the significance of career identity, because it is believed to influence the way in which individuals will relate to work organization and processes, and how they will cope with the pressures and stresses of work. Work socialisation is said to be important in helping individuals to develop an occupational orientation, work attachment and commitment (Bimrose, Brown & Barnes, 2008). Such career identities are believed to intertwine with ethnic and individual identity, and thus need an enabling environment to be expressed. An enabling setting is defined by Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2006) as an honest, transparent and open psychological environment that enables all forms of wellness. Being able to practice self-determination means that people have voice, choice and control over their lives, including how and who they want to be. These authors believe that the lack of any community's ability to have their own community identity, as well as having no resources due to the power inequalities in society are responsible for many of the social problems we are facing today. They maintain that even though modern society seems to emphasise the importance of individual well-being, the well-being of an individual is closely intertwined with organizational and community well-being, and therefore if one wants to know how to understand and promote individual wellbeing, one has to understand and promote

organizational and community wellbeing, without esteeming one over the other (Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2006).

Mlama (2002) says Africa has learnt to foster and nurture foreign capitalist and imperialist forces through television, films, arts, education and religion. This makes the media key at the mesosystemic level, because it seems to bind schools, homes, politics and religion together. Consequently, those who are in the public eye, the politicians, entertainment celebrities, economists and other prominent figures could also be key in conveying the message that it is well and good to be rich and influential and yet speak your mother tongue. Hence the suggestion made by the participants is embraced. On the community or societal levels, the media is also key because ideologies and discourses are communicated through the media.

5.4 Limitations of the research

First, as is the case with qualitative research samples, it must be mentioned that this research was small and generalizing the results to all Batswana graduates working in Johannesburg is impossible. However, the researcher's aim was to understand the phenomena of interest from the participants' eyes, with the hope that the participants are the ones who can best judge the credibility of the research results. Being able to transfer these results to other contexts will require a thorough description of this research context, as well as an account for ever-changing context within which research occurs. Secondly, the study may have benefitted from a method of data analysis that would have allowed for a more nuanced engagement with the data collected. The method applied was however able to obtain relevant data that was integrated with appropriate literature.

It is admitted that this research has made many recommendations, but fails to address the 'how' part, in other words, how politicians and ordinary citizens should be conscientised towards the need to develop all South African languages. However, it is not the task of researchers to prescribe to communities how social changes can be affected as communities are seen to have the best indigenous knowledge and thus best know where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

The recommendations made will not be easy to achieve. As some participants mentioned, it might take a long time, even generations, but it is not impossible. Developing languages could compete with other basic needs for resources. The most basic needs facing the government, such as providing adequate housing, health services, and education and improving service delivery, could be seen as more important and thus focusing on issues of language might not be a priority. "What would it matter which language I speak if I am hungry or am still looking for a job?" one could ask. But it was this exclusion of people presented by the dominance of English over other languages (as one of the factors) that now seems irrelevant, that brought about the vast inequalities in society that we are battling with today. Thus for those who can do their part, focusing on issues such as language is necessary.

Although the study focused on language, it somehow managed to look at issues of constructions of identity based on economic, historical and social trajectories. However, the neglected area seems to be that of politics, and that could be explained in that the researcher and respondents themselves informed the focus of the research through their limited knowledge. Thus those who are more knowledgeable in politics could conduct more research on the link between language and politics.

5.5 Conclusion

This study seems to have raised some consciousness and sparked off some critical thinking about the use of language ethnolinguistic identity. This was evident in the frequent change of mind about language when issues of identity were introduced, as well as the change of meaning of identity for those who preferred not to change the role that they assigned to language. What then emerged was that contrary to popular belief, the use of language is not a neutral, objective process that is not informed by underlying messages constructed in society. The fact that it is inevitable that some languages will be more dominant than others emerged, but the findings show that the choice of a dominant language is not arbitrary, instead, it is based on historical, economic and political trajectories. It is thus recommended that further research be conducted on how these

findings, which have been confirmed by other researchers, can best be implemented in practice in order to develop other South African languages to the same level as English.

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Appendix A: Subject Information Sheet (Qualitative/Interview Based Research)

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Cel: 083 987 7026
Email: morongwa.mokoena@wits.ac.za

Good day

My name is Morongwa Mokoena, and I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Masters degree in Community Based Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is that of language, specifically Setswana. We live in a society where, we are expected to be multilingual, and the use of the mother tongue is viewed differently in all situations. Part of the research aims to explore if the ability to read and write one's mother tongue is used in the workplace, whether in the form of reading or writing it. Exploring this will indicate the different levels of value that the mother tongue has in the workplaces, and if there is a difference of experience at work for those graduates who know how to read and write their mother tongue and those who do not. In addition to this, the research will focus on how the (in)ability to read and write one's mother tongue impacts on one's ethnic identity.

You are invited to take part in the study. Participation in this research will entail being interviewed by me, Morongwa, at a time and place that is convenient for you. The interview will last for approximately one hour. With your permission, this interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Should there be any part of information on the recording that you would want deleted, it will be deleted. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person other than myself, and will only be processed by myself. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

All the participants in this research must have Setswana as their home language or mother tongue; have a three year tertiary qualification (degree of diploma) from a tertiary institution in South Africa; and must be working in Johannesburg at the moment. No risk is envisaged from participating in the study. If you meet these criteria and would like to participate in the study, please fill in your details on the form below. Should you have any questions regarding the study, you can contact me telephonically at 083 987 7026 or via e-mail at morongwa.mokoena@wits.ac.za or morongwa.mokoena@gmail.com.

This research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on language issues and could help to inform the development of policies and procedures regarding language. The results of the study will be

forwarded to all participants in the form of a summary. The study might be publishable after graduation of the researcher. The participant is requested to make provision for this, and is informed that confidentiality will still be maintained in the published material.

Kind Regards

Morongwa Mokoena

Appendix B: Consent Form (Interview)

I _____ consent to being interviewed by Morongwa Bernice Mokoena for her study on the use of language and the mother tongue in the workplace. I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.
- Anonymised excerpts (direct quotations) from the interview material may be used in the research report

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix C: Consent Form (Recording)

I _____ consent to being interviewed by Morongwa Bernice Mokoena for her study on the use of language and the mother tongue in the workplace being tape-recorded. I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person other than the researcher, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete and the researcher's degree has been awarded.
- Should you want any of the information deleted from the recording, it will be deleted
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix D: Research Interview Guide

Language Related Questions

1. What comes to your mind when I say the word “language”?
2. What come to your mind when I say the word “mother tongue”?
3. What is the difference between language and mother tongue?
4. What is the value of (a) language in general and (b) the mother tongue?
5. What language do you mostly use
   (a) At home
   (b) At work
   (c) At a tertiary institution (if studying)
   (d) With your group of friends/peers
   (e) At other social settings (church, political meetings etc.)
6. Which language do you think is dominant at your workplace?
7. (If English), why do you think it is dominant?
8. How do you feel about English dominance at work?
9. Secondary to English, which language do you use the most at work?
10. (If language in 9 is not mother tongue) do you ever use your mother tongue at work, either formally or informally?
11. In what type of settings would you use your mother tongue at work? (e.g. communicating with colleagues, email, etc.)
12. How do you feel about the use (or no use) of your mother tongue at work?
13. Are you able to read or write your mother tongue?

14. How did come to read or write it? Home or school?
15. When you use your mother tongue at work, is it in written, spoken or read form?
16. Is there significance in the different forms of using the mother tongue? If yes, what?
17. Which form or use of the mother tongue do you think is the most important? Why?

Identity related questions

1. What does the word "identity" mean to you?
2. What type of things do you think are important in building identity?
3. If you were asked to give your identity, what would it be?
4. Does language have a role to play in identity, If yes, what role?
5. Does mother tongue have a role to play in identity, If yes, what role?
6. What role has your use of a non-mother tongue language(s) at work had on your identity as a person?