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Critical analysis and assessment of language policy and implementation in South Africa: South African Broadcasting Corporation's Soap Operas

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Title: Critical Analysis and Assessment of Language Policy and Implementation in South Africa: South African Broadcasting Corporation's Soap Operas.

Doctor of Philosophy Research

Submitted by

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Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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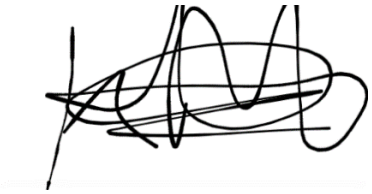
Abstract

South Africa is a country with a heavy political past, having gone through colonialism, and Apartheid. The country' history brewed ideologies of exclusion and inclusion, empowerment, and disempowerment. Among these were linguistic issues. In 1994, South Africa officially became a democratic country, with a new Constitution adopted in 1996. The South African Constitution is globally recognised for its principles of freedom, equality, reconciliation, and multiculturalism. Post-Apartheid South Africa also saw the significant role that can be played by popular culture in redressing the mistakes of the past. Hence, popular culture in post-Apartheid South Africa was given a task of healing the wounds of the past and building a united South Africa.

The problem, however, is that linguistically, a new world order of exclusion and inclusion, empowerment and disempowerment is emerging in post-Apartheid South Africa, and this exists among indigenous languages in South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). This thesis is an attempt to offer a sociolinguistic analysis of how the SABC television, with SABC 1 and SABC 2 as examples the public broadcaster's shortcomings in implementing its own language policy. This has led to both SABC 1 and SABC 2 using languages in such a way that does not reflect the linguistic realities and linguistic demographics of South Africa. Furthermore, the thesis' analysis has also established that there is an ongoing production and distribution of ideologies of whiteness in one of the SABC's soap operas. These issues sum up the interest of this thesis. Ultimately, the thesis has reached a conclusion that the SABC language policy is failing the small-status linguistic and cultural groups in South Africa.

Declaration

This thesis is my original work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgments. This work has not been presented for a degree in any other university.



……..

Kealeboga Aiseng.

Signed at ……Makhanda……

On the…27……Day of…July…….2021

Dedication

I dedicate this paper to my family, friends and everyone who contributed to this project. Indeed, matlo go sha mababi. This paper is also for my son, Abdul, daddy is securing a better future for you son. To my grandmother, Thabo Aiseng, I dedicate this paper for you also, you taught me all that I know and made me see the importance of going to school. To my late grandfather who passed away just before I could submit this research, Tshelebe Aiseng, robala ka kagiso Molehe.

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To everyone else: The son of a domestic worker has made it.

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List of Abbrevations/Accronyms

Abbrevation/Acronym	Name
AMARC	**World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters**
ANC	**African National Congress**
AsGISA	**Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa**
AZAPO	**Azanian People's Organization**
BBC	**British Broadcasting Corporation**
BCCSA	**Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa**
CWT	**Critical Whiteness Theory**
CRT	**Critical Race Theory**
DA	**Democratic Alliance**
DP	**Democratic Party**
CPEM	**Critical Political Economy of the Media**
GEAR	**Growth, Employment and Redistribution**
JSE	**Johannesburg Stock Exchange**
IBA	**Independent Broadcasting Authority**
ICASA	**Independent Communications Authority of South Africa**
IFP	**Inkatha Freedom Party**
KZN	**KwaZulu-Natal**
MMA	**Media Monitoring Africa**
NDP	**National Development Plan**
PAC	**Pan Africanist Congress**
PanSALB	**Pan South African Language Board**

PSB	**Public Service Broadcasting**
RDP	**Reconstruction and Development Program**
RSA	**Republic of South Africa**
SABC	**South African Broadcasting Corporation**
TRC	**Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

Introduction: Setting the Scene.

South Africa is a very rich and diverse country concerning linguistics. The country's constitution, adopted in 1996, is respected as one of the best provisions for multilingualism in the world. The constitution gives all the previously disadvantaged languages, including former hegemonic languages: English and Afrikaans, the legal recognition as official languages. All languages in the country must be treated with equal respect.

South Africa, like many other multilingual nations, in the world is faced with a complex linguistic situation mirroring the long colonial experience of the country, "the multifaceted socio-demographic and linguistics make up of its population and also the desire to meet local language demands and international communication needs" (Diallo, 2005:1). This complex linguistic situation, as Diallo (2005) argues in the case of Senegal, continues to create linguistic challenges for applied linguists, sociolinguists, language policymakers, decision makers and communities, among others.

This thesis falls within the field of sociolinguistics particularly around language policy, implementation and broadcasting. It focuses mainly on language policy and language-in-popular in South Africa. The focus is specifically on post-1994 public broadcasting, using the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)'s soap operas as the focus of this study. The thesis addresses issues such as equal usage of indigenous languages, attitudes towards indigenous language as well as issues pertaining to language planning and policies in the SABC.

The post-1994 public broadcasting is approached from the perspective of popular culture. This is because the stories and shows in public broadcasting are drawn from the everyday stories; they get their storylines and themes from stories that make everyday conversations. Therefore, a study regarding the implementation of language policy in public broadcasting is important as it will reflect how far South Africa's language policy is to be truly recognised and implemented. The thesis will use the term "language policy" as the SABC uses it to explain measures to improve and protect language usage in its programming.

1. Aim of the thesis

There are two aims that this thesis intends to achieve: first, it aims to analyse and critique a theoretical versus a practical language planning orientation in South Africa. Secondly, it

aims to establish how the SABC's, and national language policies are implemented in the SABC's soap operas. The thesis will analyse and critique how the policy advancing multilingualism in South Africa through (the Constitution, the Broadcasting Act as amended and SABC editorial Policies, PanSALB) translate into practice in *Generations: The Legacy*, *Uzalo*, *Skeem Saam*, *Muvhango* and *7de Laan*.

The main argument of this study is that contrary to the Constitutional principle of language equity and the SABC language policy, language usage in the SABC's soap operas points to a different reality; certain languages continue to be used more than others, English and Afrikaans are still preferred as languages of choice in White stories, and there is also a battle for small-status languages to have presence in the broadcaster.

2. Language Policy

The language policy under scrutiny in this thesis is the SABC's language policy. This policy is part of the SABC's editorial policies. The current editorial policy was adopted in 2020. The first SABC editorial policy was launched in 2004 in line the Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999 stipulation.

Tollefson (1991) argues that language policies are adopted to solve language problems in multilingual settings and to increase social and economic opportunities for linguistic minorities or majorities in any society. As a result, language policy involves the development of public policies. These public policies are meant to affect various aspects of the status and use of languages by people (Schmidt, 2006). However, as Schiffman (1998:364) once warned, "implementation may in fact be the Achilles heel of most language planning". This is where I seek to problematise the SABC language policy, it is unbalanced, and has a slow-motion implementation.

The 1994 South Africa's first democratic elections led to new language debates. The major question was what was going to happen to English and Afrikaans, were they going to continue being the official languages, what was going to happen to indigenous African languages that had been marginalised for decades. Everyone had their views, but the consensus was that things had to change. The African National Congress (ANC) was for a "laissez faire approach, which many suggested would result, over time, in the emergence of a national language, probably English" (Prah, 2006:13). The Democratic Party (DP), the party largely representing English-speaking whites, was for English as the sole official language.

National Party, representing the white Afrikaans-speaking communities, wanted Afrikaans to retain its official status alongside English. Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) based in KwaZulu Natal supported a move that would encourage the use of all African languages. But this was just in paper. They favoured isiZulu over other languages. Parties such as Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), and the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) also supported the development of the African languages. As a result, the adoption of the eleven-language policy was an attempt to satisfy all contending interests and to avoid possible linguistic civil war in the country (Prah, 2006). With this backdrop, I seek to trace and unveil the outcomes of such a political stature on indigenous languages and their usage in the SABC. The usage of indigenous languages in the SABC is unbalanced. While the language policy seeks to offer a picture that is representative of the country's linguistic diversity, the reality paints a different picture. The first hypothesis of this thesis is that an unbalanced linguistic representation and usage of indigenous languages in the SABC reflects the country's pattenrns of language usage and structuring. As a result, the SABC is becoming a platform to spread language ideologies.

The constitution of South Africa states that the country is a multilingual one, and every language must enjoy the same rights and equal benefits that every other language(s) gets. Language protection, equal language promotion and linguistic diversity are clearly acknowledged in the Constitution's preamble: "we the people of South Africa believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity, and therefore recognize the reality that many South Africans indeed have cultural, religious and linguistic identities" (RSA Constitution, 1996).

Chapter 1, Section 6 (1) of the Constitution of South Africa states that "the official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, (Sesotho sa Leboa), Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu" (RSA Constitution, 1996). Furthermore, according to (Madiba, 2005), section 6 (2) mandates the government to take practical measures in making sure that these languages are promoted equally (including minority languages). The Constitution states that "recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages" (RSA Constitution, 1996).

The Constitution has several clauses that intend to make sure that the state as well as government officials monitor the use of official languages in all government levels, local, provincial and national (Madiba, 2005). All languages are given protection in the Constitution through two measures, firstly, the establishment of a Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). The Board was established in terms of the Pan South African Language Board Act 59 of 1995 amended as PANSALB Amendment Act of 1995. The Board was established to

> (a) Promote and create conditions for the development and use of official languages (including) the Khoe, San languages and Sign Language.
>
> (b) Promote and ensure respect for all languages commonly used by communities in South Africa, including German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telegu, and Urdu, and Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, and other languages used for religious purposes in South Africa (PanSALB, 2015:1).

Secondly, the Constitution makes provision for multilingualism and language protection in South Africa in Section 185. The Section makes provision for the establishment of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religion and Linguistic Communities (Madiba, 2005). The Commission is established based on the following objectives:

1. To promote respect for the rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities.
2. To promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance, and national unity among cultural, religious, and linguistic communities, on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and free association; and
3. To recommend the establishment or recognition, in accordance with national legislation, of a cultural or other council or councils for a community of communities in South Africa.

The Commission has legal right and legal obligation to protect the rights of cultural, religion and linguistic communities as mandated by the national legislature. Such is the South African language policy.

The SABC language policy considers the provisions of the Constitution of the country and guides the SABC in:

- Providing a range of distinctive, creative, compelling, and top-quality content in all official languages across its platforms.
- Reflecting the needs of each language community in its content and offerings.
- Maintaining distinctive and separate radio services in each of the official languages.
- Integrating the South African Sign Language into its offerings as a means of making content accessible to people with hearing disabilities and
- Including other non-official languages spoken in South Africa, with particular emphasis on Khoi, Nama, and San Languages (South African Editorial Policies, 2020: 32).

Furthermore, in achieving these commitments the SABC is guided by the following:

- The need for key institutions, in adding to the SAVC, to take practical and positive steps to treat all official languages fairly.
- The need to address the marginalization of indigenous languages and the South African Sign Language in recognition of the impact of previous systematic deprecation of those languages.
- The obligation to reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity, and multilingual nature of South Africa while promoting national unity.
- The SABC's responsibility to be responsive to the needs of all South Africans, including persons with disabilities; and
- The importance of language in communication as the carrier of values, attitudes, culture, and expression (South African Editorial Policies, 2020: 32).

The above policy framework is a clear indication of the SABC's attempt to address the past linguistic injustices on indigenous languages and ensure that the language usage in its programming is aligned with what the Constitution provides for. However, there has not been enough implementation of the policy or where it has been implemented, it has not had the anticipated effects. From the preliminary analysis, the thesis argues that there is an unsystematic nature of language policy implementation in the SABC. That is, the implementation of the language policy is unbalanced; it is inconsistent with the linguistic realities of the country, as a result, leads to normative unequal representation and usage of indigenous languages in the SABC.

South Africa has clear language policy frameworks. But like many other multilingual nations in the world, the country is still facing language problems. As it will be shown during this thesis in relation to the case studies, the SABC is having challenges with implementing its language policy. In instances where it implements it, it is usually skewed. However, we will also see that some of the SABC soap operas have opted for disruptive multilingual practices, something which the SABC language policy allows for. An example of such practice is translanguaging. Translanguaging endorses the idea that human beings speak more than one or two languages; their linguistic repertoire is rich to an extent that they can draw from it at any time, not only for the sake of communication but also for identity formation Makalela (2014). Through adopting these destructive multilingual practices, small-status languages that are normally not catered for in the soap operas get to be used, they also receive some airtime. Moreover, these arguments will also reveal that the disruptive multilingual practices are counterstrategies against the dominance of isiZulu in the soap operas.

DeGroff and Cargo (2009) define policy implementation as a complex process of transforming government decisions into programs, regulations or practices that are aimed at social betterment. When it comes to language policy in the SABC, implementation lags, sometimes it appears skewed, and this is because certain languages still enjoy more benefits than others.

With this backdrop, I can now introduce the scope of this paper. The interest of this paper is on language policy and implementation, with a focus on the usage of indigenous African languages in the country's popular culture. Popular culture here encompasses broadcasting. This is because broadcasting is influenced by the everyday practices and everyday stories of the people. To enable me to carry out this research successfully, I will focus on SABC's post-Apartheid soap operas: *Generations: The Legacy*, *Uzalo*, *Skeem Saam, Muvhango* and *7de Laan.*

The reason for choosing these soap operas is that they are all broadcasted by SABC. The SABC, as a public broadcaster, is important to be scrutinised on the basis through which it helps transform the society from what it was during the Apartheid period to a democratic South Africa. These soaps are also chosen on the basis that they have a huge viewership; therefore, it is imperative that their use of language is scrutinised. The thesis will analyse few episodes from these soap operas in the last five years (2015-2020). The reason to choose five soap operas is that the SABC has five soap operas, three in SABC 1 and two in SABC 2. As

the study focuses on the implementation of the SABC language policy on its soap operas, I analyse all SABC soap operas. The study also chose to use soap operas over other genres because soap operas are the most watched television programs, and they carry socio-political and economic ideologies (Geraghty, 2006).

3. Broadcasting

Broadcasting institutions in South Africa are divided as follows: Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), Commercial Broadcasting and Community Broadcasting. The focus of this study is on public service broadcasting (PSB) using television. There is no single definition of what constitutes a PSB. However, there are key characteristics which are accepted as common to what can be regarded as a PSB (Teer-Tomaselli, 2008). All public broadcasters pride themselves with serving the 'public interests' by providing relevant information, balanced and fair reporting and diversity of programs and services (Raboy; 1990, Scannell; 1991, Mpofu et al; 2000, Scannell; 2000, Raboy; 2003, Teer-Tomaselli; 2005, 2008). Considering this foundational structure for what constitutes a public service broadcaster, below are some classical principles of a public service broadcaster as summarized by the European Broadcasting Union (cited in Morrison, 1986:13):

- Universal geographic accessibility
- Universal appeal across tastes and interests
- Particular attention to minorities
- Contribution to a sense of national identity and community
- Distance from vested interests
- Direct funding and universality of payment
- Competition in good programming rather than for numbers
- Guidelines that liberate rather than restrict program makers.

With the above PSB background on basic functions and principles that underpin the SABC, it is vital to discuss policies and regulations that govern the SABC. The SABC is governed by the following policies: The South African Constitution, The Broadcasting Act of 1999 as Amended and the SABC Editorial Policies. In Section 16 of the South African Constitution, it is clearly stated that "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom for the press and other media; freedom to receive or impart information or ideas;

freedom of artistic creativity; and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research". These provisions come with the following limitations to freedom of expression: "The right in subsection (1) does not extend to propaganda for war, incitement of imminent violence; or advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm". The purpose of the SABC Editorial policies is to guide the SABC in discharging and performing its public mandate. It is a framework for the SABC editorial staff. The policies relate to content and services for national and international audiences. The Broadcasting Act as amended, on the other hand, seeks to ensure that the South African broadcasting system is positioned by legislation to contribute towards the strengthening of democracy through privileging the public interest above all others, and contributing towards societal betterment.

These policies are of paramount importance in this study. They clearly state that the SABC is required to have programming that uses all official languages of South Africa. In the 2016 Government Gazette produced by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) recognized that language plays a crucial role in promoting and achieving the goals of building democracy. This is because the development of language is closely linked to the development of culture and identity. As a result, MMA argued that the promotion of local content should include enough African languages. In relation to this, ICASA contended that broadcasters are making a great effort to cover different languages in news bulletins, current affairs, children's programmes, and drama. However, there is less effort made in relation to other genres.

4. Rationale

Numerous scholars across the world have highlighted the issue of language policies and how implementation is always a problem (Mkudi, 1996; Ngcobo, 2003; Wright, 2004; Makanda, 2011; Augusto, 2012; Mutasa, 2015; Kangira, 2016a, 2016b; Chen, 2016). The key argument connecting the works of all these scholars is that language policies are sometimes adopted for the sake of restoration and justice to languages because oflinguistic imperialism and violence suffered in the past. However, implementation is always a key failing mechanism; it is hardly, if ever, achieved to the satisfaction of the speakers. South Africa has also been a victim of such a dilemma.

Due to implementation failure, dominant groups use various mechanisms such as the media and education to elevate their preferred languages in society and keep others at bay (Truscott and Malcom, 2010). According to Blommaert (1999), attitudes of using some languages more than others in the media are related to broader political, social and historical factors among societies and groups. The result of these issues is often different groups dominating others. However, all these scholars have looked at these issues from the perspective of colonial versus indigenous languages, emphasising that colonial languages still occupy a higher position than indigenous languages in former colonies.

The relationship between media, indigenous communities and language is also an imperative issue that has been explored by various scholars. In Botswana, the use of language in media is highly influenced by ethnic belonging; the majority group (Batswana) are more present in the media than other ethnic groups (Bagwasi, 2019). Similarly, Shona and Ndebele enjoy more airtime in the Zimbabwean media than other indigenous languages Chewa, Kalanga and Nambya (Hikwa, 2015). The Nigerian constitution acknowledges that Nigerian media is welcome to use whichever language they prefer. However, dominant ones are Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo (Obukadeta, 2019). This leaves little to no room for other indigenous languages to be featured in the media. In Australia, the dominant language in the media is the Standard Australian English, despite the language having no legal status for such. Countries such as Brazil also have the same problem, Portuguese is dominating the media.

Hikwa (2015) notes that the promoting of some indigenous languages over others in the media is hegemonic and threatens national cohesion. This is because language then plays social and political function of hierarchising social groups. Furthermore, those at the bottom of the hierarchy are excluded from social, cultural and political activities (Hikwa, 2015).

The current study has no interest in the relationship between colonial and indigenous languages for that issue has been exhausted. The interest of this thesis is on the relationship between indigenous languages themselves. The study considers that it cannot only be injustice when domination is done by colonial languages on indigenous languages. It is also an injustice when domination is done by one indigenous language over others.

The relationship between language, indigenous groups and media in the South African context has hardly been explored. Studies on language policies and language hegemony in South Africa have mostly focused on education while the broadcast domain has received very little attention. Scholars such as Nomlomo and Katiya (2018) argue that South Africa's

multilingualism in the education sector is highly questionable due to the dominance of English in the sector. Desai (2016) notes that South Africa's education sector, both basic and higher education, still reflects colonial and Apartheid legacy. However, currently efforts are made to transform language conditions in South Africa. For example, universities such as University of the Witwatersrand and University of KwaZulu-Natal have adopted language policies that seek to promote teaching and learning in indigenous languages.

This thesis posits that the usage of language in the SABC is a fundamental topic that should be studied to understand the progress of redressing Apartheid and colonial legacies on indigenous languages. Therefore, the newness of this study is in demonstrating how the social and political group, isiZulu, is dominating other indigenous languages in the SABC programmes. Furthermore, this thesis will also explore how *7de Laan* is perpetuating ideals of whiteness in post-Apartheid South Africa. Whiteness is an ideology that undermines transformation, it promotes discrimination. Likewise, the over insistence on isiZulu, promotes ethnicisation. In another words, the study proposes that two social groups, isiZulu and Afrikaans are being promoted respectively in the SABC.

The issue of colonial language(s) will also be touched on in this thesis and how whiteness is produced and distributed by an Afrikaans soap opera (*7de Laan*). *7de Laan* is an important case study here as it is the only soap opera in the SABC that uses Afrikaans and English predominantly. Scholars such as Steyn (2004), and Knoetze (2016) Marx (2018) have heavily criticised the promotion of whiteness in *7de Laan*. However, they did not look at how the production of whiteness in the soap is enabled by linguistic factors, as well as political and economic factors of the past and the present in South Africa. This thesis will explore this element and link it to the shortcomings of the SABC is in ensuring that its language policy is adhered to by all its productions.

5. Research problem and Research Questions

This research's interest is on the theoretical versus the practical orientation behind the implementation of language policy in the SABC. Of interest is investigating if there is enough implementation of the language policy, relying on the SABC soap operas as case studies. The third hypothesis I make is that, to an extent, the SABC has abided by

constitutional mandate of promoting the 11 official languages of the country, but it is struggling to achieve parity utilisation of indigenous languages in soap operas.

The terms of reference for this work directed attention to the need to answer the following research questions:

a. Are there some democratic pluralisms or hierarchical pluralism (features/practices/principles/challenges) in implementing the language policy in the SABC? What factors have contributed to the moribund implementation of the language policy in post-Apartheid South Africa?
b. Is the allotment of airtime to different languages in soap operas structured by ideologies, hegemony, and power discourses?
c. How do soap operas react to the SABC's language policy?

These questions come because of the fourth hypothesis: there is a clear contestation of space by indigenous languages in the SABC soap operas. This is because some of these languages hardly make it to the screen. Hence, we need to ask if there are no producers of television content or a growing number of new writers in Xitsonga, siSwati, Setswana, or isiNdebele. Or are there hegemonic and ideological elements in the commissioning rooms which seek to cripple the development of these languages? It is also imperative to ask to what extent translanguaging can curb down some of these problems. These questions are specifically vital to ask because soap operas are produced and written by people working under social, political, economic and cultural settings. As a result, these soaps are informed by the particularities of their production environment.

6. Literature review

Theories applied in analysing and answering the above research questions and supporting the rationale of the study draw from the works of a variety of scholars from a diversity of academic disciplines. This literature review is divided into the following sections: language policy, language ideology and critical political economy of the media.

6.1. Language Policy

Language policy came into practice as a branch of sociolinguistics during the 1950s and 1960s when scholars from Africa, South America and Asia engaged in research to develop

grammar, writing systems and dictionaries for indigenous languages (Ricento, 2006). Scholars mostly trained in descriptive linguistics were interested in understudied languages and advancing theories of language structure and use. As a result, languages were soon realised to be crucial in nation-building and nation unification (Ricento, 2006). This is how the SABC language policy has been formulated; to rely on language to build a nation. However, this has not proved to be purposeful for the country as nationalism only leads to linguistic hierarchies. Even though SABC has adopted a language policy which promotes all languages, only few languages enjoy the space. This resembles nation-states ideologies. Certain languages are associated with power in South Africa, political and economic power (Parmegiani, 2015).

The most well-known language policy framework is that of Spolsky (2004). Spolsky's framework proposes language policy as comprised of the formal language management, the complex systems of language ideologies / beliefs and the actual language practices of a speech community. Numerous scholars have explored this conceptualisation further (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2014; 2018a, Hu and Lei, 2014). In essence, language policy studies have paid attention to the ways in which social actors at macro- (lawmakers), mezzo- (administrators), and micro- (teachers) layers have influenced language development and usage and the politics of language usage (Menken and Garcia, 2010; Johnson, 2013; Heineke, 2017; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018b).

As Ricento (2006:11) argues, "language policy is not just an exercise in philosophical inquiry, it is interested in addressing social problems which often involves language, to one degree or another, and in proposing realistic remedies". It is important to note that a policy is a statement, plan or guide for action. Policy is not a law; however, policies can be adopted into laws. Government, organisations and schools use policies to govern themselves (Evans and Cleghorn, 2012). The SABC language policy, as Ricento argues, was intended to be a remedy for the colonial subjugation endured by indigenous languages. However, a question remains: what exactly was the broadcaster's language policy meant for? This is an interrelated question which will be answered as this thesis unfolds.

As Lewis (1981:262) observed

> Any policy for language…must take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected. In the long run, no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade

> those who express negative attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement to the formulation of a policy as well as to succeed in its implementation.

Evans and Cleghorn (2012) state that language policies are a responsibility of people who do not have an every-day contact with the contexts in which these policies are to be implemented. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:169) emphasise that a traditional policymaking process fits a top-down model of "people with power and authority who make language related decisions for groups, often with little or no consultation with the ultimate users". However, language policy and planning are not just a top-down process, it also involves much controversy and debates. Most countries face a dilemma in deciding a language of teaching and learning for the school system (Evans and Cleghorn, 2012). This is more prevalent in former colonial countries; they still face challenges of moving away from colonial languages to indigenous languages in their school systems.

Walsh (2012) contends that language policy is influenced by multifaceted and multi-layered processes of governance. It is an interconnected system. This view is in keeping with Shohamy's (2006) argument. She states that language policy is more difficult to detect as it is subtle and hidden from the public eye. This view implies that processes and influences involved in the outcome of a language policy are subtle; they cannot be singled out as they are interrelated.

6.2. Language Ideology

This thesis is interested in institutional production of language ideologies. In other words, on how institutions such as media are sites for production of language ideologies. In her seminal work, Phillips (1998) argues that institutions (cultural for the context of this thesis) serve as production of language ideologies to maintain national identities. These institutions convey language ideologies implicitly and/or explicitly through the languages they use, messages sent by language (metalanguage) and topics addressed or not addressed (Phillips, 1998). In sum, cultural institutions use language to naturalise dominant language ideologies and make them more powerful.

To have a full understanding of what is meant by language ideologies is it imperative that one understands what is meant by "ideology". Silverstein (1979) states that the term 'ideology'

was first coined at the end of the eighteenth century by the French philosopher, Destutt de Tracy, Tracy used the word as a science of ideas. Ideology is understood to be the meaning behind the consciousness, subjective representations, beliefs and ideas (Woolard, 1998). In the broadest sense, ideology is a constituent of culture, "the basic notions that the members of a society hold about a fairly definite…are such an honour" (Friedrich, 1989:301) – or we could propose, language, in the context of this paper. However, to use French structuralists and poststructuralists, in Althusser's (1971) formulation, ideology is not a matter of consciousness or subjective representation, but a lived experience. According to Eagleton, ideology is "a particular organisation of signifying practices which goes to constitute human beings as social subjects, and which produces the lived relations by which such subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in society" (1991:18). To narrow it down, ideology has to do with inhabitable positions of power – social, political, or economic. Ideology can be understood as ideas and discourses which signify practices of the struggle to acquire power. Ideologies can be a tool for anyone interested in claiming power, it can be "ours" and it can be "theirs", subaltern as well as dominant (Woolard, 1998).

Language ideology, linguistic ideology, ideologies of language, as Woolard (1998) uses these terms interchangeably, is a new coalescing field of inquiry. The focus of language ideology is to examine the cultural and historical specificity of languages, and not to divorce language ideology from other ideologies of everyday lives. Language ideology, not as a field of inquiry, is all about mechanisms of using language as a tool to acquire power. As a field of inquiry, it is intended to study ways in which language (s) is/are being used to gain power. It is important to note that as much as ideology can be "ours" as well as "theirs," it is always a tool for the dominant social group, it is not for everyone. Hence, the cultural conceptions and practices of the subordinate groups are non-ideological (Woolard, 1998).

Ajsic and McGroarty (2015) have taken the focus of language ideologies in institutional contexts further, focusing on how language ideologies are expressed in texts. Anvi (2012) studied such an approach on a Hebrew / English dual language school in a Jewish day school in New York. Anvi found that language ideologies expressed in policy documents and the curriculum focused more on Hebrew for both conversation and literacy development. Fitzsimmons-Doolan (2018b) argues that these texts were found to be in favour of Hebrew more than they were of English.

Hultgren (2014) also explored language ideologies of schools in Scandinavian universities. This research was also conducted by Hult and Kallkvist (2016). The duo focused on national language policy supporting parallel language use in universities. Fitzsimmons-Doolan (2018b) states that the research found contradictory language ideologies. Government institutions and policies favoured Danish; universities on the other hand favoured English as they regard English as an international language. Cultural institutions such as media and policy documents which are used by the government in most cases favour one form of language ideology while universities follow the other. This situation resembles the one in South Africa, certain institutions such as media, banks, commercial companies have started offering their services in both English and indigenous languages. On the other hand, some universities are have not adopted multilingual policies, they still rely solemnly on English as a language of instruction.

In Africa Nigeria is an example of a state faced with language ideologies. According to Mazzoli (2017), Nigeria has a diverse ethnic composition and therefore, some parts of it are characterised by lack of linguistic social cohesion and group identity. Some parts of Nigeria are dominated by English, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa. As result, Nigerian Pidgin has been used a main community language in response to the dominance of these languages (Mazzoli, 2017). Arguably, even if the speakers are not aware of this, but Nigerian Pidgin is a resistance mechanism against dominant languages in Nigeria (Mustapha, 2013).

In keeping with Phillips (1998), studies have revealed that institutions (cultural) have the power to affect language practices through their language ideologies (Tseronis, 2002; Ricento, 2005, Anvi, 2012, Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018b). They also have the tendency to support and naturalise dominant language ideologies (Tseronis, 2002; Ricento, 2005; Hultgren, 2014; Hult and Kallkvist, 2016; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018b). Therefore, the media are critical sites in my exploration of the complex interrelationship of language policy layers.

Media products are deeply imbricated in relationships of power and ideology (Constantinou, 2005 and Androutsopoulus, 2006). These factors should not just be treated as simply embedded within the mediated texts but seen as very powerful to the extent of determining the message of the media product. To understand how language utilisation in the media an ideological mechanism is, it is vital to understand that media spaces are “highly complex

phenomenon that require a great deal of detailed textual, ethnographic and social deconstruction" (Johnson and Milani, 2010:5).

However, I need to state that in my analysis I am not oblivious to external factors at play in language ideologies in the media. It is important to understand the influence of external factors such as political and economic. According to Giddens (cited in Johnson and Milani, 2010:5), "the power of the media in language ideological processes lies to a considerable extent in their practices as gatekeepers in the regimentation of 'expert systems' on language-related issues". Giddens suggests that the constraint on media to fully provide language benefits and opportunities is because they serve an interest of a group, either the political or economic group. As van Dijk (1995) cited in Johnson and Milani (2010:5) had argued, "Individuals with high social, cultural and symbolic capital are always likely to have greater and privileged access to the processes of media productions". Hence, political and economic gatekeeping will feature predominantly in analysing the failure of implementing language policies for advancing all indigenous languages in the country.

6.3. Critical Political Economy of Media

Critical political economy of the media (CPEM) has been defined in many ways by different scholars. Graham (2007) describes it as a field of how all kinds of goods are produced, distributed, exchanged, and consumed. Hardy (2014) explains political economy of the media as describing all forms of political and economic dimensions and how they play a role in the media. Nicholas and Martinez (2020) argue that using the framework of political economy to understand media operations, not only do we realise that there are economic concerns but political and ideological concerns as well. Rather than focusing on wealth and allocation of resources in the media, political economy also studies power relations in the media. According to Wasko (2009), when power relations start to play out in the media is the commodification and commercialisation of media.

Media organisations are being transformed worldwide, politically, socially, economically and technologically. Therefore, the role of these factors is paramount to understanding the past, present, and future of media operations. Within the field of media, politics and economy shape and determine the extent to which media organisations carry out their missions.

While the focus of this thesis is on the use of languages in the media, it is worth focusing on the how politics and economy shape the use of language in the media. Research in linguistic

anthropology continues to show that language use and language ideologies produce forms of inequality and social differences within societies (Graan, 2016). Language has a very important role in the construction of political and social identities (Wright, 2016). It is this role that attracts the influence of politics and capital into the use of languages in the media. Wright (2016) explains that when one looks at the process of identity construction, capital and politics are paramount in that process. Politics and money play a role in how people see themselves and how they want to be seen.

The role of media in all these processes cannot be ignored. Van Dijk (1995a) states that markets, politics, policies, and marginalisation all operate within an ideological basis. Such ideologies require production and reproduction; therefore, all these are mediated through the media. That is, the media is used by powerful forces to distribute their own agendas. For example, it has been documented that ethnicism and racism are exacerbated by at least some of the media and this is done by political and economic elites that have access to the media (Van Dijk, 1995b).

7. Theoretical Framework

The appropriate theoretical framework for this thesis is language use in popular culture. This theoretical framework will show that language use is very important in popular culture. Here I intend to show that the use of languages in popular culture can exclude and include, can empower, and disempower. With the focus on the SABC, language usage in the soap operas is not reflective of the country's multilingualism. SABC soap operas are dominated by isiZulu, with Tshivenda being the only small-status indigenous language challenging the dominance of isiZulu. We also see Afrikaans maintaining its Apartheid status of power and dominance in *7de Laan* despite the SABC language policy emphasising redressing the linguistic issues of the past. This renders the SABC language policy a toothless dog.

This framework also attempts to elucidate the relationship between the SABC language policy and actual language practices from the broadcaster's soap operas. The SABC language policy and the soap operas produced by the SABC somehow contradict each other. 1) while the language policy envisions the broadcaster to reflect the linguistic diversity of the country, we see isiZulu dominating the soap operas. 2) we see soap operas endorsing the language

policy's stance on recognising that languages are dynamic, developing and adapting to circumstances.

To decipher the above implicit multilingual issues in the SABC, we need to look first at the meaning of popular culture. Popular culture is the everyday culture, the people's culture, cultural products meant for mass consumption. It is a forum for people's discussion about people's concerns within a society. Popular cultures are cultural artefacts used to express, negotiate, and represent the everyday problems and issues. Therefore, popular culture cannot be mere entertainment that has no relevance to the lives of the people. This is because people use these popular culture spaces: theatre, hip hop music, drawings, literature, poetry, in creative ways to speak about their lives and their environments (Willis, 1990; McCarthy, 1998; Meyer, 2001; Dolby, 2006, 2001; Sue, 2009; Michaela, 2010; Pugliatti, 2013). In a sense, Dolby (2006:33) argues that popular culture is "an important locus of public debate and of individual and community agency".

The above analogy about popular culture is a broad one. We need to understand what constitutes popular culture in African contexts. Abah (2009), Newell (2002) and Barber (1997) argue that popular culture in the African contexts has always been slightly different from the way the term in understood in the West. And this has to do with cultural differences between the two.

To understand popular culture, it is imperative to understand the conceptualisation of the term "popular". As Barber noted, the term popular always refers to a social category called the "people". In the West, the term 'people' in this context constitutes those that are the State, the dominant classes, the aristocracy, or the bourgeoisie (Barber, 1997). Hence, they divide culture into "low" and "high". The former will be for the ordinary masses while the latter will be for the aristocracy and the ruling class. Taking the concept of popular culture to African context will mean a different thing. In Africa, the idea of "high culture" associated with an ancient aristocratic class does not exist. Rather, such a culture is used to describe a new elite group that has "power" in the society but still connected to the local people through kinship, language, and other community ties (Barber, 1997).

In the African context, as it is the focus of this thesis, popular culture is understood as the culture that functions in the interest of the masses and enables them to empower themselves (Thiongo, 1997). The term encompasses what Barber (1997) called 'common concerns. Unlike the common use of the term in the Western setting to refer to separation between

elites and the common, this thesis will rely on Thiongo's conceptualisation of popular Africa to denote that which functions in the interest of the masses and Barber's passion of that which represents 'common concerns and people identifying their struggles, endurance and hope.

Furthermore, Ligaga, Moyo and Gunner (2012) have argued that African popular culture, with the example of radio, has socio-political benefits for the African people. Radio in Africa has influenced liberation, has broken down the geographical boundaries, and has changed the colonial linguistic heritgage (Ligaga, Moyo and Gunner, 2012). This sets African popular culture apart from Euroepan popular culture which mainly focuses on entertainment. In a similar vein, Mhlambi (2011) contends that, with the example of the post-1900s SABC, African popular culture is a social engineering for contemporary, social and economic issues such as neoliberal policies. These arguments indicate that African popular culture is more than just entertainment. It is a public sphere.

Popular culture is social facts. These artefacts proclaim their importance in the lives of large numbers of African people. They are everywhere. In Africa, people without money to spend on luxuries spend it on popular arts; they infuse them with their lives (Barber, 1987). These artefacts speak about politics, economic declines in Africa, crime, corruption, fraud, among others. Barber gives the example of popular music in West Africa that is used to teach people about politics. If this is indeed what popular culture is about, then it should be delivered or presented in a language that is appealing to the masses, in a language that the masses are comfortable with. For example, the Motswako music in South Africa uses a mixture of Setswana, tsotsitaal, Afrikaans and English to communicate to the listeners. This is evident in the works of artists such as HHP, Tusks, Notshi, and Molemi.

Barber (1997) reminds us that popular culture is not just constellations of social, political, and economic issues, it is also expressive acts. It has the power to communicate. For example, one can look at Setswana novels such as *Masego*, and *Samorerwane*. The former relies on a moral story about social degeneration when teachers / parents have romantic relationships with learners / children and even have children with them. The latter's moral story is about greed and hunger for power which is not meant for you. Setswana literature is characterised by similar moral stories which focus on social degeneration, encountering modernity and chieftaincies.

Barber argues that African popular culture has much to do with consciousness, it gives us a window onto something present, but we never thought it is present. There are spaces through

which consciousness is achieved in Africa. This takes me to an example of oral literature. Setswana literature emerged from oral literature with the use of folk tales known as Ditlhamane: *Sananapo, Tlhole le Mmutla, Mokotedi and Bana ba dithupana.* All these would usually be narrated by a grandmother at night. They would be narrated in Setswana, using proverbs and idioms. These stories became a symbol to describe a reality which everyone experiences or had experienced in life. The use of Setswana language in these stories became a powerful element because everyone sitting around the narrator would understand the language, kids would even rely on the same stories when making oral presentations at schools. But the key thing is that these stories were always meant for the masses, and they relied on the language that the masses could understand.

Popular culture is also a space for contestations of power and control. In many countries in the world popular culture in used as a vehicle for political messages. Television, cinema, music and theatre are used to aid the regime in controlling the masses (del Ama and Medel, 2014). Works of art continue to be used as ideological medium of elites' propaganda, reproducing the discourse and ideologies of the ruling class. This study will reveal that the use of language of SABC soap operas is guided by strong language ideologies held by the producers and the broadcasters.

Analysis of language usage in the SABC soap operas reveals the role of languages as a source in empowering and disempowering different linguistic groups as represented in these soap operas. The way languages are used in the SABC soap operas construct ethnic and linguistic identities that are hierarchised. Ultimately, the SABC language policy appears to be irrelevant in addressing the past linguistic realities of South Africa as it is not effective, it is overshadowed by the political, economic and cultural factors influencing the production of the broadcaster's soap operas.

8. Overview of the Research Methodology

8.1. Introduction

A research methodology is a general approach of conducting research; it can be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative methodologies follow analytical and interpretative measures to answer its research questions. Quantitative methodologies, on the other hand, rely on numbers and certain amount of data to be interpreted for research questions to be answered.

In the case of this thesis, both approaches are relevant. This is because quantitative research methods are used in natural sciences to help understand natural phenomenon. Qualitative, on the other hand, is used in social sciences to help researchers study social and cultural phenomena (Thomas, 2010). Therefore, the case studies of this thesis are soap operas, that is, social phenomenon; hence, qualitative method becomes relevant for this paper. Since I am also interested in which languages dominate the soap operas, counting the usage or occurrences of certain languages over others is also important. Hence, a quantitative approach is also used in this study.

The thesis also relies on case study research method. According to Yin (1984:23), case study research method is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used". Case study research provides a holistic, in-depth investigation of the problem at hand. This method enables the researcher to go beyond the quantitative statistical analysis and allows for an understanding of the phenomenon from the actor's perspective (Zainal, 2007). Furthermore, case study researchers are known for investigating contemporary real-life phenomenon using detailed contextual analysis of the events or conditions and their relationships (Zainal, 2007).

Yin (1984) gives three categories of case study research. These are exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. Exploratory case studies explore any phenomenon in the data that is of interest to the researcher. The questions used in this category are usually general questions which open the door for further examination of the phenomenon observed (Zainal, 2007). Descriptive analysis looks for the natural phenomena which occur within the data in question. Here the researcher describes the data as it occurs (Zainal, 2007).

Last, explanatory case studies: the aim here is to examine the data at the surface and deep level. From the observation, the researcher may formulate a theory and test his theory with the case study (Zainal, 2007). This thesis relies on the first and last categories, exploratory and explanatory. The former assisted me to discover more information about the implementation of language policies in the SABC. The latter allowed me to formulate an analysis about the problem at the SABC from the collected data.

Considering the above, I analysed the extent to which the SABC language policies affect the use of languages in soap operas used as my case studies. In that way, the thesis is qualitative and explorative as well as descriptive in nature.

8.2. Research Design

I have designed the research method with the focus on contextual analysis. The latter is a process of assessing how texts are constructed. The focus is on their historical and cultural settings. According to Behrendt (2008:1) "a contextual analysis combines features of a 'cultural archeology', or the systematic study of social, political, economic, philosophical, religious and aesthetic conditions that were in place at the time and place when the text was created". In this thesis, I used contextual factors to understand motives behind the slow and/or skewed implementation of language policies in the SABC. This analysis pays attention to aspects such as who is responsible for language planning, policies, and implementation in SABC, who sits in the editorial board committee of the SABC and to whom do the production companies account to in terms of their creative decision (when it comes to language usage).

The research design also includes face-to-face interviews with a language expert (Tebogo Tsotetsi[1]), ICASA official (Amos Hlabioa), the language board officials (Lufuno Ndlovu) filmmakers (Lerato Molahlehi, Inga Mtebele, Tshidiso Mtshali*[2], Lerato Tsotso*, Tshiamo Masemola, Bantu Ndumiso*, Timothy Owen, Tshepo Morena, as well as audiences (Xolani Latha, Kgotso Moeng, Nkosinathi Khumalo, Lebogang Serei, Daniel Maseko, and Simon Langa). Interviews were conducted in person, except with Lufuno Ndlovu, this interview was conducted telephonically. All interviews were conducted in English to accommodate interviewees and talk in a language that would afford everyone an opportunity to express themselves freely.

Ethics clearance was granted to do interviews for this study. Some of the interviewees requested that their identities be concealed especially because of their association to the SABC and production companies. For this reason, pseudo names were used for these interviewees. Other interviewees consented that their actual names be used.

Interviewees were selected for their specialist knowledge in, policymaking, broadcasting and media policy making. Audience members were selected on their knowledge of watching *Skeem Seem* daily and knowing the soap very well. Audi Rubin and Rubin (1995:66) have argued that "all the people that you interview should satisfy three requirements. They should

[1] Consent was granted to use actual names for all names without asterisks.
[2] *Names have been changed at the request of the interviewees.

be knowledgeable about the cultural area, situation or experience being studied; they should be willing to talk; and they should represent a range of points of view". My interview base allowed me to get a range of views and opinions on the subject matter. All interviewees were knowledgeable in the topic of this research. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995:69) "you should go for a balance in your choice of interviewees to represent all the divisions within that arena of study". The purpose of the interviews was to find out about views on language policy implementation in South Africa and creative decisions behind language usage in the soap operas.

I also adopted textual analysis as part of the research design. We use textual analysis to understand how humans make sense of the world, how various cultures and subcultures understand who they are and how they fit into the world in which they live (Vassilliou, 2006). The whole purpose of textual analysis was to find out meaning behind texts. For the context of this thesis, I performed textual analysis focusing on the use of languages, the equal representation of indigenous languages in soap operas and how soap operas are used to create and spread language ideologies.

8.3. Methods of collecting data.

8.3.1. Interviews

According to Chadwick, Gill, Stewart, and Treasure (2008), the purpose of the research interview is to explore the views and experiences of individuals on specific matters. Interviews are believed to provide a deeper understanding of a phenomenon than would be the case with pure quantitative and even some qualitative methods. In this thesis, I relied on interviews to collect data because the subject matter of the study requires detailed insights from policymakers, language board, broadcasting officials, filmmakers as well as audiences. The purpose of the interviews was to get the story from language planners and filmmakers and audiences regarding issues of language policy, implementation, and usage in the SABC. I used semi-structured interviews which consisted of several key questions that helped define the research problems, but also allowed divergence from both the interviewer and interviewee. As Chadwick (et al, 2008) argue, this interview format is flexible, it allows for the elaboration of information that is important to the interviewer but may not have been thought of as pertinent by the researcher.

8.3.2. Contextual analysis

Contextual analysis will be very important in this paper. I situated the case studies or texts that I am working with within the milieu of their times, assessing the socio-political and economic conditions of the creators of the texts, the socio-political and economic conditions in which the readers and/or audiences get to access the texts. Here I was studying the commissioning processes of new shows in SABC, the history of who have been commissioning editors since 1994. Above all, I looked at any non-textual circumstances that affect the creation and the reception of the texts. I did this by studying circumstances such historical, political, economic, cultural practices and intellectual or aesthetic issues which determine the production processes of these texts.

8.3.3. Textual analysis

Botan et al (1999) explain that textual analysis is important in studying the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts. For the purposes of this thesis, I studied the texts based on the usage of language and unpacked whether the usage of language reflects what policy documents advocate for. Furthermore, through the analysis of the texts, I was also able to learn that not only are issues of language a problem in the SABC soap operas, but cultural factors are also highly affected as certain cultures dominate the soap operas.

8.3.4. Quantitative Transcription Data Analysis

Transcription data analysis was important as it assisted me with establishing a deeper understanding of the dialogues of the soap operas, unpack linguistic analysis of these dialogues and the ideologies behind the way dialogue is written, based on which languages are used and which ones are not. Through this method I was able to confirm that certain languages dominate SABC soap operas and others are hardly, if ever, used. I was also able to realise that in all the soaps under study, indigenous languages are subtitled in English only. No indigenous language was being used for subtitling.

I analysed transcription data using the following steps: the first step was to read through the scripts and identify the number of words in the script, then count how many are in indigenous languages. Thereafter, I calculate how many languages are used in the soap in relation to the country's languages. Secondly, I had to identify all instances of translanguaging in all the

transcripts. Thirdly, I calculated the percentage in which translanguaging is used in relation to indigenous languages. At this point I was able to identify few of major issues that proved the hypothesis of this study.

- There is a substantive usage of indigenous languages in these soap operas.
- IsiZulu is used more often than any other languages.
- Languages such as isiNdebele, siSwati, Xitsonga were never used in the studied timeframe,
- Tshivenda is only used in *Muvhango*,
- Soap operas tend to use translanguaging more than they use standard languages.

Therefore, I was able to argue that indeed, the way in which South African languages policy is implemented in the SABC is, on one side, flawed, and on the other side, rebellious. The former is because the usage of indigenous languages is not equal; it is not on par with the SABC language policies, ICASA guidelines as well as the constitution's provisions which stipulate that every indigenous language must have equitable representation and usage in the SABC. The SABC language policy (2020) notes that equitable does not mean equal, but fair and reasonable. The policy further states that in this regard, the SABC aims to use all official languages on television, while ensuring that content is accessible to most of the public. However, in the studied timeframe of this thesis (January 2017 to December 2020) even "equitability" was not achieved. It is only isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, and Tshivenda (in that order) that were used.

On the other hand, I was also able to identify that the SABC uses these platforms to adopt and represent the linguistic realities of this country. The SABC uses these soap operas to challenge multilingual norm, they adopt and endorse disruptive multilingual practices.

9. Overview of Chapters

This thesis has five chapters including an introduction and conclusion. The introduction sets the scene for this scene, outlines the field of study within which this thesis exists. The first three chapters of this thesis focus on the dominance of isiZulu in SABC 1. Chapter one focuses on the issues of language usage in *Generations: The Legacy*. The chapter argues that the dominance of isiZulu in the soap is because of neoliberal approach adopted by the SABC.

Chapter 2 focuses on the dominance of isiZulu using *Uzalo* as a case study. The chapter argues that *Uzalo* is producing language ideologies of dominance associated with isiZulu. This is caused by the political interference in the SABC. This political interference has benefited the production of *Uzalo*. Chapter 3 argues that *Skeem Saam* is another example of how isiZulu dominance is evident in SABC. This is visible through the soap shifting from having Sepedi has a dominant language to seeing isiZulu emerging as a competitive language to Sepedi. Chapter 4 and 5 takes a different angle by focusing on language issues in SABC 2. Chapter 4 argues that *Muvhango's* usage of Tshivenda is a sign of resisting neoliberal multiculturalism. In this way the soap opera offers social justice to small-status languages in South Africa. In chapter the focus is on *7de Laan* and how the soap is perpetuating ideologies of whiteness in post-Apartheid South Africa. In this way the soap undermines the SABC's language policy and the national project of nation building and transformation. The conclusion of the study argues that the SABC language policy has not benefited indigenous languages equally in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Chapter 1: *Generations: The Legacy*: Embracing National Ideology and Neoliberalism, A challenge for the Language Policy.

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine whether there are some democratic values or hierarchical norms influenced by neoliberalism and national ideology in the implementation of the SABC language policy. That is, in the former, the language policy intends to bring a democratic change to the development and sustainability of all indigenous languages. On the latter, there is a contestation for coexistence of indigenous languages.

Ideologies of language hierarchies are purported through *Generations: The Legacy* and they ultimately become naturalised. In many ways, both democratic pluralism and/or hierarchical pluralism are influenced by neoliberalism which acts as a covert language policy determinant. Neoliberalism manifests itself as a contributor towards the extent with which the language policy comes into effect. Majhanovich (2013) contends that neoliberal market fundamentalism is a political doctrine serving certain interests. While Africa is a very multilingual place, Canagarajah (2017) has cautioned that this might serve the interests and agendas of neoliberal agencies. Africa's multilingualism is, therefore, commodified and marketised. Duchene (2011) argues that neoliberalism is using linguistic diversity as a factor for profitability. Nonetheless, the deployment of translanguaging (as will be argued in the case of *Generations: The Legacy*) is a strategy to resist the influence of neoliberalism in language choice and use. As argued elsewhere in this thesis, the implementation of the SABC language policy is determined by various interconnected factors that do not serve the purpose of bringing linguistic reform. However, translanguaging is a linguistic practice which resists these factors.

To assert or refute arguments, the chapter will examine the deployment of indigenous languages in *Generations: The Legacy*, one of the soap operas playing in SABC 1. The chapter focuses on post-1994 national agenda and neoliberalism as themes characterising the language policy and implementation. These are manifested through democratic pluralism and/or hierarchical pluralism in how the soap opera under study endorses these contributors. It is the interest of this thesis to show that these contributors have led to the domination of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy*.

Background and Production of *Generations: The Legacy*

Generations: The Legacy follows the story of the Moroka family who have made their name in the media business landscape. The story is set in a world where virtue and evil are in a stellar battle for supremacy. *Generations: The Legacy* is not only about the Moroka family and their fight for the legacy, but also about the wealth, greed, knowledge and culture. All these themes are coupled by storylines which unfold through suspense, intrigue and tension. *Generations: The Legacy* is a comeback show of the original storyline which was called *Generations*. From September 30, 2014 to November 30, 2014 the series was put on hold following salary disputes between the actors and the employees. As a result, sixteen (16) of the original cast was fired and replaced with new cast members with a new storyline.

Before and until 1993, all soap operas in SABC were not produced locally. These included: *Dallas* and *Santa Barbara* which played on Bophuthatswana TV (a television station for the former Bophuthatswana homeland in South Africa (Motsaathebe, 2009). Before then, the only soap operas South Africans knew were broadcast on Springbok radio (one of SABC's radio stations in 1953 (Teer-Tomaselli et al. 1989; Motsaathebe, 2009). Other popular American soap operas to dominate the SABC have been *The Bold and Beautiful* and *Days of Our Lives*. Tager (2002) states American soap operas have had a mass appeal among Black South Africans, as a result, audiences connected with these characters on aspects of emotions and their lives. Audiences have a sense of aspirations towards the lives that characters are living. American soap operas have created an interpersonal relationship with their viewers, in a sense that they discuss romance, marital issues, family problems and so forth (Ahmed, 2012). This has always been one of the effects of American soap operas on black audiences, they give their audiences a chance to release their emotions as well as to fantasise (Ahmed, 2012). The result of this is that local soap operas had to endorse and adopt the same trajectory that has been established by American soap operas.

In 1993 the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was set up under the Independent Broadcast Authority Act (No. 153 of 1993). The purpose of the IBA was to provide regulation of broadcasting for the public interest and transform the SABC. As a result of the transformation mandate, Mfundi Vundla was approached to create a soap opera for the SABC and *Generations*, now *Generations: The Legacy*, was produced (Motsaathebe, 2009). Vundla,

cited in (Motsaathebe, 2009:431) revealed his objectives with the soap operas, "*Generations* made its debut on public broadcaster SABC after Apartheid ended in 1994, aiming to show blacks in a positive light after years of television drama cast Africans as unsophisticated, superstitious idiots who visited witch doctors to solve problems". *Generations* has always reflected on the demographics of post-Apartheid South Africa. The programme started showing us black characters who had shares in one of the biggest advertising companies in Africa and listed on Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), Ezweni Communications. The soap portrayed black economic empowerment. The focus of the soap has always been on rich black families contrasted with poor black families.

According to Shota (2005:3), "when it was launched on 3 February 1993, *Generations* was a huge success. For the first time, viewers were exposed to black people who lived in mansions, wore Hugo Boss suits, made and broke international deals and, best of all…black viewers were hooked". The storyline has continued to do the same; it has continued to hook the black audience all these years through its aspirational narratives that continue to glamorise and popularise black success.

Generations was tasked with the responsibility to depict the needs, dreams, and aspirations of black South Africa by portraying them as prosperous businesspersons living and working in suburbs (Tager, 2010). From the onset, *Generations* was meant to be a multilingual and multiracial production which would portray the South Africa of post-Apartheid. Tager (2010) argues that it may be inferred that the board and management of SABC by that time were propagators of the then discourses of hope, solidarity, harmony, and social cohesion of post-Apartheid South Africa.

According to Tager (2010:100), the production and consumption of the then *Generations*, now *Generations: The Legacy* is driven by 'political economic determinates", that is, prescribed guidelines by the SABC regarding how the popular media should be configured. In this case, the soap opera is used to build a collective identity which is driven by neoliberalism and national discourses. This a process through which we are invited to scrutinise the language usage in the soap opera because it is undermining the language policy.

Generations: The Legacy continues the mandate of the old storyline; it reflects the transformation (socially and economically) of the new South Africa. The story presents viewers with black nouveau riche as opposed to bourgeoisie (who have been established a century ago), something which was not the case in the pre-1994 South Africa. The soap

compares the lives of black people in South Africa, the rich and the poor. For example, in the story we are presented with the Diale family. The family lives together in Alexander, one of the most impoverished townships in South Africa. In the Diale family are the following members: Gog Flo, she is the grandmother to Lucy, Cosmo / Thembinkosi and Getty. There is also Lesedi, a teenage girl that Gog Flo adopted. Gog Flo is on pension. Both Lucy and Cosmo run a drug operation business. Lucy runs an alcohol drinking spot, locally known as a *shebeen* and Cosmo also owns a barbeque/braai restaurant, locally known as *Chesanyama*. Both the *shebeen* and *Chesanyama* are fronting businesses used to cover up for the illicit money made from the drug business. On the other side of town is an upmarket suburb known as Sandton. There, the Moroka family, a very wealthy advertising mogul family lives. The family is led by Mazwi Moroka. The family also has interests in mining, tourism and property. However, because of greed, the family never has peace. They always want to acquire more, even if it means getting involved in illegal dealings.

Neoliberalism and Popular Culture in South Africa

Neoliberalism is an important contributor to the use of indigenous languages in the SABC. It is imperative to offer a usable definition of neoliberalism for the context of this study. Harvey's definition is suitable. According to him, neoliberalism is a

> Theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private rights, free markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2005:2).

The driving ideology behind neoliberalism is that individuals, communities and institutions must be independent, they should run their enterprises without looking for assistance. Failure in this ideology is understood as one's lack of agency and effort. Individualism is the driving force behind neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism is one of the defining themes of language planning, policy, and implementation in South Africa. The post-1994 economic policies shaped South Africa's neoliberal approach (Narsiah, 2002; Schneider, 2003; and Sebake, 2017). The result of this was that market influences became dominant in shaping local policies. Neoliberalism, as a

result, plays a significant role in how the language policy is adopted and implemented. As it will be seen during this study, market favours stability and certainty. A language policy that disturbs policy certainty is a concern to the market. Therefore, uplifting one language to dominance is a benefit for the market as it creates certainty about the linguistic condition within which the market operates.

This has been a role of neoliberalism and languages globally. It divides and conquers. The result of this is that more languages are getting marginalised while some continue rising to the position of superiority. Globally, multilingualism has been heralded as a desirable turn towards more inclusive communicative policies. However, Flores (2013), (Kubota, 2014), and Canagarajah (2017) caution that this might serve the interests and agendas of neoliberal agencies. Neoliberal economics and ideologies have no interests in social elevation of the people; their only focus is on profit-making. The same caution can also be applied to multilingualism. Multilingualism has been a norm against monolingual ideologies stemming from the 17th century European modernity that it has even overlooked other linguistic cultures. This reinforces a view that language is power. Socio-political and economic power determines the degree to which multilingualism succeeds or fails. Language, in this case, is used to serve elite interest. This has been the case with South Africa. The reason multilingualism in South Africa remains a theoretical reality but never materialises practically is that language is used in such a way that it includes and excludes. Language has become a liberator and an oppressive tool.

Neoliberalism has found its expression at the SABC. Commercial interests are likely to determine and sway the operations of the institution around simply because they are the engine behind the institution's financial income. This has led to Curran (1997), Howley (2004), Kupe (2005) to argue that PSBs are now completely covered by commercial interests. Public interests can still be seen, but it is not as intense as commercial interests. They have become more commercialised by always having to secure advertising revenue. Hence, Mooney (2004) argues that PSBs are losing their identities by pursuing the commercial model. This is the reason why only one language can stand out from the rest. The notion of equal utilisation of indigenous languages has become a myth because the SABC is partially endorsing it.

This is how we get to realise the power of neoliberalism as a covert language policy determinant; it subtly indicates that commercial interests are more important and powerful

than non-commercial interests. Neoliberalism determines which language is appropriate to sell a brand. With the high revenue in the SABC generated from advertising, the danger is that the public interest is clouded by the market orientation. Canagarajah (2017) cautions that neoliberalism cannot promote social interests as this threatens its profit-making accumulation. It is important to note, as Canagarajah (2017) argues, that neoliberal agencies might adopt certain dispositions and language practices that are disruptive, that have been identified as transformative, however, that will only happen if such practices do not threaten profit accumulation. If neoliberalism does not recognise Tshivenda, Xitsonga or siSwati as a relevant language to sell its product(s), it will not advertise its product during a time in which that language is dominating, except if there is a high viewership for that programme. This means that the language is being commodified, if it does not attract enough viewers, then there will not be advertising during the programme that uses that language. Therefore, the SABC will call off the programme because it does not generate them money. McChesney (1999) argues that PSBs are afraid of challenging commercial systems in their models. This suggests that we should not only focus on language practices, for example, how best multilingualism is viewed, we should also consider these language practices in relation to the interests they serve and the ideologies informing their use.

Elizur (1998) argues that commercial interests in the form of advertising have impoverished television as a social-educational tool in Israel. Television in Israel has to some degree brainwashed people with programming that perpetuates national discourses that the government want people to know. Nye (2006) argues that in democratic countries governments cannot easily control the population or feed them propaganda as the media is free and independent. However, they rely on broadcasting in a form of documentaries, films and soaps to spread their propaganda. They rely on soft power (Lin and Hongtao, 2017), that is, governments make people do as the government wishes without force or laws of the army. Governments use cultural tools such as media to achieve its aims. Soft power is synonymous with hegemony.

Neoliberal markets are not pro social justice. Most importantly, this analysis illustrates why isiZulu is a dominant language in *Generations: The Legacy*. This is partly due to neoliberal policies and national ideology of the post-Apartheid government that influences the SABC. However, it is important to ask whether these factors are benefiting indigenous languages equally. Do they help bring the language policy into effect? What makes the implementation of the language policy to become a reality?

Mhlambi (2012) contextualises the relationship between neoliberalism, popular culture, and isiZulu in post-Apartheid South Africa. Mhlambi (2012) argues that the period around 2006 until 2009 saw the popularisation of ringtone of songs in isiZulu which were meant to mobilise support for the former president of South Africa, then deputy president, Jacob Zuma, in his corruption and rape charges he was facing as well as removal from his deputy presidency position. The ringtone songs gained popularity as people downloaded them and started using them as means of entertainment. This led to the commercialisation and commodification of the songs. Mobile network companies, insurance companies and banking systems started to offer their services in isiZulu (Mhlambi, 2012). What this signifies is the profit-interest that capitalist systems have on languages. It was only until various isiZulu cultural groups made songs about Zuma in isiZulu that capitalist formations gained interest in isiZulu because they realised the rapid growth and influence that the ringtone songs in isiZulu had on the black population. In this case, the interest on isiZulu by these capitalist formations was not on promoting the language, but on commercialising and commodifying the language for their own benefits.

Public Service Broadcasting and languages: New Perspectives

Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) play a significant role in enforcing the national agenda. One of the central goals of broadcasting, especially public broadcasting has always been to promote the nation's aspiration to deliberative democracy (Sunsetin, 2000). Oregeret (2004) states that the restructuring of television in South Africa after 1994 followed the national narrative of unity. In most cases, the national ideology or imagined community portrayed in public broadcasters excludes certain identities or nations (La Pastina etal, 2014). A typical example is that of Brazilian telenovelas, La Pastina, Straubhaar and Sifuentes (2014) argue that certain Brazilians say the Brazil they see on television does not represent them. Scholars such as Souza (2010), Neri (2010), Pochmanm (2012), La Pastina, Straubhaar and Sifuentes (2014) state that this representation is influenced by the ones who have power to determine the national agenda. Countries such as Peru have relied on the national broadcaster to help portray the country in a way that will please the world.

From the above argument, this thesis adds a new view to the existing scholarship and argue that public broadcastings are conflicted between portraying the national interest versus the

public interest. I further argue that the SABC portrays both, but due to the economic interests, it is leaning towards national interests more because that is where it gets its funding from. This view is further purported by the fact that PSBs operate in highly capitalised societies than they did when they were first established. This has a huge impact on the extent to which they uphold their public interest mandate. As a result, they are vulnerable to commercial interests. The other contribution to the scholarship is that language policies fail or take a long time to achieve their aims, which is to bring about language reform. In highly capitalist modern states, the market beats the tune and social justice/cause dances. The thesis contends, then, that the national agenda perpetuated through PSBs is an interconnected process wherein politics and economics fight for power and dominance.

Capitalism and Linguistic Practices: Reality for Indigenous Language

Capitalism does not permit an even flow or utilisation of languages, indigenous languages in the context of this study. Capitalism, through its offspring such as neoliberalism, does not benefit indigenous languages equally. In the words of Mbembe (2004:394), post-Apartheid South Africa is filled with "public theatres of late capitalism". Hassan (2003) reminds us that capitalism has affected the material and semiotic basis of our cultures. The way we speak and communicate with one another is being shaped and modelled by global capitalism. As a result, there remains a huge challenge for indigenous languages in South Africa as they do not yet have the same status as English and even Afrikaans. Therefore, the choice of language one adopts is a means of survival. What we speak and how we speak is a product of socioeconomic and political determinants.

Capitalism does not only determine our linguistic practices, it also determines our nationhood. Capitalism produces nation states. According to Bresser-Pereira (2008), nationalism is a fruit of a capitalist tree that also produced another bourgeois ideology, liberalism. Nationalism is used by capitalism to produce unity among nations for free economic development. Therefore, the success of capitalism is strengthened when the working class and the professionals put aside their differences and embrace a common identity and rally together in competition with other nations (Bresser-Pereira, 2008).

Ives (2007) asserts that, the construction of national belonging has become entrenched with complicated global neoliberalism. Ideologies of national belonging and global neoliberalism work together to determine how the language policy is put into effect. For reference purposes, Heller (2007) argues that, language practices are politically and socially influenced, they are governed by nationalist and capitalist ideologies. Bhatch (2010) argues that even the way language is used in public spheres it is not due to some coincidence or coexistence of linguistic resources, it is shaped by various factors, democracy, autocracy, globalization, economics, migration and technology. Thus, language use is an identity construction, in this case, linguistic identities are shaped by nationalist and capitalist ideologies.

Capitalism, through neoliberalism and the national ideology, has not yet benefited the linguistic reform of the post-1994. Neoliberalism and national ideology work as covert language policy elements, that is, they determine how and when the language policy is implemented. Therefore, the power of neoliberalism and the national ideology has been able to create a structure in which isiZulu is the dominant language in *Generations: The Legacy* as will be shown in this research.

Popular cultural platforms are used as sites through which the hierarchy of indigenous languages is created by neoliberalism and national ideology. The everyday or popular cultural artefacts are sites through which language use and language ideologies are spread and normalised, hence the dominance of isiZulu. The focus of this thesis is on *Generations: The Legacy* to study these claims. The dominance of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy* is being normalised/naturalised because it ties up to the notions of national belonging, national agenda, and nation building. The soap was commissioned in 1994 to promote these ideals, hence, even its usage of languages reflects such a mandate.

Neoliberalism has put indigenous languages into a hierarchy and isiZulu is sitting at the top of that hierarchy. This hierarchy is further supported through the national ideology. This emphasises that language is power. Both political and economic power dynamics determine language use. According to Heller (2007:2) languages are a set of "resources which circulate in unequal ways in social networks and discursive places". This explains that language and language policies are not power-free institutions, they are embedded with power relations and/or power contestation. The dominance of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy* is because of these power relations, it is not a natural phenomenon, it is being manufactured to appear as normal and natural.

The use of language in *Generations: The Legacy* does not take into consideration the injustices of the past on indigenous languages, that they all suffered the same fate. Rather, the one that is close to power is the one that is enjoying the benefits. What I mean by "it is close to power" is that in the absence of English, it is the most preferred indigenous language among the elites, especially politicians (Snail, 2011, Masondo, 2015, Madlala and Mkhize, 2019). This approach is unfair and deranged because it does not offer a holistic approach to uplifting the status of indigenous languages; it focuses on one or a few which are endorsed by the elites. In this case, *Generations: The Legacy* is embattled in providing a forum for constructing, reflecting and contesting the national imagery as well as upholding the neoliberal interests. The results are dire for other indigenous languages because they are not being used or where they are used, it is not to the same degree as isiZulu. This can only mean that the national imagery itself is skewed, it favours some and marginalises others. The role of neoliberalism cannot be overlooked in this process because, productions such as *Generations: The Legacy* must generate income for the broadcaster, pay the crew and still generate profit for the production company. As a result, they are forced to put profit-making forward before social justice or social cause.

From the above discussion, a language policy debate is made. The conspicuous, unequal usage of indigenous language in *Generations: The Legacy* creates an unrealistic utopian portrayal of South Africa and marginalises other indigenous languages. This is a result of the language policy not being fully adhered to. This does not mean that one soap must cater for all nine official languages. But reference to other languages, inclusion of characters who would speak a sentence or a phrase in other indigenous languages would reflect the multilingual nature of South Africa. It would also help achieve the SABC's stance on equitable usage of indigenous languages. But *Generations: The Legacy* constantly puts isiZulu at the centre, isolates it and almost turn it into a *lingua franca* of the show and ultimately enforcing the idea that non-isiZulu speakers need to conform to isiZulu as the powerful and important language at the expense of their languages.

However, *Generations: The Legacy* still depicts some resistance to this domination, thus misleadingly portraying it as a contested dominant culture of the new South Africa. At the same time, *Generations: The Legacy* is endorsing translanguaging. This is to give other indigenous languages a chance to be featured in the soap opera, it is also a way of challenging the notion that South Africa has 11 official languages. This is a move to disrupt the "multilingual norm" that the South African language policy suggests. By the multilingual

norm, I refer to the recognition of only 11 official languages and nothing else except that. Nonetheless, the role of neoliberalism can still be seen, it has started to commercialise translanguaging because it is the linguistic practice that dominates among the target market.

Adopting translanguaging is one of the of ways in which *Generations: The Legacy* is defying power dynamics which hierarchise indigenous languages. *Generations: The Legacy* is representing language as a practice that emerges from the speakers and is decided by the speakers. Language cannot be restrained as neoliberalism and the current national ideology are trying to do by rejecting other language practices other than the "normal multilingualism". As a result, I emphasise that translanguaging as we see it in *Generations: The Legacy* is a language practice that is ideological. It is not a mere product of linguistic resources used for communication. This is a linguistic liberation in a sense that it creates a free space for communication; it allows people to speak in any way that they prefer, it also gives platforms to other languages which are barely used in the SABC.

One of the concepts that can be easily confused with translanguaging is code-switching. Garcia and Wei (2014) define the latter as the ability to move forth and back from one language belonging to one grammatical system. But translanguaging cannot be confined to just that, it extends to the speaker's construction and use of "original and complex interrelated discursive practices that cannot be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of a language" (Garcia and Wei, 2014:22). Therefore, in this chapter I adopt translanguaging as opposed to code-switching as the former is broad and it encompasses code-switching within it. Translanguaging further serves a purpose that code-switching does not serve, it creates identities, and it is a decolonial practice (Makalela, 2015). It builds new identities and takes Africans back to ancient multilingualism that has always characterised Africa. Hence, the use of language in *Generations: The Legacy* goes beyond just mixing languages for communication, fluency and or representing the multilingualism of South Africa.

Translanguaging is used as a broader linguistic practice in the context of this study. Therefore, it also encompasses what is locally called *Tsotsitaal* in South Africa. *Tsotsitaal* is a contact language used by black people in South Africa, it serves as a *lingua franca* between black people (Msimang, 1987). *Tsotsitaal* draws its speech community from different social and historical communities. It emerges from the freehold townships of the Western Areas of Johannesburg, namely, Sophiatown, Martindale and Alexandra (Ntshangase, 1995).

Tsotsitaal developed as an argot or criminal language among the criminal gangs of the Western Areas who were composed mainly of urban male youths (Ntshangase, 1995).

Mesthrie (2008) argues that South African townships are dominated by linguistic practices such as *Tsotsitaal*, *Flaitaal*, *Iscamtho* and *Gamtaal*. These linguistic practices keep shifting in context. They are highly influenced by urbanisation, migration and underworld cultures. Therefore, I propose translanguaging as a generic term to include all these various linguistic practices because they all form part of communication that draws from other codes and registers of various languages and they use such a technique for identity construction.

These linguistic practices are used for identity construction depending on what circumstances dictate. Speakers use these linguistic repertoires which are non-standard languages to integrate and negotiate communication with other speakers (Bristowe etal 2004). Ultimately, speakers are open to learning and accommodating other languages. Such is the power of translanguaging, and this is how *Generations: The Legacy* is using the practice. In this way, the soap is accommodating other languages and linguistic practices that the language policy, because of the influence of neoliberalism and the national ideology, overlook. Therefore, practices such as *Tsotsiaal* and *Iscamtho* form part and parcel of translanguaging as they are practices used to form identities and negotiate communication under specific circumstances.

Generations: The Legacy is also aiming at endorsing the SABC's language policy on accepting that languages are not static, they adapt to circumstances. Philipson (2009:8) asserts that "the global language map and the geopolitics of language are never static", therefore, there is a constant need to fine-tune them to suit the linguistic culture of the day. Schiffman (2006:112) defines linguistic culture as the "totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious structures and all other cultural 'baggage' that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their culture". *Generations: The Legacy* endorses the practice of translanguaging to consciously or unconsciously to endorse the SABC's language policy and to challenge the ways in which markets control and dictate language usage in the SABC. Therefore, the use of translanguaging is a strategy going against the national agenda and neoliberal influences in the SABC. Neoliberalism relies on power and majority. This means the system follows and produces languages that are associated with power and dominance. This chapter uses South African television as a base for demonstrating that neoliberalism determines and controls the language deployment and ultimately creates a hierarchy of indigenous languages, one in which isiZulu is at the top. Neoliberalism is

interested in a language that will generate income for the market, and isiZulu is one indigenous language that serves such a purpose. As Bourdieu (1999) argues, neoliberalism does not expand people's linguistic choices, it is restricting them. This hierarchisation ultimately creates assimilation with isiZulu where non-Zulu speakers, do not feel free to speak languages or express linguistic practices of their choice because only one is associated with power.

Neoliberalism, Nation Building and Indigenous Languages: Understanding *Generations the Legacy*.

After the first democratic elections in South Africa, there came a need to build a united nation, one nation, a nation united in diversity. Different races, cultures, languages, religions, genders, sexualities and many other identities had to live together in harmony and in unity. The purpose of this was to create a national ideology and build a national identity (Gqola, 2001). The analogy of Archbishop Desmond Tutu calling South Africa a rainbow nation was to foreground a belief in the ability of all South Africans co-existing despite any differences they might have. However, in this thesis, I show that this is an illusion that has not yet materialised as it benefits some and excludes/marginalises others, especially on languages. It is a dinner table in which only a few are invited. Belonging to the rainbow nation means that all indigenous languages will be used equally or equitably in the SABC as a PSB. But this is not the case. The answer to this is an interrelated one. Ultimately, the language policy is compromised, it cannot yield the results it intended to achieve (which were to develop the usage of all indigenous languages and uplift their standard from that of colonial-Apartheid era).

Prior to 1990s, the ANC's policy was all about redistribution as a central theme (Habib and Padayachee, 2000). The government shifted its attention from a socialist approach or redistributive ideals to a neoliberal agenda (Mhlambi, 2014), which created a fertile ground for market dominance over social justice. Habib and Padayachee (2000) argue that the ANC abandoned its socialist approach towards the 1994 general elections when its conference removed nationalisation as policy adoption. This was the beginning of the ANC becoming softer on redistribution and addressing inequalities of the past. The ANC started moving towards a market-orientated approach (Aliber, 2003). In 1993, a Reconstruction and

Development Program (RDP) was adopted, this was meant to address the imbalance of power between employers and employees which was created by the Apartheid government. This was replaced by Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) program in 1996. GEAR was a neoliberal model which reduced the government's role in growing the economy and promoted the market by increasing privatisation and deregulation. GEAR's approach was on encouraging distribution through the market (Aliber, 2003) and not address inequalities of the past. In 2004, GEAR was replaced by Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA). This was meant to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014. In 2013, National Development Plan (NDP) was adopted as a replacement for GEAR. Mhlambi (2014) argues that the adopted neoliberal policies had faltering outcomes that resulted in polarities between the different classes, racial categories and political outcomes.

These policies have had a significant effect on the development of popular culture. The success of popular culture requires financial support and resources. With neoliberal policies responsible for financing, there is a high likelihood that popular culture that speaks to heavy politics and promote social justice will be crippled. This has been the case with the use of language in *Generations: The Legacy*. The soap receives its funding from advertising which is a neoliberal agency. That plays a significant role on how *Generations: The Legacy* lives up to or upholds the SABC's language policy. As a point of reference, thematically, *Generations: The Legacy* has also not taken on the betrayal of South Africans' national consciousness.

Language reforms were some of the major changes brought to the SABC post 1994. The SABC was mandated to broadcast in 11 official languages, with a special focus on previously disadvantaged languages. The two languages which previously received more coverage; English and Afrikaans, no longer dominated the broadcaster. However, more attention was supposed to be given to indigenous languages as they were previously denied that opportunity. However, neoliberal interests still managed to find a way to influence the use of languages in the SABC. Neoliberal agencies such as advertising and competition with other broadcasters use language as an artefact in a profit-orientated manner, for commercial interests, without paying attention to the interests of language in meaning-making contexts. Canagarajah (2017:16) contends that the "elite and profitable languages would be coveted, and the languages of underprivileged communities would be ignored".

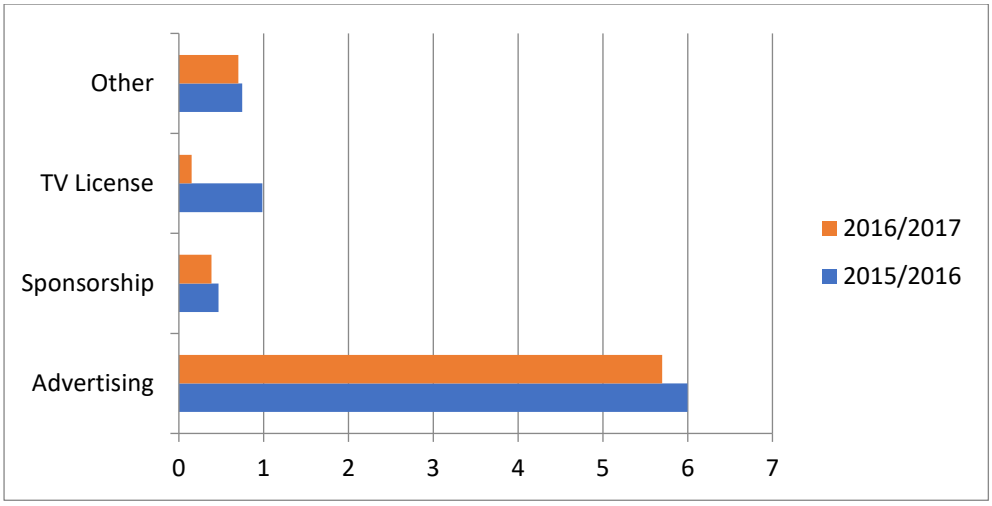
There is no better way of explaining unequal utilisation of indigenous languages in *Generations: The Legacy* than within the framework of Canagarajah (2017). These languages are hierarchically used to associate isiZulu with power, dominance and elitism, while excluding and marginalising other indigenous languages. This happens at a structural level, rather than, overt manner. This is an unwritten policy. It is meant to appear as normal, that for as long as isiZulu is an indigenous language then it is not a problem when it is elevated to the higher status compared to other indigenous languages.

It is important to discuss ways in which PSBs are funded to substantiate the argument that the influence of neoliberal agencies is overshadowing the constitutional mandate of the SABC when it comes to parity utilisation of indigenous languages. In their ideal operations, PSBs are funded through license fees, what in South Africa is usually referred to as TV license. License fees alone are not enough to sustain PSBs. In fact, PSBs which are funded by license fees alone no longer exist (Siune and Hulten, 1998). This has resulted in PSBs mixing their funding models, allowing both license fees and commercial funding which comes in a form of advertising, donations and sponsorship. Some even have public funding, in a form of state funding. The SABC is a typical example of a PSB that relies on TV licenses fees, commercial funding and state funding.

Commercial and state funding are always acceptable in PSBs, but with the "agreement" that they do not interfere with the PSB's mandate to fulfil its public service mandate (World Radio and Television Council, 2000). The 2016 SABC Performance Information showed that the SABC is financed through (in the order of their importance): advertising revenue, sponsorship revenue, TV license fees and government grants. More of this information can be seen in the graph below:

Figure 1: SABC Revenue Comparative

REVENUE (R) BILLIONS



Source: SABC 2017 Annual Report

The graph indicates the sources of revenue collection for the SABC. From the above, advertising plays a huge role in the SABC. The category of the "Other" is mostly government grants and trade exchanges. Scholars of CPEM (Mosco, 1996; Powel, MacRury, and Hardy, 2009; Hardy, 2010, 2014) have argued about the role of strong political and economic influences in media houses. The central argument for a CPEM is that those with political and economic power always influence the ways in which media houses operate. When there is high revenue generated from commercial companies in a form of advertising, the SABC risks compromising its constitutional mandates for appeasing commercial interests. That is one of the ways in which neoliberalism is influencing the SABC's language policy and the national language policy. The SABC is meant to uphold the language policy but with the influence of advertising, the language policy is compromised.

Neoliberalism maintains a set of concrete initiates in the popular culture. It is vital to note that the advocates of neoliberalism seek to dismantle centralised governance. This means that regulation of the popular culture is limited. In this case, as much as ICASA may be responsible for regulating the SABC and making sure that it complies with its license conditions which stipulate that the SABC will use all indigenous languages equally, the role of ICASA is limited to an extent because the SABC, even though it is a PSB, it must make profit. In an interview with Hlabioa (2018), Head of Compliance at ICASA, he clearly stated that ICASA cannot interfere with managerial or financial operations of the SABC because as the broadcaster, the SABC must make money to remain in business. The role of ICASA is to monitor license compliance of broadcasters and not necessarily how they remain true to social justice. As a result, if commodification of content and language is what brings money

to the SABC, the broadcaster will exploit that opportunity. Therefore, if isiZulu is doing well as a language of commodifying content, the SABC is likely to sway its content towards using that language. As Blouin (2018) argues, neoliberalism corporatises the commons, its aim is to commercialize. The result of this is less public interest and more commercial interest for the SABC. Platforms such as *Generations: The Legacy* are used as tools for capital interests.

Ives (2007) argues that neoliberal policies have intensified their call on countries to open their boarders and to embrace a more 'global' and less 'nationally-orientated' visions. This has huge consequences on indigenous languages, especially in post-colonial countries such as South Africa. As a result, popular cultural artefacts such as television are used to construct hegemonic cultures. These are cultures which do not endorse and promote a holistic cultural mood of the country, it is a mediated selection process in which certain cultures are being used and others are not. The whole purpose of this is to commodify cultures. This is the reason why advertisers will choose soap operas like *Generations: The Legacy* to advertise on, simply because it uses a language that the market is friendly toward, and it is a dominant language.

Olseen et al, (2004) write those neoliberal ideologies produce multi-layered and somewhat diverse set of discursive tenets that came because of liberalism and conservative economies. Furthermore, in many respects, these tenets exhibit propositions such as the invisible hand (where individual fate is tied to national interests and development). The dominance of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy* is not a coincidence; it is a manufactured outcome that came because of nation building discourses that are pro-market. Indigenous languages' disadvantaged socioeconomic status and the pressure of assimilation into dominant languages or languages with socioeconomic status is being perpetuated through popular culture, in this case, through *Generations: The Legacy*. This calls for serious attention because without a nuanced understanding of what neoliberal policies and national consciousness discourses do on indigenous languages, it is impossible to offer an effective critique of the language policy in South Africa.

Globalisation cannot be ignored in all these processes. The rise of globalisation has a significant role in language use and choice. Capitalism continues to take advantage of the power of globalisation. Sharma and Phyak (2017) contend that with the rise of globalisation, language practices have essentially changed from being market of nation-state and heritage identity to more dynamic and commodified goods in the economic market. The multilingual

reforms of the post-1994 were intended to build a nation-state out of unity through diversity. However, with the deregulated neo-liberal market, as part of the capitalist economy, companies such as SABC have fallen into the traps of profit-making using languages, hence the commodification of isiZulu. This explains that the nation-state and heritage identity of the post-Apartheid rainbow nation discourses and the democratic constitution are crumbling at the expense of capitalism. The rise of capitalism determines the effect to which the language policy can survive.

The result of deregulation policies is that government cannot interfere with how businesses operate. The deregulation policies that the ANC government adopted post-1994 have left companies to operate without state intervention and guided by the belief that economic profit, as the driving force, will be suitable for public institutions (Flores, 2013; Holborow, 2015; Sharma and Phyak, 2017). Companies such as the SABC commission / produce their own shows with an assumption that these shows will represent the nation. Consequently, the state has no intervention in how companies or even public institutions operate. As a result, the sole intention or the major intention of companies is to maximise profit. Thus, if isiZulu helps the SABC maximise profit through its soap operas, the SABC will pursue the use of this language. The dire consequence of this is that government cannot interfere as business policies do not allow government to instruct business how they must operate.

Neoliberalism operates on market value and profitisation. That is, the value of the product must generate profit. Therefore, the same approach is applied to language. Holborow (2015) argues that neoliberal ideology upholds the view that the market is responsible for determining human relations and social relations. Our values are not shaped by collective institutions and interaction, but by supply and demand. The implication of this is that our views on language usage and the value indigenous languages have are determined by the language's value as an economic capital in a free competitive market (Bourdieu, 1991). In the case of *Generations: The Legacy*, it is inevitable that the broadcaster favours isiZulu because the market privileges isiZulu more than other languages. This is a perpetuation of the marginalisation of other indigenous languages because their values are determined by the market reaction towards them. In this case, a language is a product, and it must have a value. Therefore, a product must result in profit. The use of isiZulu is a product, and it is producing profit for the advertisers as it attracts more audiences for the show(s).

Below is a table showing the linguistics demography of South Africa as released by Statistics South Africa.

Figure 2: Population by first language spoken and province

Source: Statistics South Africa (2011).

First Language	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	SA
Afrikaans	2 820 643	683 410	606 225	340 490	161 876	309 867	1 502 940	289 446	140 185	**6 855 082**
English	1 149 049	362 502	37 842	78 782	1 337 606	120 041	1 603 464	124 646	78 692	**4 892 623**
IsiNdebele	15 238	14 854	6 023	10 008	111 657	43 988	380 494	403 678	104 283	**1 090 223**
IsiXhosa	1 403 233	5 092 152	60 187	201 145	340 832	190 601	796 841	48 993	20 275	**8 154 258**
IsiZulu	24 634	31 634	8 501	118 126	7 901 932	84 835	2 390 036	965 253	62 424	**11 587 374**
Sepedi	8 144	14 299	2 431	7 395	20 555	83 999	1 282 896	372 392	2 826 464	**4 618 576**
Sesotho	64 066	158 964	14 136	1 717 881	79 416	201 153	1 395 089	138 559	80 299	**3 849 563**
Setswana	24 534	12 607	373 086	140 228	52 229	2 191 230	1 094 599	71 713	107 021	**4 067 248**
Sign language	22 172	42 235	3 933	32 910	48 575	14 924	52 744	8 932	8 230	**234 655**
SiSwati	3 208	2 020	648	2 246	8 347	12 091	136 550	1 106 588	25 346	**1 297 046**
Tshivenda	4 415	3 663	1 083	2 592	4 309	16 255	272 122	12 140	892 809	**1 209 388**
Xitsonga	9 152	3 092	1 201	8 039	8 936	127 146	796 511	416 746	906 325	**2 277 148**
Other	127 117	36 893	12 385	15 935	77 519	60 872	371 575	39 639	86 322	**828 258**
Total	**5 675 604**	**6 458 325**	**1 127 683**	**2 675 777**	**10 153 789**	**3 457 004**	**12 075 861**	**3 998 726**	**5 338 675**	**50 961 443**

The importance of these statistics is to show which language(s) dominate across South Africa. Such dominance is the one that influences the market. The market puts more capital where the numbers prove to be in its favour, the main aim is to sell the product to as much people as possible. As a result, the dominance of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy* is influenced by these national demographics. Advertisers then opt to market their products on a television program that targets a certain number of people and that depends on the language that the program uses.

Advertising, as a profit-generating mechanism, has found demographics very useful in understanding and categorising market segments according to socioeconomic characteristics. Typical examples of demographic variables are age, gender, ethnicity, language, religion, occupation and family size. These characteristics help businesses know their market segment. Thus, businesses develop and use efficient tools to drive the message to reach the target market. In the case of *Generations: The Legacy*, businesses advertise on the soap opera because it is dominated by a language that, according to Statistics South Africa, is the most spoken in South Africa. Advertisers understand that this approach will send their messages to

millions of viewers. However, this compromises the language policy's intention of promoting all indigenous languages equally because the market beats the drum and the SABC dances. This is because the SABC must make profit from these soap operas. It is, therefore, compromised in terms of the extent to which it upholds the language policy.

Most adverts that play during *Generations: The Legacy* are mainly in isiZulu and endorsing the Zulu culture. In the picture below, this is a KFC advert about a boy, 8 years old whose head is used by old men as a napkin after eating meat. This hand-on-head wiping is a ritual meant to bode well for one's acquisition of lots of cows therefore translating into wealth for the young boy on the receiving end. The boy in the advert decided that he had had enough of the head-wiping and comes up with the idea of buying KFC Streetwise 2 for himself and his uncle. Instead of wiping hands on the boy's head, the uncle licks his fingers.

Picture 1: KFC Advert



Source: Vimeo.

This advert is 100% in isiZulu. No other language or linguistic practice is used in the advert. This is one of the ways in which advertising has endorsed isiZulu as a language for sales and profit. The advert also embodies a traditional practice in African cultures where elders ceremonially wipe their hands on the head of a young boy, to bestow good luck and fortune. This is a practice still well-known and a norm for many Zulu rural areas in South Africa. In this case, it is not only the language (isiZulu) that has been adopted and commercialised by neoliberalism, but the culture of the Zulu people also. This ultimately side-lines other indigenous languages and cultures.

Picture 2: Castle Milk Stout



Source: Business Insider South Africa

Picture 3: Castle Milk Stout



The second and third pictures are of a very recent and one of the most popular adverts on television, radio, newspapers, billboards and social media. *Generations: The Legacy*, as one of the most watched soap operas in SABC 1, plays this advert frequently. The advert is from an alcohol brand, Castle Milk Stout. The advert has branded African clan names on their cans and these clans are being recited during the advert. At the beginning of the advert, we see a young Zulu man (as can be seen in the picture) wearing traditional Zulu attire. Throughout the advert, a Castle Milk Stout can is rotating on the screen, with a voiceover reciting clan names as they are written on the can.

Castle Milk Stout claims that the advert is meant to celebrate African cultures, roots and heritage (Business Insider, 2018). However, the fact is that the advert is only promoting the IsiZulu culture, roots, and heritage. The advert is not a full reflection or even a fraction of the African cultures, roots, and heritage of South Africa because it only focuses on one culture or tribe. The advert does not give a glimpse of the siSwati clan names, isiNdebele, or isiXhosa as Nguni languages. Thus, it is not true that the advert is meant to celebrate African roots and heritage. The advert celebrates and promotes the culture and language of the Zulu people.

This is influenced by the commercialisation and profitasation of the indigenous languages and cultures as argued before. Castle Milk Stout chose Zulu clan names to brand their alcohol containers for ethnic identification. This is a dominant language in South Africa based on the statistics. Therefore, it makes financial sense for Castle Milk Stout to opt for a language and culture of this magnitude for them to make a profit and receive visibility.

The second factor which upholds the democratic pluralism and hierarchical implementation of the language policy is the national ideology discourses of the post-1994 government. *Generations: The Legacy* is a platform that was used to build a normative national ideology with a focus on representing South Africa as a united and a rainbow nation. Earlier, this thesis indicated that *Generations: The Legacy* was mandated to represent a multilingual and multiracial South Africa. This was a vision of the new government to portray South Africa as a non-racial nation. This was meant to instil the rainbow nation ideology on the people. Since the soap opera was given this mandate in 1994 when it first aired, it has been an apparatus of the "New South Africa". In addition, the soap attempts to construct a nation out of different languages and make sure that they can survive together in harmony. However, the soap produces, performs and contests the South African unity through isiZulu dominance.

Television is a very powerful tool in disseminating information. In the words of Rajagopal (2001:4),

> As a medium, television's work is parallel to and interlinked with that of the economy. Both disseminate information to help circulate goods as well as to socialise members of society. Television is thus active in the material and the symbolic reproduction of capitalist relations.

As a medium of communication, television uses language(s) which are appealing to the mass hence providing them with a vision of the world. As a result, Rajagopal (2001) states categorically in the above statement that such a motive does not differ from a capitalist intention which seeks to produce power and money. In *Generations: The Legacy*, we are presented with indigenous languages in hierarchies. This only seeks to build a particular worldview, a particular ideology. This is a very covert strategy because at the same time, this hierarchy is hidden behind the argument of national agenda that was introduced after the 1994 elections which was to promote and develop the equal use of all indigenous languages. These national ideologies were "unity in diversity" discourses. Ideologies like the ones *Generations: The Legacy* is building; perpetuating the isiZulu dominance is supposedly part

of the rainbow nation narrative: many languages surviving together under one nation. Hence, the dominance of isiZulu is a subtle strategy because it is one of the indigenous languages. This might not raise concerns like it would if the dominant language was still English or Afrikaans.

Television has the potential to create and naturalise inequalities. This is because of its ability to reach a lot of people. Ives (2007) argues that the construction of the nation put forth by some television programming masks inequalities. These effects play a role in asserting linguistic hierarchical relations among indigenous languages because these languages are not used equally. As Ives (2007) contends, this leads to power relations. In these hierarchies of power, isiZulu dominates. Such domination eludes continuing marginalisation of other indigenous languages in the name of "nation building". A "nation-building" strategy is a form of a nation-state, meaning that the aim is to build one state with diverse people, cultures, religions, languages and so forth. The danger of nation-states is that, ultimately, they empower and disempower, some will find themselves marginalised and others will find themselves included in important matters of the state. This empowerment and disempowerment, marginalisation and inclusivity are always justified in nation-states as they are supposedly part of the "nation building" and "one nation" discourse. This is to where such a domination of isiZulu is leading the country. The moment the domination takes effect in and through popular culture, it is then that it is being naturalised and institutionalised.

Media are powerful platforms through which we get to define who and what we are. Our identities are defined and continued to be redefined in and through the media. The work of Kellner (1995:1) states "radio, television, film, and the other products of the culture industries provide the models of what it means to be male, female, and successful or a failure, powerful and powerless". The role of *Generations: The Legacy* in this statement is to put indigenous languages in hierarchy and choose the one that is going to attract the viewers and advertisers. As a result, the idea of "power and powerlessness" as Kellner argued, is already determined. Such a motive is then normalised and institutionalised; that isiZulu is the language of power, while others are not. Linguistic identities are already defined in these instances, one chooses a language that is closer to power. Constantly hearing isiZulu in one programme and seeing that it dominates other languages is a process through which cultural construction is operationalised and institutionalised. Gramscian's notion of hegemony is featured here. Gramsci argues that economic and political control are not only through violence and coercion but through ideology as well. The dominance of isiZulu in *Generations: The Legacy*

is an ideology. This ideology reflects the implementation of the language policy. It has been created as a "common sense" that isiZulu is a dominant language in South Africa. This is because strong emphasis and enforcement of the language policy is not being followed. As a result, the creation of this "common sense" helps to maintain the status quo (Ives, 2007). Popular culture is germane to understanding how language(s) is used to conducting, achieving, and upholding these power relations. Hence, the elites rely on popular culture to exercise their powers and spread their worldviews.

The role of television in achieving and spreading national ideologies should never be underestimated. Popular culture, in the form of television, can act as a storyteller of the national narrative (Ives, 2007). This is because television is a constant presence in people's lives (Abu-Lughod, 1997). Through this, television serves as a primary mode through which the imagined notion of the nation becomes realised. In this case, television in South Africa has become a compelling medium for articulating a "new South Africa" under the banner of the rainbow nation. *Generations: The Legacy* is then used as a tool to achieve and maintain certain national narratives. However, these narratives are not in the benefit of everyone, they only benefit a few. This substantiates the argument that the South African language policy in paper is democratic, but the implementation reflects hierarchical pluralism.

However, the question remains: who benefits and who loses from the hierarchical usage of indigenous languages in the SABC? Certainly, the SABC and its sponsors and advertisers benefit more as programmes like *Generations: The Legacy* generate them income. The government also benefits in this case as it can push forward its neoliberal policies through a "rainbow nation" agenda which does not bring about social justice to some of the injustices of the past, which are only repeating themselves in one way or the other. Other indigenous languages continue to be the losers in this motive, they continue to be marginalised and having to assimilate with the status quo, isiZulu being the dominant indigenous language.

Translanguaging in *Generations: The Legacy*

Translanguaging is a key linguistic practice in *Generations: The Legacy*. The use of translanguaging in *Generations: The Legacy* brings about tensions between the dominance of isiZulu and other indigenous languages as markets dictate which language gets to be used more than other languages. The soap deploys this linguistic practice ideologically to represent

or to give other indigenous languages a platform in the soap opera. However, this is still not enough because languages such as Xitsonga, Tshivenda, or even other Nguni languages (as SABC is a Nguni channel) have not yet featured in the soap. Deploying translanguaging is a step in the right direction towards giving other languages a platform. Translanguaging also opens realities of how indigenous languages influence one another, something which the language policy does not acknowledge. The language policy does acknowledge multilingualism in South Africa. However, it limits this to only eleven languages, it further standardises these languages. In formal settings, people are expected to speak fluent and standard Setswana, siSwati, or Sepedi while they do not speak like that on everyday basis. The soap opera deploys translanguaging to challenge the language policy on this aspect. In *Generations: The Legacy,* we are seeing characters communicating with one another while drawing from various languages, both indigenous and colonial languages and, most importantly, doing away with speaking standard languages.

Mamabolo (2018), one of the actors in *Skeem Saam* states that in certain cases, actors translate for themselves, but in other instances scripts come with translations. According to Mamabolo (2018), translators are responsible for texts that do not need specific cultural and geographical understanding. In instances where actors feel like a generic translation will not work, they translate for themselves. This is applicable across all soap operas in the country. This is important for understanding how translanguaging works in soap operas. The responsibility of actors / actresses to translate texts that are geographically and culturally based is an indication and acknowledgement that translanguaging is a cultural and contextual practice. This debunks the notion of language as a national sovereignty that can be used to treasure the nation. The soaps are therefore, endorsing language as a cultural and a geographical factor which cannot remain stable.

However, as argued earlier on, markets have already started to commercialise translanguaging. Advertisers of brands such as alcohol, mobile cell phone networks, restaurants and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns are now using codeswitching (codeswitching is used as part of translanguaging in this thesis) in their adverts on television, radio, newspapers, billboards and social media. They use this language practice to target the market because they are aware that the market uses these linguistic practices to communicate than they use standard languages. This has a potential effect on translanguaging because if it gets influenced by commercial interests, it is going to lose its essence, which is, as this thesis argues, to uplift the status of indigenous languages which are not being used in popular

culture. Such an effect has already started blooming, the adverts from these brands use codeswitching that is mostly between English and isiZulu. That again, raises the issue of the dominance of isiZulu even in translingual spaces.

Translanguaging is not about diverse people coming together and adopting as well as embracing their linguistic diversity. It is a linguistic social process in which people rely on their languages against their struggles and fighting against the authority. In the context of this study, I argue that translingual spaces such as *Generations: The Legacy* are discursive spaces fighting the de-authorisation of languages and power discourses using linguistic cultures which are going against what the language policy advocates for. The language policy advocates for 11 official languages but *Generations: The Legacy* does away with that. It uses tranlanguaging to bring languages together.

However, translanguaging, together with translingual spaces such as soap operas exist in three levels: the conscious level, sub-conscious level and unconscious level. This means that speakers might be aware, slightly aware, or completely unaware that they have engaged in a linguistic culture that is revolting against the language policy and language ideologies; that they are using language to empower themselves therefore, the "powerlessness." Language speakers might not always be aware that, for example, the reason they engage in translanguage or speak in *Tsotsitaal* as it might be argued for in *Generations: The Legacy* is that they are rejecting the hierarchisation and the separation of languages as our language policy intends to do. Some speakers might be aware, and more research is needed to prove this, but some might not be aware.

Following the above discussions and the use of translanguaging in *Generations: The Legacy*, it is evident that translanguaging is a linguistic practice or strategy of renegotiations to resist dominant values and norms which are associated with linguistic hegemony (giving some languages more power than others). *Generations: The Legacy* uses translanguaging as a tool for resistance to asymmetrical power relations and social linguistic injustices. The soap uses it as a linguistic practice / culture / trend which is *Avant-Garde* to nationalistic and neoliberal language ideologies discussed in the previous section. The motive is to give other indigenous languages a platform for existence in the soap. This is done by drawing on registers from other indigenous languages. It is also meant to show that languages cannot be contained, they emerge from the everyday interactions, socio-political and economic encounters. Therefore,

they always find a way to live together despite the language policy treating them like water and oil.

Translanguaging acts space is a space of power for the powerless by giving marginalised linguistic practices recognition. As the introduction of this thesis argued, language policy and implementation is all about power. It is influenced by those who have socio-political and economic power. The general masses do not always have a say in that process, even if consultations can take place before a language policy is adopted, the final decision is taken by those with power. Language planning, policy and implementation process is an elitist project. The ordinary language speakers, those that are affected by the language policy, do not have a say in the adoption of the language policy. They have a space in which they revolt against language policies in the form of popular culture. Through popular cultural artefacts, they can enjoy the benefits of mixing their languages without any shame. These spaces, their configuration, reconfiguration is what this thesis argued for in the introduction, that the language policy should not be top-bottom, but bottom-up to allow the linguistic practices to be a determinant factor for how the language policy should be.

Due to colonial language policy in the country, indigenous languages still have lower status compared to English and Afrikaans. Among the speakers, translanguaging is a form of struggle for uplifting the status of indigenous languages to that of English and Afrikaans. It is also a form of resistance against the standardisation of indigenous languages which polices communication. *Generations: The Legacy* uses translanguaging as a tool for indigenous languages to uplift and empower speakers, as well as tools for identity construction. Thus, the practice is so dominant in the soap opera, it is a form of identity construction for the characters, to remember who and what they are. In this instance, translanguaging is a decolonial tool, it is a weapon used as an empowerment for the language speakers. Speakers use translanguaging to build identities which are influenced by the African multilingualism as opposed to colonialism and post-colonialism.

Issues of language representation are also influenced by ethnicity. According to Wilsem (2005), ethnicity is always politically constructed. Ethnicity arises anywhere and anytime. This is because people always see the need to join in consolidation in securing and sharing identity in economic, political, or social forces (Wilsem, 2005). The same is applicable to how languages get to be used and given social powers in *Generations: The Legacy* and even in social and political powers in the society. This could be because languages are used as a

medium of accessibility to economic, political and social forces. Thus, language is a survival mechanism; people are forced to learn certain languages as a means of avoiding exclusion and marginalisation. Translanguaging then becomes a tool to learn other languages and incorporate them into one's mother tongue. In this way, *Generations: The Legacy* is suggesting that translanguaging is a tool for survival for the previously oppressed languages. Translanguaging exists as a connecting thread running through black people in the country as they can communicate with one another as opposed to speaking their own standard languages or mother tongues.

South Africa has 11 official languages. However, many South Africans do not conform to such a narrative. This is because they are multilingual, as a result, they end up speaking more than one language. That is the reason why in *Generations: The Legacy* translanguaging occurs commonly and spontaneously. The soap is being representative and accommodative to a large viewer base and not certain speakers just because their language will generate revenues. We see this when a character utters a sentence in English while the following sentence is spoken in Setswana or isiZulu, or using English, isiZulu, Sesotho and Afrikaans. Typical examples of the characters who speak like this in *Generations: The Legacy* are Spororo and Mrekza. This is a representation of an everyday South Africa, especially among black communities. Many other SABC productions have used this practice, *Yizo Yizo*, *Zone 14* and *SoulCity*. Translanguaging has become a norm for SABC stories.

Translanguaging is intended to represent a crucial role in the practical and ideological responsibility that soap operas can play in critiquing and representing the linguistic reality of South Africa. Translanguaging functions on two levels in *Generations: The Legacy*. Firstly, it is at the reality level, in this level translanguaging is a device for everyday communication, it symbolises the linguistic reality in terms of how speakers draw from their bilingual and multilingual resources of their everyday lives to communicate. In this level, it is inevitable that multilingual communication is a reality, it is a natural practice and speakers would do anything possible to communicate with each other. On the second level, translanguaging is ideological. This means that translanguaging empowers those that have been disempowered, to include those that have been excluded. Translanguaging allows speakers who are not fluent in one language to portray linguistic hybridity, cultural convergence, multiculturalism and unity in diversity. Speakers draw from their linguistic repertoires and registers, features that will allow them to communicate across linguistic boundaries. *Generations: The Legacy* has mastered this technique, and this calls for the review of the multilingual policy in South

Africa. *Generations: The Legacy* is showing that languaging is governed by the ideals and ideologies that operate within the broader linguistic context of South Africa, not by the policy. Therefore, the language policy must reflect the reality.

What follows are few extracts from different episodes of *Generations: The Legacy*. The extracts show which indigenous languages are used in the soap opera and the deployment of translanguaging. This analysis is only on the dialogue and not the action(s) that characters do when performing. The only interest was on what they are saying. Episodes were selected randomly. The purpose of this analysis is to show language usage in Generations: The Legacy.

Episode of *Generations - The Legacy*, 08th June 2018

In this episode Gadaffi is embattled between killing the woman that he loves, Tshidi and saving her life even after she secretly stole millions of Rands from him. Gadaffi takes a decision that it is better to kill Tshidi even though he still loves her. On the other hand, Tboz falls for the lies from Scalo and decides to attach Getty with the mob, accusing her of witchcraft. Jack's land development project is facing a crisis when workers go on a major strike which leads to people losing their lives after clashes with the police and security guards. Jack's plan is to put the blame for the strike on the leader of the workers so that he is absolved from any wrongdoing as the employer.

An example of monolingual text (1). Monolingual text here denotes dialogues which use only one indigenous language, isiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana, Sesotho, and isiXhosa.

Extract 1.

Mazwi: UJack ubethumele uJackson ukuthi ayodambisa isimo, kodwa... (*You know, Jack asked Jackson to send men in to contain the situation, but*…)

Smanga: Ba e tsa lintho di be worse jwale. (*They are making things worse now*). They are not helping at all.

Sphesihle: Ngisacela uyivale bafana, angisafuni ukuyibona (*Please close it. I don't want to see anymore)*.

Smanga: If they don't get this under control, we'll have bloodbath on our hands.

Bafana: Fuze ukuthi ubekhuluma ngalento uLesego makathi *(It means this is what Lesego was talking about when he said)* he'll show Jack what they are made of.

Mazwi: Kodwa angiboni ubecabanga ukuthi izinto zobheda kanje. (*But I doubt he thought things would get this bad*).

Sphesihle: We can't afford a repeat of what happened with the forced removals...

Bafana: What?

END OF SCENE.

In the above scene, there are four characters, 3 are isiZulu speakers and one is a Sesotho speaker. Mazwi and Smanga are half-brothers, sharing the same father. Bafana and Sphesihle are siblings, sharing the same mother and father. The scene revolves around how Jack Mabaso (the stepfather of Bafana and Sphesihle) has allowed the mine workers' protest to escalate and lead to fatalities.

In this scene, we have three occurrences of monolingual isiZulu being used. These are highlighted in yellow. The other dialogues are in English and translanguaging. Discussions around these elements will follow in due course.

Episode of *Generations - The Legacy*, 08th June 2018

An example of monolingual text (2)

Extract 2

Tshidi This is insane. How did it get out hand so fast? This is turning into a PR nightmare!

Jack: Shh Cima lento. (*Turn that thing off*).

Tshidi: Eng? (*What*?)

Jack: Ini? (*What?)*

Jack: Ayi man, man. Yazi lento le beyingafanele iphele kanje. (*No man, you know, this thing was not supposed to turn out like this*).

Tshidi: Tshwanetse rentshe statement, maar ha ke sure what to say. (*We must issue a statement. But I am not sure what to say*).

Jack: Leli cala sizolithwesa uLesego (*We will blame all this on Lesego*).

Tshidi: Mothaka wa ko Rusternburg? (*The guy from Rusternburg?)*

Jack: Ehhe! Lombhikisho uphenjwe uye. Uyena ofake abantu umoya. Lonke loludlame olwenzekayo, lwenzeka ngenxa yakhe (*Yes. He is the one who instigated the protest. He got the people worked up. It is his fault things turned out this way*).

Tshidi: No, batho ba ne ba protesta because ha ba thola di jobs that they were promised. O ka se i-gnore seo. (*No. People were protesting because they did not get the jobs they were promised. You can't ignore that)*.

Jack: Ngabaqasha mina abantu. Ilokho-ke okufanele uhlale phezukwakho. Inhloso yethu bekukuthi uma ulokhu uqhubeka umsebenzi wokwakha, nathi sakhe silokhofuthi siqasha abanye abantu. (*I did hire people. That's what you must focus on. Our plan was that as construction moves forward, we would keep hiring more people*).

Tshidi: In other words, ke bue maka. (*In other words, I must lie*). We will have to motivate why you chose to do it in stages.

Jack: Umsebenzi omkhulu onjengalo uthatha isikhathi eside. Futhi labantu laba abanawo amakhono eyindaweni eyifanele. (*A project like this one takes a long time, and these people do not have the right skills.*). George, I take it you're watching the news. Listen, they're going to eat me alive. I need you to support me. Make sure they don't halt construction. Thank you. I appreciate that very much.

END OF SCENE

In the above scene, Jack and Tshidi have just received the news about how the mine workers' strike has escalated. Jack and Tshidi come up with a PR strategy to spin the story and put the blame on the workers. However, Jack wants Tshidi to put the entire blame on the workers' leader, something that Tshidi is not comfortable with as she wants Jack to take some responsibility as the employer.

In this scene, Jack speaks entirely in isiZulu, he does not mix it with any other language. Tshidi only speaks once in Setswana, in the rest of the scene, she moves between languages. In one sentence she would speak English, Setswana and add some Sesotho registers. This is mostly influenced by the fact that in real life, she is a Zulu speaker, while in the story she is a Setswana speaker. As a result, she uses both Setswana and Sesotho in her linguistic repertoire. This view is what supports the usage of translanguaging in *Generations: The Legacy*. Tshidi's linguistic repertoire is an evidence that as a South African, she is not fluent in one language, but she is able to draw codes and registers from other languages to enhance communication. This subverts the intended dominance of isiZulu as Tshidi's multilingualism gives other languages platform in the soap.

The following extracts, 3 and 4, show the use of translanguaging in the selected episodes. Translanguaging in *Generations: The Legacy* takes place through two ways: actors translanguage a lot between one indigenous language and English. It is only a few characters such as Cosmo, Lucy, Mrekza and Spororo who have isiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana, English and Afrikaans in their linguistic repertoires. Hence, they translanguage using various languages

Episode of *Generations - The Legacy*, 08th June 2018

An example of translanguaging text (1)

Extract 3

Cosmo: Ayi kanti le da-iding bebeyibiza i-foot binding uyabona. Bebeyechuna nje kubantu besimame nje kuphela. (*This was called foot-binding, you see. They only did to to women*).

Lucy: Hayibo. Foot binding? mina ngiyaqala ukuzwa ngawe serious. (*Jeez. Foot-binding? It's the first time I hear about this serious*).

Cosmo: Ya siswami, bebeyichuna njegakumantobezane asemancane, lapho boma 4 years kuya-le boma 9 years (*Yes my sister. They were doing it on young girls, when they were still 4 to 9 years old*).

Gog Flo: Yini yona le eyenziwayo? *(What is it that they are doing?)*

Cosmo: Eyi ma, kushukhuthi nje ba benza nje izinyawo zabo zibe zincane. (*Hey grandmother, it means they were making their feet smaller*.)

Mrekza: O fokotsa bwang tlhakwana ya motho mfethu? (*How do you reduce someone's foot bro?)*.

Cosmo: Eyi Mre kushuthi babenzani yabona, baphulinyawo yabona, phakathi kwendayo mara ngaphansi yabona, bese belidonse balihlangaise nomlenze. (*Mrekza, you know what they did…They broke the arch of the foot and pulled the foot in line with the leg*,).

Gog Flo: Yaze yabuhlungu leyonto. (*That is horrible*).

Lucy: Eyi man, fori ini vele? (*For what exactly?*)

Cosmo: Eyi sis wami, ngathi uba muhle hure. Angazi kanjani, ungambuzi. (*My sister, it was a symbol of beauty. I do not know why*.)

Mrekza: Iyoo (*Ouch*).

Cosmo: Uthi eyi na? Umsangango ne. Mawucabanga abo-cherry angakanani ayishune lento, ama-millions. (*You saying ouch? It's crazy, right? And to think how many women, millions of them had done this thing*).

Lucy: Ayi man yoh, mina angeke. (*Jeez. Yoh. I can't)*.

Mrekza: Maar ba vaya bwang? (*But how do they walk?)*

Cosmo: Hyi bona bahamba buhlungu kabi. Kodwa, bake bayigqoba lelisiko lelabo ngoba lidale izinkinga zempilo. (*Hey, they walked with difficulty. But they eventually banned the custom because of all the health problems it caused*).

Lucy: Yoh ayi bayenze kahle. And entlek awungtshele, bonke labo-cherry babelokhu bevuma ukuthi bashune lento le yokufuna ukuphula? (*Hey, they did well. So tell me, all these women let them break their…?*).

Cosmo: Ayi siswami, ilabo nje ebephethe ishingshing, amashankura labacala lesimo. (*No, Sis. It's the rich ones who started this custom*).

Lucy: Ahh sis kufana nabo (*Typical of them*).

Cosmo: Kodwa-ke yazi bambalwa labo abasenalazo ezinjalo, kodwa-ke badala kakhulu. (*But there are only a few who still have feet like that, but they are very old now*).Lucy: Nie maan. Grand-sharp awungitshele, why ufunda yonke le-nonsene le? Le-nonsense izokusisa kanjani mawuyokwenza i-besigheid? (*No man, tell me. Why are you reading about this nonsense? How will this nonsense help you when you do business in China?).*

Cosmo: Yazi siswani, ngakutshela ukuthi i-culture i-important blind le ema-Shayineni. (*Hey Sis, I told you that customs are important to the Chinese*).

END OF SCENE

The scene above takes place among the Diale family members. Cosmo is about to go on a business trip to China. He narrates to his family members about a Chinese tradition in which women reduce their foot sizes. Everyone is shocked to hear about this culture and wonder why he is even learning about those things.

In this scene, Cosmo, Lucy and Mrekza do not rely on a monolingual dialogue. They draw from various languages. Their linguistic registers are very rich that they include isiZulu, Afrikaans, Sesotho and a little bit of Se-Piroti (which is not an official language). It is only Gog Flo who speaks standard isiZulu. She is the grandmother of the house hence her register.

The last example of a translanguaging is a scene below. In this scene there are two characters, Kumkani and Spororo. They are both gangsters, and Kumkani is Spororo's boss.

Episode of *Generations - The Legacy*, 08th June 2018

An example of translanguaging text (2)

Extract 4

Spororo: Azidumeke nkalakatha. Nayi lento ekade uyicelile. Ishisa blind. (*Let us get on with it boss. Here is the thing that you asked for. It is powerful*).

Kumkani: Traceable?

Spororo: Hhayi umshini oyishintshayo lo. Ushaye ngama armed robberies ayi-three. Uphethe double-murder la e-North. Ngale e-CBD ushaye ngama heists we cash-in-transit ayi two.(*It is comparable to none. Done three armed robberies, double murder in the North and two cash-in-transit in the CDB*).

Kumkani: So go bolaya Tshidi ya kone go tla e tsa go bonagale o kare this is another random murder? (*So, killing Tshidi with it will make it look like another random murder)*

Spororo: Hhayi sure case. So unalo i-plan wena? Sengishukuthi uyoichuna nini, kanjani? So ukuthi ngizokhona ukuqeda umkhondo daa. Or maybe sengaiyichuna as a crime scene?(*Sure boss. So, do you have a plan? Meaning how you are going to do it, when? So that I can clean up the mess or maybe we can do it as a crime scene?*).

Kumkani: No, no, no dilo di fetogile jaanong Spororo. Wa tseba the way Tshidi anratang ka teng, o setse a propositse maabane bosigo. (*No, things have changed now Spororo. You know, the way Tshidi loves, she even proposed to me last night*).

Spororo: Hhayi nkalakatha...as in, ufuna ni trouwe nou? Bese wathini wena?(*No boss. As in like getting married? Then what did you say*?).

Kumkani: Ke dumetse (*I agreed*).

Spororo: Why uvume le daai ding nkalakatha?(*Why did you agree to that boss?).*

Kumkani: Wa tseba nkammolaya Tshidi jaanong jana. Maar, nah. The victory will be that much sweeter If ke mo thuba tlhogo ka nako e a nagang gore o simolola botshelo jo bontsha.(*You know, I can kill Tshidi right now. But no. The victory will be that much sweeter if I can kill her when she thinks she is starting a new life*).

Spororo: Manje awusho, isona isizathu sokuthi uvume uku-trouwa lo muntu lona vele?(*So, tell me, is that the only reason you are agreeing to marry her?).*

Kumkani: Ompotsolotsa dipotso? (*Are you questioning me?)*

Spororo: Cha nkalakatha. Ukuthi nje uyabona indaba zomshado zithatha iskhathi esibhaya. Solokho lomunto kumele abuye ngadaar azobloma nawe zi inyanga zilokho zilandelelana uyabona. And nou uya bona ukuthi uyaku-frostana blind. Imagine after 6 months ukuthi kuzobe kushube kanjani?(*No boss. It is just wedding things take forever. Meanwhile she must come stay with you and you can see that she loves you dearly. Imagine how bad it will be in six months?)*

Kumkani: Yeh, le yone e ka se ke ya ba easy eo. Maar ke tshwanetse go e etsa ntho e. I always take care of business. (*Yes, I know that it won't be easy. But I must do this thing. I always take care of business*).

END OF SCENE

In the above scene, Spororo brings a gun to Kumkani so that he can kill his girlfriend who stole his money. However, Kumkani is conflicted because his girlfriend has asked him to marry her.

The scene is 98% in translanguaging. As already mentioned, Kumkani and Spororo are gangsters; their register is the same used by Cosmo and Lucy. They draw from various languages, but Kumkani translanguages from Setswana to English and the other way around in this scene. Spororo, on the other hand, speaks what is commonly referred to as Tsotsitaal in South Africa.

However, even in translanguaging there is always a language, codes or registers from a particular language that dominates other languages. In the above scenes, as it is the case with other SABC soap operas in this study, isiZulu tends to be a dominating language. Its codes and registers appear more than the codes and registers from other indigenous languages. Msimang (1987) acknowledges that even in Tsotsitaal, there is a high far-reaching influence of the isiZulu vocabulary. This indicates that the dominance of isiZulu is a naturalised phenomenon.

Below is a summary of instances in which monolingual and translanguaging texts/dialogues were used in the 5 studied episodes of *Generations: The Legacy*. This is followed by a summary of sentences or dialogue lines in translanguaging.

08th June 2018

There were 454 of dialogues lines in this episode. This means, the time a person speaks until there is a full stop before they either start another sentence or another person starts speaking. Only isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana and Sesotho were used in this episode.

Table 1: Summary of monolingual dialogue lines in *Generations: The Legacy*

Languages used.	**Number of dialogue lines (in the said language).**
isiZulu	38
Setswana	13
isiXhosa	08
Sesotho	05
Total	64

11th June 2018

There were 420 of dialogues lines in this episode. Only isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Sesotho were used in this episode.

Table 2: Summary of monolingual dialogue lines in *Generations: The Legacy*

Languages used.	**Number of dialogue lines (in the said language).**
isiZulu	48
Setswana	14
isiXhosa	09
Sesotho	09
Total	78

13th June 2018

There were 491 of dialogues lines in this episode Only isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Sesotho were used in this episode.

Table 3: Summary of monolingual dialogue lines in *Generations: The Legacy*

Languages used.	**Number of dialogue lines (in the said language**).
isiZulu	62
Setswana	15
isiXhosa	11
Sesotho	06
Total	94

14th June 2018

There were 489 of dialogues lines in this episode. Only isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Sesotho were used in this episode.

Table 4: Summary of monolingual dialogue lines in *Generations: The Legacy*

Languages used.	**Number of dialogue lines (in the said language).**
isiZulu	46
Setswana	22
isiXhosa	09
Sesotho	13
Total	90

19th June 2018

There were 449 of dialogues lines in this episode. Only isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Sesotho were used in this episode.

Table 5: Summary of monolingual dialogue lines in *Generations: The Legacy*

Languages used.	**Number of dialogue lines (in the said language).**
isiZulu	58
Setswana	16
isiXhosa	11
Sesotho	06
Total	91

These numbers show dialogue lines in each of these languages without elements of translanguaging in the sentence or line of dialogue. Below is an indication of how many times lines of dialogue or sentences in translanguaging were used.

The table shows the occurrences of translanguaging in the studied episodes. In the table we can the date(s) of the episode and the amount of translanguaging in that episode. The percentages show the usage of translanguaging in relation to standard languages.

Table 6: Summary of dialogue lines using translanguaging in *Generations: The Legacy*.

Date of the episode	**Dialogue lines in translanguaging**
08th June 2018	230 (51%)
11th June 2018	223 (53%)
13th June 2018	269 (55%)
14th June 2018	245 (50%)
19th June 2018	252 (56%)

These figures indicate that for the whole week, only 417 monolingual sentences or dialogue lines used indigenous languages in *Generations: The Legacy* episodes. Out of that, 251 (60%) were in isiZulu, 48 (12%) were in isiXhosa, 37 (9%) were in Sesotho and 80 (19%) were in Setswana. There was a 25% average usage in monolingual dialogues for the whole episodes. Out of the whole dialogue lines, translanguaging occurred or was used more than indigenous languages. There was a 53% average usage of translangual sentences or dialogue lines in these episodes. This was 28% more than it is the case with the usage of indigenous languages. The remaining 22% was in monolingual English dialogues which does not form part of this study.

From the above analysis, the key argument to make is that only isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, and Setswana are the indigenous languages used in this soap. Out of these, isiZulu is used more than other languages. Translanguaging also appears a lot in this soap. Translanguaging is used more than standard indigenous languages. These statistics portray the ongoing democratic pluralism and/or hierarchical pluralism in the ways in which the South African language policy is implemented.

Conclusion

The South African language policy makes provision for all indigenous languages, together with colonial languages to be treated equally. The SABC language policy also states that it is going to make programming that utilises indigenous languages equitably. However, from this thesis it is inevitable that the reality of the above provisions has not yet come into effect. IsiZulu is a dominant indigenous language in *Generations: The Legacy*. The reason for this is that factors such as advertising plays a big role as a source of funding for the SABC. Therefore, advertisers choose which programs they want to advertise through. As isiZulu is the most spoken indigenous language in the country, they choose to advertise through a program that uses that language. This marginalises other indigenous languages. The other element that creates this domination is the national ideology which seeks to maintain South Africa as a rainbow nation, especially linguistically. The rainbow nation discourse is a nation-building ideology and nation states always rely on one language to build the nation. Thus, isiZulu is being promoted through popular culture, it is being used as a tool to build and unify the nation.

In this case, the rainbow nation discourses and neoliberal policies influencing the use of indigenous languages in the SABC is a project to naturalise the suppression and marginalisation of other indigenous languages. To put it differently, this is a systematic practice meant to reproduce and exacerbate linguistic hierarchies that are deeply rooted in existing socio-political inequalities (Kubota, 2014). The result of this is to give isiZulu a greater socioeconomic and political privilege to the viewers of *Generations: The Legacy*. Here we are seeing neoliberal ideology playing a significant role in the current and future language policy and ultimately producing isiZulu to the status of a *lingua franca* hence categorising other indigenous languages as having less symbolic, economic and political value. *Generations: The Legacy*.

Multicultural and multilingual reforms of the new government in 1994 have somehow changed conditions of indigenous languages in South Africa. I contend that these reforms were intended to form part of the "new nation", "national consciousness" and "rainbow nation" discourse of the post-Apartheid government. They were a continuation of the early 1990s CODESA political stature. This is because they have not transformed the status of indigenous languages to an extent that all indigenous languages enjoy equal usage in the country. The ideology of linguistic and cultural dominance of isiZulu is so extensive in

Generations: The Legacy, it has become the norm. Adherence to such a norm is due to the need to confer national consciousness, nation building and unity.

There is a high presence of neoliberalism in determining which indigenous languages are used in *Generations: The Legacy*. This is because neoliberalism is involved as a covert language policy that disavows all policies and regulation which seek to against free market. The South African language policy, as it stands, is anti-market. The policy is founded based on achieving social justice, emancipation, transformation and inclusivity. On the other hand, neoliberalism approves of policies which will satisfy the market, policies which benefit the few and maintain the status quo which upholds the Western dominance, and/or Eurocentrism. Consequently, language policies which seek to negate colonial languages are always met with disapproval from the market. Power is centred unto the market hence political power without economic or market power is meaningless.

Chapter 2: Political Interference in the SABC: The Case of *Uzalo* and the Production of Language Ideologies?

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to study and analyse the political interference in the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and how this provides ascendency for isiZulu in the public broadcaster. It is the hypothesis of this thesis that the SABC has been affected by a considerable amount of political interference. This political interference has created an environment through which isiZulu received more airtime that other indigenous languages on SABC 1. The chapter will test this assertion by using the production of a popular SABC soap opera, *Uzalo*, as a typical example of how political interference in the SABC can affect content production. Key themes that will be unpacked in this chapter are that (a) the production of *Uzalo* is because of political interference, influence and/or meddling in the SABC operations and (b) the show brews potential language ideologies. Therefore, such interference has the potential to negatively affect the editorial policy of the SABC (focusing only on the linguistic part of the policy). Issues of political interference, empowerment and disempowerment and language ideologies characterise this chapter.

Political interference is a process through which political leaders interfere and use their political status to influence the decision making in public office matters such as planning, organising, staffing, directing, budgeting or coordination (Mfuru etal, 2018). Among various challenges facing Africa is the political interference in public administrations. Mfuru, et al (2018) expand this argument and contend that many African countries are facing a challenge of having politicians wanting to maintain their factions using public administrations. Thus, the undue pressure of political interference in public administrations leads to their politicisation, that is, they no longer serve the public but serve political interests.

Political interference in the SABC has been a concern for many years. Research shows that part of the SABC problems stem from political interference in how the broadcaster carries out its mandate (Chiumbu and Ciaglia, 2015 Mufune, 2015; Wasserman, 2020). This study argues that the political relationship between some SABC executive members and political parties has led to the continued production of *Uzalo* and the show is creating a potential Zulu ethnic nationalism. The interest of this research on *Uzalo* is regarding the use of language.

The only language used in *Uzalo* is isiZulu, and this thesis intends to study how this is a suggestion for Zulu ethnic nationalism.

Popular cultural artefacts are deeply implicated in the struggle for access to power. Wasserman (2011) and Conboy (2002) have alluded to the fact that popular media, as one of the manifestations of popular culture, exist as vehicles for hegemony by the political elites to serve their own interests. Many African countries are dominated by a popular culture that serves the interests of the power elites (Barber, 1997; Nyairo and Ogude, 2005; Mano, 2007; Chibita, 2011).

The production of media texts is determined by a top-down influence from the elites. The word 'elite' is highly contested as people approach it differently. This study uses 'elite' to refer to people with political powers, privileges, and prestige (Aiseng and Akpojivi, 2019). Ownership of the media by the private corporates results in the owner having the power to allocate resources, appoint senior staff and influence editorial agendas. The state, on the other hand, exerts pressure on media production through regulations, licensing censorship and libel laws (Golding and Murdock, 2000; Miller, 2004; Davis, 2007). The interest of this thesis is on how political interference in the broadcaster allows the ideologies of the elites to compete with the mandate of the PSB to serve the public interests.

Public broadcasters are not just structured media organisations; they are also the most political (Hanretty, 2011). PSBs are terrains through which political power and media logic interact and overlap (Ciaglia, 2017). Scholars such as Hallin and Mancini (2004), Stromback (2008), Ciaglia (2013) have explored and analysed the different practical ways through which political actors and media logic meet, overlap, and often collide.

The degree to which the SABC is free from political interference is often questioned by scholars, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and the media (Fourie, 2013). The SABC is an organisation also beleaguered by governance and managerial problems (Duncan, 2008, Media Monitoring Africa, 2012). Likewise, Fourie (2013) indicates that this challenge is not only faced by the SABC, PSBs globally are facing the same challenge.

The process of political interference taken by this thesis is the one proposed by Hanretty (2011:5), it is described as "threats or inducements from politicians which cause or attempt to cause PSBs' employees to act in a particular fashion". It is influenced by political pressure. VonDoepp and Young (2012), argue that interference with public media in Africa is pattered

around governments' desire for information and ideological control. Moreover, by political interference in broadcasting, this thesis means: the degree to which PSB employees and management take decisions about their output with the influence of or acting on the basis of, threats and / or inducements from politicians, and relying on political support to keep programs playing in the broadcaster.

Although public broadcasters are prone to many political interference processes, the funding model makes it more vulnerable. The SABC receives some portion of its funding from the government, +R1billion (SABC Annual Report, 2017). Ciaglia (2015) indicates that this relationship results in an indirect consequence of an overlap between the governing party and the public broadcaster. Duncan and Glenn (2010) call this a 'non-linear' political interference. The interference is structural, entrenched and subtle; it exists not only on financial support, but also on government being involved in the appointment of the board, and senior staff members. This is "symptomatic of clandestine political insinuations linked to broader power dynamics" (Muswede, 2016:171).

According to Davis (2006, 2007), elites use the popular culture to communicate their political interests with other elites. Popular culture has become a platform of competition for power. The elites use their power to influence the media output. Arguably, ideologies and interests of the elites reflected in the popular culture are not only meant to control the subordinates but they are also meant to compete with other elites for power and dominance. Savigny (2013) argues that popular culture therefore provides us with a political context within which our existence is determined. To establish the nature of such political existence in the SABC, we need to ask political questions: in whose interests is the language ideology constructed, presented, and mediated in the broadcaster? And who is empowered and disempowered (or "falsely" empowered) because of this construction? These political questions are not just about interests in the language ideologies in the SABC but power and power relations in implementing the language policy.

One of the ways in which language ideologies are formed and spread is by using institutions (Blommaert, 2014). The ruling class usually use authoritative communicative actors such as media, and arts or what Althusser (1971) refers to as "ideological state apparatus,' to spread its ideologies. These are what Blommaert (2014) calls "institutions". Arguably, political interference is one of the key challenges for public broadcasters, not only in Africa, but across the world. Political pressure continues to affect public media operations. The key

language ideology that this study seeks to unpack is the domination of isiZulu and a suggestive ethnic nationalism built in *Uzalo*.

Viewed in this manner, the study of language ideologies in the media opens possibilities for these language ideologies to be challenged. Kroskrity (2000:13) observes that "even dominant ideologies are dynamically responsive to ever-changing forms of oppositions". The inclusion of all indigenous languages in post-Apartheid regime came as a result of the antagonism that the Apartheid language policy faced.

According to Barber (1987) popular cultural artefacts help people recognise and understand their social, political and economic status in a society. That is, as much as the elites use these platforms to normalise and spread their ideologies, audiences also learn a lot about their subjugation from these platforms. Audiences learn about their statuses in society from popular culture. African popular culture is very important in helping audiences or their consumers formulate new ways of looking at things (Barber, 1987). The intention here is to expose underlying language ideologies and power discourses in popular culture. As Austin and Sallabank (2014) contend, ideologies are like cultural patterning; they can be overcome through awareness-raising or agency.

The PSB is part of a popular culture. Dolby (2006) argues that popular culture in general is always a forum for negotiation of race, nation and other identities and for struggles for power within a society. As pointed out by Hall (1981:239) popular culture is "the arena of consent and resistance" to the socio-political power and hegemony.

Popular culture in Africa symbolises the product of everyday life (Barber, 2018). This is the culture of the ordinary people, not the educated elites, politicians, or the rich people. Barber (2018) emphasises that African popular culture emerges from everyday life. It is for this reason that SABC soap operas are defined as popular cultural artefacts in this thesis. They are produced for mass consumption; their storylines have a mass appeal and PSB itself, as a medium, is established for the public interest. Consequently, language ideologies playing out in television are of critical importance for this thesis. Additionally, it is also important to note that broadcasting is institutionalised as an assemblage of social practices, language ideologies, power relations and contestations.

To achieve the aim and objective of this thesis, this study defines language "as a resource that, under certain political-economic conditions, can be exchanged for other symbolic or

material resources" (Heller, 2001:2010). Heller's definition notes that the status of a language is never fixed or guaranteed, it can bend with socio-political conditions. This is what has characterised isiZulu in the SABC over the past years.

The status of isiZulu has changed significantly compared to other indigenous languages which all at one point were disregarded by colonial and Apartheid policies. The status and change that isiZulu enjoys currently is because of political support it has and continues to enjoy. Arguably, this political support is not enjoyed the same way by other indigenous languages, buttressing the view that "language emerges as a particularly salient site for the regulation of people's access to resources" (Percio, Flubacher and Duchene, 2017).

Background and Context: Uzalo and its Production Politics

Uzalo is one of the South African local soap operas playing daily on SABC 1, at 20:30 until 21:00. The story is created by Duma Ndlovu and co-produced by Gugulethu Zuma-Ncube (the daughter of former President Jacob Zuma) and Pepsi Pokane. The story is based in KwaMashu, a township in north of Durban, KwaZulu Natal (KZN). Onuh (2017) argues that *Uzalo* has a localised identity and contributes to popularity of isiZulu, with English subtitles. According to Onuh, this makes *Uzalo* more unique compared to other soap operas.

The soap tells the story of two families: the Mdletshes and the Xulus. These two families are always implicated in the contradictory worlds of religion and crime, respectively. These families are bound together by their sons who were accidentally swapped at birth. Some of the major themes explored in the story include family ties, loyalty, patriarchy, family tensions and community disputes. *Uzalo* delves into the socio-political issues that are part and parcel of the black communities' realities in South Africa.

The Mdletshe family have a church, Kwamashu Kingdom Church. This is the biggest church in Kwamashu, and it attracts members from all age groups. On the other hand, the Xulu family are gangsters; they run a car theft syndicate. They have connections with the police, therefore, hardly get arrested. When they do, they bribe the judges. To this day, the show has won few awards in the South African media and recently, the show was said to have reached a milestone of 10 million viewers, the first television soap opera in South Africa to achieve such.

Initially, *Uzalo* aired on SABC 1 thrice weekly, and the first broadcast was in 2014. Now, *Uzalo* plays daily in a very popular prime-time, 20:30-21:00. SABC 1 broadcasts in isiZulu, isiXhosa, some isiNdebele, and siSwati, with some broadcast in English.

To understand the production politics surrounding the making of *Uzalo*, this study will draw from the scholarship that explore empowerment and language ideologies. As argued before, popular culture in some contexts has been captured and used by the elites to some degree. However, it still plays a salient role in civic empowerment. Staples (1990) and Gerodimos, Scullion, Lilleker, and Jackson (2013) define empowerment as the acquisition of power by the citizen(s), with a purpose of strengthening democracy and maximizing citizens' welfare. Savigny (2013) adds that empowerment is a process through which people break free from the shackles of disadvantage. Therefore, popular cultural artefacts are tools through which ordinary people, of the lower class and the middle class empower themselves. These are tools that are mostly easy to produce, create and disseminate as they do not need elites' endorsement. The people are being empowered to tell their own stories, critique the government, and inform the world about their social and political conditions. Popular cultures are a resemblance of the public sphere. On the other hand, language policies are also tools established to empower languages and linguistic practices. Therefore, it is vital to interrogate the extent to which South African post-Apartheid language policy and the SABC have empowered the people.

As a public broadcaster, the SABC is charged with the mandate to serve as a platform that portrays the country's national challenges, languages, identities and stories (Muswede, 2016). In the post 1990s, the SABC was characterised by transformation plans. These were meant to make the SABC a public forum that is truly reflective of the political, social and economic outlook of the country and to serve as the pillar for the regeneration of the South African society (RSA: Government Gazette, 2009).

Mass media plays a significant role in empowering the audiences or listeners. It provides information, entertainment and education to the audiences. From these platforms, audiences can rethink their power influence, relook issues of democracy and realise their advantaged or disadvantaged living conditions. However, empowerment is a power relations product. Empowerment is only realised after it has passed through filters and is curled and crafted by gatekeepers. Empowerment privileges political agents and enacts who gets empowered (Gerodimos, et al. 2013). These processes ultimately create disempowerment, or what this

thesis calls ‘false empowerment’. False empowerment is a result of “empowerment” being a process embedded with political values/interests and/or manipulations, which ultimately do not empower the people.

Savigny (2013) contends that empowerment exists within certain power relations. That is, where certain social and political interactions take place. As such, some interest groups may be more empowered than others. This is more evident in South Africa where there are social and political interactions which are supposed to empower all groups in the country. However, power relations at play compromise the intended empowerment. As a result, Savigny (2013) argues that empowerment is mediated by political and social environment. Politically mediated relationship(s) between the concerned groups and the elites determine whether empowerment will be realised or not.

The SABC is mandated by the Constitution to empower all languages. However, this has not been the case. Some indigenous languages are empowered more than others. This brings the role and responsibility of the SABC; to broadcast in the public interest into scrutiny. Part of the SABC has become a platform for political and elitist interests. Savigny (2013:16) sums it up well by stating that “the public interest” is often conflated with what interests [the] elites” in PSBs.

From this perspective, issues of power and domination of one language over the other(s) appears as a very complex and crystalised network of power relations (Rojo, 2017). The domination of isiZulu in SABC soap operas is not by coincidence, it is a result of the network of power relations. This domination is purely a language ideology; it is borne by mechanisms of power at play.

Media can pretend to be independent of power relations while helping to maintain social control through the ideology of the ruling class. In fact, the public opinion we see in the media is not the voice of society, but that of power relations (Yilmaz and Kirazolugu, 2014). As Althusser (1971) indicated, the media is an ideological state apparatus; that binds society to sovereign power by will rather than pressure. It is through this way that we see certain language ideologies emerging in the SABC. These ideologies are part of the ruling class interests to maintain power in the society and maintain their language ideologies.

In language ideology context, ideology is “understood in its role as a (i) a promoter of one language at the cost of another language, and (ii) a political-economic weapon in the service

of oppressive forces" (Zaidi, 2012). Language ideologies undergird language use (Piller, 2015) and together they serve political ends. This means language ideologies are beliefs that represent the interests of a particular group (Piller, 2015). This thesis argues that the political interference in SABC brews certain language ideologies which are manifested in their soap operas. As a result, the language ideologies of certain political leaders get to dominate the SABC.

It is also important to note that language ideologies are motivated by political and economic interests that benefit certain groups and disadvantage others (Rosa and Burdick, 2017). I call these "political behaviours" than anything else because they are only interested in power and dominance while subjugating and/or pushing others to the periphery. These political behaviours erase multilingual realities that the Constitution creates and protects.

Popular cultural artefacts are a great site through which language ideologies can be explored. They are meant for mass consumption and to create fans. Moody (2013) contends that language in popular culture is never spontaneous, but highly edited for consumer appeal. Therefore, it is vital to extrapolate the use of languages in the SABC 1 soap operas, understand whose interests it is serving. Agwuele and Falola (2009) allude to the same argument; popular culture is a realm of politics, that is, dominant political ideologies have found expression in popular culture. Consequently, popular cultural spaces such as SABC 1 soap operas become spheres of contestation for power and dominance.

Language policy is an attempt to create an ideal language practice in which there is order and law for language use. However, Spolsky (2004) argues that depending on how the language policy is executed, certain language ideologies and attitudes get to influence and affect language practices. Nonetheless, language ideologies cannot be detached from their socio-political and historical contexts. The media are great sites in which much of these factors are revealed, power among languages is revealed and perpetuated in the media. This thesis posits that the media are creators, containers and spreaders of language ideologies.

Language is a power discourse. Language is more than just a medium of communication; it exists within interrelated social and political processes. Therefore, language never appears by itself, it always appears as a representative of a system of social and political interests, which themselves reflect the prevailing discursive and ideological systems (Taiwo, 2007).

The chapter draws upon interdisciplinary research involving Pietikainen and Kelly-Holmes (2013), Bueno (2009), Choi and Yi (2012), and Fukunaga (2006). These scholars agree that popular culture is a powerful site to produce and spread language ideologies. Due to power differences, certain languages and/or ideologies are reproduced and circulated much more widely and deeply than others. African popular culture is greatly influenced by global popular culture, the latter is remade locally and re-circulated to maintain political significance, and work as a counter-hegemonic tool in African public spheres (Wasserman, 2011). Therefore, African popular culture cannot be studied in isolation from the global popular culture. This rationale draws its arguments from cases that have been studied across the world.

As part of the rationale of this study, attention should be paid to the important role of language in the media. The language that is spoken or used in the media determines who gets to be heard. However, numerous factors determine which languages are used in the media and the hierarchy of their deployment (Chibita and Salawu, 2016). Language deployment in the media creates an issue of inclusion and exclusion (Chibita and Salawu, 2016). But it is also imperative to note that the hierarchisation of indigenous languages in African media is a creation of colonial policies of marginalisation of certain languages; this has become a norm even in post-colonial Africa (Chibita and Salawu, 2016). Vessey (2016) expresses that whether explicit or implicit, the utilisation and representation of languages is based on beliefs ingrained in socio-political ideologies, taken to be “common sense”. These ideologies are naturalised and become explicit in linguistic representations.

The significance of this chapter lies in examining the role of popular culture in driving the hierarchisation of indigenous languages, as well as the role created by minimum institutional autonomy of the SABC in producing its own content. Pietikainen and Kelly-Holmes (2013) have alluded to the fact that popular culture can be used as spaces where tensions between language ideologies are often made explicit. Popular culture has become a platform in which political interference has embedded itself.

This chapter is contextualised within the above scholarship occurring in the social sciences due to the acknowledgment of the central role of mass culture in disseminating language ideologies because of political interference. From a scholarship perspective, the chapter contributes to the bridging of research questions associated with hierarchisation of indigenous languages in countries that have adopted both the national and official language(s) status model. This chapter also pays a special attention to the conflict that is likely to arise when

language policies seek to empower the people and relying on mediums such as PSBs to do such, and the civic disempowerment that PSBs play because of political interference in their operations.

Despite the rapid research on how popular cultural artefacts are a rich site where dominance of one indigenous language over others is a growing phenomenon, none has been conducted on the case of isiZulu. There is a dearth of research about the use of popular culture, especially SABC soap operas in the context of promoting the dominance of isiZulu because of political meddling in the SABC.

When Politics Meet Media Production: A Battle for Control

Political Interference in the SABC

According to Scannell (1990:13), editorial independence in any PSB system is about "maintenance of high standards…preservation of a high moral tone" for it to achieve its obligated mandate. To ensure this in South Africa, the SABC is subject to various mechanisms such as Parliament, ICASA, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA), and Chapter 9 institutions to guard against editorial compromises (Muswede, 2016). But all of these are still not enough to ensure that the SABC is not a victim of political interference. Typical examples through which this is happening is that the deployment of the SABC board is the role of the President of the country and the SABC is highly subsidised by the government. More of these cases will be explored in detail during this study.

Wasserman (2011) contends that when studying African popular culture, it is impossible to ignore the influence of asymmetrical political and economic power. As a result, one is forced to unpack the role that popular culture plays in the continent when it operates under interrelated political and economic power relations. To this stage, this thesis has established that the SABC's mandate of serving the public's interest is highly compromised as the broadcaster's editorial processes are infiltrated by political interferences. These political interferences brew linguistic conditions that only benefit isiZulu.

However, Wasserman (2014) argues that despite dominant political and economic powers influencing popular culture in Africa, a great respect should be given to African popular

culture for fighting these power relations and becoming a creative articulation of everyday life in the continent and examining the relationship between the people and their leaders. Therefore, African popular culture is more than a mere tool of entertainment, it has become a public sphere in which political and economic discourses such as neoliberalism and nationalism continue to be challenged. This argument has been supported by Barber (1997:3) with reference to Bourdieu, stressing that the popular culture in Africa is a site "inscribed with the history of political and cultural struggles".

The independence of the SABC is also protected in the Broadcasting Act 4 of 1999. Section 6 (2) of the Act provides that the SABC "in pursuit of its objectives and exercise of its powers, shall enjoy the freedom of expression and journalistic, creative and programming independence". Section 3 (5) of the Act further requires the SABC to provide members of the public with accurate, neutral and pluralistic information. The Act provides that the programming provided by the South African broadcasting system must-

a. Be varied and comprehensive, providing a balance of information, education and entertainment meeting the broadcasting needs of the entire South African population in terms of age, race, gender, interests, and backgrounds.
b. Be varied and offer a range of South African content and analysis from a South African perspective.
c. Must be drawn from local, regional, national and international sources.
d. Provide a reasonable, balanced opportunity for the public to receive a variety of points of view on matters of public concern.

For all these reasons, the independence of the SABC is protected in law. The SABC's highest decision-making body, the board, is also protected by the law.

The SABC editorial policy also makes a provision for the broadcaster's independence from both commercial and political interests. However, Muswede (2016) contends that the relationship between the SABC and the government in South Africa has not been transparent enough to reflect an ideal situation in which the former can resist the pressure from the latter. This assertion has been supported by Fourie (2009); the SABC has, to an extent, abandoned its own criteria documents such as the editorial policy, programming policies as well as codes of practice that are supposed to guide the public broadcaster's operations.

The remainder of this subsection discusses some post-Apartheid governance, managerial and political interference problems at the SABC. This discussion will add on to the existing work dealing with the same aspects in the SABC governance and managerial issues by scholars such as Duncan (2006; 2008) Louw and Milton (2012), Teer-Tomaselli (2011) and Fourie (2013).

There is a general agreement that a public broadcaster must have certain core features. These include universal access to content, programming that appeals to all citizens, programming that features public debates and allows for dissenting views, a public broadcaster should also play a nation-building role, serve the public interests rather than the private self-interests, must be independent from political and commercial influences (Tleane and Duncan, 2003). This is an international model for all public broadcasters. Therefore, it is vital to analyse the SABC's alliance to this model.

From its inception, the SABC has always been overloaded by political inference. The problem has continued even in post-Apartheid South Africa. A background history of the SABC is without question necessary to contextualise the current developments in the SABC. According to Davis (2014), political interference in the SABC in post-Apartheid South Africa started in 2003 when the ANC was accused of attempting to influence the portfolio committee in its nominations for the SABC board. In 2004, the ANC's election launch was covered live – a privilege that other parties did not get. This was possibly the case as the then Chairperson of the SABC board, Eddie Funde who was also in charge of the ANC's party list selection process (Davis, 2014).

Political factions in the ANC have had a significant impact on the political interference in the SABC. One example that demonstrates this is that in 2007, the ANC Member of Parliaments (MPs) shortlisted an initial list of the board members (Skinner, 2012). The list was tempered with at Luthuli House (ANC's head office) and certain members such as trade unionist Randall Howard were removed. This was allegedly under the duress of the former President Thabo Mbeki (Skinner, 2012). According to Skinner (2012), within the SABC, the board was supportive of Mbeki, while the management was aligned to the then deputy president and the president-in-waiting, Jacob Zuma.

During this time, Mbeki was later ousted from office by Zuma's faction. All those that supported Mbeki in the SABC board were removed and replaced by Zuma's faction (Dludlu, 2017). It was during this time that the meddling into the SABC affairs from the ANC was

evident, especially in two forms, (1) the appointment of the Board and who became the Minister of Communication (Dludlu, 2017).

In 2010, the Chairperson of the then SABC Board Dr. Ben Ngubane together with the Group Chief Executive Office (GCEO), Solly Mokoetle, appointed Phil Molefe as Head of News, without consulting the rest of the board. Ngubane told the board that he was "operating under the direct instructions of the President of the Republic [then Jacob Zuma] and that he has resolved to appoint his preferred candidate" (Davis, 2014:8).

The arrival of Jacob Zuma in the Presidency continued the political interference in the SABC and the maintenance of the previously established factions. According to Dludlu (2017), the control of the SABC under Zuma's administration was also a strategy to try and fight the decline in the popularity of the ANC among the voters during Zuma's era. Upon the ascendency of Jacob Zuma to office as the President of the Republic in 2009, the ANC in parliament made changes to the Broadcasting Amendment Bill in just three months. This gave parliament the power to replace the SABC board with an interim board (Davis, 2014). This decision affected the operations of the SABC negatively as indicated in the Public Protestor's Report (2014); it resulted in the misuse of finances, irregular expenditures and appointments at the SABC. The majority of the executive managers at the SABC were appointed based on their political affiliation to the ANC and alliance to Jacob Zuma. All this was done to maintain a strong support for Zuma from media criticism in the SABC (Dludlu, 2017).

In the court case: Mvoko v SABC (2017), the court detailed various examples of political interference in the SABC. Mvoko is a former Group Political Editor in the SABC. After his suspension from the SABC, he took the matter to court. The court heard that in 2016, after an interview Mvoko had done with the former Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, concerning racism in South Africa was aired; he was told by Nyana Molete and Nothando Maseko (whom he was accountable to) that the management was intending to cancel his show, *On the Record*. This was done without giving any reasons to Mvoko.

The other example of political interference heard in the court was regarding the 2016 local government elections. During this time, the former SABC Chief Operations Officer (COO) Hlaudi Motsoeneng (2011-2013) decided that the SABC will no longer show footages or pictures of violent protests in the news as this influenced other communities to follow path. This decision was overturned by ICASA. In the similar period, during the coverage of the

Democratic Alliance (DA) (second biggest political party in South Africa and official opposition), Mvoko reported that the DA had believed that the ANC was at its weakest and vulnerable in certain metropolitan municipalities. Mvoko was then informed by the former acting political editor, Sophie Mokoena, that Motsoeneng was not impressed by his comments, he was listening and scrutinising every word from him and he should be careful of what he says on air about the ANC (Mvoko v SABC, 2017).

The court also heard that during one of the interviews Mvoko had with Jacob Zuma after the latter's State of the Nation Address, the former experienced some censorship. During this interview, Mvoko questioned Zuma about the relationship between the Minister of Police and Robert McBride, as well as about limitations on land ownership by foreigners. Mvoko was later told by Ms Maseko that those parts of the interview relating to land ownership and the Minister of Police had to be excised. Those portions were subsequently not broadcasted (Mvoko v SABC, 2017).

In 2016 a Parliamentary Ad hoc committee into the SABC's financial and operational woes was established. In this inquiry, journalists, managers and SABC board members were called in to testify. The following eight journalists who have become known as the "SABC 8" gave oral and written evidence before the committee about the SABC problems (Thandeka Gqubule-Mbeki, Vuyo Mvoko, Lukhanyo Calata, Krivani Pillay, Suna Venter, Busisiwe Ntuli, Foeta Krige and Jacques Steenkamp). These were the 8 journalists that stood up to the public broadcaster to fight against the censorship imposed by Motsoeneng and the capture of the newsroom. They were later known as the "SABC 8" (Foeta, 2019).

According to witnesses during the committee hearings, the then Minister of Communications, Faith Muthambi would at times interfere with the Board's business in the guise of holding the SABC accountable to the Shareholder Representative, in doing so, she disregarded the Board as the highest decision-making body of the SABC and imposed decisions from the President of the country (Parliament of South Africa, 2017). According to sections 91 (2), 92 (3) (b) and 96 (2) of the Constitution of South Africa, the government is the sole shareholder of the SABC, and the Minister of Communication is the Shareholder Representative. This clearly gave Muthambi "unlimited" powers into the interference of the SABC matters.

The appointment of the executives of the SABC is also one of the factors creating an ideal climate for political interference in the South African broadcaster. Duncan (2014) states that the Group CEO and COO of the SABC are both political appointees, that is, they are

appointed by the Minister of Communications. Even the Board of the SABC is a political appointee as it is approved first by the Parliament and later by the President. This means that the President and the Minister of Communications are indirectly involved in the editorial content of the SABC, an arrangement that is likely to result in political interference in the broadcaster. The fact that there is such a power relation between the President, the Minster of Communication and the SABC is concerning, especially pertaining to the extent with which the SABC can execute its Constitutional mandate for holding the office bearers accountable to the public.

The other issue also creating an ideal situation for political interference in the SABC is the removal of a board member of the SABC (Parliament of South Africa, 2017). Parliamentary Ad hoc committee found out that according to the section 15 of the Broadcasting Act, the President may remove a board member on account of misconduct or inability to perform his/her duties after recommendation by the board. This means that the President has exclusive and discretionary powers over the SABC board matters (Parliament of South Africa, 2017). A typical example of how this has been the case in the SABC was the dismissal of Mr Ronnie Lubisi, and the late Hope Zinde. These were dismissed for voicing dissent against the interference of Muthambi in the Board affairs.

This background sets out the scene for the subsequent arguments and debates that this thesis will make. From this background information there is a certain amount of political interference in the SABC. As this thesis argues, this political interference makes it ideal for certain language ideologies to emerge and dominate the public broadcaster irrespective of the provisions and protection for all indigenous languages by the Constitution and the SABC editorial language policy. This thesis uses *Uzalo* as a perfect example of how political interference in the SABC can benefit some programmes over others.

Production of Uzalo

Uzalo started playing on SABC 1 with three episodes per week. On the 11th of June 2016 the SABC COO, Motsoeneng announced that *Uzalo* would increase from three episodes per week to five, meaning that the show would run every weekday. In one of the press conferences of the SABC, Motsoeneng said “actually, I am going to make *Uzalo* five days to compete accordingly with other soapies or dramas. Any production house that does well for the organisation [SABC], they are going to be getting five days” (SABC, 2016).

Uzalo was commissioned as a telenovela which is a close-ended show but, as Motsoeneng took a decision on his own, it was turned into an ongoing soap (*News24*, 2016a). Perhaps this decision was also made based on the viewership of the show in the first season and to compete with Mzansi Magic's *Isibaya* which also started as a telenovela and later was turned into an ongoing soap opera.

The production of *Uzalo* has always been surrounded by controversy because of political interference in the production. *Uzalo* was initially meant to be a limited season telenovela at a cost of R50.5 million. However, Motsoeneng pushed through a R167 million contract for *Uzalo* after the co-producers of the show, Zuma-Ncube and Kobel Pokane approached Motsoeneng for assistance (*News24*, 2016).

In 2016, a review panel into the production of *Uzalo* was established. This consisted of Clara Nzima, Maretha Bakkes, Vanessa Jansen and Reneilwe Sema (all of whom are television executives in the SABC). The panel was concerned with the production's lack of business plan, a budget 10 times higher than usually needed to produce a 13-part series. There were also problems with 'writing aesthetics and delivery' of the content in the first season that the review panel raised. As a result, the panel suggested that there should be no second season for *Uzalo*. This decision led Zuma-Ncube to approach the COO for help and the latter overturned the decision of the review panel (*News24*, 2016a).

It is inevitable that Motsoeneng's relationship with Zuma-Ncube goes beyond the broadcasting one. The former has an open-secret relationship with the father of the latter; he has declared his support for Zuma many times in public. Motsoeneng's decision to overturn the recommendations of the review panel to stop the production of *Uzalo* is not surprising. Despite the financial challenges the SABC has had over the last 10 years, Motsoeneng managed to inject R167 million into the production of *Uzalo*. The ties between Motsoeneng and Jacob Zuma helped the production of *Uzalo* to continue. This is political interference because Motsoeneng's political affiliation helped *Uzalo* to continue with the production.

In 2016, *Uzalo* received a cash injection of R5 million from the KZN government. National Freedom Party's (NFP) Happy Khuzwayo said her party was concerned that the KZN Film Commission, which is one of the entities funded by the government, was not receiving the same financial support received by *Uzalo* to carry out its mandate; to help emerging talent in the film industry (*The Citizen*, 2016). Khuzwayo further states that "we are also worried that this government has provided funding opportunities for people who have already established

political connections to the ANC" (*The Citizen*, 2016:1). The political connection Khuzwayo refers to is about Zuma's daughter being one of the executive producers of the show. This funding for *Uzalo* was also questioned by other opposition political parties. DA's Councillor Zwakele Mncwango asked the Provincial Legislature "are we funding this project because they deserve it or is it because she is the daughter of the President? He further said the government of KZN should rather set aside the money to fund and support the entire film industry in the province and not just one project (*Daily Maverick*, 2015).

Another controversy that featured in the news 2016 was that Zuma-Ncube had threatened not to vote for the ANC in the 2016 Municipal Elections if her father did not influence the SABC to give her money for the second season of the show. Zuma-Ncube clarified the matter to *The Citizen* (2016), stating that it was not her who threatened not to vote for the party, but it is *Uzalo* viewers who had threatened not to vote for the ANC should she not bring back the show and some of the characters that were removed. Zuma-Ncube is quoted by the *The Citizen* (2016:2) stating that after the comments from the viewers she said, "And then I picked up the phone and I'm like, 'dad I'm losing you votes, I'm costing you here". The underlying message of this story is that the R167 million-contract that was awarded to *Uzalo* was not because the show deserved it, as the review panel had decided that the show should not have had the second season. It was a way to "buy" the votes for the ANC from the viewers of the show, the facilitator of the whole process was Motsoeneng.

The Former Public Protector (PP), Thuli Madonsela released a report relating to her investigation entitled "When Governance and Ethics Fail" in 2014. Her key findings in respect of Motsoeneng were that:

(a) His appointment as Acting COO was irregular.

(b) The former Chairperson of the SABC Board, Dr Ben Ngubane, had acted irregularly when he ordered that the qualification requirements for the appointment of COO be altered to suit Mr Motsoeneng's circumstances.

(c) His salary progression from R1.5 million to R2.4 million in one fiscal year was irregular.

(d) He had abused his power and position to unduly benefit himself.

(e) He had fraudulently misrepresented when completing his job application form in 1995 and in 2003 when he applied for the post of Executive Producer: Current Affairs that he had matriculated

(f) He had been appointed to several posts at the SABC despite not having the appropriate qualifications for those posts

(g) He was responsible, as part of the SABC management, for the irregular appointment of the SABC's Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

(h) He was involved in the irregular termination of the employment of several senior staff members resulting in a substantial loss to the SABC.

(i) He unilaterally and irregularly increased the salaries of various staff members which resulted in a salary bill escalation of R29 million (Report of the Public Protector, 2014).

During the previously stated Parliamentary Ad hoc Committee into the problems at SABC, some of the journalists such as Mvoko were quoted as follows "our understanding is that Mr. Motsoeneng has the support of the President", "also…he has the protection or support of someone who is very important, who is powerful", "if I could explain it ma'am, I would tell you, but the way I understand it, and the way some of my colleagues understand it, Mr. Motsoeneng has the support of someone no less powerful than the President" (*News24*, 2016b). Former Minister of Communication, Faith Muthambi was quoted saying "But Baba loves him, he loves him so much. We must support him [Motsoeneng]" to one of the SABC board members when the latter complained to her about Motsoeneng's interference in editorial matters (*Timeslive*, 2016).

During the committee hearings, some Board members testified that the process of appointing Motsoeneng in the position of COO was done hastily despite the PP's damning findings against him (Parliament of South Africa, 2017). The Chief Executive: Human Resource, Jabulani Mabaso, testified that he was not included in the discussions around Motsoeneng's appointment. Mabaso's evidence states that Motsoeneng's appointment was done in contravention of the SABC's recruitment policies and procedures (Parliament of South Africa, 2017). Muthambi, in her own evidence, explained that she had sped the appointment of Motsoeneng as the position was long vacant.

All these discussed issues lay out a model of the political interference that has affected the SABC. Therefore, it is inevitable that that the proposed hypothesis of the production of *Uzalo* being the result of political interference in the SABC remains firm and still. The soap opera's production and funding has benefited a lot from its producers' relationship and association with political elites who have access to the management and operation of the SABC. What follows is how *Uzalo* produces a certain language ideology, Zulu ethnic nationalism.

Subtle Emergence of Ethnic Nationalism in Uzalo

The aforementioned state of political inference have had a significant impact on the SABC, and this section unpacks how these issues influenced the linguistic aspects of SABC 1 programming. Post-Apartheid South Africa has managed to maintain a cohesive identity from multiple languages, cultures, nationalities, ethnics and races. The nature of ethnic nationalism in *Uzalo* is very subtle, systematic, and structural, therefore it needs a rigorous sociolinguistic analysis to unearth the hierarchisation that lends itself out in this drama series. There is no evidence to indicate that post-Apartheid South Africa ever had the desire to create a monoethnic or monolingual state. Popular cultural artefacts such as *Uzalo* are, however, making suggestion of the emergence of this political system.

PSBs have always been used as platforms to spread nation-state ideologies (Roosvall and Salovaara-Moring, 2010). To this day, nations - as well as other imagined communities - thrive in these mediums. PSBs remain the key technology for keeping nations together because they are under legislative mandates to uphold the image of the nation to the rest of the world. It is through these platforms that national identities are being reinforced (Aslama and Pantti, 2007). *Uzalo* is playing an active role in upholding and spreading the nation-state ideology to the country.

There are undertones of Zulu ethnic nationalism in *Uzalo.* There are elements or characteristics in the story that are suggestive of the emergence of this political system. Hailemariam, Kroon and Walters (1999) argue that in Africa, nationalism refers to ethnic solidarity and related sentiments and this approach is the one that is taken by *Uzalo.* Interestingly, this issue is not under debate in the country.

The use of *izithakazelo* (clan names)

The first characteristic of ethnic nationalism in *Uzalo* is the use of *izithakazelo.* Mcunu (2004) argues that *izithakazelo* are made of clan names and personal praises. These are not just any clan names, but honorific clan names, Mhlambi (2016). *Izithakazelo* bring about the relationship between individual and collective history in matters that affect a group of people who consider themselves a "community" (Mhlambi, 2016). *Izithakazelo* are highly artistic forms that can capture individual and collective agencies (Mhlambi, 2016). This practice is used to reconfigure one's identity among a group. In *Uzalo,* we see the linguistic and cultural significance of isiZulu held together, narrated and reproduced using *izithakazelo*.

Below are some examples of the usage of *izithakazelo* in *Uzalo*. The transcriptions only focus on instances in which *izithakazelo* were used and not the rest of the scenes. The following scene takes place during a wedding of Nkuzi and MaNcgobo in a church. This is after MaNgcobo just walked into the altar and the choir is still singing before the pastor pauses the choir (12 June 2018).

Extract 5

MaNgcobo: Wena Mhlongo, Njomane kaMgabhi eyaduka iminyakanyaka yaze yabuya wesine ne sthole sthole esimdudukazana. Makhedama, Soyengwase, nina baka-Bhebhe, Bhebhe wena owabhebhela umuntu etshini ngoba usaba amazolo.

Nkunzi: Mapholoba! Mbele, Maguya! Nyuswa ka Dingile, kaNgcobo kaVumizitha, Ngcobo'omhlophe ozal'uNongoma.

Another example is after Mxolisi just stole more than 25 luxury cars for Nkunzi. In this scene Nkunzi is using *izithakazelo* to praise Mxolisi for his bravery (27 July 2018)

Nkunzi: (Blows a whistle after seeing Mxolisi approaching him): Ngomane, Msindazwe, Mfuyi wamatshe abanye befuya izinkomo, mfusi kaMawewe, wena waseZisayini, Mnomo!

In another instance, Smangele (Master Mind's sister) just got home and finds Master Mind drunk and lying on the couch. She manages to wake him and tell him that she just got engaged to her boyfriend. Master Mind, confused at first, finally understands what her sister is saying. He jumps around in the house and reciting *izithakazelo* for her sister (06 June 2018).

Master Mind: Lubheleni, Dibandlela, Mangcingci, Jeqe, Mashimane, Zulu, Doncabe, Zukuzela, Mngun'omkhulu, Masiyane! Nina baka Mgobodi, zul'elidumele lika Zikonde. Nina bas'eNgoleleni.

The use of *izithakazelo* in *Uzalo* is very important. It creates a sense of one's identity and belonging because characters use them to pride themselves or each other. They are used for identity constructions and access to acts of nostalgic memories as Mhlambi (2016) notes about the use of *izithakazelo*. This is largely due to the rainbow nationalism project which has failed to address South Africa's racial past (Mhlambi, 2016) as a result, racial groups are reverting to past senses of nationhood to reconfigure their identities.

At the advent of democratic South Africa, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was formed in 1997. The commission was a court-like body assembled for anyone who felt they had been a victim of violence during Apartheid to tell their story and heard by the commission. Those that were also perpetrators of violence could also give testimony and request amnesty from prosecution.

It was at these hearings that South Africa was first referred to as the Rainbow Nation by the former Archbishop of the Anglican Church who was also the chairperson of the commission, Desmond Tutu. The idea of the Rainbow Nation projects an image of different racial groups coming together and living in harmony (Habib, 1997). However, this has been labelled a failed project due to ignoring the democratic, economic and social imbalances caused by the Apartheid (Pillay, Daniel, Naidoo, and Southall, 2013; Pillay, Hagg, Nyamnjoh, Jansen, 2013). Habib (1997) called the 'Rainbow Nation' discourse a political metaphor that is used by political elites as electioneering tools to win the support of the public, it is used by businesses to exhort the public to buy into the idea of patriotism.

In this way, it is inevitable that the Rainbow Nation project has failed to unite the country due to its shortcomings. Therefore, as Evans (2009) noted, racial groups are resorting to past senses of nationhood to build racial and ethnic unity. This political strategy has found expression in *Uzalo*, the soap uses *izithakazelo* to reinforce memories of nationhood and reemphasise the Zulu culture. This practice in *Uzalo* goes beyond the linguistic element or the script in the story, it is a cultural strategy to maintain or build a sense of belonging to a social group, Zulu.

It is the view of this thesis that such is a symbolic and ideological strategy to uphold isiZulu as the language and culture of beauty, power, and dominance among other indigenous languages. This is the strategy to reinforce the traditional ways of living for the Zulu people. Other soap operas which use Sepedi, Sesotho and Setswana never do this. Also, it is true that people from other cultures in South Africa do not use clan names to address each other in as much as the Zulu people do. Also, it can be argued that the writing teams of every soap decides for themselves how they want to write, and the broadcaster does not interfere with such decisions. That is true. However, the broadcaster has a mandate to determine the kind of programming that features on its platforms. In that case, the SABC has the powers to set the standard for its programming so that no language or culture has an upper hand to the others, it has the power to create parity. The privilege among the soaps must come from the content and the storyline not language; if it is on the language, such a privilege must be enjoyed by all languages.

Location/Setting

Uzalo is set and shot entirely in KZN. The story is also shot entirely on location. In total, each episode of *Uzalo* has between 32 and 35 characters, both main and supporting characters. All of them are Zulu-speakers. The story is only set in KwaMashu, a township in KZN, invariably "Zulu-land". The ideals we see represented in *Uzalo* are that of a society or community in isolation because the images, voices, and bodies of those that are not Zulus (Whites, Indians, and Coloureds) are completely ignored and marginalised in the soap opera. This reinforces ideas of ethnic nationalism, an imagined ethnic community. As Anderson (1986) explains, nationalism invents nations that do not exist.

In this section, I want to explore the politics of location. This analysis draws from the work of Jameson (1984), Soja (1989) and Keith and Pile (1993), collectively contending that space is not a mere and passive "thing" in which things happen, it is embedded with social and political power dynamics. According to Soja (1989), drawing from Lefebvre and Foucault, space is not passive and undialectical, it is not an innocent backdrop to position; it is filled with politics and ideology.

Likewise, Soja (1989:124) contends that is it very important to consider "the deeper social origins of spatiality, its problematic production and reproduction, its contextualisation of politics, power and ideology". Location/setting is also very important in a film or a television series because it serves as a vehicle for driving the story forward and it has a certain

relevance to the audiences. Moreover, according to (Cresswell and Dixon, 2002), film medium has become a very important site through which locations communicate identities. We can see the use of film location as a metaphor, as allegory and as a vehicle for driving identity construction. Cresswell and Dixton (2002) further note that a film location can also be looked at as a way in which people are represented authentically. Egyptian films set in Egypt are used to validate the Egyptian national identity (Khatib, 2006). These films are shot entirely in Egypt, represent national myths and symbols that bind the Egyptian nation together (Khatib, 2006).

Locality / location or what Appadurai (1995) calls neighbourhoods are socially and politically reproduced. Locality is realised with the help of symbolism, that is, certain symbols form the idea of "locality. In *Uzalo* these symbols include the use continuous appearance of Durban Beaches (North and South). Durban Beaches form a major part of the KZN tourism industry, they attract millions of people across the world annually (eThekwini Municipality, 2019). It is these symbols that help with the formations of nation- state (Appadurai, 1995), imagined communities that do not exist.

Location, in *Uzalo,* is a microcosm for the suggestion of a nation/ethnic nationalism. According to Appadurai (1995), such an approach to the use of location denies local subjects to be anything other than national citizens. In sum, the production of locality is primarily a political struggle (Demmers, 2002). In a similar vein, Mills (2008) argues that locality as a nationalistic strategy is one of the historical processes through which Jews, Greeks and Armenians became minorities because they were treated as outsiders in the Kuzguncuk landscapes. Locality plays a big role in the construction of national identity. Identity is produced in relation to place, a location that is layered with cultural significance.

Various mediated cultural forms: news bulletins, soap operas, editorials and films have contributed to the production of nationalistic discourses, myths, or symbols (Bishop and Jaworski, 2003; Chan, 2005). It is against this background that I assess the use of location in *Uzalo* as a suggestive emergence of an "*imagined ethnic community"* [italics for own emphasis]. The setting of *Uzalo* which is entirely in KZN is a strategy to build 'community solidarity'. This notion is best captured by Anderson, "all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact are imagined…it is imaged because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet, in the mind of each, lives the image of their communion" (1983:15).

The exclusion and or marginalisation of other races, languages, and places/locations/settings (besides KZN) in *Uzalo* symbolises a technique that has been called structural exclusion. King (2015) explains this technique through which decision-making and participation is restricted to a narrow range of structural perspectives and interests. One of key focus of locality is that it must always be protected from external factors and other societies (Appadurai, 1995). That is, the place must not be infiltrated by the "other", those that are not part of "us." Therefore, the situating of *Uzalo* in KZN can be said to be a strategy to protect KZN from other societies. This can also be looked at as an ethnic behaviour, that is, self-identification of the members of a group in how they distinguish themselves from members of other cultural or ethnic group with whom they have contact (Khan, 2009).

Dhoest (2012) maintains that television is a powerful medium to share 'imagined' or 'interpretive' communities and creating group identities. Television has been described as a national medium, it has been assigned (especially PSBs) the mandate to make programmes referring to and spreading national culture, "making the nation one man" (Cardiff and Scannel, 1987:157). Such is the approach taken by *Uzalo's* use of location. Localizing the story only in KZN despite the SABC having the mandate to represent the national ideals of everyone, is a strategy contributing to the everyday construction of an imagined ethnic community.

According to the 2016 / 2017 Socio-Economic Review and Outlook of KZN (Province of KwaZulu-Natal, 2017), KZN was the second most populated province in South Africa as it is home to 11.1 million people. The report indicated that the province population is divided into four racial groups: Africans, Coloureds, Indian and Whites. Africans are the dominating group (87.2%), followed by Indians (7.2), Whites (4.2) and the smallest percentage of the province is constituted by the Coloureds (1.4%).

These statistics reflect the racial demographics of KZN. However, *Uzalo* as it is set in KZN is not a reflection of these demographics, both in terms of the story and the language used in the story. The story targets only black audiences, mostly Zulu speakers. This then means other racial groups in the province are not accommodated. Other racial and linguistic groups in KZN are marginalised, underrepresented and ultimately ignored in *Uzalo*. This almost signals a situation in which the whole of KZN is occupied only by the Zulu speakers. *Uzalo* viewing is a national ritual, providing symbolic members of the nation and promoting a sense of ethnic identity.

The solemn centralisation of *Uzalo* in KZN is a clear political organisation. Khan (2009:149) defines political organisation "as a group that maintains the internal order; preserves territorial limits and allocates power and decision making over group action in a relationship with regional, national and international political power structure".

The other way to look at the use of location in the soap is from the perspective of nation branding. Bolin and Stahlberg (2010) argue that nation branding is the phenomenon through which governments engage in self-conscious activities with an intention of producing a certain image of the nation-state. Another phenomenon which is similar to nation branding is public diplomacy. The latter denotes government activities portraying a certain image of its nation-state to be used as an instrument of power and influence in international political relations (Roy, 2007). *Uzalo* is used to achieve the former. The soap is used as a tool to produce and sell a particular image of KZN as a place of the Zulu people. Ultimately, the result is that other languages and/or cultures must assimilate with the "established status quo;" isiZulu is a language and/or culture with which KZN is synonymous.

Certain symbols such as the use of the local KZN artists in the soap opera (Babes Wodumo, DJ Tira, Destruction Boys and Hlengiwe Mhlaba), are all strategies used to brand KZN, to grow and sell the area. *Uzalo* is the only soap opera in the SABC that now and then would feature celebrities in its episodes. However, it only features local artists from KZN. This thesis acknowledges this as a good strategy to give celebrities a platform in television and increase ratings. However, featuring celebrities from KZN only is not just about ratings and viewers, it is about localizing the soap opera, excluding anything and anyone who is not from KZN.

Hannerz (2007) calls this soft power while Roy (2007) talks about how states such as United States of America (USA) do not always use 'hard power' such as military and strong economic muscles, to achieve their needs, they also rely on 'soft power'. This is the means to make others do what you want them to do without forcing them. The imposition of isiZulu as a dominant language and a language/or culture that KZN is synonymous with is being instituted through this form. This is a form of hegemony. It involves the national and international spread of isiZulu and as a language and culture through popular culture while other nationals and languages unknowingly assimilate with this logic.

Bolin and Stahlberg (2010) state that the branded nation is more interested in making sense to "others", not to those people who might identify with it. In the case of *Uzalo,* the sole

utilisation of isiZulu, shooting only in KZN and using actors and celebrities only from KZN is interested in branding KZN with isiZulu. As argued before, this strategy is achieved through using history as a justification mechanism where all indigenous languages were oppressed and the elevation of isiZulu is argued that it will also apply to other indigenous languages. Bolin and Stahlberg (2010) contend that nationalists use history to build social solidarity and assimilation. The notion that isiZulu is an indigenous language, and it has undergone the same oppression and marginalisation as other indigenous languages makes its dominance unquestionable, it is being naturalised. I call this "cognitive domination," the domination is mental, when a person who is not Zulu sees isiZulu dominating popular culture, it does not bother them, they have internalised and normalised such domination mentally. Non-Zulu speakers do not even realise that there is a domination of isiZulu to their languages, for as long as it is an indigenous language then it is fine. Such dominance is not used for community building or social justice, it has to do with liberalism, as an ideology more concerned with individual agency rather than on collective cohesion (Calhoun, 2007). In this case, the interest is on building and strengthening the Zulu culture and language, rather than developing all indigenous languages as the language policy asserts.

Language use

The third characteristic to look at is the use of language in the soap opera. As it has already been established elsewhere in this thesis, *Uzalo* is only in isiZulu. Drawing on language ideological inquiry, the use of language in *Uzalo* echoes ideologies of linguistic purism that emphasise language separation, while also reflecting hegemonic ideologies that privilege isiZulu over other indigenous languages. By linguistic purism, it means the urge to preserve / protect a "desirable" language while eliminating "undesirable" languages and/or linguistic elements (Hosokawa, 2015). This drive is profoundly intertwined with nationalism.

Below are some of the examples to demonstrate the purism attitude in the use of language in Uzalo.

Episode of *Uzalo*, 26th June 2018

In this episode, after the disappearance of pastor Mdletshe, Qhabanga steps into his shoes with the aim of using the church for money laundering. The focus of the episode is on MaNcobo, who has found out that her husband, Nkunzi, is cheating with her friend, MaMlambo. On the other hand, Mxolisi threatens Qhabanga's life for the disappearance of

pastor Mdletshe. The episode also touches on Mxolisi's endeavour to hunt down the root of the drug industry flourishing in the community.

The scene below takes place in church during service. The scene is entirely in isiZulu and it revolves around MaNgcobo/Lindiwe playing an audio recording of her husband, Nkunzi and her mistress, MaMlambo.

An example of monolingual text (1)

Extract 6

Qhabanga: Awusho. Uthi wenzani umthetho wakho? Indlu ka Nkulunkulu le. (*Tell me, what do you think you are doing? This is the house of the Lord*).

MaNgcobo: Cha phela bengifuna ukuthi ibandla lazi ukuthi losisi ohlezi ezenza ngcono ngathi sonke asazi ukuthi uluhloboluni luka-pende. (*I wanted the congregation to know about this woman who acts all holier-than-thou, what kind of a person she is*).

Fekile: UNkunzi ulala noMaMlambo? (*Nkunzi is sleeping with MaMlambo?*)

MaMlambo: Mnge. Mnge wami ngiyakucela.Ngicela ungilalele.Ngicela ungiphe ithuba ngichaze. (*Friend. Please, my friend, hear me out. Give me a chance to explain*).

MaNgcobo: Mnge? Wena usathi mnge kimi? Uyayazi lento oyishoyo? Lalela la ayikho into engizoyilalela ezophuma emlonyeni wakho wena.Ayikho. Ngoba wena ukhohlakele. Ungumthakathi. (*Friend? You are still saying a friend to me? Do you know what that means? I won't listen to anything you say. I won't. You are evil. You are a witch*).

MaMlambo: Lindiwe lalela, lalela. Ngiyakuncenga. Ingoba bekumele ngihambe. Ngoba benginamahloni ngalento engiyenze kuwena. Ungumngani wami. (*Lindiwe, I am begging you. Hear me out. That's why I had to leave. I was ashamed of what I did to you. You are my friend*).

MaNgcobo: Yazi yini? Kumele engabe wena uxolisa kuNkulunkulu, lo uhleli uthandaza ngaye zonkinsuku (*You know what? You should apologise to God, the one you are always praying about*).

MaMlambo: Akenimeni kancane.We-Lindiwe, Lindiwe, Ucabanga ukuthi bengiyenza ngedwa yini kanti lento le? Seningibuka kanjena manje? Senibiza mina ngonondindwa

Lindiwe? Uyafuna ngikutshele ukuthi eyakho indoda injani? Uyafuna ngikutshele ngo-Nkunzebomvu Mhlongo ukuthi uyindoda enjani Lindiwe? (*Wait. Lindiwe…Do you think I was in this thing alone? Now you are calling me names? Now you are calling me a whore, Lindiwe? Do you want me to tell you what kind of man your husband is? Do you want me to tell you what kind of man Nkunzebomvu Mhlongo is?*).

END OF SCENE

Episode of *Uzalo*, 18th June 2018

The episode saw Qhabanga showing his true colours, threatening to kill pastor Mdletshe if he does not resign from the church and disappear. As a result, pastor Mdletshe resigns from his position as head of the church during the youth day celebration service. Zweli confronts Qhabanga for some advice on dealing with his problems regarding his two girlfriends, Qhabanga does not have a solution for his problem but rather suggests that the best thing is to ease his mind in that they must plan another heist to hijack cars. On the other hand, Nkunzi continues to blackmail Qhabanga and the latter decides that he has had enough, and he is going to kill Nkunzi.

The scene below is centred on the issue of finding a replacement for Pastor Mdletshe who has decided to leave the church after he was threatened and blackmailed by Qhabanga for a very long time. Other members of the church want Pastor Mdletshe to be replaced while others do not. The scene is 98% in IsiZulu with only one instance of English and one in which Mr. Mbatha used an English word in the middle of a sentence.

An example of monolingual text (2)

Extract 7

Mrs MaDlala: Bakwethu. Akumele engabe siyahamba siyomubheka? (*People shouldn't we go look for him?*).

Gabisile: Yazi nami bengithi ngiya emaphoyiseni. Kanti uzomane athumele i-SMS. (*I was about to go to the police. And then he sent an SMS*).

Mr. Mbatha: Kushukuthi sizihluphelanike? Nangu ekwazi ukuthumela ama-SMS. (*Why bother ourselves, then? He is well enough to send SMSs*).

Gabisile: Ohh nantsi. Ithi "mntakama, ngiyaxolisa ukuthi ngihambe isigubhukane. Bekumele ngikwenzile lokhu. (*Oh, here it is. It reads "sister, I am sorry to leave so suddenly, but I had to*).

Mr. Mbatha: Yabona-ke kuchaza khona ngempela ukuthi lomuntu akafune muntu ozomthinta kulento. (*You see? That means he doesn't want anyone to contact him*).

Mrs. Madlala: Ayi lendoda ihlukumezekile (*That man is disturbed*).

Mr. Mbatha: Yabona-ke, Kade ngangiyisho leyonto. (*I have been saying that*).

Gabisile: Yazi wena Mbatha, ngiyazi ukuthi awuzwani nomntakama. Manje ngicela ungaqali iscefe. (*Mbatha, I know you don't like him. But don't start with* me).

Mr. Mbatha: We-Gabisile, lento usuyenza ibengami manje, uyakhohlwa ukuthi lomfowenu uyimpuqumpuqu, wenza yonke into ayithandayo la. Uyabona? Ngakho...Hawu! Mzilikazi KaMashobane. (*Gabisile, you are making this about me now. You seem to forget that your brother does as he pleases. You see? That's why…Mzilikaze kaMashobane*).

Qhabanga: Yebo, yebo. (*Hello*).

Mr. Mbatha: Uthini mfethu ngalendaba? (*What do you say about this matter*?).

Qhabanga: Yona yiphi indaba? (*Which matter?).*

Mr. Mbatha: Asisena-Pastor thina la. (*We don't have a pastor anymore*).

Gabisile: Hhayibo. Nalibhadi-bo. Ngiqeda ukwenza le-SMS ngikufundele yona, kukhona la ekuthiwa akuna-Pastor khona? (*What? Goodness! The SMS I read didn't say we don't have a pastor anymore).*

Mr. Mbatha: I-SMS ikubeka kucace ukuthi uthi akafune kuthintwa ubhuti wakho.Ngakho-ke asiyeke indoda izenzele ukuthanda kwayo, ngesikhathi esithandayo. Thina la sifuna umfundisi. Siyazwana? (*The SMS makes it clear that your brother doesn't want to be found. So let's leave him to do as he pleases. We need a pastor, okay?*).

Qhabanga: UMdletshe khona engathi usaphathekile. Umfundisi wethu khona ke kumele simuhloniphe. (*Mdletshe is going through something, but he is still our pastor. We must respect him*).

Gabisile: Thank you.

Qhabanga: Ekushoni kwami-ke lokho, isonto liyamdinga umuntu ozolihola azabuye phela u-Mdletshe. (*Be that as it may…the church needs a pastor until Mdletshe comes back*).

Gabisile: I can't listen to this.

Mr. Mbatha: Ayi, khululeka wena Mntungwa. Uyayihlanyisa lo, uzoba-right. (*Relax Mntungwa. She is just acting out. She will be alight*).

END OF SCENE.

The purist attitudes on isiZulu in the story is a desire to establish "Zuluness" in reference to the "otherness" with the rest of other indigenous languages in South Africa. This is an ideological mechanism established to construct an "internal other" to a Zulu 'Self'. In other words, this is meant to reorganise and maintain cultural hegemony. I submit that in this context (of *Uzalo*), other indigenous languages represent a foreignness, or otherness, created within a society that constructs an 'internal other' to a Zulu 'Self'. In this case, it is evident that language is not only a means of communication but an essential element in building a strong ethnic community.

Hansen, Wypych, Banko and Bilewicz (2018) argue that one of the purposes of linguistic purism is to treat other languages or their influences as evil and as a threat that can and should be combatted. The exclusion of other indigenous languages in the soap opera can be said to be a reinforcement of the above argument. As much as it can also be said that *Uzalo* is a pure Zulu soap opera therefore the inclusion of other languages in the soap will take away the essence of the soap being a Zulu soap opera, South Africa is a very multilingual nation and KZN is also multilingual. Thus, the soap opera is not a true reflection of the linguistic demographics of both South Africa and KZN. As such, it is evident that the linguistic purism purported in *Uzalo* is an ideology meant to maintain symbolic power and oppression occurring between advantaged and disadvantaged linguistic groups.

The perspective underlying linguistic purism in *Uzalo* is like the premise of Apartheid and colonialism which divided the nation into tribes, languages and ethnicities. This notion is also supported to an extent by the language policy because the latter continued the colonial division of languages and did not do much to rectify the historical mistakes of keeping indigenous languages in separation and isolation. Hosokawa (2015) states that such

dichotomous categorisation perpetuates fundamental binaries of Self and Other that ground processes of identification. Thus, the language policy as it is, and *Uzalo* taking it to the next level, carve up the nation into "them" and "us". This ultimately creates power discrepancies; it creates exclusion and inclusion. This phenomenon creates 'outsiders within', a process in which other indigenous languages are treated as outsiders, but still within the same system as isiZulu. Gottlieb (2006) while referring to the issue of 'outsiders within' in the case of Japan argued that this is a system through which we define others as what we are not, often without spelling it out and ultimately constructing the image of the mainstream group and minority groups, with the latter labelled as 'undesirably different'.

The preference for isiZulu that we are seeing in *Uzalo* is also a reflection of ethnolinguistic vitality (Hansen, Wypych, Banko and Bilewicz, 2018). In the domain of language use, this is understood as a group's ability to maintain and protect its culture and linguistic identity. This concept has been used to describe how various linguistic groups maintain their language versus accommodating and shifting toward other languages. (Hansen, et al. 2018). In other words, it denotes a phenomenon in which groups do not tolerate other languages. Therefore, what we are seeing in *Uzalo* is one group producing a soap opera which protects, promotes and maintains its linguistic identity in exclusion of other indigenous languages which are found across South Africa. This has potential effects on isiZulu speakers. As Giles and Byrne (1982) argue, ethnolinguistic vitality affects language acquisition towards second language. That is, speakers of that language become stereotypic to acquire other languages.

Uzalo invents, imagines and reproduces the national logic in a mediated discourse. This strategy offers a sense of belonging for the isiZulu speakers but it also creates linguistic borders which go against the language policy. The political intention behind the soap is to claim superiority over other nations in the country as well as cultural and political spheres.

Research in sociolinguistics has moved away from viewing languages as separated and bounded entities. Communication or language is now being viewed as a system within which language users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal to maximise communication (Blackledge and Creese, 2014). The works of McKinney (2017), Hurst and Mona (2017), Heller (2007), Blommaert and Rampton (2011), Makalela (2005, 2014, 2015) show that there is a huge presence of disruptive multilingualism in South Africa, that ethnic nationalism has no place in modern-day South Africa, that South Africans draw from various linguistic repertoires, codes and registers in their everyday communication for the sake of

maximising communication with one another. The use of language in *Uzalo* is a perpetuation of dated discourses and ideologies that view language and culture as bounded entities which seek to create nation-states. Bakhtin (1981) argues that the idea of a nation state is politically and ideologically motivated. The sole utilisation of isiZulu and the Zulu culture in *Uzalo* and its dominance over other indigenous languages is ideologically constructed to create an imagined ethnic community.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter to study the use of popular culture as a hegemonic tool has been influenced by the following arguments. Nyairo and Ogude (2005) argue that it is less helpful to conceptualise popular culture as a platform through which elites' dominant ideologies are challenged without studying how the elites can gain control of popular culture to push forward their ideologies. Chirambo (2002) adds on to this and states that many researchers, especially Western-trained researchers tend to study African popular culture for its potential to contribute to social change. These arguments open a gap in the scholarship for this thesis, that is, there is a neglect of the large corpus of art which does not live to these expectations, art that does not contribute to social change but has been captured by the elites and turned into a hegemonic tool. Popular culture, as a field of study, has been ignored and regarded as unworthy for some time (Fabian, 1997; Street, 2001 and Marchart, 2008). This rejection was largely based on the argument that popular culture is "trash" and is an inferior kind of culture (Newell, 2002). However, popular culture has become a subject of academic study in the recent years (Newell and Okome, 2014; Barber, 2018). This is because popular culture is now understood to embody a lot of socio-political ideologies and messages. This thesis has just unpacked ways in which popular culture in embedded with language ideologies.

Lysaght (2009) argues that television has a key role to play in exploring central beliefs and disseminating ideologies. Therefore, the language used in broadcasting has a huge symbolic importance and power. This is because, the language used in broadcast media is not just a tool for transferring information to the target audience but is also able to associate power and influence with that language, simply because it reaches millions of audiences in a day (Zeinalabedini, 2014). As it was shown in this chapter, SABC has commissioned a soap

opera, *Uzalo*, and this soap opera has benefited great political support which has not been received by other soap operas.

The dominance of isiZulu in SABC 1 is a result of power relations and political interference in the broadcaster. In this way, ideologies (language ideologies) of the ruling class or the elites become dominant and hegemonic (Fang and Duff, 2018). The result is that there is a systematic and symbolic hierarchisation of indigenous languages, one in which the top spot is occupied by isiZulu.

Language is commonly used as an important symbol of group identity, often stimulating a sense of solidarity among communities sharing a single speech. It is sometimes deliberately manipulated to create a sense of belonging to communities (Simpson, 2008). In South Africa, with the diverse and complex ethnolinguistic configurations presented by various tribes, languages, dialects and linguistic communities, the need for careful, conscious analysis to language policy and implementation and the role of popular culture in a nation-state is of special importance.

Chapter 3: The emergence of IsiZulu in *Skeem Saam* (2011): Sociolinguistic Factors and the Politics of the 'the Loss of Ethnolinguistic Pluralism' at the SABC 1

Introduction

Bourdieu (1977) conceptualises the linguistic space as a market, arguing that the linguistic market is hierarchical, it assigns different values to different languages and people. In addition, the value that speakers see in languages are dependent on the social, political and economic statuses that come with the languages (Mensah 2016). The result is that ethnolinguistic pluralism shrinks because only a few portions of languages and cultures in the world have social, political and economic privileges. Ethnolinguistic pluralism refers to the multiplicity, variety and presence of ethnicities (cultures) and languages. In the South African case, the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) mandate is to ensure this ethnolinguistic plurality. Thus, this chapter engages on how the SABC is treating indigenous languages in its programming.

SABC editorial policies are important as they guide arguments that are made in this chapter regarding the reality of what transpires in the national broadcaster with regards to ethnolinguistic plurality. Arguably, in the SABC editorial policies, it is stated that the SABC commits to reflecting the South African attitudes, values and ideas, the broadcaster also intends to advance the national and public interest (SABC editorial policy, 2020). Among the core editorial values of the SABC is equality: the SABC intends to provide programmes for everyone, in all official languages and provide universal access to its services (SABC editorial policy, 2020). The SABC editorial policy provides that the broadcaster will not promote any form of discrimination and marginalisation on the grounds of gender, race, language, culture and religious belief. However, despite the good will enshrined in its editorial policy, the opposite pertains especially with regards to the treatment of different ethnic interests and linguistic interests of the groups.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate how ecological factors a multilingual-polyglossic South Africa are exploited by the SABC 1 to maintain and create ethnolinguistic dominance. Key arguments this study will make are:

- polyglossia is a language ideology masquerading as ethnolinguistic pluralism,

- there is a loss of ethnolinguistic pluralism in SABC 1 because of the polyglot culture and its transmissions,
- isiZulu is emerging as a language and cultural flare of the channel. These hypotheses will be tested in one of SABC 1's soap operas, *Skeem Saam*.

Skeem Saam was initially conceptualised as a Sepedi language soap. It engages pre-university and university students' life experiences, having chosen Sepedi as medium of communication across all its generations. This language use is an interesting take on youth languages in South Africa, which were progressively gravitating towards the English vernacular, or Tsotsitaal. The use of Sepedi language in its purest form was further buoyanced by a cast from Sepedi television drama of the 1980s (*Bophelo ke Semphekgo*, Anthony Thobejane, 1980), who through their impeccable use of the Sepedi vernacular and its metalinguistic flare made its regular use in African modernising social spaces and popular imagination a fashionable predilection. *Skeem Saam* as a drama series attracted a great audience viewership in its first season, 2.3 million viewers (IMDb, 2011).

The programme was converted into a soapy which further drew an unprecedented audience, (3.8 million viewers in 2015, IMDb, 2015) for vernacular soapies to an extent that when the *Generations* fall out[3] played itself on the public pages of South Africa's print and broadcast media, the SABC thought that temporarily *Skeem Saam* could occupy the 20:00 PM, prime slot *Generations* occupied for more than two decades. It was at the time when +*Skeem saam* was converted to a weekly soapy that new African languages found spaces of articulation, which was a welcomed development because South Africa's linguistic terrain evinced such polyglot groupings. However, in time, one language, isiZulu, which had begun to have been perceived as occupying a new linguistic hierarchy in other programmes and sites of SABC programming, began to make its presence felt, slowly supplanting Sepedi vernacular and the Sepedi broadcast visual and cultural tradition *Skeem Saam* was predicated upon.

The loss of ethnolinguistic pluralism and the construction of ethnolinguistic domination in this organisational setting invite theoretical points of departure that engage language shift as an ideology central to constructing polyglossia. This chapter will demonstrate how the loss of ethnolinguistic pluralism is creating language and cultural regimes and how the implications

[3] In 2014, the 14 main actors and actresses in *Generations* were fired after 2 months of protesting. Actors and actresses were fired for demanding higher salaries, extended contracts and wanting royalties from episodes that had been rebroadcasted. Generations shooting was put on hold for another 2 months, the show resumed later with a new storyline: *Generations, The Legacy*.

of these regimes affect notions of equal distribution of linguistic and cultural resources and powers in the SABC.

The analytical approach of the current chapter draws from the field of language ecology. This is the study of interactions between language(s) and its environment (Haugen, 1972). The field is described metaphorically from the study of living things. It implies that one can study language as one studies interactions among organisms and their environment (Donne, 2017). My approach to this is that languages overlap with other aspects of society: gender, identities, cultures, traditions and beliefs. In that sense, language will not be approached just as a means of communication but as an entity, a package that encompasses all of these aspects because they all live together and influence one another like living organisms. In other words, a threat to a language is a threat to an entire cultural ecology.

One of the major questions this chapter grapples with relates to the absence of a shift from isiZulu to Sepedi or why SABC 1 is not keeping *Skeem Saam* a purely Sepedi soap opera. Scholarship on language shifts indicates that language shift is normally a down-to-top approach. Agyekum (2010:383) argues that "it is usually a weaker language or lower-status linguistic group that shifts to a stronger, dominant, majority or higher-status linguistic group and not the reverse". The language shift in *Skeem Saam* is from a small-status language(s) to isiZulu. Such a shift creates an impression that isiZulu is a superior language associated with a higher status, prestige and wider context usage. Holmes (2001) posits that, a language that has been given such a status has little or no incentive and motivation to adopt the language of a minority. As a result, related questions that guide this chapter include:

- How has ethnolinguistic pluralism fared in the SABC 1?
- What ethnolinguistic attitudes are brewed and spread by the channel?
- What is the future of small-status languages in the channel?

These ideas are to some extent shared by Kandler, et al (2010) who note that in language contact situations, people are confronted with difficult questions about which language they want to speak and the ones they should speak. The major challenge being that a more local or less prestigious language must be abandoned for the more modern and useful language which gives access to greater social mobility and economic opportunities. The same is unfolding in SABC 1. IsiZulu is the most economic indigenous language (it has more speakers than other indigenous languages in the country), it is an indigenous language most political elites use in

public gatherings (Gumbi, 2019). All this renders it as a prestigious language, speaking it has greater benefits over speaking any other indigenous languages. It does not come as a surprise that SABC 1 (as the most watched channel in SABC) would keep this language in dominance over other languages, it attracts viewers for the channel.

As Alexander (2001) states, in South Africa, we prefer not to speak of majority and minority languages. The preferred typology consists of three categories: high-status, low-status and endangered languages. The main reason for this is political and ideological. Due to the ethnic division of the Apartheid past, and the post-apartheid's conscious strategy of promoting national unity, the government became wary of giving the impression that the country still operates on the premise of some languages being more important or valuable than others (Alexander, 2001). However, the reality of isiZulu convokes with these past associations. In this study, I focus heavily on two categories: high-status and low-status languages. High-status languages will include isiZulu while small-status languages will be Sepedi, isiXhosa, Setswana and siSwati. This conclusion is based on the number of speakers that these languages have. The focus is specifically on these languages as they are the indigenous languages used in *Skeem Saam* and supposedly guaranteed protection and promotion on par with isiZulu. This chapter intends to reveal how filmmakers of the soapy feel about an unfair allocation of television airtime to one language poses a threat to other indigenous languages.

This chapter will rely on case study analysis (*Skeem Saam*), interviews with producers of *Skeem Saam* and television experts in South Africa to support the arguments made. There is a lot of subterfuge going on at the SABC which will be brought to light in this chapter to support the argument that there is a polyglot culture in SABC 1 which is made to appear as multilingualism. My analysis focuses on four interrelated realms produced by the channel through in *Skeem Saam*:

- language attitudes;
- language regimes;
- loss of agency
- ethnolinguistic revitalisation.

Background and context of *Skeem Saam*

Skeem Saam is a weekly soapy playing on SABC 1 at 18:30 to 19:00. The story focuses on the journey to manhood amongst young African boys from the village of Turfloop, Limpopo,

in South Africa. The storyline delves on the plight of modern male children and the tough challenges they face transitioning into manhood anywhere in the country/world. The story focuses on familial relationships, neighboured community relationships, masculinity, gender relations and self-esteem. The story explores these themes from teenage and pre-university students' perspectives.

Skeem Saam is created and produced by Winnie Serite, one of the few black female filmmakers in South Africa. It is an SABC Education youth drama that started playing in SABC 1 in 2011. Serite is the owner of Peu Communications Solution (Pty) Ltd, a 100% black female level 3 BEE company (Bizcommunity, 2012).

Serite's experience in television ranges from *Isidingo* where she worked as a scriptwriter/coordinator, *Muvango* where she was a story structure/editor and finally *Skeem Saam* where she is the executive producer. These three shows have an interesting linguistic setup, they all thrive to represent small-status languages.

The first season of *Skeem Skeem* was purely in Sepedi. This was in 2011. During this time SABC 1's programmes were mainly in isiZulu, isiXhosa, with a little bit of Sesotho and Setswana. *Skeem Saam* was the first pure Sepedi soap opera to be produced for SABC 1 post-1994. In the second season (2012/2013) other small-status languages such as isiXhosa, Setswana and siSwati were introduced. This was a strategy to empower small-status languages. Since the dawn of democracy, they had been lagging with their own content especially in fictional programmes. IsiZulu was also introduced in the second season. However, Sepedi still maintained its dominance in these seasons. The dominance was maintained through main characters speaking Sepedi only. Only MaNtuli would switch between Sepedi and isiZulu during this time. Her children, Kwaito and Pretty hardly spoke isiZulu during this season. From the third season (2013/2014) changes were noticeable, isiZulu and Sepedi were equal. Characters speaking isiZulu were given dominant roles, meaning that they would appear more often than their counterparts who spoke Sepedi. Mangaliso, was the leading character speaking isiZulu, Kwaito and Pretty started switching from Sepedi to isiZulu a lot especially when they were speaking to their mother (MaNtuli). During this period, *Skeem Saam* appeared more multilingual than as a Sepedi soap opera. This means the cultural and linguistic flare that the Pedi people have been enjoying from the first season in 2011 in the soap had imperceptibly been washed away.

Towards the end of the fourth season (2015) to eighth season (2019 to current) isiZulu is outcompeting Sepedi and other small-status languages and this coincides with the period when isiZulu's has maximised its base on SABC 1. IsiZulu dominates *Generations The Legacy* (Murual Pictures, 2020*), Uzalo* (Stane Glass Productions, 2020) and now *Skeem Saam*. Reference to these other two shows is necessary as they also demonstrate the same trend where isiZulu is the dominant language in the programmes on SABC 1, which by this stake is viewed as a plan to secure its place as the dominant language in SABC 1, while stimming off small status languages of the limelight they had begun to enjoy on the channel.

However, the deployment of the isiZulu vernacular and multilingualism in *Skeem Saam* diluted Sepedi register that had earned the programme its popularity and the cultural flare of the show was also affected. It is vital to note that language is a package. It comes with linguistic variables, dialects, cultures and codes and Sepedi language programmes established these television dramas viewing traditions since the 1980s with the films such as *Bophelo Kesemphego* (Anthony Thobejane, 1980), *Ke Kgwebo ya ka ye* (1982), *Mokgonyane Mmatswale* (1991) *Death of a Queen* (2008), the latter is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. IsiZulu arrived with its television drama viewing traditions and frames of reference which shifted focus away from the Sepedi language and cultural outlook. This means audiences were not only losing out on Sepedi but also on the cultural world; its cosmology and epistemology that the story already introduced: the life in Turfloop, Pedi teenagers in university in Gauteng (a province dominated by isiZulu) and Pedi family quarrels. The inclusion of isiZulu in the programme meant that Sepedi's outlook on life, based as it were from philosophies tied to ontological epistemes, was reduced, and had to be shared with the Zulu language and cultural value systems, which in many instances do not auger well with the outlook and humour that Sepedi television dramas had established and was the draw card for *Skeem Saam* audiences and the public.

Although popular culture, popular languages and ways of livingin the African context are intertwined, certain popular cultural artefacts, especially rooted from ethnic culturalism, are context based, they target a specific community and present issues, stories and messages that are relevant to such a community in particularly distinctive ways. In a semi-structured interview with one of the fans of *Skeem Saam*, Matsepe (2020:1) revealed the following

> As Mopedi, there are some things I want to hear in Sepedi shows. I want to hear actors saying "boMma" (my mother or my mother's it should be

> pluralised, and it is only the Northern Sotho languages that pluralised names of elders as a sign of respect). I want to hear and see those that are living in Gauteng longing to go back home in Limpopo. Pedi people are very sensitive about their language and culture. They always want to show pride with those. And *Skeem Saam* was giving us that. But the show is changing slowly. We are now seeing other cultures and languages that do not appeal to us.

The ethnic and cultural groups cited by Matsepe have been continuously represented by other Sepedi programmes. Shows/films such as *Crazy Entertainers* (2009) and *Noko Mashaba* (2018) are very relevant to the target audiences. Another interesting point is one of the Jesus Christ films on YouTube that have been dubbed in Sepedi. They are called *The Jesus Film – Sotho, Northern/Pedi/Sepedi/Transvaal Sotho Language*[4]. These shows use languages (standard and non-standard) that are very relevant to the Pedi people. The shows also show some pride in the language and culture of the Bapedi. *Death of a Queen*[5] was mostly relevant in this case as it was dealing with the famous story of the Bapedi people, the issue of The Rain Queen.

A historical note might be useful at this stage to put this argument into context. The Apartheid government introduced TV 1 in 1976, broadcasting in English and Afrikaans. TV 2/3 were formed in 1982 and 1983, broadcasting in Nguni and Sotho respectively, for black audiences (Tomaselli, et al 1989). Tomaselli et al (1989) explain further that TV2/3 were further divided into TV2, addressed at isiZulu speakers and TV3 addressed at Sotho speakers. In that way, the government of the time was trying to accommodate some African indigenous languages in SABC, of course, with English and Afrikaans at the top of the hierarchy.

During the 1980s, the SABC had a successful linguistic and cultural pluralism in SABC TV shows. Sepedi had programmes such as *Bophelo ke Semphekgo*, Setswana had *Lesilo* (JB du Preez and AA Pitse, 1982). The same goes for Sesotho: *Mopheme* (Khotso Nthako, 1983). The shows were proud of their cultural representations. Mhlambi (2012) states that the black television series of the time touched on issues pertaining to black people, including the continued economic and socio-political marginalisation. These shows drew directly from the Third Cinema framework and Black Film Theory. Television series of the time depicted

[4] On YouTube, there are a couple of Jesus Christ films that have been dubbed in indigenous South African languages. These include isiZulu, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Sesotho, Setswana and Sepedi.

[5] The name Modjadji or Rain Queen is used to refer to a line of queens of the Balobedu (a tribe among the Babedi people in South Africa. The Rain Queen is known for her ability to control clouds and rainfall (Goitsimodimo, 2019).

predetermined discourses, using the relevant language(s), languages that the target audience could understand. Shows were culturally relevant and appealing to the black audiences, especially because there was dearth in content relevant to African audiences.

These shows were very successful in representing black stories. Sepedi shows played entirely in Sepedi that is mostly spoken in Limpopo (rich in idioms and culture). However, those who speak other Sepedi dialects were not represented in the shows. Some of the performers in *Skeem Saam* such as Koko Mantsha and John Maputla had the opportunity to play roles in *Bophelo ke Semphekgo*. From the point made by Matome above, it shows that the pure/standard Sepedi introduced by these characters attracted the Sepedi speakers to the show. These characters still speak standard Sepedi with a particularised flare in *Skeem Saam* as they did in the old shows. Such an approach by *Skeem Saam* to have Sepedi dominating the series, especially in the first 2 seasons, has led to its success. The show was able to attract audiences from different generational groups and connect older audiences to old traditions while introducing new, younger ones to all language aspects considered of prime significance. Sepedi as deployed in these first two seasons, recreated the success that has been noted in the deployment of the Zulu culture and language in Black Cinema of the 1970s and got to its height in the 1980s.

Introducing a Nguni ethnolinguistic variety (isiZulu) into this setup should not have been problematic. The issue is that this language cluster, especially isiZulu has invasive capabilities and outcompetes the language that was initially meant to be the language of the show, thereby trampling on linguistic rights of the speakers and the language's right to protection as spelled out in the National Language Policy. The problem with this is progression when this situation is left unchecked is that some languages and cultures have the potential of being elevated to a higher status thus rendering others inferior. This defeats the purpose of the multilingual/multicultural policy of the SABC because it uplifts one indigenous language over others. It also calls into question the future of other indigenous languages, cultures, identities and practices in SABC 1 and in other SABC channels.

Why focus on indigenous languages?

Critical to language policies in this study is the way in which the SABC deals with languages that have a smaller number of speakers than isiZulu. In SABC 1, languages with small number of speakers in the country do not get enough platform and airtime like isiZulu. When

they do, they are made to exist alongside isiZulu. Bull (2007) points out that in the context of media in Norway, there is a hierarchical principle governing the use of language which places some languages at the bottom of the pile. According to Bull (2007), some languages are more equal than others in Norway as it is the case in most societies. At the top of the hierarchy is Norwegian followed by Sami (with an internal hierarchy between North Sami, Lule Sami and South Sami). This is then followed by other indigenous languages.

Examples resembling this situation can be seen across the world. 21% of the population in Wales can speak Welsh, and at least 5% can understand it. After the Welsh-language television, S4C, went on air in 1982, various laws were put into place to support broadcasting in Welsh (Amezaga, Arana, Narbaiza and Azpillaga, 2013). However, other languages were not catered for in the broadcasting. It was only high-status or majority languages that enjoyed the media attention. Finland is another example. Swedish is an official language of Finland, with a population of 300 000. Despite the small number of speakers, Swedish enjoys a significant status in the country (Amezaga, Arana, Narbaiza and Azpillaga, 2013). Swedish's primary television keystone is on Yle Fen channel. Swedish enjoys great dominance in the channel over other indigenous languages (Finish, Sami, Romani, Karelian). Among these cases discussed above, there is one thing that they all have in common: minority languages are marginalised and suppressed by majority or the high-status languages.

Zimbabwe is another example worth observing. Zimbabwe has 18 African languages. Of these, only English, Shona and Ndebele are recognised as official national languages and that is because they both have a proportionately large number of speakers (Ndhlovu, 2006; Mpofu and Salawu, 2018). However, there is still a hierarchy between the Shona and Ndebele. Due to the Shona political hegemony, the two languages are not afforded equal status and functional spaces. The Ndebele language has always been marginalised in education, in the media, in the judiciary, politics and business (Ndhlovu, 2006; Mpofu and Salawu, 2018). In a similar vein, Hachipola (1999: xxi) submits that:

> One could be misled by politics to think that the government sees Shona and Ndebele on par. The truth is that Shona has a much higher status than Ndebele. In the media, for example on television and radio, news is read in Shona first.

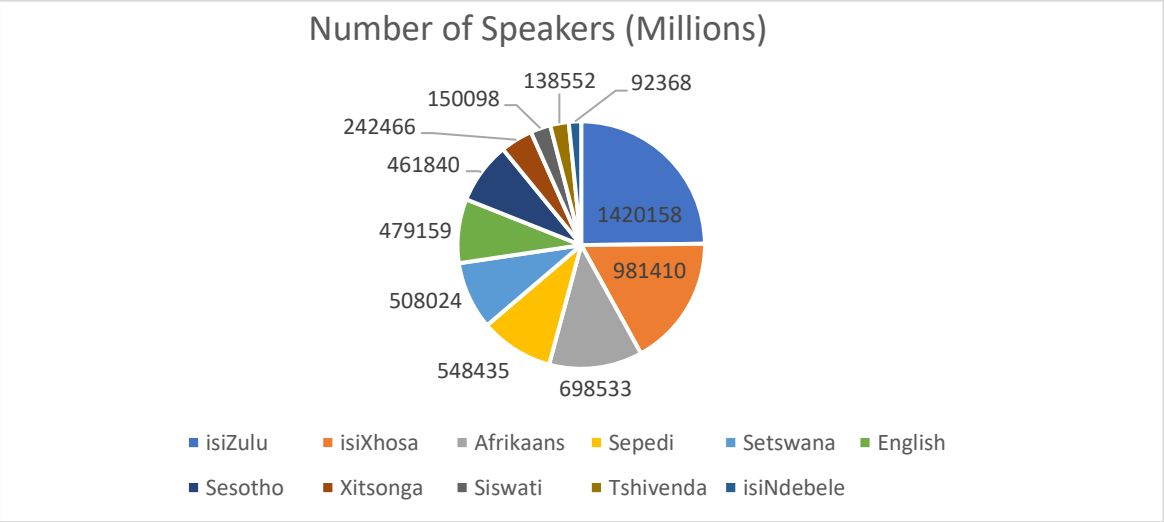
These debates reveal existing scholarship that precedes this study. It is inevitable that the treatment of small-status languages in SABC 1 is not a unique scenario. The problem exists in various parts of the world, small-status languages are not treated equal to the high-status

languages. The major point through which this study differs from the existing scholarship is that it focuses on the diglossic relationship between indigenous languages within a post-colonial and post-apartheid context. While most of the existing scholarship focus on the relationship between colonial and indigenous languages, I pay great attention to indigenous languages.

Media is central to contemporary language politics. Yet, the issue of minority language media, such as the use of small-status languages in the media is not generally noted for its political involvement (Cormack, 2000). Minority language media reveals a lot about active political, economic and social tensions involved in languages. Minority language media also reveal that some languages have more power than others, some deserve to be used in certain settings while others do not. These issues indicate the inequality that exists among languages. Television broadcasting in minority languages refers to television broadcasting in non-hegemonic languages (Amezaga, Arana, Narbaiza and Azpillaga, 2013). This exists in countries such as Norway, New Zealand, and Philippines. Television broadcasting was established in these countries to protect indigenous or minority languages such as Welsh, Tao Maori and Tagalog

In 2018, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) estimated the population of South Africa at 57, 73 million (Stats SA, 2018). Below, we get an appropriate visual representation of numerical importance of the official languages in South Africa.

Figure 3: Official languages of South Africa



Source: STATSSA (2018)

Judging by the statistics above, it is inevitable that some languages have smaller numbers of speakers than others. This might be because of various factors like language shift and migrations. A language loses its ground to another language because of mainly two factors: it is spoken by fewer people and it is highly influenced by the competitor, which its speakers seem to command or like better (Mufwene, 2005). This argument can be applied to the use of language in SABC 1, the more certain languages are used in the channel, the more people are likely to command or better like them. This has an effect of making language speakers shift from their indigenous languages to other languages.

Scholars such as Bourdieu (1977, 1991), Eckert (2003), (Mufwene, 2005) O'hlfearnain (2015) have studied the relationship between languages, focusing heavily on the relationship between colonial and indigenous languages. However, they did not look at such relationships between indigenous languages. Their arguments have been that colonial languages remain dominant in Africa; thus, they are given such a high respect in Africa, and across the world. A few scholars have also looked at the relationship between Kiswahili and other African indigenous languages. Moshi (2006), Okombo and Muna (2017) note that Kiswahili is rising above other indigenous languages in East Africa, it is becoming a lingua franca of the region, killing other indigenous languages and making itself the ultimate language.

In South Africa, a body of scholarship in this field (Bouwerman (2000), De Klerk (2000; De Wet, 2001) and Kamwangamalu (2003a; 2003b) have dedicated their work to issues of language shift in the South African context, with a special focus on the shift from indigenous languages to English in the media and education sector. This chapter acknowledges the previous work done on the field of language shift, especially in media. However, not much work has been done in language shift among indigenous languages on television dramas. It is, therefore, the intent of the current study to pursue an element of language shift among indigenous languages, especially in the media. Scholars have indicated the danger of shifts from indigenous languages to colonial languages but what is at stake when the shift is from one indigenous language to the other has not been adequately studied.

This chapter is an attempt to contribute to this body of work that has looked at power dynamics among languages, with a special focus on indigenous languages in South Africa. It is the view of this study that a comparable process of social stratification between colonial languages and indigenous languages (rendering the former more powerful and superior) has always been. The linguistic segregation legacy of Apartheid, demographic domination,

concepts of majority and minority have always been with us. SABC 1 now is playing a central role in that process. Further, it is possible to view the new hierarchisation of indigenous languages at SABC 1 as responding to the expanding populations of isiZulu speakers, whose magnanimity is now interlinked with neoliberal logic of capital and commodification processes linked with consumption of highly marketed commodities (Schrijver, 2014), which then makes indigenous languages compete and the SABC to meander on its linguistic promises as articulated in the National Language Policy. This argument also undergirds some of the questions this chapter attempts to answer: Was the introduction of isiZulu into *Skeem Skeem* meant to expand its population (viewership) by deliberately competing with Sepedi? Was this a strategy meant to consolidate the dominance of isiZulu by the SABC 1? What about Sepedi speakers having their own monolingual soap opera like Zulu people have *Uzalo*? These questions will be answered during this study.

In contemporary times, languages are heavily dependent not just on language speakers but also on broadcasting for their continuation and survival than just on language speakers. Furthermore, television is the most powerful vehicle for keeping languages alive from generation to generation (Howell, 1992). Therefore, it is easy to understand why cultural minorities throughout the world are fighting to gain access to their national and / or public airwaves, this is a strategy to help their languages survive and keep them alive (Howell, 1992).

Mufwene (2001, 2002a, 2002b) and Sissons (2005) have looked at how media creates linguistic authenticity and legitimacy in empowering and disempowering languages. The media can include and exclude languages. Drawing from this scholarship, I further advance a view that media engineers much of the language shifts to create superiority and inferiority among languages. *This view is based on the fact that: 1)* media has the power to influence worldviews, ideologies and behaviours, 2) the more languages are given airtime in the media the more they appeal to the listeners/viewers. Therefore, the media is used as a weapon to make people shift from one language to the other.

Language shift and Polyglossia: A threat to multilingualism?

The main argument of this theoretical framework is that language shift leads to polyglossia, which ultimately threatens multilingualism. Language shift denotes a community giving up a language completely or partially in favour of another one. In this case, the members of the community choose a new language where an old one existed. Romaine (1994) posits that in such a situation, a community which was once monolingual becomes bilingual due to contact with another language, usually a socially more powerful language. In this case, the community transitions into a new language until their own language is given up. The transitioning from one language to another is complex and may not always be voluntary because the other is appealing and speaking such a language offers speakers lucrative opportunities that their native languages cannot offer. In the case of this study, the shift from Sepedi to isiZulu offers the *Skeem Saam* a lucrative opportunity to prosper and to grow its ratings and viewership (Mtshali, 2020*[6]).

However, the shift from one language to another could be regarded as multilingualism, especially in a multilingual setting such as South Africa. Hence, shifting from Sepedi to isiZulu or to a more multilingual approach than the monolingual one that the soap started with requires a nuanced and holistic sociolinguistic investigation. As far as this chapter is concerned, the shift from Sepedi to a multilingual terrain in *Skeem Saam* is 'multilingualism in disguise', it is polyglossia as it elevates isiZulu to a lingua franca of the channel in yet another soap opera in SABC 1 as it has been the case with *Generations: The Legacy* and *Uzalo*.

Most language use in the media is metalinguistic, that is, its production relies on the successful deployment and uptake of what has already been framed politically, socially, and economically at the expense of other languages (Jaworski, 2007). Therefore, language shift in the media classifies and categorises languages. It creates a hostile environment within which other languages must exist. Kramsch (1998) argues that hostile linguistic systems help draw cultural and linguistic boundaries. They also help classify languages in groups of their importance or power.

Such is a typical case of what is unfolding in SABC 1. Giving more airtime and platform to isiZulu than indigenous languages carves a way for isiZulu being a powerful language with a

[6] Name(s) changed at the request of the interviewee

higher status, importance, and influence in the channel. The result of this is that cultural and linguistic boundaries are drawn about languages and cultures, a hierarchy is created, one in which isiZulu is at the top and other indigenous languages are at the bottom. This creates a linguistic ecology in which isiZulu is outcompeting other indigenous languages in SABC 1.

Polyglossia might be taken to refer to speaking many languages, it can mean multiplicity of languages, the use of several languages (Berger and Komori, 2010). The term polyglossia derives from the well-known concept of diaglossia - dichotomous language contexts with a 'High' and a 'Low' language variety (Leo and Wong, 1990). Polyglossia refers to a linguistic ecology in which a multilingual speaking community has a consensus that the main spheres of social interactions should be accessed via specific languages, or codes or registers (Di Carlo, 2017). Using polyglossic approach, we realise that in multilingual settings, there is an ideological division, stratification and compartmentalisation of languages.

Therefore, for SABC 1 it would be more appropriate to speak of polyglossia, many programs use a verbal repertoire containing more than two languages (except for *Uzalo* and the news). The reason for selecting the term 'polyglossia' over diaglossia for the present study is mainly pragmatic. This study is concerned with investigating language use in the mass media (SABC 1) where a wide range of languages are used, unlike only two as in a diaglossic situation.

Polyglot media depicts the diversity of language use (Berger and Komori, 2010), it is characterised by the presence of bi- or plurilingual dialogues or languages. Drawing from this definition, the focus of the present study is on the presence of multiple languages in the media. The presence of two or more languages on a screen presents complex solutions to make programs accessible to almost everyone. However, it also requires a sociolinguistic analysis to unpack the deeper meaning behind it. In what follows, I focus on the analysis of language usage in *Skeem Saam*.

Ethnolinguistic Attitudes, language regimes and the politics of monetary value on isiZulu language as a commodity in *Skeem Saam.*

In this subsection, I argue that the introduction of isiZulu into *Skeem Saam* and its ultimate takeover creates certain ethnolinguistic attitudes which are detrimental to small-status

languages. Language attitudes refer to speakers' feelings towards a language (rich, poor, ugly, beautiful). Language attitudes are "the feelings people have about their own language or the language of others" (Crystal, 1997:215).

It is important to ask whether SABC 1 has a tolerance towards ethnolinguistic minorities in its programming. The answer to this relies heavily on the economic status associated with each language in the channel. Neoliberalism cemented by capitalism contributes to ethnolinguistic attitudes. It is against this background that I access the development and current state of ethnolinguistic attitudes that are emerging in the SABC. In this section, I discuss how language attitudes are created in SABC 1 and how they are intertwined with socio-political agendas. In doing so, this section shows the danger of ethnolinguistic attitudes in functioning as a cause for ethnic and linguistic discrimination and rendering the language policy null and void.

To get to the crust of the problem, I conducted an interview with Tshidiso Mtshali. She is one of the key figures behind the production of *Skeem Saam*. With an experience of more than 10 years in the film and television industry, Mtshali has produced films for Mzanzi Magic and National Film and Video Foundation. He has also worked in sitcoms and drama series in SABC 1. According to Mtshali (2020), his interest in language issues in media started when he arrived at the SABC and worked for SABC 1 as programme provisioning producer. It was at this time that he realised that languages are not equal in the national broadcaster.

The interview with Mtshali revealed a lot about the treatment of languages in SABC 1, and one point revealed was that profit is one of the key elements determining the usage and status of a language in the broadcaster. Mtshali (2020:1) notes that "not every language will make you a profit. Not every language will appeal to the advertisers and audiences. That is the reason why isiZulu is progressing in those domains. It is a popular language". This statement underscores the shift from Sepedi to isiZulu vernacular, particularly from the years I have indicated earlier in this chapter. Television shows survive on advertisers to make a profit, they also need audiences to stay on air. This explains why dominant groups depend on popularity to stay dominant. The use of language and cultural flares in the media is based on popularity, in that, they gain their growth and survival depending on how the popular masses react to them. Thus, isiZulu can stay long in SABC 1 and even outcompete other languages because it has established itself as a language of the masses in the channel.

Mtshali (2020) maintains that

> As a producer, your job is to sell the show, source funding, deal with broadcasters and all other financial stuff. And it would be naïve for me to ignore the power of Zulu in selling the shows in SABC. The language is just a commodity, it sells, audiences do not mind it, advertisers want it for their products.

Mtshali (2020) further states that every show that is commissioned must bring profit. According to Mtshali, the first season of *Skeem Saam* had an unstable profit, advertisers did not trust the show to sell their product. Possibly, isiZulu was brought in for this reason because the language came towards the end of season 2.

Mtshali (2020:) clarifies the issue about the introduced isiZulu into *Skeem Saam:*

> The management will not tell you to 'use isiZulu only, a little bit of Venda and no Swati'. The mandate will be that the show must make money. You must attract audiences; you must use sociocultural elements that will generate profit for the show. What does that mean? What does it mean for small languages, small cultures? As producers, we have our backs against the wall. We choose between what is morally or societally correct and what is right for our stomachs (profit)

In the above, profit will prevail over what is morally or societally right. Mtshali's argument indicates that in the SABC, there is an unwritten policy which favours certain sociocultural factors over others. In as much as it is the responsibility of the producers to make the show generate profit, grow viewership, and increase ratings, the broadcaster uses soft power to make producers agree and pursue its ideologies.

It does not come as a surprise that languages are commodified for generating profit in SABC 1. According to Mtshali (2020), profitmaking and languages cannot be separated in the SABC. Mtshali explains that the industry standard to produce a soap opera in South Africa is R14 000 per minute. However, when *Skeem Saam* started, it was given R11 000, only after the 3rd season was the soap given R13 000. Mtshali explains that this was after the sudden changes to introduce isiZulu in the soap. What this means is that the price tags for isiZulu and Sepedi are not the same in *Skeem Saam*.

The price tag is a determinant, it tells what is important and what is less important. Not all languages have such a status as isiZulu in SABC 1. Karl Marx's ideas of commodity

exchange in capitalism is very relevant here. Marx discovered that capitalism creates economic relations among people, things and cultures. People and cultures are given prices for their value.

Lerato Tsotso[7]* (2020:1) supports Mtshali's statement by arguing that:

> Let me tell you a secret, shows in SABC 2 and 3 are not so profitable as shows in SABC 1. Language is very important in that. 2 and 3 (SABC 2 and 3) do not have programmes that are purely in Zulu. That is why they don't sell. This is the biggest language in the whole of South Africa. It is bound to make you money".

The adoption of language as a commodity stems from the influence of neoliberal ideology in languages. Under the neoliberal order, commodification spreads to all aspects of social life (Holborow, 2018), language and cultures are no exception to this process. Under neoliberal domains languages and cultures are monetised, they are used for commercial purposes. Languages and cultures are no longer treated as cultural tools but economic tools used to maximise profit. SABC 1 has realised the power and importance of isiZulu in this aspect, the language is simply a tool for the channel.

To support this argument, Heller, and Duchene (2016) observe that commodification of languages is memetic of the neoliberal order of things. That is, language is straightforwardly an economic asset. Citing a human capital theorist, Becker (2002:3), "what should lead some speakers of language X to learn language Y rather than language Z?" The answer for this relies on which language will give speakers economic and political freedom or power and access to resources.

These questions are fundamental to the SABC 1 situation, and the following rephrasing makes it clear why they are important: why should SABC 1 use language X instead of language Y? The answer for this is based on which language has strong political, social and economic support of the country, the language which will give the channel revenues. This is very relevant because SABC 1 is the most watched channel among all SABC channels.

[7] Name changed at the request of the interviewee

These arguments reveal that, indeed, not all languages are equal in SABC 1. The respect, prestige and value given to a language is dependent on various factors. In an ideal world of linguistic diversity,

> All languages are morally equal, and that, therefore, each has the right to have an unrepressed presence at the global linguistic banquet. In the real world, however, languages are not equal. While some are privileged as the languages of politico-economic power and control, others are marginalised, and others are still pushed to the verge of oblivion (Mazrui, 1998:52).

It is no surprise that some indigenous languages are pushed to the periphery in SABC 1. They do not have the same political, social and economic benefits for SABC as isiZulu. This stems from Tsotso's statement above, which shows that those who do not use isiZulu as a leading language do not make as much profit as the ones that use isiZulu as a leading language. In Mtshali's (2020:1) words,

> Politics, finances, social matters, they all play a role in what *Skeem Saam* is today. There is a lot that is going on behind the scenes, behind closed boardrooms that you as an audience do not know about. But the *Skeem Saam* that you see each day of the week on TV is a product of all those factors. And it won't surprise me if Zulu outplays Sepedi completely.

However, the ethnolinguistic attitudes created through *Skeem Saam* are not just economic, they are also cultural, they can be felt among audiences as will be shown below. As part of this study, I conducted an interview with a focus group. The focus group had 6 students from City Varsity College, where I lecture in the film and television department. Out of these six students, 2 are Sepedi speakers, 2 are isiZulu speakers and the other two speak isiXhosa. The purpose of the focus group was to get an audience's perspective on the use of language in *Skeem Saam*.

The focus group results indicate that even from audiences' perspective, there is a battle for power in terms of these indigenous languages. Zulu speaking audiences are comfortable with isiZulu dominating the media because this is the biggest language in the country. Speakers of other indigenous languages feel that their languages are being treated unfairly.Nkosi maintains that "isiZulu is the biggest language in South Africa, Zulus are many, +more than any other tribe in this country. So, it is not a problem for isiZulu to dominate in the media".

According to Kgotso, on the other hand, "as Mopedi (a Sepedi speaking person) I feel like our language and other minority languages are being undermined in South Africa. Zulus have *Uzalo*, they also have *Isibaya*, they have many shows. That is unfair"

Other students were neutral in this debate. Their stance is that the broadcaster must use a language that audiences will understand, and a language that will generate income because broadcasting is all about profit. According to Xolani

> As a Xhosa-speaking person, I understand isiZulu. So, if shows are playing in isiZulu, I do not have a problem with that and most people in the country understand isiZulu. But, if we have Tshangane (Xitsonga) or Venda shows, people will not watch TV because they do now know those languages. That is why I do not watch *Muvhango* because I do not know Venda.

It is inevitable that ethnolinguistic issues in SABC 1 are sowing divisions in the public. This is due to the ethnolinguistic attitudes that are brewed and distributed by languages in media. Giles, Coupland, and Coupland (1991), demonstrate that attitudes towards languages and communication are inseparable. SABC 1 is multilingual in paper, but monoglot in character/practice. This form of engineered monolingualism by SABC 1 is naturalised to the extent that it is taken for granted as 'common sense'.

Although media in South Africa, especially the SABC has been argued to be "democratic" and "plural" in that they promote equal participation, there is little protection of small-status languages. IsiZulu is increasingly dominant in the channel, while multilingualism is circumscribed. The SABC 1 linguistic environment is persistently hierarchic, which creates a dichotomy of dominant and dominated languages.

The emerging ethnolinguistic attitudes in *Skeem Saam* create language regimes. By language regimes, it means the distribution of linguistic power (Knight, 1992), that delineates which languages can be used when and where. This suggests speakers of certain languages can lay claim to greater respect (Horowitz, 1995). Language regimes have the potential to distribute linguistic power equally, creating a sense of collective community that is shared by all (Liu, 2015). However, this is hardly the case as language regimes usually create inequality by adopting certain languages over others, using certain languages as lingua franca over others.

In an interview with Tshepo Morena (2020), a film director in South Africa, a lot of issues emerged regarding language usage in South African media. Morena argues that the

"multilingualism" in *Skeem Saam* does not come as a surprise, even though the soap was initially meant to be a Sepedi program. According to Morena (2020), from his experience of working in several media productions in the country, there is a clear agenda to undermine the status of minority languages and replace them with isiZulu. Morena further points out that the SABC is driven by surface language popularity considerations, a language that is popular among audiences gets preferences in SABC programming.

Morena's stance was also supported by Simon Owen, a film lecturer in one of the South African film and media institutions. In an interview, Owen (2020) stated that isiZulu is becoming a new English/Afrikaans of the post-Apartheid era. There is a sense of disregard for minority languages in the South African media, these languages are overshadowed by the political and social support of isiZulu (Owen, 2020).

The shift from Sepedi as a language of *Skeem Saam* to a polyglot culture that is currently leading to isiZulu dominating the soap opera is multifaceted. From the above arguments, politics, economy and status of a language all play a role in determining which language is going to be used for the programme. Bantu Ndumiso*[8] (2020), one of the core production members in the show acknowledge that there was a managerial influence on the move from *Skeem Saam* being a pure Sepedi soap opera to a multilingual soap. According to Ndumiso, this was a decision taken without consultation with the executive production team of the soap, it was a decision from the higher office of the SABC. The time in which isiZulu rose to prominence in *Skeem Saam* is the time in which SABC was clouded by political and executive interference in the broadcasting of programmes under the leadership and vision of Hlaudi Motsoeneng. Therefore, Ndumiso's note of management making decisions on the language of programmes that would affect productions is not a surprise.

During colonial and apartheid times, dominant linguistic groups always relied on their political and economic status to overpower, consume and subordinate groups that do not have the same political and economic statuses. However, in post-apartheid neoliberal South Africa, such a move has paled because the status of languages is now determined by market forces. During colonial and Apartheid period English and Afrikaans ascended to power through political allegiance, economic support and social status while indigenous languages remained marginalised and were forced to assimilate to the dominant groups. In post-apartheid era, the linguistic contestations no longer work within past binaries, but there is a lot that is

[8] *Names have been changed at the request of the interviewees.

predicated on neoliberal logic of maximising gains at the expense of what is of cultural value and just. This has resulted in scenarios where speakers of socio-politically weak languages are forced to speak dominant languages if they want recognition or access to resources, or they must start borrowing variants of dominant languages and infusing them to their native languages.

In an interview with some actors, a number of these contestations emerged. For instance, Jack Masemola* (2020:1), one of the leading actors in the soap states that "at first we were excited as Bapedi that we also have our own programme in TV. But that changed gradually, by the time we realised it, *Skeem Saam* was a mix of all other languages". A member of the writing team in *Skeem Saam*, Tsotso* (2020) reveals that transitioning from being a purely Sepedi to multilingualism was something that took everyone by shock in the production team, "but we were told that the show has to make money, and money comes from more viewers".

Space has its own ideologies. *Skeem Saam* is a typical space where language ideologies have unfolded. According to Masemola (2020:1) "when you talk about language, you talk about status, dignity, respect, your being. And when you lose your language you lose all of that". Sepedi is certainly losing the elements reiterated by Masemola. This eventually leads to small-status languages assimilating into the mainstream. There is a consensus established that SABC 1 is an agent of social control whose operations and functions are driven by a desire to elevate isiZulu to an ethnolinguistic dominance of the channel.

In the words of Mtshali (2020:1) "When you talk about agency you talk autonomy. Your research is raising an important issue, an issue that we might have all overlooked, Sepedi has lost its autonomy in *Skeem Saam*. It is now just one of the languages in the show". In support of Mtshali, Tsotso (2020:1) contends that "languages do not only lose stature when they are being undermined in media, they also lose credibility".

Any form of speaking and language usage involves agency. This is because language usage establishes a reality that has the potential to affect whoever might be listening (Duranti, 2004). Van Lier (2008) adds that agency is central to language usage. In a similar vein, Joseph (2006) argues that agency is paradox, either we have it or we do not have it. Some have it more than others, however, no one lacks it absolutely. In other words, the level to which we have agency is not the same.

Agency exists alongside space; they are intertwined. Blommaert (2010:6) states that "space is always *someone's* space…filled with norms, expectations, conceptions of what counts as proper and normal…language use and what does not count" [italics added]. Pennycook (2010) further describes space as 'organised' and given meaning, it produces meaning as well as the subjects who inhabit it. Miller (2012) argues that one way to investigate the meaning behind spaces is to consider the linguistic acts coming out of a space.

This contention is applicable to the use of language in SABC 1 and how this has transcended to *Skeem Saam*. Multilingual spaces such as SABC 1 contain groups in contact who are frequently in competition. This has dire consequences for ethnolinguistic maintenance and pluralism. The reality of the matter is that those with established agency will prevail and the rest will lose their agency.

The loss of ethnolinguistic pluralism is apparent in SABC 1. This will result in a culture of monoglot which will ultimately mean that SABC 1 is a one-language-channel, others are just being accommodated. This strategy defeats the purpose of the SABC language policy, which is to achieve the multiculturalism of South Africa's linguistic ecology.

Conclusion

The SABC language policy was designed to produce inclusionary linguistic practices in the SABC programming. However, this has not been fruitful for all indigenous languages. In this chapter, I incorporated an analysis of the SABC language policy to which the examination of the use of languages in *Skeem Saam* are tied, as well as the ways in which the use of these languages is undergird by ideologies. Small-status languages are hard done by the shift from monolingual Sepedi in *Skeem Saam* to an inclusionary polyglossic approach. The transition has destabilised them in SABC 1 and weakened the base which they were starting to enjoy.

One factor which leads to the loss of ethnolinguistic pluralism and elevates isiZulu to the status of the lingua franca in SABC 1 is neoliberalism. Markets favour linguistic practices that can unite the people, grow the economy and sell the brand. If one language does that, the market is happy with it and promoted as a language of the state of being. The culture of monoglots promote single languages and invests in the value associated with a language. As

such, the common belief is that embracing single languages would provide us with readymade access to social inclusion and socioeconomic mobility.

Languages such as isiZulu have established their own demographic securities in the media, they are densely populated in the media to a point where they maintain some level of endogamy (Anderson and Anderson). However, the situation is not that bleak. Indigenous South African languages in SABC generally are in stable condition, they maintain vitality despite the dominance of isiZulu in SABC 1. Other languages do not enjoy such positive view of the situation.

In every language contact, there is a chance that language imperialism will emerge, resulting in language shift. In such situations, speakers abandon one language and shift to another Language contact emerged in *Skeem Saam* (the introduction of isiZulu), as a result, the soap is slowly but gradually moving away from being a Sepedi soap opera to isiZulu, playing a core role as a language of the soap opera together with Sepedi. This does not mean that *Skeem Saam* must be multilingual while using some indigenous languages and rejecting isiZulu. Previous chapters have discussed how isiZulu dominates *Generations: The Legacy*, and that isiZulu is the sole language in *Uzalo*. In *Skeem Saam,* the soap opera started by giving other small-status languages a platform, which I believe would have contributed significantly to the multilingual policy of the SABC. However, isiZulu has also come into play and it is outcompeting Sepedi. Thus, what is unfolding in SABC 1 is not multilingualism, but polyglossia.

Chapter 4: A Quest Against Neoliberal Multiculturalism, Form and Content in the case of *Muvhango*.

Introduction

African popular culture is constantly producing radical changes against the oppressive neoliberal policies. In Ghana, radio stations are known for allowing languages of the street, characterised by slang, codeswitching and mixing of English, Akan, and other Ghanaian languages (Barber, 2018). Even presenters translate news from English to indigenous languages, listeners call the radio stations and address themselves in everyday registers (Barber, 2018). All these are counter strategies against the neoliberal agenda which views languages as economic resources that must be used depending on their price tags. The Ghanaian radio stations reject this strategy and treat languages equitably, giving them a platform that under neoliberal governance they would not be given.

Muvhango is a good case study of a local soap opera that has resisted the takeover of neoliberal multiculturalism. Kymlicka (2013) defines neoliberal multiculturalism as the belief that ethnic identities can be profitable, they can be used as assets to make money. Ethnic identities such as language, tribe and culture are used by neoliberal forces to make money. Neoliberal agents attach price tags to these identities and ultimately create challenges and insecurities for individuals and groups. That is because some individuals and groups start to see themselves as superior to others, as more valuable than others.

In *Muvhango,* Tshivenda has been a key language of the story for more than two decades without the soap resorting to more economic languages to sell the show, increase viewership, or win awards. For this reason, the current chapter will analyse form (production techniques) and content (narrative) in *Muvhango* looking at the following elements and how their representation and utilisation challenge the neoliberal agenda: setting/location, the utilisation of Tshivenda, and the use of stars/ "popular performers".

According to Statistics South Africa's Community Survey of 2018, Tshivenda was spoken by only 2.5% of South Africans out of a population of 58 million people, that is, only 1 450000 people spoke Tshivenda. This is a small number compared to, for example, isiZulu which has 14 674000 speakers and Setswana which has 6 438000 speakers (STATS SA, 2018). This indicates that Vendas are a small group in South Africa, thus the efforts by *Muvhango* to

sustain the usage of this language as the language of the soap should be studied to understand the ideological motive behind it.

The use of a small-status language (Tshivenda), the location of the show in Venda and Johannesburg, and the use of unpopular stars in the soap, all contribute to the fight against neoliberalism. For instance, through these elements, the soap promotes localisation, a counterstrategy of neoliberalism which pushes internationalisation. According to Bamberger, Morris, and Yemini (2019), internationalisation embodies a complex entanglement with neoliberalism. That is, one is a product of the other. The United States of America's (USA) economic and political status in the world has led to internationalisation of its film/production/distribution techniques (Gornostaeva and Brunet, 2009). Classical Hollywood Cinema cinematic techniques such as: character-centred narrative, psychologically motivated characters and three act structure have been internationalised.

The analysis of form and content in *Muvhango* demonstrates that the show is in the process of granting Tshivenda socio-political agency, self-determination, and democratic inclusion in the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), a space that is currently dominated by isiZulu. For example, the soap's narrative devices are one of the ways through which *Muvhango* is rejecting internationalisation. *Muvhango* is well known for relying on old oral art forms such as praise poetry and incantations. This is a way of consuming both the old and young audiences. The show does not reject any audience segment on the bases that it is outdated, illiterate, old-fashioned or uneconomical.

This chapter will argue that *Muvhango* is a project rejecting and challenging neoliberalism in the film and television industry. Focusing on how neoliberalism produces the so-called "international film standards, techniques, and narratives," the chapter will argue that such is a strategy that seeks to eliminate indigenous popular cultural films which opt to make films for their audiences, in languages that their audiences will understand and acted by the local people. Through these elements, the chapter will demonstrate that *Muvhango* opposes neoliberalism through localisation of its form and content. The key theme of the story that will be tackled to advance these arguments is the celebration of African cultures. Throughout its history, *Muvhango* has celebrated the Tshivenda, isiZulu, Sesotho and Setswana cultures. At the core of the story is the relationship between modernity and the traditional lifestyles.

It is the view of this chapter that neoliberal filmic techniques (form and content) are purposely used to marginalise minorities and keep them away from the media ultimately

creating a superiority complex where some indigenous groups are made superior to the others. Gabriel (1988) argued that the established Hollywood standards (content with international appeal, stories with a clear three-act structure, a chain of events and continuity editing) are not ideal for stories in the Global South as film is highly influenced by its context. Drawing inspiration from global movements such as Italian neorealism, French New Wave and Third Cinema, *Muvhango* is a tool in the hands of the minority groups in South Africa such the Venda people. *Muvhango* opposes structural and systematic exclusion of the minorities in the media. The show gives minorities space in the media, it uses a small-status language as the key language of the show and it represents Venda culture from the perspective of pride, using techniques such as long takes, few close-up shots and oral narratives. The show is rejecting international production techniques which are associated with profit-making and production success.

One of the other ways through which *Muvhango* rejects neoliberalism is that it does not cater exclusively to the economic elites, it does not follow the logic of economic optimisation. Economic optimisation is the process of finding the maximum value of a product. *Muvhango* does not use languages and cultures with an intention of selling the show, it uses these to portray the African ways of living. For example, through the character of Mulisi (Humbulani Tsharani) a traditional healer for the royal house, the story does not sensationalise his character, it does not portray him as a mad man. He is represented as a character with an exceptional gift, with the ability to interpret bones and make life predictions. The character of Mulimisi is at the centre of the story in Venda and the people around him understand him and respect him for this role in the royal house. By so doing, the story does not reject African traditional beliefs or ridicules them, rather, they are embraced and celebrated.

Through storylines such as battle for chieftaincy among the Vhakwevhos, power and greed in the Johannesburg's corporate companies, the use of traditional healers at the centre of Africans' way of living in the villages, *Muvhango* is showing that minorities have good stories to tell just like majority or dominant social groups. The show allows for plurality of stories, cultures, languages and geographical backgrounds, producing a new post-Apartheid popular culture that is not based on popularity and dominance.

The other element of *Muvhango* which challenges the process of neoliberal multiculturalism is its polyglot culture of South Africans. *Muvhango* is highly diverse, it features stories of ethnic interactions, it has inter-ethnic marriages and friendships. By so doing, the show gives

equal weight of different languages and cultures without pitting the languages against each other. In other words, *Muvhango* does not value one culture or language over the others. Even though, the soap is dominated by Tshivenda, characters from other cultural groups such as Zulus and Sothos do not assimilate with the Vendas, they get to keep their cultures and languages when they interact with Venda characters.

The story that this chapter wants to trace is how *Muvhango* resists neoliberal multiculturalism. The soap has used Tshivenda without stigmatising it as a language of the minority, the show has portrayed Venda as a village with economic activities, law and order, not as backward village that its citizens are eager to leave for greener pastures in big cities. *Muvhango* has also given emerging / unknown Venda speakers big roles as leading characters in the story. Such is an attempt to elevate cultures, languages and people that are usually forgotten in the neoliberal agenda. These arguments will be demonstrated in detail later in this chapter.

Neoliberalism is known for having a huge negative impact on multiculturalism across the world (Kymlicka, 2012). However, the story of the resilience of communities and ethnicities against neoliberalism cannot be ignored. Studies on ways in which minorities resist neoliberal ideologies have been conducted on how communities are protecting themselves. In Argentina faith-based organisations have played a significant role in offering services such as basic education and health care to citizens when government and the private sector failed to do so (Occhipinti, 2015). This stature is a respect for human life even amid profitmaking as a rule when administering health care for civilians. Countries which include Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala have seen indigenous communities fight against commercialisation of their cultures, heritages, languages, and even natural resources (Van Cott, 2006). By rejecting these cultural aspects to be sold, they have resisted the use of money to access heritage centres. Resilience of multiculturalism against neoliberalism resembles the fight for belonging and citizenship.

Arguably, *Muvhango*, in its two decades on air has been using a small-status language (Tshivenda) as its language of the show. However, other small-status languages that are constantly featured in the soap include Xitsonga, Setswana, and Sesotho. These languages have been featured in other soap operas in the SABC (*Generations: The Legacy*, and *Skeem Saam*) and they never survived for a long time. They are always replaced by isiZulu, which is a dominant indigenous language in South Africa. Such a replacement is due to the former's

economic status compared to the latter. These small-status languages are not as economically viable as isiZulu (Ndebele and Zulu, 2017; Gumbi, 2019). Cealligh (2019) argues that macro-level economic forces have a significant impact on language shift. Nettle and Romaine (2000) and Mufwene (2017) have also argued that minority languages suffer a great deal in social changes due to macro-level economic forces.

It is also worth noting that *Muvhango* has never experienced a language shift. In *Muvhango* other languages do not challenge the existence of Tshivenda, they do not replace it as the language of the programme. As argued in the previous chapter, isiZulu has emerged as a competitive language to Sepedi in *Skeem Saam*. This has not been the case with *Muvhango*. The show started playing predominantly in Tshivenda and Sesotho. Later Setswana, isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Xitsonga were introduced in the show. However, these languages never threatened to take over or replace Tshivenda. At no point, did we see Setswana or Xitsonga culture or language taking over from Tshivenda. Arguably, the status, space and privilege given to a small-status language has not been taken away or replaced with more competitive and economical cultural flares.

The point of departure in this chapter in contrast to the previous chapters is that the focus is on small-status language(s). In the previous chapters, the focus was on isiZulu as a hegemonic language replacing and dominating other indigenous languages in SABC 1. The previous chapters argued and demonstrated that such a domination is a result of neoliberal influence on languages. This chapter provides a new dimension that small-status languages can challenge, resist, and / or redefine neoliberalism. Thus, the aim of this section is to analyse the extent to which small-status languages can fight neoliberal multiculturalism.

In other words, *Muvhango* follows in the footsteps of the general African popular culture that contests the visibility of African people in global spaces. These include African films, songs, paintings, literature, and poetry that resists the framings of power imposed on the African people. The African art that helps restore the dignity of Africans (Ugor, 2015, Oloruntoba-Oju, 2019). Barber (1997:1) refers to such African popular cultural artefacts as the "most protean, adaptable, transferable of arts" and the only ones to make noticeable impact on the African people and their material conditions. The study will prove these assertions through studying how form and content in *Muvhango* are contesting power against the neoliberal multiculturalism.

In discussing the above objective of the study, the following questions become important to this paper: how can the media play a role in linguistic social justice? How does *Muvhango* ensure social justice towards languages such as Tshivenda? How does *Muvhango* preserve territorial integrity of Tshivenda? How did *Muvhango* use Tshivenda to survive the impact of neoliberalism in SABC? How does *Muvhango* ascertain the future of small-status languages in media, especially SABC.

Background to the production of *Muvhango*

Muvhango is a Tshivenda soap opera, created by Duma kaNdlovu. The soap broadcasts on SABC 2, Monday to Friday (21:00-21:30). SABC 2 is one of the three television channels that belong to South African Broadcasting Corporation. The channel broadcasts mainly in Afrikaans, English, Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. Masenyama (2006: 160) summarises the structure of the SABC channels as follows:

> SABC 1 is a full-spectrum channel aimed at younger viewers, broadcasting in English, isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, and siSwati. SABC 2 is also a full-spectrum station but aimed at the whole family and broadcasts in English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, Xitsonga and Tshivenda. [However, SABC 1 and 2 no longer broadcast in English]. SABC 3 broadcasts in English only.

SABC 2's focus on these languages is justified by its target audience. The channel does not use languages that can be regarded as "popular".

The title: *Muvhango*, is a Venda word, meaning "conflict". The first episode of *Muvhango* was aired on the 7th April 1997. During this period *Muvhango* was a 13-episode drama series, playing weekly. Due to growth and popularity of the soap, it started to play three days a week for 7 years. From 2005-2007 *Muvhango's* viewership was ranging between 1 million to 1.8 million (Independent Online, 2005). This was the highest viewership the show had ever experienced. The popularity of the show among various South African cultural and linguistic groups continued to grow between 2010 and 2013. From March 2014 *Muvhango* started to play 5 days a week.

Muvhango depicts diverse urban and rural contexts of South African people. This is unlike other soap operas that usually limit their representation to semirural, suburban, or black township of South Africa. The base language of the soap is Tshivenda, a minority / small-status language spoken predominantly in the Limpopo province, 1 209 388 speakers (Statistics South Africa, 2016). The multilingual nature of the soap is what has attracted the attention of this thesis. It is the view of this paper that *Muvhango* is an epitome of multiculturalism in South African television.

Muvhango is set mainly in the rural village of Thathe in Venda (Limpopo) and Johannesburg (Gauteng), focusing on the lives of the royal Mukwevho family under the leadership of the family patriarch and village chief, Azwindini Mukwevho (Gabriel Temudzani), (SABC 2, 2020). The show juxtaposes traditional beliefs and ways of living with the modern lives between those who live in Venda and Johannesburg. This Tshivenda soap opera has presented to the South African television market storylines that speak to the African experiences for over two decades (SABC 2, 2020). The show has remained true to its vision of telling real African stories and cultures. Pamela Power, *Muvhango's* story editor, states that *Muvhango* is mainly a Venda/Sotho soap opera, but there are also Zulu and Pedi characters (Brand South Africa, 2017). *Muvhango* is a show concerned with cultures, rituals, indigenous people, and their languages. According to Power, in an interview with Brand South Africa (2017), *Muvhango* deals with everyday rituals that occur in every family or culture, the show is culturally rich that every South African can learn from it. This set up influences the language choices in the soap. The story's setting and its storylines fit well into the use of indigenous languages.

The other major element of the soap is the family feuds between the Mukwevhos and Mokoenas. The third family that is also at the centre of the story is the Mojalefa. They are newcomers in the story and are brought in through a business partnership with the Vhakwevho. Later, Vhakwevho started seeing evil intents and scheming in everything the Mojalefas do. The battle for power between the two families has culminated into outright war that led to the death of Albert Mukwevho, who was one of the family leaders of the Vhakwevho.

Since its first episode, *Muvhango* has produced very interesting plotlines: the royal family and its subjects, members of the Thate village in disagreement with the royal family because of matters regarding land, relationships and marriages in tatters, political killings, corruption,

fraud and money laundering by government officials. All these plotlines have kept *Muvhango's* audiences on their screen every day at 21:00 on SABC to watch the unfolding of events that affect every community in South Africa.

Ndlovu, in an interview with *Alex News* (2017:1), states that *Muvhango* "started as a concept in the quest to bridge the cultural divide between black communities and also the issue of language superiority". Ndlovu's statement supports the previous argument made that *Muvhango* is a platform used to tackle issues of language superiority or language exclusion in the South African media. By using Tshivenda as a language of the show, *Muvhango* is rejecting neoliberal ideologies of hierarchising and prioritising certain languages over others. This is a strategy to support the utilisation of indigenous languages in the mainstream media. Arguably, this is also a strategy to help minority social groups sustain their well-being in face of neoliberal world order. Hall and Lamont (2012) refer to this strategy as social resilience in the neoliberal era, that is, the capacity of groups of people to sustain and advance their well-being in the face of neoliberalism. Therefore, *Muvhango's* themes of witchcraft, supernatural powers by traditional healers and representations of the Venda culture and rituals without stigmatisation is a social resilience effort to elevate the marginalised cultures that do not fit into the neoliberal narrative.

Ndlovu is very well-known in the South African film and television fraternity. He has produced and directed *Muvhango, Soweto Blues* (2006), *Uzalo* (2015) and *Imbewu – The Seed* (2018). All his shows are known for using indigenous languages: *Muvhango* uses Tshivenda and Sesotho, *Soweto Blues* (a documentary) uses English, isiZulu, and Sesotho, *Uzalo* uses isiZulu only, while *Imbewu – The Seed* uses predominantly isiZulu and at times, English. The success of *Muvhango* in using small-status language necessitates a critical inquiry about how small-status languages can survive the powers of neoliberalism. It is also important to understand why Ndlovu's first television production (*Muvhango*) has always used small-status languages as its languages of programming, but his subsequent shows opted for dominant languages (English and isiZulu).

It is also important to note that in rural Venda, in *Muvhango,* characters speak a standard version of Tshivenda. They do not switch to English or other languages (Nzimande, 2015). But when they visit Johannesburg they can switch to other indigenous languages. Characters such as Azwindini, Albert (Ndhivuho Mutsila), Rendani (Innocentia Manchidi), Ndalamo (Lesley Musina) and Hangwani (Constance Sibiya) can all switch from Tshivenda, to isiZulu,

Sesotho, and Xitsonga respectively in the soap. Such is the nature of multilingualism depicted in *Muvhango*. The soap avoids compromise on linguistic inclusion no matter the story line.

According to Finlayson, Slabbert and Berg (2008), in a study conducted on the language usage in South African media, the original intention of using standard Tshivenda in the soap was to satisfy language purists. However, later, the soap started introducing dialectical variation within Tshivenda and other indigenous languages. This argument reveals that *Muvhango* does not only cater for other small-status languages, but it also uses various dialects of Tshivenda. This ensures that the soap appeals to the majority, if not to all Tshivenda speakers.

In the next section, this study looks at ways in which this study contributes to the scholarship. The next section will identify the gaps in the previous studies and offer ways through which the current study will fill those gaps. Following this will be the analysis of the existing literature in the field of neoliberal multiculturalism, followed by the theoretical framework. The study will conclude by analysing ways through which *Muvhango* is rejecting neoliberal multiculturalism.

Neoliberalism and minority languages: Small-status languages matter.

Countries such as Australia are highly diverse linguistically (Piller, 2014). However, the absence of the constitutional protection of Aboriginal rights in Australia "left Aboriginal people exposed to a harsh form of neoliberal restructuring that cut deeply into the basic terms of Aboriginal citizenship" (Kymlicka, 2012). This is because Australia has long been characterised by a monolingual mindset (Clyne, 2005), which has resulted in minority languages being rendered invisible (Piller, 2014). Speaking of Latin America, Fischer (2007:11) notes that the indigenous people have been "able to use [neoliberalism] to make further demands [about their citizenship] and redefine the terms of relations between the state and civil society and indigenous people".

Other work that has been done on the resistance of social groups against neoliberalism has mainly been in the education sector. Hill (2008) looked at how students in United Kingdom, Haiti and Brazil are encouraged to use their languages in the classrooms, a move going

against the neoliberal project which seeks to uplift English above other languages in those contexts. Chun (2008), on the other hand, studied ways in which teachers are constantly teaching learners about neoliberalism, an attempt which seeks to make learners more aware of their surroundings. Likewise, Costigan (2013), in this research, realised that some schools in the Unites of America are making their learners aware that their education system is meant to turn them into workers for big corporates, rather than the owners of the economy. These studies reveal valuable examples of ways in which neoliberalism is being contested in the education sector across the world.

In South African scholarship and context, there is a gap on the topic at hand. No scholarship exists that look at how small-status languages have resisted neoliberalism in the South African media. Drawing from the above scholars, this study aims to contribute to the debates by providing a new perspective about the fight against neoliberalism from small-status languages. The newness presented in this study is that *Muvhango* is involved in a fight against neoliberalism, giving small-status languages a chance to exist in the media even when generally the influence of neoliberalism in the broadcaster has been noted. The use of Tshivenda in the mainstream media that is currently dominated by isiZulu is an effort against neoliberalism and an effort to raise the status of small-status languages in the media. The use of "unpopular stars" which *Muvhango* always endorses is also a strategy that defeats the purpose of neoliberalism in the media (to use stars to sell and/or marker the show), the themes of the story that are centred on indigenous African cultures are also a strategy against neoliberalism as they seek to celebrate and endorse African cultures, beliefs and practices. The cultural aspects in *Muvhango* (such as initiation schools, the belief in African traditional practices) are represented as ways of life instead of commodities.

Some work on neoliberal multiculturalism has explored how some languages have failed to resist structural and ideological inclusion. For example, in Kenya internationalization has negatively affected indigenous languages (Orao, 2007). Mozambique is also another example characterised by high levels of linguistic and cultural diversity (Henriksen, 2015), but due to globalisation and neoliberalism, these countries' minority languages are struggling to keep up with the competition from dominant, colonial languages (Henriksen, 2015). In these studies, the authors seem to focus a lot on the impact of the neoliberal agenda on indigenous languages and ignore the counter strategies evoked by these indigenous languages against the neoliberal agenda.

How this study intends to differ from its predecessors is by looking at how small-status languages resist the destructive effects of neoliberalism on languages in former colonised states and turn it into an assert. Drawing from the argument made above on how *Muvhango* rejects neoliberal multiculturalism, the study argues that the use of Tshivenda in *Muvhango* is a way of using neoliberalism to compete in global spaces, to rise above its "lower status". Tshivenda is fighting the destruction of neoliberalism in the media, the destruction that has taken or kept some indigenous languages away from the media. For example, more than 250 Nigeria's indigenous languages are not present in the local media. That is because only Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are associated with profit and prestige in the media (Usua, 2018). This study propels the analysis of language and neoliberalism in a new direction. In a fight against neoliberalism, Newari speakers in Nepal also use this economic policy to bestow new meaning to their language, they afford minority languages economic opportunities in the art and tourism sectors. They use neoliberalism to make Newari compete in globalised and neoliberal spaces (Sharma and Phyak, 2017). This argument opens debates for the study of small-status languages in South Africa and their fight against neoliberalism.

This study opens a debate about the relationship between media and neoliberalism. Neoliberalism plays a significant role in the media in that it creates a media operation that is dominated by the logic of the market (Phelan, 2014). Harvey (2005) argues that media's operation is highly ideologised on two perspectives: economy and politics. According to Phelan (2018), the media's agenda, narrative and framing perspectives are drawn from the neoliberal logic. Congruently, the media, just like the state, internalises neoliberal logics. The media's operation is dictated by market and political forces. This takes away the role of media in society which is to educate, entertain and inform.

Popular culture in the era of neoliberal multilingualism

Neoliberal multiculturalism

Harvey (2005:2) states that neoliberalism "proposes that human well-being can be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade". Neoliberalism has a significant impact on languages, it gives languages economic value and decides the status of languages. In the thesis, I approach the relationship between neoliberalism and

languages from the perspective of neoliberal multilingualism. In the field of language, neoliberalism often exists as an ideology that commodifies languages (Ennser-Kananen, Escobar, Bigelow, 2016). This takes the essence of language as an expression of pride, belonging and citizenship towards one of profit, economic and materials gains (Heller and Duchene, 2012). This is also true in the field of media, the impact of neoliberalism results in a shift from multilingualism in social liberalism understanding to market values, which involves languages that can sell the shows. This is a business competitive model, generating among other things, greater social inequality (Zacchi, 2016).

Kymlicka (2013) states that the multiculturalism rose in the 1960s, well before neoliberalism and was rooted in a social democratic impulse, emphasising the struggle for citizenship and belonging. It was for this reason that neoliberalism rejected multiculturalism project because the former viewed the latter as a project of the social democratic welfare state (Kymlicka, 2013). Later neoliberals decided to work with multiculturalism, transforming it in a neoliberal direction, reframing it as a project of market inclusion rather than citizenship (Kymlicka, 2015).

Under the influence of neoliberalism, multiculturalism emerged as the form of cultural logic of multinational capitalism (Zizek, 1997), creating multiculturalism as a technique of neoliberal governance, making it a way of integrating minorities and minority cultural products into global market (Michell, 2004; Hale, 2005; Cardinal and Denault, 2007). The multicultural project created by neoliberals is not about addressing the social and political marginalisation of minorities, rather, it is about enabling minorities to utilise their cultural markets and identities as sources of market inclusion and exploit their cultures as sources of capital, (Kymlicka, 2015). The neoliberal version of multiculturalism was to have ethnicity, cultures and intercultural competence as market assets.

According to Kymlicka (2015:7) neoliberal multiculturalism denotes “equal right of all to market themselves and their culture, and to safely consume the cultural products of others…in short, inclusion without solidarity”. The concept of neoliberal multilingualism suggests that multilingualism, while promising linguistic and cultural diversity, is being used as another form of neoliberal governance (Straud and Guissemo, 2015). Neoliberal multiculturalism treats speakers as clients, treats communities as business enterprises, it makes languages and cultures obey principles of economic efficiency (Boccara, 2011). This leads to cultural choices becoming opportunity costs. Neoliberalism is offering cultures

spaces in the market while using them to its own advantage, to advance its cause. That is, neoliberalism is emerging as a new form of linguistic maintenance and governance. Neoliberalism is in control of linguistic rights and intercultural equality.

Whenever neoliberal reforms have shaped social relations, it is also possible that those relations have also shaped neoliberalism. The latter have blocked some neoliberal reforms, while pushing other reforms in unexpected directions, with unexpected results (Kymlicka, 2013). *Muvhango* is a typical case of a process where neoliberal reforms have been pushed aside, endorsing the value and status of small-status indigenous languages. In the process, *Muvhango* pushes for social resilience through subverting, or appropriating neoliberal ideas to protect the identities of the minorities without a desire for profit.

James (2006) states that multiculturalism has always been a target of neoliberal change. Many citizens see neoliberalism as a threat to multiculturalism, which is a scheme of national solidarity. For neoliberal projects to take-over cultural elements, multiculturalism is always the first target because it is key to defining the terms of belonging and citizenship (Kymlicka, 2013). In other words, neoliberal multiculturalism is possible because multiculturalism is a source of capital (Kymlicka, 2013). In fact, the ability of neoliberalism to appropriate multiculturalism has been so great that it is easy to assume that multiculturalism was a neoliberal invention (Kymlicka, 2012), while it was a project of social liberalism (Zizek, 1997).

There is a belief that under neoliberalism, life is doomed to failure, especially for the minorities. McLaren cited in Zacchi (2016:162), states that neoliberalism and globalization seek to "democratize suffering, obliterate hope and assassinate justice" while for Giroux (2005), it is easier to imagine the end of life than the end of neoliberalism. This is because aspects of life, aspects that make us what and who we are as human beings have been sold, language is one of these aspects (Heller, 2010; Giroux, 2005). It is not deniable that neoliberalism is hegemonic and imposed to meet the agendas of the dominant social groups (Zacchi, 2016).

On the other hand, Kymlicka (2013) argues that neoliberalism has the potential to turn minorities into effective actors in global markets. This is because the more minorities appear on the media, they get exposure and attention, allowing them to embrace the logic of global competitiveness and integrate it with their commitments of democratic citizenship (Kymlicka, 2013). On this view, minorities can adopt neoliberal multiculturalism as a

supplement to it and as way of extending it. Hale (2005) argues that in Latin America neoliberalism has become a full-fledged political project, an economic doctrine but at the same time, a promoter and a reorganiser of political society. It is this closing argument that opens a subsequent debate of this study: why should the resilience against neoliberal multiculturalism be studied?

Smits (2014) argues that a fight against neoliberal agenda by minorities produces ideas of belonging to a community, relationship to geographical space, celebration of individual and collective spirituality and a paradoxical connection to one's history and tradition. When applied to *Muvhango*, this argument reveals that *Muvhango's* reliance and loyalty to the Venda culture and language produces political communities that have their own identities, and autonomy. *Muvhango* is promoting cultural inclusion, which Smits (2014) argues is a strategy for resistance. Such cultural inclusion has also been experienced by the Maori people where self-determination and autonomy were fundamental to their struggle. Seemingly, popular culture, especially youth culture, is usually associated with a culture of resistance, opposition, or counterhegemony (Englert, 2008).

Imperial neoliberalism is provoking the emergence of new social movements which are engaged in counterhegemonic struggles that seek to defeat the manifestation of capital orientation (Prempeh, 2006). Prempeh (2006) further argues that spaces in Africa are being opened to contest neoliberalism. These include protests, decolonisation movements, art, education sector and even the health care sector (where people start incorporating the Western medicine to the traditional medicine). These struggles defy disempowerment brought by neoliberalism and promote politics of emancipation (Prempeh (2006).

According to Lamont, etal (2012), multilingual spaces are signalling to every culture that they are valued and welcomed. *Muvhango's* multilingual status signals to other languages and cultures that they are welcome in the soap. This multiculturalism is also evident in New Zealand, for example, where Maori cultural performances and productions are promoted by public and private actors in the global market. These cultural performances are treated as intellectual property and protected from commercialisation without the consent of their Maori owners (Smits, 2014). Currently, Maori culture enjoys protection and ownership by the Maori people. This yields self-determination, cultural recognition, and inclusion for the Maori people (Smits, 2014). It is the interest of this study, as the next section will discussion, to

show that *Muvhango's* representation of culture seeks to produce self-determination, cultural recognition and inclusion for the small-status languages.

Neoliberal Resistance

In as much as neoliberalism is a hegemonic force that threatens social justice, minorities have demonstrably refused to contain themselves within the boundaries of neoliberalism (Kymlicka, 2012). This has been witnessed among the Maori people (New Zealand), Welsh communities (Wales), and Tagalog speakers (Philippines). In Africa, the effects of neoliberalism are dire on communities (Ugor, 2013). However, communities in the continent, especially led by the youth are constantly developing counter strategies to assert space and identity (Ugor, 2015, Ayezulano, 2015, Oloruntoba-Oju, 2019). Through popular culture, young people in Ghana, Tanzania, Senegal and Morocco contest their marginality and showcase their true African identities, something that the neoliberal agenda has always rejected and treated as inferior (Oloruntoba-Oju, 2019).

African popular cultural artefacts always claim their position as social facts. They are everywhere, they are used by hegemonic bodies to oppress the people and sometimes they are in defiance of these hegemonic bodies (Barber, 1987). They penetrate political, social and economic institutions. These cultural tools are expressive acts through which Africans reject the framings of power and expose its oppressiveness (Oloruntoba-Oju, 2019). Barber (1987) notes that in Africa, ordinary people tend to be invisible and inaudible, with some regimes treating them literally like rubbish. Thus, popular culture becomes a voice for the voiceless. By so doing, art works constitute consciousness against oppressive regimes such as neoliberalism. Barber (1987) argues that popular culture formulates new ways of looking at things. African popular culture "furthers the cause of the people by opening their eyes to their objective situation in society. It 'conscientises' them, thus preparing them to take radical and progressive actions" (Barber, 1987:7).

Language and popular culture go together. In the case of Yoruba popular theatre of the 1970s-80s, Barber (2000) argues that it is in the plays that language survives, language with its idioms, slang and dialectical peculiarities can be saved through popular culture. In *Muvhango,* the usage of small-status language is a way of saving these languages.

Barber (2000) argues that majority of the performers in the Yoruba theatre were not professionals or elites, some had not even gone to school. This indicates the localisation of

the theatre production. Likewise, audiences can relate and identify with the story and the performers as they appear as real as possible. *Muvhango's* approach in using local, unknown performers is suggestive of the same intention, to localise the story, to make audiences identify with the story and the performers. This makes the soap attract people of all social categories. Similarly, to the Yoruba theatre, *Muvhango* is not exclusive, it does not target some demographics and reject others using commercial interests as a motivation.

While neoliberalism has tried to create "subjects who govern themselves in accordance with the logic of globalised capitalism" (McNeish, 2008:34), as Sawyer (2004:15) states, such attempts have failed in some parts of the world and instead produced new "transgressive political", "who invoke multiculturalism for their own purposes relating to democratic citizenship and self-determination" (Kymlicka, 2012:113). Popular music in West Africa has been used for social mobilisation, and as a tool to sensitise people (Niang, 2015). African youth use music as agency to organise societies towards resistant actions against exclusion from the economy, against misrepresentation of African cultures in the media and against the marginalisation of Africans who cannot speak colonial languages in the economy.

Drawing from the above arguments made by Barber (1987), Sawyer (2004) and Kymlicka, (2012), this thesis will demonstrate that *Muvhango's* usage of Tshivenda has been a counter strategy against neoliberalism and a process of democratic citizenship for the Venda people, something that *Skeem Saam* was not able to do for the Pedi people. Democratic citizenship denotes citizens' active participation in democracy (Crick, 2002). According to Butts (1988:187), the following are core values to the theory of democratic citizenship: "justice, equality, authority, participation, truth and patriotism". *Muvhango's* usage of a small-status language that is side-lined in the mainstream media, the representation of the Venda culture from the perspective of pride and not victimisation, and the upliftment of villages in the story all evoke the above principles of democratic citizenship. They have been represented as a people with a sense of self-determination. Accordingly, the culture of 'othering' that has been invented by the Western media against Africans is rejected and dismantled. Manda-Taylor (2006), CohenMiller (2019), Olivier (2019), Oloruntoba-Oju, (2019) extrapolate that African popular culture is constantly in the process of restoring the dignity of Africans, rejecting the colonial identities of uncivilised Africans. These elements from the soap give Tshivenda justice and equality, participation and patriotism that has been enjoyed by isiZulu in SABC 1. In other words, *Muvhango* is creating parity between Tshivenda and isiZulu.

In *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952) Fanon reflects on the psychological effect of white dominance on the black people. Fanon argues that the "black man" has constantly been pervaded by whiteness, a black man always sees the need to perform whiteness. While Fanon is referring to the psychological conflict of identity for the black man, it might well be argued that the same arguments are relevant to the contemporary rhetoric of globalisation which seeks to promote 'white world' everywhere. Despite these attempts, there are counter strategies of resistance, which are reflected by popular culture in Africa (Oloruntoba-Oju, 2019). In the context of this study, I will look at how the use of language, the representation of minority cultures, rejections of whiteness thematically and the use of "unpopular stars" reflect instances of mirroring indigenous realities which are counter neoliberalism.

According to the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC, 2014), the translation and promotion of indigenous languages supports cultural and linguistic diversity. The promotion of indigenous languages also brews support for the social, economic and and cultural life of the people who form part of those languages and cultures. However, some languages and cultures are under threat, especially from more dominant or powerful languages. The SABC is constitutionally mandated to be independent and create pluralism and diversity in cultures, languages, religions and sexuality. SABC 2, with the example of *Muvhango,* is involved in democratic and participatory processes that support and reinforce global identity and cultural wealth through using small languages. This has also been the case with other places in the world.

For instance, Browne (1996) shows examples of how the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) took initiative in the 1940s to make minority groups in Scotland, Northern Island and Wales more visible in the media. The Iraqi television has also taken initiative to give Kurds some presence in the media. The same also goes for France which has created a radio station for minority languages such as Provencal, Basque, and Breton (Ramallo, 2017). In Zimbabwe, broadcasting on radio also gives minority languages such as Shangaan and Venda airtime in its programming. Television in Botswana also airs its programmes in minority languages such as Sinjalo, Zulu, Ndebele, and Kalanga (Jeremiah, 2015). Namibia also provides another example where minority languages are used in the media. Television in Namibia broadcasts in some minority languages: Setswana, Silozi, Ruhanango and Oshiwambo (Jerimiah, 2015). In these countries, it is inevitable that the media is facilitating the process of belonging to a group, it is a space for expression of local and regional sensitivities, it preserves local identities (AMARC, 2014). All these examples are speaking to

the central argument of this study, that there are instances where small-status cultural groups are resisting the effects of neoliberalism on their existence. In short, the argument is that there are various creative responses against neoliberalism.

Representation of Culture in *Muvhango*

From the above presented debates, the following discussions seek to illustrate the success of *Muvhango* in resisting neoliberal multilingualism. To that effect, this thesis presents a discussion on how *Muvhango* has achieved that. The discussion will focus on the cultural flare of the show. Culture in this context refers to the beliefs, values, language, art, places and material culture (Layton and Wallace (2012). The cultural elements that will be analysed here are the setting of the story (Venda and Johannesburg), the use of languages and the use of "stars"

Setting/location of the story

The setting of the story is in Johannesburg (the economic hub of South Africa) and Venda, a rural place in Limpopo. While television programs in the SABC are giving too much exposure to the cities and forgetting to include rural spaces, *Muvhango* is doing the opposite. The soap is elevating Venda and giving it exposure and presence in the media. This has the potential to contribute to the tourism of the place, raise awareness for rural places and attract economic opportunities to them. By so doing, the soap is promoting rural villages and showing them as places with normal living conditions just like the cities.

The Venda characters in *Muvhango* elevate the status of Venda. For example, Mulimisi is a traditional healer for the village and a healer for the royal family. Vhangani (Kingsley Ramabulana) is a messenger for the chief. Azwindinii is married to four wives. The characters in Venda strongly believe in African traditional religion. Mulimisi is not ridiculed and treated as a mad person. In fact, he is the royal house traditional healer. The Venda characters in *Muvhango* are very close to their ancestral home. One of the famous filmmakers in South Africa, Ntshavheni waLuruli, in speaking about his Venda film: *Elelwani* (2013), stated that the Venda people "inhabit a deeply spiritual world as can be seen from wood carvings, pottery and building decorations" (Aiseng, 2017). The representation of Venda and its people in their historical geographical space in the story is taking away the stigma of Africans as backward, undeveloped and vile.

In the scene below, Mulalo (Sydney Ramakuela), (playing a character of an acting chief) has gone blind after assuming the role of the chief. Vho-Mukondeleli (Elsie Rasalanavho) is begging Mulimi to help Mulalo as she believes Mulalo is being punished by the ancestors for assuming the role of the chief when he is not the rightful chief. Mulalo is held by a spell. Even in his blindness, he can see what others cannot see. He keeps saying "they are here". But no one else in the room can see who he is referring to.

Dialogue between Mulimisi, Mulalo and Vho-Mukondeleli (20 November 2020)

Extract 8

Vho-Mukondeleli: Mishumo! Na mulandu wanu ndi mini na? Ndo ni vhudza ndari muthuseni hoyu muthu mani *(Mishumo, what is wrong? Help him).*

Mishumo: Asi nne makhadzi, kha vha vhone mato awe. *(It is not me. Look at his eyes).*

Vho-Mukondeleli: Mulalo, mulandu ndi mini? *(Mulalo, what is wrong)?*

Mulalo: Khevha, khevha, makhulu khevha. *(They are here).*

Vho-Gizara: Vho nnyi? *(Who)?*

Mulalo: Khevha! Nnthuseni! *(They are here. Help).*

Mishumo: Yuwi yuwi, mianga we! Hu khou itea mini afha. Nne vhuloi hotorali athi athu vhuya nda vhuvhone nne. *(What witchcraft is this)?*

Vho-Mukondeleli: khafhumule! *(Shut up).*

Mulimi: Ngwani wa po. Tshidza tsha po. Mutangi wa vhugala. Vho inwi vho makhulukuku washu. Vhori ngaho phanda. One maguluvhe mahulwane a luonde.(Chanting)

Vho-Mukondeleli: Ni khou itani ni khori tshuwisa nandi. *(You are scaring us.)*

Mulisi---Khavha gwadame fhasi, vhadzimu vha hone fhano. (Kneel, all of you, the ancestors are here).

END OF SCENE

The scene above is done in a melancholic manner, dark lighting and soft tune playing in the background to invoke the emotions associated with what Mulalo is going through. We see fear in his family. Mishumo suspects that it is witchcraft, but Vho-Mukondeleli believes that it is the presence of the ancestors that is affecting Mulalo. Mulimisi is asking for the ancestral intervention. In this scene, it is inevitable that there is a strong belief in the ancestral spirits. However, the scene does not portray such a belief as vile and scary. The scene represents everyone as fearful of the ancestors' deeds, hence, Mulimisi is asking for the ancestors' intervention to set Mulalo free from the spell.

In *Muvhango,* there is also a representation of the relationship between characters and their traditional lives. The themes of the story exist within the history of the Venda people. This is part of indigenising instead of internationalising popular culture. *Muvhango* evokes ideas of self-realisation by centralising the Venda characters to their ancestral home in the story. By bringing forth the power and importance of one's ancestral home, *Muvhango* is keeping the story local. We see the soap avoiding popularisation of culture in this instance. The Venda culture, even though it is a minority in South Africa, but it is being respected and promoted in *Muvhango*. The soap is rejecting neoliberal multiculturalism by endorsing and protecting minority cultures. *Muvhango* is facilitating the perseveration of local and minority cultures against neoliberal multiculturalism.

Muvhango is playing an important role in the growth and promotion of Venda by creating a better awareness and understanding for the village. The soap does not represent Venda as a backward village with nothing interesting. Venda's geographical backdrops and cultural practices play an important role in storylines most of the times. For example, in the scene below, we see *Mulimisi* entering the royal house in a form of a spirit. In this scene, Azwindinni is having a conversation with his son, Vhutshilo (Wavhudi Lidzegu) about the police investigation about the murder that has happened. Vhutshilo is the primary suspect in the murder and his father promises to support him. Mulimisi appears sitting on the couch among Azwindinni and Vhutshilo. He is making a prophecy that the person who committed murder is still in the royal house, and it is not Vhutshilo. He then disappears while Azwindinni is trying to ask him what he means.

Dialogue between Mulimi, Azwindinii and Vhutshilo (09 March 2018).

Extract 9

Azwindinii: Madi khea nwananga. Hoku ndi kone kushumele kune mapholisa a shumisa ngako. So, ene asongo la mbilu naluthihi. Angavha nne na mme awe ri dovha ri hone umutikedza. Zwine ene a ita zwone, ndi umba ngoho fhedzi. Uri zwithu zwi kone u tshimbila nga ngona mukololo. (*Have some water, son. This is just routine police procedure. You have nothing to worry about. Your mother and I will be with you every step of the way. Just tell the truth and everything will be fine*).

Vhutshilo: Arali? (*What if…)*

Azwindinii: Arali mini? (*If what?)*

Vhutshilo: Ndi khou amba uri, arali nda amba zwithu zwine zwa nga fhedzisa zwo dzhenisa muthu khomboni? Ndi khou amba muthu ane nda mufunesa. (*What if I say something and it gets the person I love into trouble?)*

Mulimisi: Malofha, malofha o dalaho zwandani. (*Blood. Bloodstained hands.)*

Azwindinii: Vho maine, vhari mini? (*Maine, what is it?)*

Mulimisi: Malofha o dalaho zwandani. O shuluwaho. *(Bloodstained hands. Bloodshed. The person who spilt blood is still here.)*

Azwindinii: Vho maine. Vhari mini? *(Mulimisi. What do you see?)*

Mulimisi: Malofha o dalaho zwandani. O shuluwaho. Muthu o shululaho malofha u khadivha hone fhano pfamoni. *(The person who spilt blood is still in this royal house.)*

Vhutshilo: Baba, vha a zwidivha? Uri muthu o vhulaho u khadivha hone fhano pfamoni? *(Dad, I knew it. There is a killer in this house.)*

END OF SCENE

In the scene above, Mulimisi appears out of nowhere. He does not enter through the door or even the window. Azwindini and his son just see him sitting on a couch and talking to them but they do not run away, they do not look frightened to show that they are familiar with his spiritual capabilities. The soap here is showing us a strong connection between the Venda

people, their culture and spirituality. Such a representation is an example of a counter-colonial strategy against the victimisation and nullification of African spirituality which was replaced by Christianity and Islam.

Moreover, Ikuenobe (2016) states that life in Africa is seen as a composite of natural forces and an interconnected continuum of natural elements. Furthermore, Senghor cited in Ikuenobe (2016) argues that Africans see reality and nature as one single force. Therefore, the contribution of *Muvhango* in denouncing neoliberal multiculturalism is evident in the above scene. In this scene the soap is promoting African spirituality. *Muvhango* exists as a tool fighting for the African ways of living. The soap is a social activity, a technique of living for the marginalised Africans. The above scene is an indication of how Muvhango is affirming the identity of Africans.

Muvhango demonstrates that the media has the potential to elevate the values and civilisation of a place, people and culture with an attempt to correct the stereotypes. In this way, the media contributes greatly to activating positive attention to African values. The soap is marketing marginalised communities.

The representation of Venda in *Muvhango* provides a re-imagined, re-experienced and re-constructed experience for marginalised communities as places with life and reason to visit and explore. Through the soap audiences learn that cities (with the use of Johannesburg) are not the only places where there are developments and strong economies. In *Muvhango,* Venda has law and order just like in the cities, perhaps even better than the cities. The soap presents law and order from the civil and customary practices of VaVenda's social and political organisations. Those that commit small crimes such as theft, are punished through the customary law. Big crimes such as murder and corruption are dealt with under the civil law. Here, *Muvhango* is showing the coexistence of customary and civil law. No system is the binary of the other. *Muvhango* is reinstating the African traditional justice system, something that has always been vilified under colonialism and Apartheid. By so doing, the show is continuing the fight for African identities to be respected and acknowledged. The show is portraying a world in which the linguistic rights and cultural identities of minorities and Africans in general are recognised.

All these story elements are coupled with relevant production techniques: long take shots are not uncommon in *Muvhango*. Scenes in Venda are usually stretched to be longer than those in in Johannesburg. These symbolise the slow-paced life in the rural villages. For example, the

episode of the death of Albert Mukwevho (the uncle to Azwindinni) was represented in a slow-paced and darker image in Venda than it was the case in Johannesburg. The scenes in Venda were filled with unilluminated images which represented the grieving period in the royal house.

Okere (cited in Gugler, 2003) argues that slow-paced technique in Third World films evokes a realist mode. That is, it is used to emphasise the realism aspects endorsed from everyday lives. *Muvhango* uses this technique in Venda a lot to reflect the way of life, usually the slow-paced life associated with villages. These techniques show differences between life in the cities and the rural areas. By so doing, not only is the language of the Venda people advanced, but their living conditions are also depicted in the story. We see that *Muvhango* is not only focusing on the lives of city dwellers but even villagers are well represented in the story.

The other technique used a lot in *Muvhango* is 'silence'. Unlike other SABC soap operas, *Muvhango* relies on the power and potential of silence to tell the story. This technique is discouraged in international Hollywood filmmaking style. Where neoliberalism, through the case of Hollywood, has normalised the use of sounds and soundtracks to advance the story, *Muvhango* has opted for silence as a technique to drive the narrative of the Venda storylines. When the story shows us exposition shorts of Venda, there is usually silence. When the audiences see scenes of Mulimisi, there is usually silence. When Albert died, most of the scenes were accompanied by silence, with minimal non-diegetic sounds such as thunders and rainfall. All these examples show that the soap is using silence to achieve its intended meaning to the audiences for Venda storylines. The show also uses lotss of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds for the storylines in Johannesburg. For the latter, we see *Muvhango* adopting a Hollywood technique to advance the story. Therefore, *Muvhango* does not completely shy away from neoliberal filmic techniques, it adopts them and at certain instances like in the use of sound in Johannesburg storylines and slightly moving away from them in scenes set in Venda.

The use of Tshivenda

The idea behind *Muvhango* is to produce a television drama that speaks to the consciousness of African people using African languages. In an interview with Tashi (2011) Ndlovu states that his first major responsibility with *Muvhango* was to produce a drama that says to Africans: 'we are Africans and what is our place in society?' Interestingly to him, he chose to

use Tshivenda as a language of the drama because he realised that the language is full of cultures and history that would bring newness to the South African television.

Ndlovu, in an interview with Tashi, (2011:2) also explains that (in as much as he is Zulu) "we wanted to do a story that spoke in a language that people understood". Ndlovu says that he saw a gap in the television market by realising that isiZulu is his mother tongue, but it is not a marginalised language, in fact, it is the majority language in the country, so he decided to write in a small-status language, Tshivenda (Tashi, 2011). This obviously exposed Tshivenda to the rest of the country and people started being familiar with the language. In *Muvhango's* Facebook page, the about section reads as follows "the show became a true reflection of South African society with elements of culture, tradition, superstition and witchcraft infused into the characters' lives", (@MuvhangoSA, 2020:1)). The Facebook page go on to state that "the show popularised Venda culture" (@MuvhangoSA, 2020:1).

This production background of *Muvhango* opens discussion on how the show has avoided cultural commodification, that is, the use of culture as a commodity for commercial interests. A commodity is an item that can be bought and sold for profit. In a narrow sense, this discussion looks at *Muvhango's* representation of cultures from the perspective of anti-commodification. In other words, *Muvhango* represents culture from the perspective of pride rather than market-interests. The element of culture I focus on is language. In the soap, culture and language are not commodities, but a way of life, a sense of pride.

Muvhango has a total of 21 main characters. Out of these, the following speak Tshivenda in the story (Azwindini, Susan, KK, Gizara, Vho-Mokondeleli, Tenda, Vho-Masindi, Vhangi, Mulimisi, Mulalo, Hangwani, Rendani, Mpho, Makhadzi). This is 14 out of 21. This is clearly a dominant language in the soap. The remaining characters are speaking Sesotho, Setswana, isiXhosa, and isiZulu. Tshivenda has dominated the soap from its inception. The domination of Tshivenda is also maintained through the storylines. The storylines are always centred around characters who speak Tshivenda. The other point to note is that the drama and conflict unfolding in the story always involves characters living in Venda. *Muvhango* does not use language for popular appeal, it uses a language that fits the story and was intended for the story since its inception. The show is exposing Tshivenda to neoliberal forms by promoting it as a rich and cultural language that is rooted in its history. It does not hide the language simply because it is a small-status language which will not attract viewers, it forces viewers to love the language if they love the story.

The centralisation of the story on small-status language and culture is not just a promotion of multiculturalism, especially of the minorities, but it is also exposing these small-status languages to economic interests of those looking for larger markets while keeping the interests of those who want pride and justice for the previously marginalised languages. Similarly, the soap is helping to keep small-status languages alive, to gain access to the same space where dominant languages have found their footing. This is not an easy task as it is a constant reminder to neoliberalists that homogenised languages are not the only ones deserving of a space in the media.

In a general sense, *Muvhango's* use of Tshivenda ensures that small-status languages exist along three vectors: "(1) awareness that a community has its own cultural capital, capacity of the community to take decisions that enable its people (2) *cultural capital to be preserved and renewed* and capacity to open up culture itself to (3) *exchange and interaction* [italics for emphasis from the source] with other cultures in the country and the world" (Uribe-Jongbloed and Salawu, 2018:183). When applied to *Muvhango*, the first vector would imply the soap gives small-status languages recognition and promote their usage. The second vector implies that these languages are being empowered and preserved for future usage. In other words, the use of languages in the media is another form of language preservation. Finally, the third vector implies that the soap promotes multiculturalism, small-status languages are made to exist alongside dominant languages such as isiZulu without feeling pressure of replacement from the latter.

In general, the aim of *Muvhango* in terms of languages is to allow small-status languages to remain the 'normal' form of communication for their respective linguistic communities. This is an anti-neoliberal stance. Multiculturalism is regarded as a threat to nation states. Therefore, Muvhango's resistance against neoliberal conception of multiculturalism, that is, the soap's principle of not using languages as capital products but as cultural products, is a disservice to the neoliberal interests of building a monolingual, monocultural state with one language(s), one culture(s), and one religion(s). In all these years of *Muvhango* production on television, the soap has never succumbed to the market forces of changing the soap's stance on languages.

African polyglot societies which embodied multilingualism and multiculturalism were appropriated, ridiculed, and killed off in different ways under colonialism and Apartheid. The presentation of these cultural practices in *Muvhango* is a way of correcting history. Barber

(2000) argues that such cultural representations, as seen in Yoruba theatre, are what popular culture in Western Nigeria and the rest of Africa were created to achieve. The representation of African people, culture, and places from the perspective of pride is what held people's attention in these popular cultural artefacts (Barber, 2000).

The use of language in *Muvhango* is supported by the narrative devices that are used in the show. *Muvhango* relies heavily on oral narratives which come with traditional and cultural experiences. The use of a traditional healer, the reliance on the village and royal adults as the wizards and the belief in the power of ancestors to reward good acts and punish evil acts are some of the examples from the show on how oral narratives play an important role in the story. Unlike other SABC soap operas which use international narrative techniques, *Muvhango* localises its narrative techniques. This is a strategy to keep the story local and keep attracting local audiences.

The use of "stars"

The other way through which the soap resists neoliberalism is the rejection of *celebrity endorsement* (italics for emphasis). Celebrity endorsement is a form of brand advertising or marketing that involves a relationship between a firm or production company and a celebrity; in such an agreement, the fame of the celebrity is used to help promote the product or show (Leung Cheng and Tse (2018). Celebrities are people who have public recognition by many people because of their popularity and achievements in media, art, sport or even politics. In the words of Leung Cheng and Tse (2018), celebrities are used as attention-gathering mechanisms in the media to attract and consumer attention and influence their product consumption.

Muvhango is certainly against the concept of using celebrities to attract viewers for the show. None of the lead characters in *Muvhango* has acted elsewhere before in big shows. None of them are doing promotional or marketing work for big brands other than *Muvhango*. In fact, it is only after they have left Muvhango that they start to be approached by big productions to take lead roles. An example is Sindi Dlathu (a powerful business mogul), a long-time leading character in *Muvhango* left the soap in 2017 to join another production in Mzansi Magic.

It has become a norm that media products such as films, television shows, radio and advertising use celebrities to promote the sale of products or increase the show's viewership.

According to Emsaeipour (2015) media houses use some celebrities that are liked by society because of their reputation, popularity or achievement to persuade consumers and audiences to buy their products or watch their shows.

These arguments raise a new perspective about *Muvhango*. The soap is brewing linguistic normalisation under the neoliberal order. Linguistic normalisation is about incorporating all languages into various domains and registry (Uribe-Jongbloed and Salawu, 2018). This is done to allow the users of such languages to speak their languages without having to resort to other languages, especially dominant languages. Linguistic normalisation has been relevant for minority languages and media in Catalan because media are important for making languages available for use in all aspects of everyday life in communities (Uribe-Jongbloed and Salawu, 2018).

This is unheard of in the South Africa media. No soap opera in South Africa has built linguistic normalisation under the neoliberal order. In all cases, neoliberalism has managed to overshadow small-status languages with dominant languages, rendering them invincible. As Bradley (2019) argues, under the neoliberal influence, minority groups are assimilated into larger groups. This results in the loss of linguistic diversity. However, *Muvhango* has succeeded in preventing the complete loss of linguistic diversity in the SABC.

In this way, the media creates intercultural dialogue. Although Tshivenda has a comparatively small number of speakers, the language is actively maintained on SABC 2. In fact, the neoliberal agenda has failed to eradicate Tshivenda in *Muvhango*. *Muvhango* has cared lessbout profit and turning its cultural elements into market actors, rather, the soap has used these cultural elements into effective political tools through capturing the opportunities created by the neoliberal project.

Sharma and Phyak (2017) argue that in certain instances in Nepal, institutions and individuals are using creative tactics, agency and practices to fight the impacts of neoliberalism in their identities and language skills. However, this is done with an opportunity to also use neoliberalism to promote their languages, raise the status of their language and help them acquire multilingual repertoires in global languages such as English, German and Chinese.

As previously stated from the work of Barber (2000), Yoruba theatre attracted a lot of audiences because it spoke things that concerned the ordinary people in a language that they could understand. The theatre was associated with a resilient will to self-betterment. It is

inevitable that *Muvhango's* multicultural nature and diverse storyline is meant to attract as many South African audiences as possible. The soap draws its ideas from the close rapport with its audiences.

Conclusion

In the case of *Muvhango*, the soap has resisted the tragedy that neoliberalism has caused to many languages across the languages. On the other side of the coin the neoliberal market has also given new meaning and values to Tshivenda as a small-status language. Looking at the case of Canada as reported by Heller (2003), minority languages are not always without linguistic or symbolic value in neoliberal market. They are just denied the space and time to prove themselves. *Muvhango* gave Tshivenda a chance to prove itself. As Heller (2003) argues, neoliberalism can open opportunities for localism in which ethnolinguistic minorities can exercise control (Sharma and Phyaka, 2017). Finlayson (et al, 2008) argue that *Muvhango* gave Tshivenda an opportunity to exist in the media, especially among the economic and political connotations associated with languages in South African media.

Muvhango's use of location (shooting in Venda and Johannesburg) is very important in localisation of stories and creating a sense of citizenship for the people of Venda because through the location of the story, they see themselves as active participants in the story. This is a counterstrategy against neoliberalism because the soap gives local villages agency and presence in the media, something that neoliberal agenda only does to big towns and cities. The same applies to the use of "stars" and language in the story. *Muvhango* has proven that it is not driven by profit but by cultural representations of the minorities.

Muvhango has been able to reach its cultural, intellectual and artistic potential without resorting to international film styles, or storylines with international appeals. The show indigenised international standards, adopting the attitude that that neoliberalism has granted to African indigenous popular culture a language (film language) that is not to be rejected but appropriated.

Chapter 5: Ideologies of Whiteness: Unsettling Race and Language in the Case of *7de Laan*.

Introduction

After 1994, South Africa was named the 'rainbow nation' by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. This was a symbol for the country to thrive together regardless of cultural, racial, sexual and linguistic differences. Many measures were put into place to build a "rainbow nation". Art, film, literature and music were at the cornerstone of this realisation. In 1996, the Department of Arts and Culture published a white paper which emphasised the role of arts and culture in healing the wounds of the past. The white paper warned that "culture should not be used as a mechanism of exclusion, a barrier between people, nor should cultural practices be reduced to ethnic or religious chauvinism (Steyn, 2019:29).

However, some have heavily criticised the idea of the rainbow nation in South Africa. In her award-winning novel, *Trimof*, Marlene Van Niekerk criticises the rainbow nation by arguing that: *"Nuut se gat…dis nie nuut nie, dis dieselfde gemors gerecycle onder 'n ander naam"* (New my ass…this is not new, it's the same trash recycled under another name). Other academics such as Magogodi (2009) and Gqola (2001) have also heavily criticised the notion of the rainbow nation, labelling it a fallacy to make black people believe we are all equal.

7de Laan is one of the appropriate case studies through which to analyse the extent to which the rainbow nation idea has been been achieved. *7de Laan* is a soap opera playing daily in the South African Broadcasting Corporation, SABC 2. It is the view of this study that the linguistics setup in *7de Laan* is racialised. In approaching the linguistic setup in *7de Laan* as racialised, I rely on the argument by Castles and Miller (1993). According to the two authors, unjust and unfounded exclusionary practices against certain ethnicities amount to racism. According to Wal (2002), racism in the media is communicated in the form of social representations. That is, the way in which ethnicities are represented in the media can be prejudicial. Wal (2002) further notes that, racism is not always obvious, sometimes it is concealed. For example, the 'absence' of certain ethnicities in the media produces prejudiced beliefs about them and legitimises their exclusionary practices towards them (Wal, 2002). In South African visual media, the absenting of other races has a very long history and it has commonly been referred to as structural absenteeism which worked in tandem with the philosophies of Apartheid (Jansen, 1990). Institutions such as the judiciary, education and

government were using laws to structurally exclude black people from the economy of the country (Jansen, 2019). These exclusionary practices and the argument advanced in this chapter are more relevant in the case of *7de Laan*; the show has significantly excluded black characters and indigenous languages from its content. The absence of these can be viewed as ideal for the protection of the Afrikaner community and Afrikaans language from "intrusion".

The goal of this chapter is to show that *7de Laan* is continuously reproducing ideologies of whiteness using language as a strategic tool. Many scholars have defined whiteness in different ways. Bush (2004) defines it as a critique for systematic patterns of racial inequality. According to Visano (2002), the nature of whiteness is to formulate exclusionary practices that marginalise and negate others. Similarly, Cooks (2003:246) defines whiteness as "a set of rhetorical strategies employed to construct and maintain a dominant white culture and identities". Gunstone (2009:1) defines the concept as "the marginalisation, discrimination and oppression of non-white groups and individuals and the privileging of white groups and individuals". According to Case (2012), among racial categories, whiteness is the invisible default. Lipsitz (2009) argues that the power of whiteness depends on white hegemony, manipulating racial outsiders to fight against one another, to compete with each other for white approval, and to seek the rewards and privilege of whiteness for themselves at the expense of their own indigenous or racialised populations. To some, whiteness is considered normal and neutral. Moreover, whiteness also reveals ways through which white people benefit from a variety of arrangements that often appear (to whites) to have nothing to do with race. Whiteness is more than just a race. Whiteness is about a dominant culture and group in society. This chapter intends to unpack ways in which whiteness is reproduced and disseminated in *7de Laan*.

This chapter, like its predecessors unpacks language issues in the SABC soap operas. While the preamble in the South African Constitution states that the country and its people recognise the injustice of the past, honour those that have suffered for justice and freedom and heal the division of the past (South African Constitution, 1996), soap operas such as *7de Laan* have not yet fully responded to such a national call. The SABC's editorial polices also state that the SABC should play a role in healing division of the past and contributing to nation-building (celebrating South Africa's national identity and participating in building the country's democracy), but we see soap operas such as *7de Laan* still producing and distributing ideals associated with colonial and Apartheid whiteness. These include white characters living alone in white suburbs, black characters not having their own storylines in

the soap, making black characters speak Afrikaans even with each other and white characters not speaking any indigenous language.

In studying whiteness, Critical Whiteness Theory (CWT) is profound. The theory stresses out "behaviours that signify what it means to be white in our society" (Charbeneau, 2009:2). The theory further illuminates that whiteness has a set of linked dimensions that include racial advantage, egocentrism, and oblivious of whiteness as race, thus, whiteness is theorised as a location of structural advantages (Frankenburg, 1993, Cullen, 2014). Another theory that is important in understanding the cultural meanings behind whiteness is the Critical Race Theory (CRT). Sleeter (2017) explains that CRT offers tool for interrogating how race and racism have been institutionalised and maintained. Therefore, it affords lenses for analysing whiteness. At the core of CRT is that racism is endemic, institutionalised and systematic, it is a fundamental way of organising society (Sleeter, 2017). This means that the continued dominance of Afrikaans only in *7de Laan*, the exclusion of black cultures and the promotion of the Afrikaans culture in *7de Laan* is not an aberration. Rather, it is a product of a system designed to meet white needs. Using CRT, this study will reveal that *7de Laan* masks white privilege and power. Thus, the use of CRT in this context involves recognising how oppressive practices play out in *7de Laan*.

To argue that *7de Laan* is producing whiteness, this chapter will study three themes from the soap, family relationships (we only see Afrikaans characters as having families and going through life challenges with their families), Afrikaans protection (using the show to protect the Afrikaans culture and language) and racial capitalism (the white bourgeois, black proletariat, and class struggle). These are the strongest messages that the soap is communicating to the audiences. By studying these themes and the messages that they are communicating, the chapter will show that *7de Laan* is not promoting the rainbow nation principles, but merely promoting whiteness by portraying white lifestyles as complete and whole while underrepresenting black lives, characters, and cultures. As aforementioned, *7de Laan* does not show white characters speaking indigenous languages, the show does not show black cultures and white cultures both endorsed and accepted in Hillside (the fictional town of the story), and we see black characters assimilating into white cultures (they speak Afrikaans and English and most of the black characters are given white names). This creates a world in which whites are structurally above blacks, the show is institutionalising and maintaining racial superiority between whites and blacks.

Language is at the cornerstone of the above-mentioned themes. The use of Afrikaans culture and language is used to elevate Afrikaners in the soap, they are used to keeping black characters, their culture and languages in minority in the show. Through such representations, it is inevitable that language issues are vital in postcolonial nations. Gramsci's position to this is that language cannot be separated from its culture, society, and history of its users (Ives, 2004a). Here Gramsci reminds us that language and its usage are part of our everyday lives (Ives, 2004b). The meaning of language comes from how it existed historically, how it is used culturally and socially. This argument is vital as it explains the relationship between Afrikaans culture and language and how it is utilised in *7de Laan*. Kotze (2004) explains that language is central to the Afrikaans people as they view it as their source of culture and identity. This means that Afrikaans language makes them Afrikaners hence the protection of Afrikaans in *7de Laan* should be viewed in this context.

In the context of sociolinguistics, language and culture are inseparable (Salim, 2017). Salim (2017) also argues that language is a communication tool and carrier of culture. Also, the purpose of language is to communicate with others, to think, and to shape one's standpoint and outlook on life (Mahadi and Jafari, 2012). Language carries culture and language is the crystallisation of each culture (Xue and Zuo, 2013). In general, language assists with cultural exchanges and cultural diffusion. Language also helps its users to gain a sense of cultural identity and social belonging (Xue and Zuo, 2013). As a result, language is vital in maintaining domination, and segregation. This is because language has inextricably associated with politics and economy (Xue and Zuo, 2013).

The language used in the media is also a projection of a certain culture. Mahadi and Jafari (2012) explain that words (language) are the most significant tools of cultural symbols. Poems, stories and fictions are also some of the ways through which culture is projected. This hypothesis suggests that a language reveals the thought and perception of its speakers (Mahidi and Jafari, 2012). In that sense, the use of language in media is not ideology free, in fact, it is a communication of a certain culture and its beliefs.

Considering all the above factors, this chapter will show that the production of whiteness in *7de Laan* is produced by macro contextual factors. These macro contextual factors include: the history of South Africa (Apartheid), political economic stratification of post-Apartheid South Africa and other forms of socioeconomic inequality. According to Andrews (2018), the

economic success of the Afrikaans film industry in South Africa is an indication of the economic advantages afforded to the Afrikaans people by the legacy of Apartheid.

Background/context of Afrikaner nationalism

The South African War or Anglo Boer War (1899-1902) played an important role in Afrikaner nationalism. The war saw Britain introducing English as the sole official language in South Africa, completely ignoring Afrikaans (Giliomee, 2003). When the British colonies moved towards unification through the British flag, it was assumed that English would crush Afrikaans. This time led to Afrikaans being the symbol for identity and unity for the Afrikaners (Giliomee, 2003).

Under the British rulership, Afrikaners took pride in their Afrikaans cultural heritage, Afrikaner fought for both English and Afrikaans to be on an equal footing (Giliomee, 2003). After the formation of the South African Union in 1910, language was a serious political and status struggle for the white communities. At the heart of this struggle was the Afrikaners fighting for an independent community with its name, language and identity as English (Giliomee, 2003). Afrikaners were also fighting for their language to be used in Parliament, schools, universities, and business, they wanted Afrikaans to be the medium of the media, novels and art. For Afrikaner nationalists, this cultural revolution is what led to the political dominance and economic advancement of the Afrikaner people (Giliomee, 2003).

The economic privilege of the Afrikaans people dates to the 1900's when Afrikaans people implemented their own Afrikaner Economic empowerment programmes known as Afrikaner Nationalism, *Broederbond* or *Volkskapitalisme* (Giliomee, 2003). These programmes were meant to ensure the survival of the Afrikaans people and their economic emancipation against British imperialism (Luhabe and Mangcu, 2006).

After 1948, the Apartheid government systematically promoted Afrikaner control and ownership of the economy through affirmative action and the parastatals and ensured deployment of state contracts and patronage to Afrikaner firms (Masito, 2007).

Today, Afrikaners still enjoy the economic privileges left by the Apartheid legacy. In recent years, South African media and public affairs have been dominated by the term "White Monopoly Capital". The term is used to refer to land and assert ownership monopolised by

the white minority in South Africa. This also denotes the persistent economic advantages still dominated by the white South African population in post-Apartheid South Africa (Lloyd, 2018). Lloyd (2018) further argues that a significant amount of the country's wealth has been redistributed but this is not enough compared to the wealth that is still in the hands of the white minority. With the introduction of programmes such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), the vast other forms of capital still personify the legacy of white privilege (Lloyd, 2018).

It is vital to note that the post-Apartheid Afrikaans privileges and racism are due to the structural, economic and symbolic privileges accrued during Apartheid (Carolin, 2019). Carolin (2019) further states that South Africa's racialised history has produced an economy that is highly unequal, an economy that is still owned by the white minority. Such a history and economic privilege belonging to white minority has also produced a cultural architecture in which whiteness still functions as a norm in post-Apartheid South Africa. According to Frankenberg (2001), the notion of whiteness is ignored or ridiculed by those that it benefits. It remains invisible to them. Steyn (2019:29) alludes to the notion that the reason Afrikaans, despite its minority status (in term of numbers of speakers), is still a powerful language in post-Apartheid South Africa's media is "because Afrikaners still command a vast material and cultural capital, they have been the prime producers, sellers and buyers of Afrikaans-language media and cultural commodities".

The indication is that white people in general and Afrikaners still have a disposable capital in their hands that allows them to produce content in their own languages without adhering to the rainbow nation principles. The system has allowed whiteness an opportunity to thrive in a country politically belonging to black people but economically belonging to white people. Van der Walt (2015) argues that South Africa is controlled by two sectors: a white private sector elite and a black state elite. As a result, South Africa is a morass of wretched inequality, racial tensions and class conflicts (Van der Walt, 2015).

It is certain that the powers of languages are politically and historically invented by race, economic forces and political elements (Severo and Makoni, 2018). With the advent of Apartheid in 1948, the Afrikaners used their state power to use their language to divide and rule (Snail, 2011). From 1948 to 1990 Afrikaans enjoyed state support which made it a dominant language in South Africa together with English. These factors all contributed to the status of Afrikaans in post-Apartheid South Africa. The language is still widely used in the

country in the education sector, the legal fraternity, business and government due its historical associations with the government.

These historical factors are paramount to understanding the present. In analysing the current sociolinguistic situations of Lusophone countries in Africa, Salgado (2018) writes that the theory of 'path dependency' suggests that the past determines the construction of the present. In the context of this study, the past linguistic setup of the domination of Afrikaans in the SABC still influences the language usage in *7de Laan*. This means, the segregation of languages and cultures from the SABC during Apartheid is being replayed in *7de Laan*. When television was introduced in South Africa (in 1976), it was broadcasting only in two languages, Afrikaans, and English. Today, Afrikaans has its show where it continues its mobilisation for an "only" Afrikaner community.

To expand these arguments, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis or the linguistic relativity hypothesis is crucial. The hypothesis comprises of three main ideas. First, languages differ significantly in the meaning of their words and syntactic constructions. Second, the semantics of a language can influence the way its speakers conceptualise and perceive the world. Third, speakers of different languages think differently (Wolff and Holmes, 2010). Part of this hypothesis is that language determines and influences speakers' thoughts and worldviews. That is, language is so powerful that it can overwrite previous and existing conceptual capabilities (Wolff and Holmes, 2010). Additionally, the theory stresses that the languages we speak can influence our thought patterns, can influence our perception of everything that occurs and exists around us. Moreover, in clarifying the relationship between language and culture, Wardhaugh (2002) states that the status of a language in society determines the way the speakers of that language view the world. Language influences the worldview of the speakers of that language. People's culture also finds reflection in the language that they employ, that is, people use their language in ways that reflect what they value in society (Wardhaugh, 2002).

The overall effect of this configuration is that colonial languages are superior to indigenous languages. Therefore, the worldview of the speakers of the former is that of domination and power over everyone else (UNESCO, 2008). Consequently, the speakers of languages such as Afrikaans still hold the view that their language is superior to the indigenous languages. The speakers are still highly inclined to hold the view that Afrikaans as a culture and as a language is important over other languages in the country. This was the ideology bred by

colonialism and Apartheid hence it is not a surprise seeing Afrikaner filmmakers producing content that excludes indigenous cultures and people as well as content that prioritises Afrikaans over indigenous languages and indigenous people.

Therefore, the study of whiteness in *7de Laan* cannot be considered separately from the systems that invented it. To defend the arguments that *7de Laan* is promoting whiteness, this study will also analyse the role of the above-mentioned Afrikaners' economic stability in post-Apartheid South Africa and how it is a culprit in helping Afrikaners to resist change.

The predominant use of Afrikaans in *7de Laan is* a concern to this study as this is the language connected to whiteness (Knoetze, 2018). The language is, furthermore, connected to whiteness owing to its political and ideological status during Apartheid, hence its reference as the "language of the oppressor" (Knoetze, 2018).

7de Laan's obsession with the Afrikaans language and culture, and its ignorance of other South African languages and cultures, can be read as presenting a specific position against the SABC language policy. While the policy states that language usage in the SABC programming should be cognisant of the linguistic history of the country and contribute to nation building (SABC, 2020), *7de Laan*'s usage of only one, and former dominant, language is promoting a sense of protection for the Afrikaans culture, an intention that seems as if the soap is intending to keep the Afrikaans community "pure" and homogenous. The soap is regulating contact with anyone perceived as non-Afrikaner.

In a newspaper article by *News24* (2014), it was reported that the SABC wants the use of Afrikaans in *7de Laan* to be cut from 90% to 80%. The use of English and other indigenous languages was also to be increased to 20%. This was to ensure that the show continues to be demographically representative of the post-Apartheid South Africa's demographics. *News24* (2014) also reported that during the negotiations to review the soap for a new season, some individuals in the SABC were shocked to see that in the proposed new season of the soap black characters would also be expected to speak Afrikaans. Black characters such as Aggie (Mimi Mahlasela), Kopano (Thabo Mhlanga), and Fikani (Nicholas Nkuna) only speak indigenous languages when they are together. However, it seems as if *7de Laan* got what they wanted as black characters such as Aggie and Nozipho speak Afrikaans in the show. Black characters also speak English more than they do indigenous languages. The present study submits that the objective of the practice is to position Afrikaans as a purveyor of Afrikaner whiteness specifically and whiteness generally at the centre of language usage in the show.

The idea of the show is to keep the languages of white people (Afrikaans) at the top of indigenous languages just like it was during the Apartheid era. Moreover, seen against the background of Apartheid, it seems that the *7de Laan* presents a homogenous community of "whites-only", a sense of nostalgia for the Apartheid era.

Considering all these arguments, indeed *7de Laan* is not a reality, it is a work of art. However, all works of art act within social institutions, they tell us something about aspects of life in society (do Nascimento, 2019). Media have a visual power of representing the social life to us in an orderly manner. In this way, watching a film, television show and theatre performance becomes a sociological significant event that represents life. Therefore, art and life are inseparable as art represents life and life influences art. Accordingly, Ewick and Silbey, 1995: 200) note that

> Narratives [works of art] are socially organised phenomena which, accordingly, reflect the cultural and structural features of their productions…as socially organised phenomena, narratives are implicated in both the production of social meanings and power relations expressed by and sustaining those meanings.

Art can be used to express meaning; it is an act of communication and a means for the exchange of information. It is inevitable that art may 'reveal truths' about the social life. The work of art represents reality. Hall (1992) submits that a specific culture can reveal a lot about itself in stories that are told.

Knoetze (2018) maintains that one possible way of investigating the production of whiteness may be to look at media narratives and the ways in which whiteness and belonging are constructed in these stories. Through majority of the characters being white Afrikaaners, the dominant language being Afrikaans, black characters only speaking indigenous languages when they are alone (instantly so), just as it is normative outside the reality of the soap, it is the contention of this chapter that *7de Laan* is constructing and reproducing ideologies of segregation, white versus black, us versus them. These story elements are deliberately created to suit the narrative of creating a secluded Afrikaans community in the soap which goes against the SABC language policy and the national building and social cohesion imperatives enshrined in the national language policy and the White Paper of the Arts, Culture and Heritage policy.

Background and Context of 7de Laan

7de Laan is a weekly soap opera playing on SABC 2 at 18:00. The soap focuses on the lives of residents staying in the community of 7de Laan (7th Avenue), in the suburb of Hillside, Johannesburg. The story is set around the trial and tribulations of the fictitious Hillside community. *7de Laan* is dominated by the lives and times of people who live in this community. There are elders, the middle aged and the youth who are all portrayed to be living together in harmony. The soap is set in an entirely Afrikaans community, a space that lacks cultural diversity and thereby reinforcing Apartheid policies of the absence of the black other. The soap is set in a small town of Hillside, in this town, there are very few black people. The town is dominated by white Afrikaans-speakers, only white Afrikaans-speaking people own businesses in Hillside, black people are mainly employees rather than employers or business owners, the names of the streets, the names of the businesses, the signage in the hospital and restaurants are all in Afrikaans. This reflects the Apartheid era when South Africa was not reflective of its demographics. *7de Laan* is continuing such issues by creating Hillside as 'Afrikaans-only-town".

7de Laan is created by Danie Odendaal and produced by Danie Odendaal Productions. Danie Odendaal is well-known in the South African media, especially Afrikaans media. Odendaal was the writer and director of *Dennekruin 12* (1983), *Galery* (1985) and *Saartjie* (1989). All these shows are in Afrikaans and are about the Afrikaans nationalism (the idea of living together as Afrikaners, preserving the Afrikaans culture and protecting each other as Afrikaners). These films were made during the height of Apartheid in the country but none of them touches on the issues of Apartheid. None of them has an anti-Apartheid message.

Odendaal joined a list of filmmakers in South Africa during the Apartheid times (such as Jamie Uys) whom, at the height of Apartheid, did not have anti-Apartheid messages on their films. Like many of his counterparts (Donald Swanson, Jamie Uys, Sam Williams, Pierre de Wet), Odendaal produced, wrote and directed films that only promoted Afrikaner nationalism. In 1983, he formed his own production company, Danie Odendaal Productions. In the 1990s, the production company produced another Afrikaans show, *Egoli: Place of Gold* which ran for many years in M-Net. In 1999 Odendaal was approached by the SABC to create an Afrikaans multi-cultural programme, *7de Laan* with an intention of continuing to use the media to build a multicultural society in post-Apartheid South Africa.

7*de Laan* started playing on SABC 2 on the 4th of April 2000. When the show started, it was broadcast on Tuesdays only. For much of its broadcast history, *7de Laan* was airing at 18:30. In July 2016, *7de Laan* was moved to a later timeslot, 19:00. In February 2017, *7de Laan's* timeslot was changed again and moved to 18:00. These changes were part of an ongoing programme reshuffle on the SABC's three television channels (SABC 1, 2 and 3).

7de Laan is the only Afrikaans soap opera broadcast by the SABC. *7de Laan* is a multilingual soap opera but broadcasting predominantly in Afrikaans. The soap has characters who speak indigenous languages: Setswana and isiZulu instantly. English is used as a subtitle language and used by African characters when they are speaking with each other or with white Afrikaans-speaking characters. Marko is the only white Afrikaans-speaking character who infrequently speaks isiZulu while talking with some African characters. Despite the mild level of multilingualism in the soap, all characters accept that Afrikaans is the primary language of the show.

In this chapter, I consider the social, historical, cultural and economic factors that coalesced to enable the production of Afrikaner nationalism and regeneration of whiteness in *7de Laan*. Steyn (2019) contends that the Afrikaans media are good sites through which to explore the role of Afrikaans in post-Apartheid South Africa as some of them have not transformed. Steyn (2019) further notes that many Afrikaners still see post-Apartheid South Africa as a threat to the Afrikaans nation. Thus, they still see Afrikaner identities as an integral part of their selfhood. It has become popular for Afrikaners to construct a new defensive mechanism for their language and culture. Therefore, television programs such as *7de Laan* are constantly involved in promoting the protection of the Afrikaner language and cultural values from language death and "disappearance".

Knoetze (2016) contends that the characters in *7de Laan*, through their narratives and arches, are still reminiscent of dominant white ideologies and racial orders. For example, for a long time in the soap, Oubaas (Pierre van Pletzen) and Hilda (Annelisa Weiland) had a helper / domestic worker, Maria (Themsie Times). Maria was a black woman from the Free State. Maria was also used by other Afrikaans characters to help them with their household chores and doing shopping for them. Maria's representation in relation to white characters was indicative of incidents of colonial and Apartheid ideology when blacks were working for different white families whenever they were needed. Maria's motive for working for different families was that she needed to build a guest house and take her child to school back in the

Free State. This was the same motivation that got many black people to work for different white families in the colonial and Apartheid eras, they needed to support their families back in the villages and townships. The representation of Maria in *7de Laan* was a continuation of such a system where black people are working hard for white people to take care of their families at the expense of their own families in far flung places and blacks-only locations.

Another example of the perpetuation of whiteness in *7de Laan* is the use of language. Marko (Francois Lensley) is the only white Afrikaans character in the show who can speak an indigenous language (isiZulu). However, characters such as Matrone (Annelize van der Ryst) constantly ask Marko and whoever he will be speaking isiZulu with to switch from isiZulu to Afrikaans. This can be perceived as Matrone's ignorance of the new status of indigenous languages in post-Apartheid South Africa. This also signals her superiority complex regarding her language (Afrikaans) and indigenous languages. She feels entitled to be accommodated in the conversations using Afrikaans. This resonates with Andersson's words (2003), that *7de Laan* is a land where years have passed but prejudices have not. That is, white characters in the story still do not see the need to learn indigenous languages and expand their need for social cohesion.

The birth of these problems was the Afrikaner nationalism. Verwey and Quayle (2012) argue that nationalism has always shaped Afrikaner identity. Afrikaner nation always relied on themes of religion, racial and cultural purity, superiority and the struggle for autonomy against oppression (British oppression) to build its own unique identity (Verwey and Quayle, 2012). In 1948 when the National Party (the Apartheid government) came into power, Afrikaners were encapsulated in a network of school, social clubs, cultural and business organisations and the media to create a self-referential Afrikaner ideological world (Verwey and Quayle, 2012).

For the context of this chapter, the two things that contributed to the Afrikaner identity and nationalism were language and the media. The fight for Afrikaans language to be recognised as an official language in South Africa from the British government played a significant role in the nationalistic development project. With the use of translators, journalists, writers, linguists, politicians, community and religious leaders, efforts were made to facilitate the process in growing the Afrikaans language hence mobilizing Afrikaner political consciousness and building a new cultural identity (Beukes, 2007).

Verwey and Quayle (2012) contend that the struggle for Afrikaans as an independent and uniquely African language justified its nationalist intentions. Joseph and Taylor (1990:132) argue that

> Afrikaans linguistics emerged within the context of struggle for the recognition of Afrikaans in all domains. The Afrikaner *Broederbond* and National Party gave this language struggle (*taalstryd*) a nationalistic direction by incorporating it into the larger drive toward political dominance.

The media also played a significant role in the Afrikaans nationalism. Newspapers written in Afrikaans were used to support Afrikaner nationalism, mobilise Afrikaners and achieve political power (South African History Online, 2018). During the colonial and Apartheid South Africa, various media organisations, especially newspapers, radio and television were used to spread Afrikaans ideologies, values, and cultures. These media products were mainly published in Afrikaans and English. The intention was to protect and preserve the Afrikaans language (South African History Online, 2018).

The Afrikaans language has always been a keystone of Afrikaner nationalism and Afrikaner identity (Verwey and Quayle, 2012). Therefore, the coming together of Afrikaans and media in post-Apartheid South Africa is not a new thing, the two have always exited together and been seen as the repository of Afrikaner heritage and Afrikaner power (Melisa and Steyn, 2004).

According to Botha (2012), Afrikaans media still serve Afrikaner communities and produce Afrikaner nationalism. For example, in films such as *Promised Land* (Xenopoulos, 2002), *Skoonheid* (Hermanus, 2011) *While You Weren't Looking* (Stewart, 2015), there is a small number of black characters. This indicates that the many Afrikaans-speaking film producers have not incorporated the 'rainbow-nation' mantra of the post-Apartheid South Africa in their films, 26 years into democracy. This indicates that some white people still see themselves as privileged over black people and that they cannot live together. Apartheid begot a system that continues to undergird a racial segregation depicted in *7de Laan*. Apartheid time-spaces remain productive of racial orders. Thus, *7de Laan* produces racialised differences.

It is important to note that the Afrikaans culture has mostly been patronised by Afrikaners (Steyn, 2019). The Afrikaans television channel, KykNET (broadcasting in M-Net), for example, is the most watched channel in M-Net. This is remarkable considering the small

size of the Afrikaans-speaking consumer market (Steyn, 2019). But all of this is possible due to the high number of businesses that are targeting a wealthy niche market of Afrikaans-speakers by advertising in Afrikaans newspapers, magazines, *7de Laan* and on KykNET. Andrews (2018) argues that the commercial success of South African cinema is still dominated by Afrikaans produced films. However, most of these films are still reserved for white characters, majority of which are white Afrikaans-speaking characters. These films have not transcended beyond the racial segregation of the Apartheid era. This raises questions of whether the post-Apartheid notion of 'rainbow-nation' only applies to the media produced by black people.

Steyn (2019) notes that Naspers, the media conglomerate in South Africa has also contributed expansively to the preservation and promotion of the Afrikaans language and culture in post-Apartheid South Africa. Initially known as *De Natonale Pers* and later *Nationale Pers* (National Press), Naspers was established in 1915. At first, it focused on printing and publishing Afrikaans newspapers and magazines (Steyn, 2019). Due to its close ties to the Apartheid government and its publications serving as the mouthpiece of the National Party (NP), Naspers grew into one of the most powerful media hubs on the continent.

Wasserman (2009) argues that in an attempt not to distance themselves from their lucrative Afrikaans audiences in post-Apartheid South Africa, Naspers has shown their vigorous support for Afrikaans group rights. These include *Solidariteit* (Solidarity), formed in 1902 and Afriforum, formed in 2006. Looking at this within the language rights means that Afrikaans media can continue to profit from producing Afrikaans-only products, without having to address the language's historical baggage.

As part of this chapter, I conducted an interview with two filmmakers, Lerato Molahlehi (film producer) and Inga Mtebele (film director) who have both worked at Multi Choice productions, owned by Naspers. In this interview, it was revealed that Mnet, one of the Multi Choice channels is a typical example of the production of whiteness in post-Apartheid South Africa, just like it was during Apartheid. In the interview, it was revealed that Mnet's mandate is to protect the Afrikaans culture and language. For this reason, Multi Choice gives more production budget to Mnet than Mzansi Magic (one of the channels targeting black audiences), (Interview with Mtebele, 2020). Mtebele made an example of two upcoming television shows in Multi Choice, *Lioness* (a white story that will play in Mnet) that took 8 weeks to shoot. The show has a bigger budget, bigger casts, and white crew. The other is

Mzali wami (a black story that will play in Mzansi Magic), the show took 5 weeks to shoot, with a smaller budget, unknown cast, and lesser black crew members.

Mtebele (interview 2020) also raises the other issue which resembles the Apartheid segregation in Multi Choice, black shows are done by black productions and black crew members only while white shows are done by white productions and white crew only. However, white productions and crew members can still be used to tell black stories. Molahlehi (interview 2020) makes an example of John Barker, a director for Kyknet shows, stating that to make white films, one must have the knowledge and experience of the white culture. However, Barker directed *Jacob's Cross* (a black show in SABC 2) while he is not black. In other words, Blacks do not have the knowledge and experience of the Afrikaans culture that can allow them to tell white stories, but whites do not need the black knowledge and experience of black culture to tell black stories.

It is also important to understand the differences in the target markers in Multi Choice. One of the issues that came out of the interview with the two interviewees is that Mnet is regarded as an international channel. It tells stories with an international appeal to attract international audiences (interview with Mtebele, 2020). Mzansi Magic, on the other hand, is a local channel. It attracts local audiences. White shows and stories are for international audiences, black shows and stories are for local audiences (Mtebele, 2020). This indicates that whiteness can travel beyond borders, hence the bigger budget for white stories. Black stories remain localised. This also explains why shows in Mzansi Magic only continue the colonial and Apartheid media representation of black people. Shows such as *Uyajola 99* and *Utatakho*, represent Blacks as communities and people always wallowing in social problems, people behaving in a nonsensical and comic way. Shows on Mnet, on the other hand, continue to represent white people as morally good, business orientated and civilised. The statement made by this kind of representations is that whites remain superior to blacks.

The above context is reminiscent of the Apartheid-filmmaking-style in South Africa. When the films funding schemes were introduced, white filmmakers were commissioned to tell white stories and black stories while black filmmakers were side-lined or used as crew members with no creative roles in the filmmaking.

Multi Choice practices are ensuring that the binary oppositions of black and white of the Apartheid era continue in post-Apartheid South Africa. Black productions are given a low

budget and white productions a high budget. This perpetuates the assumption that white productions are better than black productions (interview with Mtebele, 2020).

It is inevitable that white productions in post-Apartheid South Africa are serving an agenda to maintain the status of whiteness, part of which is to protect the Afrikaans language and culture from death. Since the dawn of democracy, there have been outcries of the "death of Afrikaans" by some Afrikaans speakers hence, Steyn (2019) argues that the Afrikaans culture industry has contributed to the panic and paranoia about Afrikaans' "fading position". For example, Afrikaans newspapers publish articles about "injustice" committed against Afrikaans language or against its speakers. They constantly, dedicate space to opinion pieces about Afrikaans and its future (Steyn, 2004). Afrikaans media are, just like they were during Apartheid, firmly rooted in white life and white experiences (Steyn, 2019). Productions in Multi Choice and *7de Laan* are also contributing to the same ideas of protecting the Afrikaans and culture.

Despite all these issues raised, Afrikaans shows such as *7de Laan* still have a great viewership. In September 2020 *7de Laan* averaged 1.6 million viewers on a day (Broadcasting Research Council of South Africa, 2020). Does this mean that audiences are complacent about the issues of representation in *7de Laan*? Shobiye, Naidoo and Rugbeer (2018) state that the decision of people to watch certain media products is based on the language they speak, their cultural experience and racial group to which they belong. Using this analogy in the context of *7de Laan*, the show's majority audiences (Afrikaners) and creators use the show to support their group's vitality, social identity and avoid messages or issues that threaten their group identity. As stated by Williamson and DeSouza (2006), ethnic media and its products which target specific ethnic groups, help strengthen community cohesion by minimising social isolation and promoting and maintaining culture and language. These elements make *7de Laan* appear as ethnocentric.

The usage of Afrikaans culture and language in *7de Laan* portrays tendencies of resisting the political change that took place in 1994. Much of this resistance can be categorised as what DiAngelo (2011) call 'white fragility,' that is, the racial stress endured by white people leading them to a defensive mode for their privilege. Consequently, shows such as *7de Laan* do not endorse the rainbow nation ideals due to white fragility.

Whiteness has Been Normalised, New Perspectives

Many works exist that look at the production, distribution or exhibition of whiteness in media, education and society in general. According to Carr (2016), whiteness is a major concern in contemporary societies globally and can be used to understand and deconstruct a range of social conditions and lived realities of all people. Adding on this, Applebaum (2011) contends that whiteness and racism are interrelated. Yancy and Davidson (2014) explain that race is crucial in the making of whiteness as racial hierarchies have always placed the White race as the pinnacle. Carr (2016) contends that White privilege remains significant in shaping political, economic and social structures such as the media.

Drawing from these works, this thesis is located within the current sociolinguistics studies that investigate what whiteness may mean for indigenous languages in post-Apartheid South Africa using popular culture as an example. As Knoetze (2016) states soap operas are rich texts to study how whiteness is presented in popular culture.

An example which resembles *7de Laan's* situation is the use of Flemish in *Thuis*, a soap opera in Belgium playing in *Vlaamse Radio-en Televisiomroeporganisatie* (Felish Radio and Television Broadcasting Organization), or VRT. In both countries (South Africa and Belgium), there is a serious challenge dealing with diversity of the countries in media. Both countries have policies guiding the nation building projects in their respective Public Service Broadcasting (Knoetze, 2018). However, in each case study, there is a reluctance to reflect the societies' diversity. Those that hold the economy of the country still call the shots in the public broadcasters (Knoetze, 2018).

Another example which shows dominance of whiteness is Kenya. In this country, Swahili is the medium of instruction until the 5th grade. From onward, English becomes the only medium of instruction (Migge and Leglise, 2007). This setup is also evident in French Guiana, where French still dominates local languages in the education system, commerce, and government (Migge and Leglise, 2007). These cases are a reassurance for whiteness, creating a platform that confirms that whiteness prevails.

Another example which has been studied is that of Pakeha in New Zealand. Nairn, Barnes, Rankine, Borell, Abel and McCreanor (2011) argue that the representation of Pakeha is made to appear normal and ordinary over that of the Maori in the New Zealand media. This leads to the values, beliefs, practices and language of the Pakeha appearing natural and common.

Nairn et al (2011) contend that such a representation hides the historical facts of how Pakeha dominated Maori culture over the years due to colonialism. In a similar vein, Robson, and Reid (2001) argue that the media construction of Pakeha as the norm is a denial to acknowledge the unequal power relations between Pakeha, indigenous and minority cultural groups.

In identifying the gaps in the current scholarship regarding this topic, Spears (2018) argues that scholars of language and race have not sufficiently attended to the issues of race and language. Carr (2016) argues that race has been ignored in dissecting language issues. It has also been alluded to by Wise (2011) that whiteness is often neglected when studying issues of social justice. Adding these, the thesis argues that race and language overlap in the production of whiteness in *7de Laan*.

Scholars have not looked at macro-forces such as global capitalist system, political-economic stratification and other forms of socioeconomic inequality in terms of how they produce linguistic racism in *7de Laan*. Thus, in writing this chapter, the newness to be expected is that the racial and linguistic issues that emerge out of *7de Laan* are also produced by macro context factors such as the economic power that belongs to the Afrikaner community in South Africa.

This chapter posits that the current scholarship has not paid sufficient attention to how media institutions in South Africa help reproduce social inequalities, especially based on race and language. Racism in these institutions is no longer explicitly legally sanctioned, but it is still manifested, particularly institutionally (Jung, Vargas, and Bonilla-Silva, 2011).

Using the above studies as a premise to identify the gap in the current debates, the present research offers a new element that has not been adequately explored: colonial languages have a long lasting socio-political and economic power that they are currently using to mobilise and garner support for their continuing survival in Africa. In South Africa in particular, this kind of power and supprt undermine postcolonial and post-apartheid democratic policies meant for redress. The need to study the linguistic racial issues in post-Apartheid South Africa is as paramount as it was during the Apartheid times. As part of the contribution of this study to the current scholarship, I argue that while the SABC has an existing language policy aligned to Constitution of the country that emphasises redressing the past linguistic injustices and promoting nation building, there are tendencies produced and distributed by

7de Laan which undercut these policies to strengthen the ideology of whiteness in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Having considered examples of the production and distribution of whiteness from across the world, the research questions guiding this study are: what are the coded elements that allow for continued resistance to linguistic change (in *7de Laan*) and how are they continually reinforced to maintain the status quo? With whom does political and cultural economy in the post-Apartheid South Africa reside? To answer these questions and many other issues raised, the study will rely on Critical Whiteness Study (CWS) as a theoretical tool to reveal that the resistance to linguistic change in *7de Laan* is a political and cultural stance to keep *7de Laan* as a 'white space', that (re)produces whiteness, and "protect" the Afrikaans language.

The chapter relies on two methodologies to extrapolate these themes: interviews and semiotic analysis. The interview for this chapter was done with two filmmakers, Inga Mtebele and Lerato Molahlehi who are both film directors and film producers respectively in South Africa. This method was relevant for this study as it was able to offer the contextual data that informed the arguments of the chapter.

Semiotics, on the other hand, is the study of signs. It is the study of what constitutes signs, what laws governs them, what meaning they communicate and how they communicate that meaning (Danesi, 2004). In film studies, semiotics is the study of the meaning behind images, gestures, sound or anything visual to the audiences. Using semiotics in this chapter will help decipher the meaning behind the above-mentioned themes, it will help unpack the social, political and ideological meaning behind these themes.

Critical Whiteness Studies, the case of 7de Laan

The specific literature for this study is CWS. Foster (2003:1) argues that CWS is a discipline working to "destabilise the assumptions behind whiteness as a cultural norm". According to Alley-Young (2008) CWS seeks to disempower or reject whiteness, to expose its privilege and exclusion of "others". Foste and Irwin (2020) describe CWS as a body of scholarship that intends to expose the ways in which whiteness functions to maintain racial oppression. According to Cabrera, Franklin and Watson (2017), critical whiteness studies expose the hegemonic nature of whiteness. Frankenberg (1993:1) explains whiteness as "a location of

structural advantages…a standpoint…and a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed". According to Frankenburg (1993), whiteness shapes the lives of those that are white and those that are not white as well. By focusing on whiteness as an influential element in the usage of language and culture in *7de Laan*, attention is drawn to potential biases that the show is promoting in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Through the analysis of the representation of the family structure between whites and blacks, the living conditions which portray white characters as communal and black characters as individualistic, the teenage journey to adulthood only for white characters and entrepreneurship only for white characters in *7de Laan*, the study seeks to bring whiteness into visibility, to show that post-Apartheid South Africa is still caught by colonial and Apartheid ideologies of white privilege and white spaces reserved for "whites only". In *7de Laan,* whiteness is a norm. Applying critical whiteness studies to *7de Laan* draws attention to a system and ideology of white domination in the soap, a system that excludes black cultures and languages, preserving the soap for white characters, white languages and white cultures.

Gibson (2006) and Colvin (2009) contend that there are advantages to belonging to the dominant white race, but this privilege is both disguised and reinforced by its invisibility. Whiteness has become a dominant cultural space and it offers significant advantages to those that are white (Gray, Jaber and Anglem, 2013). In adopting this position, the intention of this study is not to criticise Afrikaans in *7de Laan* but to analyse and study how whiteness in the soap is normalised and naturalised and how language is the tool. Under whiteness, ideological racist linguistic norms flourish regardless of whether anyone adheres to them or not. It is the contention of this study that the perpetuation of whiteness in *7de Laan* ignores the historical facts which made Afrikaans a language of the oppressor hence the language's privileged position in the show. As Ratele and Laubscher (2010) state, we live in a context where race operates as the fulcrum on which power is determined, where whiteness, and the connotations inherent to its construct, remains a contentious issue.

It is important to note that popular cultural artefacts such as soap operas, still yield political and social power (Knoetze, 2018). In a similar vein, Bernard (2006) contends that post-Apartheid popular culture is a good site to study the chronicles of transformation that characterise the new South Africa. In the same approach, Milton (2006) reveals that popular culture can reveal a lot about social realities of their era. According to Knoetze (2018), soap operas can produce a lot of ideas about their imagined communities. This is because they

focus a lot on the local storylines and they have instances of cultural proximity. Such representations can reveal a lot about the societies that produce them.

Afrikaner media should be viewed as cultural exchanges that rely on underlying cultural codes to be understood (Van Coller and Van Jaarsveld, 2018). These include language and religion (Christianity). Hall (1997) states that cultural codes give a sense of our identity, they determine who and what we are and where we belong. Therefore, the use of Afrikaans in *7de Laan* can be viewed as a cultural code that seeks to install a sense of belonging among the Afrikaners.

The chapter now turns to an analysis of whiteness in *7de Laan*. This analysis will unpack ways in which whiteness is produced and distributed in the show and its cultural and political meaning for indigenous languages in South Africa.

Language and Culture in *7de Laan*: Whiteness in Disguise

In this section I discuss three identified themes from *7de Laan* that support the arguments made thus far that *7de Laan* is producing and distributing elements of whiteness. These themes are family relationships (the representation of family structures for white characters and black characters), the protection of Afrikaans (the use of language and culture that only favour Afrikaans) and the representation of racial capitalism (the representation of business ownership that does not reflect the demographics of South Africa). These themes are not directly mentioned in the story, they are implied.

Family and love relationships

To address the representation of family and love relationships in *7de Laan*, we must first understand the impact of Apartheid on white and black families in South Africa. Trotter (2009) states that one of the significant impacts of Apartheid on black people was separation of families. Many black people were separated from their families either for employment (working in areas far from their families), arrests, exile, and killings. This made black families unstable and lost while white families remained tied and united. The following analysis shows how the unity of white families and disunity of black families are reproduced in *7de Laan*.

In *7de Laan,* black characters are never shown when they are at home with their families or with their own stories like it is the case with white characters (Steyn, 2019). Using the example of Aggie, Fikani, Nozipho or Lesedi (Kabelo Motselenyani), the story never shows their homes, or their families. Previously, there was a character named Mandla. He was the only one who had a storyline with his mother. Ever since Mandla's character was removed, black characters have remained "family-less". However, white characters are very family-orientated in the story. In fact, all white characters in *7de Laan* have families and their families have their own storylines. Rickus has a mother (Marrian), father (Chris) and sister (Alexa). The other white family in the soap is the Bassons, there is DeWet Basson (father), Shawn Basson (De Wet's son) and Lana (Shawn's wife).

7de Laan does not portray black characters having their own stories, some black characters only enter the narrative through their relationships with white characters (mainly professional relationships). For example, Lesedi plays a big character in the soap (she is a lawyer), but outside her professional relationship with white characters such as Rickus, she does not have her own story. Kopano, who plays a character of a waiter at *Oppoiekoffie* (coffee shop) is also another black character who does not have his own storyline. We only get to see him at work but his life outside the coffee shop is not known.

This indicates that as much as blacks are represented in the story, they are not represented the same way as their white counterparts. While white characters have families, the case is different for black characters do not have. White characters have homes, but black characters are hardly seen at home. This gives the impression that white lifestyles are more complete than black lifestyles.

The storylines in *7de Laan* are mainly for white Afrikaans-speaking characters. White characters drive the narrative. New white characters in the soap such as Alexa, Connie, and Lana have their own storylines. Alexa is a seasonal main character in the story who is playing the role of a medical doctor. She has a family (Welman family). We see her life both at home and at work. She is also in a relationship with Fikani (a black medical doctor). When Bonita (Hildegardt Whites) joined the show in 2016, she was introduced as a girl with a criminal background, known for dealings with drug lords. She was then introduced as a girl selling flowers and making a living for herself. Even when she is represented as a 'white other', she, together with many others have storylines that drive the soap in several episodes. Black characters, on the other hand, often do not have their own storylines.

Black characters such as Aggie who have been in the soap for many years still struggle with their own storylines outside white families and white colleagues. To this day, the soap has not created a storyline for Aggie. This suggests that black characters are only in the story to help white characters propel their storylines. Black characters are underrepresented in the story. Bonita and Alexa are typical examples of how whiteness operates in the story. White characters are given familial storylines while the majority of black characters are not given any.

Steyn (2019) criticises such representations by arguing that the representation of black characters in Afrikaans media is superficially characterised such that no black South Africans would be able to identify with them. In *7de Laan* particular, black characters are examples of what Shohat and Stam (1994) called "pseudopolyphony", that is, representations of a particular group in a media as voiceless, marginalised, and disempowered.

Interracial relationships

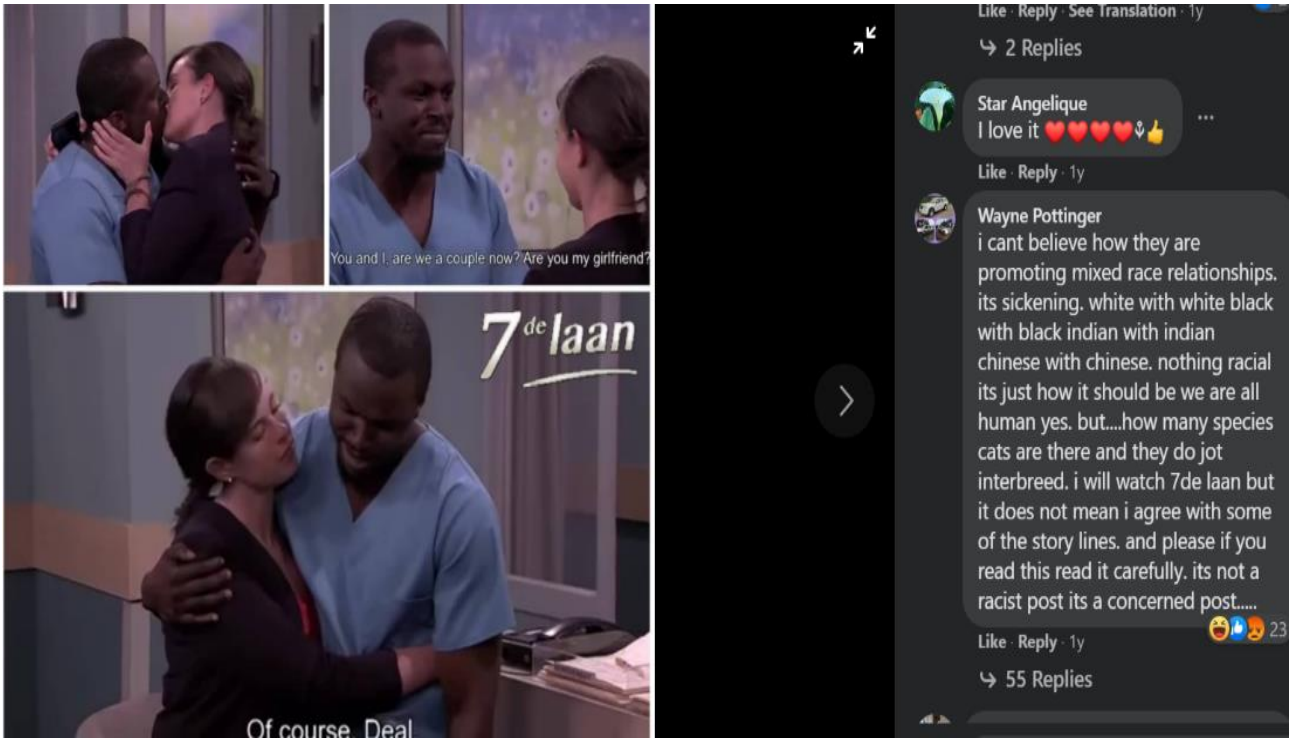
Another aspect related to love and relationships is the representation of interracial relationships in *7de Laan*. Interracial relationships are one of the indicators of diversity in a society (AhnAllen and Suyemoto, 2011). This is because interracial relationships indicate that both racial groups in the society have welcomed each other to an extent that they can form love relationships and build a society that has better senses of cohesion than what was witnessed during the apartheid times when interracial relationships were criminalised. *7de Laan* does not have interracial romantic relationships between white and black characters. The only relationships that are portrayed in the story are between Afrikaans characters (Paula and Altie), between white and coloured characters (Vince and Bonita) and between Africans (Mandla and Alyce). This suggests that *7de Laan* still struggles with diversity, black racial groups are not yet fully welcome in this fictitious world of Hillside.

In the history of *7de Laan*, two incidents that involve interracial relationships have happened and they were both vehemently opposed by the viewers. In 2016 the soap depicted a romantic relationship between Nandi (a black woman) and Bernard (a white man), both of whom have since left the soap. The couple received racist slurs from both the audience and the cast who did not approve of the interracial relationship (*News24*, 2016).

Another incident happened in January 2019 when the soap depicted an interracial kissing scene between Fikani (black character) and Alexa (Afrikaans character). Both are medical doctors in a local hospital. This incident caused outrage and condemnation from the audiences on the shows' social media. The Afrikaans audiences felt the scene was inappropriate. One audience member went to the show's Facebook page and posted: "I used to like you on *7de Laan* [referring to Carina]. But I am glad you are not my wife after that episode. Actress or not, I would never have kissed you again. Sis, man, you are dragging white girls' name through the mud" (*The Citizen*, 2019). Their relationship ended and now the story depicts them as ordinary colleagues.

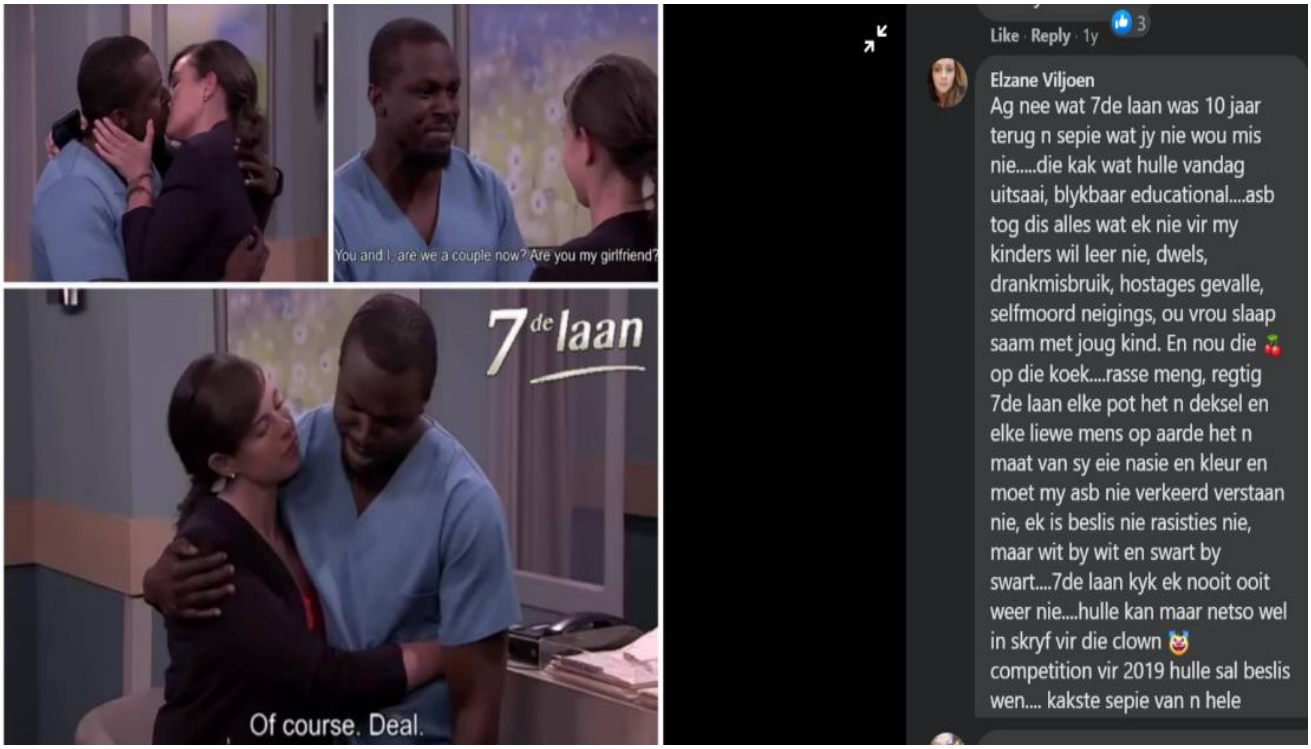
Below are actual screenshots from Facebook posts made by the audiences.

Picture 4: Facebook Screenshot



Source: Facebook (*7de Laan*).

Picture 5: Facebook Screenshot



Source: Facebook (*7de Laan*).

Translation of Elzan Viljoen's text in picture 5 above

(oh no 7de Laan was a nice soap 10 years ago that you didn't want to miss. The nonsense they are producing today, is supposed to be educational? Please, this is something that I will never want to teach my children, drugs, misuse of alcohol, hostages, suicide attempts, old women sleeping with young boys, and now the open cake? Races do not get along, everybody do their own things, every single person on earth has a friend from different race, nation, and colour. And please, do not misunderstand me, I am definitely not racist, but white stays white, and black stays black. 7de Laan, I am never going to watch again. They might as well up for a clown competition for 2019, they will definitely win, rubbish).

The reception of the above scene is symbolic of how some Afrikaner audience negatively interpret interracial relationships between blacks and whites and do not believe blacks and whites can live together. It also indicates that some white audiences in post-Apartheid South Africa do not support or agree with the rhetoric of nation building and the rainbow nation.

However, the soap opera subsequently defended its decision of including the interracial kiss and its creators called for an end to "hate speech". *7de Laan's* head writer, Hanli Rolfes told *Sunday Times* (2019) that she would not bow to pressure from audiences or those threatening

to boycott the show after the kissing scene. According to Rolfes, "we live in a real South Africa where loads of people have interracial relationships. *7de Laan* is focused on putting the real South Africa on TV. It is our responsibility to show that art imitates life" (Sunday Times, 2019:1). Interestingly, it has been almost 2 years and the show has never depicted a similar scene with this couple or any other interracial couple. That seems to suggest that the pressure from outside the show won.

The racial segregation and resistance to interracial relationships in the show suggest that in Afrikaans communities, these types of relationships do not exist. According to Kellner (1996), media text highlights the values and social issues of the contexts in which they are produced. As a result, media products such as *7de Laan* can be considered as snapshots of a society in which they are produced. The reality is that *7de Laan* is a product of a society that is still highly racially polarised. According to Van der Merwe (2011:6),

> *7de Laan* places the Afrikaans-speaking South African in a prominent position in the fictional South Africa. It provides a sense of security, stability, or reassurance that Afrikaans-speaking South African viewers need in the post-Apartheid context. The underlying message is 'nothing has changed, everything is fine'.

It is inevitable that whiteness is one of the central mechanisms through which *7de Laan* is constructed when it comes to issues of racial diversity, and interracial relationships. Steyn (2019) argues that shows like *7de Laan* have been created exclusively for the Afrikaans communities, at least in part, by paranoia about Afrikaans' "fading position" in post-Apartheid South Africa. Therefore, interracial relationships are forbidden as it is assumed that they are going to lead to the end of the Afrikaans community as mixed-race children will be born. These children will not identify as either race, but a new race. Audiences and the show reject interracial relationships to influence Afrikaans audiences to also reject them, to keep the Afrikaans nation alive and pure.

Using Steyn's (2019) argument regarding post-Apartheid Afrikaans media, shows such as *7de Laan* do not participate in enforcing and facilitating Afrikaans-speaking integration into a new South Africa, rather, they continue to reaffirm and naturalise the imagined boundaries of "Afrikaans-only-community". Steyn validates the findings of this chapter that *7de Laan* is a white space, reserved only for white people, except for few black people. Adopting an

argument from Webb (2010), Afrikaans has remained a symbol of white identity in post-Apartheid South Africa.

These arguments make it clear that the challenge for some white people has been to adjust to post-Apartheid South Africa where the political environment seeks to undo the colonial and white supremacist past. In this new context, according to Foster and Steyn (2008:25), the central question for whiteness in post-Apartheid South Africa can be: "how to maintain privilege in a situation in which black people have achieved political power".

The protection of the Afrikaans vernacular

The first South African democratic elections in 1994 led to fears about the position and status of Afrikaans in post-Apartheid South Africa. Various studies exist which explain a significant language shift from Afrikaans to English, especially among the Coloured communities in the Western Cape (Anthonissen, 2013). Posel and Zeller (2019) state that many Afrikaans language activists feel that the cultural value of Afrikaans has been eroded in the post-Apartheid period. According to Bishop (2019), Afrikaans no longer has the same state protection in post-Apartheid South Africa that it had during the Apartheid period. All these shifts have led to full force attempts to protect and preserve the Afrikaans language and culture because of fears that the language would disappear. This has led to the formation of Afrikaans civil rights organisations such as Afriforum. The organisation's mission is to fight for the protection of the Afrikaner minorities. There is also an establishment of "Afrikaans-only" communities such as Orania. This is a community found in the outskirts of Northern Cape. Orania is inhabited by Afrikaners only, the town practices Afrikaans culture and even has monuments of the engineers of Apartheid such Hendrick Verwoerd. There is also a huge production of Afrikaans popular culture led by artists such as Steve Hofmeyer actively involved in producing content in Afrikaans and even defending Apartheid.

By Afrikaans protection, this chapter means that there are signs used by the soap which connect to external factors to protect the Afrikaans language and culture. The objective is not explicitly said in the soap, it is implemented through various representations as will be seen below. This element is considered a theme in this chapter as it is done repeatedly, it is at the centre of the show.

From its inception, Afrikaans has always been a dominant language in *7de Laan*. In total, *7de Laan* has 15 main characters. Out of these, only Fikani and Lesedi do not speak Afrikaans.

Other main black characters are Aggie and Nozipho. Whenever they are in the presence of Afrikaans-speaking characters they speak Afrikaans. Aggie occasionally speaks isiZulu with Marko or Fikani. Nozipho, on the other hand, never speaks isiZulu. She speaks English with other black characters. No Afrikaans-speaking characters ever speak English, even in the presence of black characters who respond in English.

The scene below is a typical example of how language is used in the show to maintain the position of Afrikaans. In this scene, Lesedi invites Connie van der Lecq (Quinne Brown) for dinner as friends. Connie goes to talk to the phone and DeWet Basson (Dirk Stoltz) enters the scene. They are not happy to see each other with Lesedi as DeWet is no longer interested in using Lesedi as his divorce lawyer.

Dialogue between Lesedi, Connie and DeWet (09 December 2019)

Extract 10

Connie: Ons sien jou heeltemal te min. (*We see too little of you*).

Lesedi: That is going to change. How about drinks later? I will find out if Aggie is available?

Connie: Ek mis dit vir niks. (*I won't miss it for anything*).

Lesedi: DeWet…

DetWet: Ons het niks verder om vir mekaar te se nie of wil jy my weer van iets beskuldig en dryg met n vuurwapen. (*We have nothing to say to each other Lesedi. Or will you accuse me and threaten me with a firearm again*)?

Lesedi: I just thought you might want this. (Lesedi gives him a letter). Willem asked me to give it to you. I also emailed you a copy.

DeWet: Hy is toe nie so dom soos hy lyk nie. (*He is not as stupid as he looks, after all*).

Lesedi: You might get an angry call from your wife. I told her about Willem's statement. I also warned her that there will be serious consequences if she continues to harass me. I know you are looking for another lawyer. I was just wrapping things up.

DeWet: Ek sou nie vir iemand anders gesoek het was dit nie nodig maar dis onmootlik om saam met jou te werk ek weetnie waar eka an of af is nie. (*I wouldn't be changing if it wasn't necessary. Bu it's impossible to work with you. I never know where I stand*).

Lesedi: 2019 has been unusually tough, which made me edgy and irrational. But I've got it under control now. I won't let you down.

DeWet: Jy kan jou stere dank jy is mooi en slim. (*You can thank your lucky stars you are pretty and clever*).

END OF SCENE

The use of language is intriguing in this scene. Both DeWet and Connie use Afrikaans only when they speak to Lesedi. Throughout the scene, Lesedi uses English and no other language. Neither Connie nor DeWet, use English or codeswitch to English when talking to Lesedi. It is evident in this scene that DeWet and Connie are comfortable in using their mother tongue while talking to a black character. Lesedi is forced to either speak English or Afrikaans with them. She is not entitled to use African her mother tongue just like DeWet and Connie. Again, here we are seeing whiteness prevailing over blackness. White characters have the freedom and space to speak their language and black characters must accommodate them.

In these scenes, two former dominant and colonial languages are used in a conversation between white and black characters. The scene is showing us two people speaking different languages but able to understand each other. Lesedi, an educated black character is not to speak her indigenous language like white characters are doing. The context signals the shortfalls of implementing the state's the nation building and social cohesion agenda. *7de Laan* does not show interest into the state's policies. In this soap opera blacks must assimilate into whiteness.

Language, in this case, functions as a unifying factor and contributes to the creation of a homogenous group (Knoetze, 2018). However, this happens at the expense of indigenous languages. Whiteness prevails at these instances as it is African characters who switch from their languages to a white language to accommodate white Afrikaans-speaking characters. This raises questions about transformation and diversity in the soap. If Afrikaans is a minority language in South Africa and there is a clear language policy by the public broadcaster to uplift the status of indigenous languages so as to undo the errors of the past, how come Afrikaans can maintain its high status in the show?

The protection of whiteness in the story goes beyond white-white, white-to black interactions and exists even in scenes involving black characters only. In *7e Laan,* we sometimes find black characters speaking Afrikaans and switching to English and indigenous languages. Such use of language never happens to white characters. White characters either speak Afrikaans or English, the latter is spoken instantly. The soap has normalised the use of Afrikaans even for black characters.

The scene below shows an example of how the use of Afrikaans has been normalised in the soap even for black characters. In this scene, Khethiwe asks Kopano about Gabby's mood lately as she feels that there is something wrong with Gabby. However, Kopano does not know anything about it. Khethiwe surprises Kopano by mentioning that her and Romeo are in a relationship. As previously, mentioned, black characters struggle with having storylines of their own in *7de Laan*. The scene below is an interchange between two black characters about love and relationships that involve Khethiwe. Even in this instance, the storyline was not sustained, it died very early, it even led to a storyline of two white characters (Gabby and Romeo) falling in love even though Khethiwe had mentioned that she and Romeo are in a relationship.

Dialogue between Kopano and Khethiwe (09 December 2019)

Extract 11

Khethiwe: Hi! Ukhona uGabby? *(Hi! Is Gabby here?)*

Kopano: gou vir Jacob n aflewering gevat se my is daar groot skade by die fabriek *(Delivering a takeaway for Mr. Jacob. Is there a big damage at the factory)?*

Khethiwe: Hayi wethu! Abakhange bathathe nto ingako. Kubonakala ngathi babefuna imali cha. (*Not really. They didn't take much. It seems as if they were looking for cash*). Is Gabby nog in a strange mood? Sy en Romeo wou vroeer praat oor iets maar toe kom roep connie in. *(Is Gabby still in a strange mood? She and Romeo wanted to talk earlier, but then Connie arrived).*

Kopano: Sy het niks vir my gese nie. *(She did not say anything to me).*

Khethiwe: Apparently wil sy nie my gevoelens seer maa ken sy wil my nie verloor as n vriendin dink jy sy het n problem met my en Romeo as n paartjie. *(Apparently, she doesn't want to hurt my feeling or lose as a buddie. Think it's an issue? Me and Romeo as a couple?*

Kopano: Julle n paartjie? *(You, a couple)?*

Khethiwe: Dis nog nie uitgemaak maar ek het haar vertel ek hou van hom en hy voel dieselfde. (*It's not official yet. I told her I have a crush on him and the feeling's mutual*).

Kopano: Het hy gese hy hou van jou of dink jy net so? *(Did he say so or do you just think so)?*

Khethiwe: N vrou weet sulke dinge se vir Gabby sy moet inloer by di boutique. *(A woman knows these things. Tell Gabby to pop in at the boutique).*

END OF SCENE

In the scene above, Khethiwe instantly switches between isiXhosa and English, but Kopano is responding only in Afrikaans. This shows that Kopano can understand isiXhosa, instead of responding in an indigenous language, he keeps responding in Afrikaans. Despite Khethiwe switching from Afrikaans to isiXhosa, the dominance of Afrikaans is maintained in the scene, both characters have accepted Afrikaans as the language of the show. This, in return, negates the role of indigenous languages in the show. If two black characters are comfortable in having a conversation in Afrikaans despite both understanding an indigenous language that one instantly uses, it means indigenous languages are not needed in the show, Afrikaans is overpowering them.

The other element to consider in the protection of Afrikaans in the show is the type of Afrikaans spoken by Oubaas (male Afrikaner). In the scene below, we see Oubaas having a conversation with Hilda, his wife (female Afrikaner). Hilda is sad that Charmaine does not like her food. After complaining to Oubaas, Oubaas is very angry and is ready to confront Charmaine (female Afrikaner), Hilda stops Oubaas from confronting Charmaine.

Dialogue between Oubass and Hilda (20 July 2015).

Extract 12

Oubaas: Daar is jy my bruid weet jy waarvoor sit ek en kou my lippe af daai brooitjie wat jy vir my gemaak het die ander dag met ham en fye of is dit celery. (*There you are my bride. Do you know what I have been craving all day? That sarmie you made for me with ham and fig. Or was it celery*)?

Hilda: Agirki (*Gherkins*).

Oubaas: Einste n woonderlike kombinasie en nou my lelie hoekom is jou gemoed so somber wat is fout. (*That is, it. A prime combination. And now, my lily? Why is your heart so gloomy? What is wrong*)?

Hilda: Charmaine dink my kos is aklig sy se sys al eerder haar polse kou as om by my te kom eet. (*Charmaine thinks my food is awful. She said she would rather gnaw her wrists than eat my food*).

Oubaas: Die jezebel! Sy sider al vir jare aan jo eksotiese dusewaavoor sal sy nou kom met sulke onsinighede as ek my sonde nie oorsien ek gaan haar somer nou vertel waar David sy wortels begrawe het sy ken nie vi Septimus van Zyl (*That Jezebel! She has been feasting on your exotic dishes for years. Where do these absurdities suddenly come from? I have a good mind to…I am going to tell her what is what immediately. She does not know Septimus van Zyl…*).

Hilda: nee nee oubaas ek soek nie nog moeilikheid ek sal okay wees miskien moet ek van nou af by die vaal en voorspelbare bly miskien is my kombinasies te uitheems vir ander se smAKE (*No, no. Please do not, Oubaas. I do not want trouble. I will be okay. Maybe I should stick to the drab and predictable from now on. Maybe my combinations are too foreign for other people's taste*).

Oubaas: Nonsens, Jou kos is altyd uit die bonste gestoltes daar is niemand wat n kers by jouk an opslaan. (*Rubbish. Your food's always from the top shelves. There is no one who can hold a candlestick to you*).

END OF SCENE

Oubaas's use of language in the story, as can be seen in the scene above is unique. He uses a linguistic verbosity that can only be understood by Afrikaners. He relies heavily on Afrikaans idioms. While these are subtitled in English, there is a possibility that some meaning gets lost. The other issue to consider is that old black characters such a Maria are not afforded the

opportunity to use their language as Oubaas uses his. Afrikaner audiences are entitled to entertainment in their mother tongue but black audiences are not. This shows that whites are more welcome than blacks in the story.

Among the three Afrikaans varieties in South Africa, Oubass uses Orange River Afrikaans. McCormick (2006) states that there are three Afrikaans varieties in South Africa, Cape Afrikaans, Orange River Afrikaans and Eastern Cape Afrikaans. The first was spoken mainly by the Dutch imported slaves employed at the Cape, the second was spoken by the indigenous Khoikhoi and the third was spoken mainly by the Dutch European settler descendants, also known as the *trekboers* who moved to the east for farming (Meyer, 2018). The latter is a variety mainly spoken by the white Afrikaners who still live in the farms and who are strong conservationists of the Afrikaans language. Therefore, Oubaas is a typical representation of that group of Afrikaans speakers. He embodies the social group that seeks to protect the Afrikaans language.

The decision by *7de Laan* producers to make Afrikaans a dominant language, to make it a soap about the white culture while commissioned and broadcast by a public broadcaster is not an innocent decision. It is a decision that requires some scrutiny. Milton (2011) categorically states that during the Apartheid era, despite the large number of black speakers of Afrikaans, the language was viewed, appropriated and developed as a distinctively white language. Therefore, the soap is protecting this white language and white culture, to advance whiteness in a political system that is dominated by blacks. As Steyn (2019) argues, the arrival of democracy in South Africa seemed to announce the death of Afrikaans media (films, soaps, dramas, newspapers) therefore, Afrikaners saw it best to protect their language. This is an issue that also raises questions about the ability of the ruling government of the African National Congress (ANC) to ensure that there is clear transformation in social spaces.

These problems in *7de Laan* are highly contextual, they exist within a special political, economic and social system whose intention is to protect Afrikaans culture and language from disappearance in post-Apartheid South Africa. Omojuyigbe (2004) reminds us that the media occupies a very influential position in society. For this reason, language usage in the media should conform to the rules of the game, that is, it must suit the interests of those with political and economic power. Furthermore, Oso (2006:175-176) states;

> Languages and the ways they are used in the mass media, structure, or views of the world and that the use of language and the type of language used have

> ideological implications and they form part of the overarching structure of power and subordination in a particular society.

To contextualise the above statement, soaps are works of art, but the elements discussed in this chapter are more than just art. They are ideological. During the Apartheid era black people did not have businesses in white areas. They were not allowed to be in white areas without a permit. To white people, black areas were "no-go-areas" as it was believed that such spaces were full of crime, poverty and backwardness. *7de Laan's* exclusion of black locations, black people owning businesses in a white area (Hillside), or no mention of black areas in the soap is reminiscent of the Apartheid system. By replicating this context in post-Apartheid South Africa, the soap shows that black people are still not accepted in white spaces.

To conclude, *7de Laan* is using Afrikaans as a language and culture to build cultural dominance of Afrikaans in the show, demarcate white spaces and link Afrikaans to Europe and Asia, geographical areas viewed as centres of civilisation and progress. Xue and Zuo, (2013:2263) assert that "cultural dominance is the continuation of modern colonialism in cultural field. Its purpose is not to conquer territory, nor is it to control economic field, it is to control people's mind". *7de Laan* vigorously promotes the expansion of whiteness, making it a norm. In a sense, it is culture wars at the level of language, using language to violate post-Apartheid's rainbow nation.

Racial capitalism

The problem of economic domination and exploitation has been a concern in South Africa for decades. Cloete (2014) argues that such a system and problem cannot be separated from the racial differences that brewed them. For Cloete (2014), the privileges of the white race have created a system in which economic freedom belongs to white people while political freedom belongs to black people. In a context such as South Africa, it is vital to discuss how the white economy is still protected in a country that is politically belonging to black people.

Business ownership is also of the themes that always feature in the storyline of *7de Laan*. Conveyed through who are aspiring and thriving business owners, the story's main idea is entrepreneurship and wealth. However, the representation of business ownership in the story is dominated by whites. Whites own business and produce, while Blacks consume. *7de Laan*

shows a typical capitalist class struggle between Whites and Blacks, in a case where Blacks are struggling to survive.

The representation of business ownership in *7de Laan* touches on capitalism. Bellanca (2013) defines capitalism as an economic system in which all property is privately owned, where the government does not interfere with business and there is less government regulation, supervision or involvement in market processes. This economic system has dire consequences for a country that comes from a colonial history with racial oppression as it indicates that government cannot interfere in the private business affairs. For a black-led government, it poses challenges on how the economy of the country can be transformed.

In *7de Laan,* we see businesses operating without government or state intervention. Business owners set and determine prices in their own businesses. However, the business ownership in the soap is racialised. This is racial capitalism. According to Bhattacharyya (2018), racial capitalism is not a way of looking at capitalism as a racist conspiracy, but a way of understanding the role of racism in enabling capitalist developments. This means that racial capitalism is important to understand how people are connected or divided from each other in the name of economic survival or in the name of economic well-being. This analysis unpacks ways in which white solidarity and white business ownership enables a "white-only" economic world in *7de Laan*. This can be read as racial capitalism as the exclusion of black entrepreneurs in the story can be read as racist tendencies of the Apartheid era when blacks were only good for manual hard labour, not owning the economy.

To get a full grasp of the representation of racial capitalism in *7de Laan*, key issues are identified in the soap: a two-class system; the absence of labour unions; private ownership and economic inequality.

Private ownership is one of the prevalent themes of capitalism, whether it is private property or collective, land or intellectual property. These ideals play out in *7de Laan* through the Welman family: Chris Welman (David Rees), Rickus Welman (Andre Lotter) and Marrian Welman. Chris is a property developer, Rickus co-owns Hillside Heights with Lesedi (Keabetswe Motselenyane) as a token of Black Economic Empowerment, and Marrian owns The Welman House. In the case of Hillside Heights, Lesedi is only responsible for the legal matters of the business while Rickus is responsible for the business operation. This also signals racial concerns as it suggests that black people are only good for administration while whites can run and conduct the business on their own.

Throughout the soap, capitalism is maintained and adhered to by the Welmans who privately own their businesses without any state interference. In fact, *7de Laan* never mentions state interference in its representation of business ownership. The family runs its own affairs, determines employee salaries and the working conditions of their own businesses. For example, in running The Welman House, Marrian usually tells employees to go home anytime without sticking to the business operating times. She can also ask employees to work overtime.

A two-class system in businesses operation and ownership is also visible in all businesses in *7de Laan*. Olin (2015) describes a two-class business operation as a business operation that has the capitalist class, which owns the means of production (the owners/managers) and the working class (those who sell their labour to the capitalist class in exchange for wages).

In *7de Laan,* we see Eclectic E Boutique, a local female boutique owned and managed by Connie van der Lecq (a white lady) and Khethiwe (black lady) who works as a store assistant. There is also Beleef, a café owned and managed by Marrian (white female) and Vince (white male) and Ivy (coloured woman) is working as a waitress. Oppiekoffie is a coffee shop managed by Esti (white female) while Kabelo (black male), Tumi (black female) and Kim (white female) are waiters and waitresses.

With the white-owned business bourgeoisie at the top of the economic hierarchy, white managers in the middle and black workers at the bottom of the financial scale in *7de Laan,* there is an indication of class division which rehashes the old apartheid racial orders. Black characters, on the other hand, are mere workers, serving the business interests of white characters. Black characters are not portrayed as businesses orientated. Some of them have middle class jobs but others are working as retailers, waiters / waitresses and salespeople. Such a representation of black characters continues to box black people as mere employees of white people. The soap does not portray black people as equals to white people. This is historical, it dates to the colonial and Apartheid periods when Blacks were regarded as servants of white people. *7de Laan* is suggesting that things are still the same as they were in the past.

7de Laan has white characters who work as retailers, waiters / waitresses and salespeople but compared to black characters, white characters are not doing these jobs because they really need to. White characters do these jobs as “part-time jobs”. Black characters, on the other

hand, do these jobs as their only jobs, they are not portrayed as having a variety of options to choose from.

The representation of capitalism in *7de Laan* is a classical class struggle set-up. There is a separation between the haves and the have-nots, where the white characters live their lives above ground as business owners and the black characters eke out a pitiful existence trying to survive. Simply expressed, *7de Laan* portrays white characters having better lives compared to black characters. The soap depicts the capitalist power and how it applies to different races in the story.

An example of racial capital power in the story can be seen in the example below where Chris is informing his wife, Marrian, that his company is busy with the evictions of people who are in "his land" unlawfully. Marrian is worried that Chris did not provide the people with alternative accommodation before the eviction. Chris is not bothered by that, his worry is that the more people occupy the land, the more his planned constructions are delayed.

Dialogue between Chris and Marrian (15 December 2020).

Extract 13

Chris: Dis oral in die nuus die uitsetting. (*The evictions is all over the news*).

Marrian: Ek is jammer hulle het die hof befel afgestel. (*Pity they disregarded the court order*).

Chris: Net een familie het getrek die res het gedink ek dryg net. (*Only one family moved. The rest, it was idle threats*).

Marrian: Hoe lank vat so 'n uitsetting? (*How long will the evictions take*)?

Chris: Half n dag hulle smyt uit en slaan plat hulle vat nie nonsense. (*Half a day. They evict, tear down. Don't take any nonsense*)

Marrian: Kan jy vir almal bly plek kry? (*Could you find everyone place in shelters*)?

Chris? Ek mut nog navrae dun ek wag nog vir antwoorde (*I am still waiting for answers*).

Marrian: So, al daai mense is haweloos? jo reputasie. (*So, all those people are homeless? Your reputation)!*

Chris: My pr span staan reg om vure dood te slaan. (*My PR team's is ready to do damage control*).

Marrian: Jy kan nie so praat nie mense gaan op straat wees jy gaan uitgekryt word as n gierige bufel. (*You can't talk your way out of this? People will be out on the streets. You will be damned as greedy and heartless*)!

Chris: Ek was al erger genome. (*I have been called worse*). Chris talks to DeWet on the phone.

De wet ek is met mariaan jy is op speaker. (*DeWet, I am with Marrian. You are on speaker. How are things there)?*

DeWet: Kan jy my hoor? Dis ergdie plakkers probeer red wat hule kan dis n baklei mammas en kinders huil honde jank die ouens maak mooi skoon. (*Can you hear me? It is bad. The squatters are trying to save whatever they can. There is fighting, moms and kids crying, dogs howling. They are doing a great job*).

Chris: Dis goed hoe lank dink jy gaan dit not vat. (*Good. How much longer*)?

DeWet: Meeste hutte staan nog n uur of twee dan stuur ons die bulldozers. (*Most shacks are still standing. An hour or two, then we will send in the bulldozers*).

Chris: Solank jou mane nie te rof werk onthou niemand kry seer. (*You guys must not be too rough. No injuries*).

END OF SCENE.

This scene is an example of disrespect for human life caused by those whose values are undergirded by capitalism. Chris, a property business mogul, is destroying the homes of the Coloured people who live in a land that he has bought. The Coloured people are a racial group that resulted from the racial and cultural mixing of Europeans with Cape slaves and indigenous black people. This group has historically been treated as too black to be white and

two white to be black. Thus, majority of them have always been excluded from the economic and political spaces of the country.

Chris did not make alternative accommodations for the people who inhabit the land as the post-Apartheid government orders have stipulated, he simply got a court order to evict the people. Even when his wife is talking to him about it, he does not show any sympathy for the lives and livelihoods of the people. All that he cares about is profit.

This scene is also historically relevant. The forceful removal of the Coloured people from Chris' land is reminiscent of the forceful removal of black people and coloured people from their communities such as Sophiatown and District 6 during the Apartheid era. In these two settlements, black people and coloured people were removed from their communities by the white government for commercial purposes. They were taken to the land far from the towns and cities to make way for the construction of "white only settlements". In *7de Laan,* we see Chris removing coloured people from their settlements to expand his property businesses. The similarities between how black and coloured people were treated in Apartheid and how Chris treats them in the soap shows that racial capitalism did not end with Apartheid.

With all these examples from the soap discussed, it is inevitable that race is the defining factor for businesses ownership in *7de Laan*. The representation of business ownership in the soap is racialised, Whites use their culture, language and identity to exclude other races from business relationships. Business ownership in the soap is hierarchised. At the top of this hierarchy, it is whites who own business and Blacks who are working for whites fall at the bottom. The only token Black who is a boss in his business is Fikani, the rest are employees. The soap does not represent black characters as active participants in business ownership. Such a representation characterises Whites as business orientated and Blacks as less business orientated. The implicit message behind this is to elevate whites over Blacks and create a representational image that stigmatises blacks when it comes to business ownership. In the words of Kendi (2019), racism and capitalism are 'conjoined twins.' One cannot successfully argue against whiteness in *7de Laan* without arguing against the support of capitalism that feeds such racist representations.

Racism and ethnicity go together when tracing issues of belonging and identity in the media. Racism and ethnicity are used to exclude others in the media, they are used to create stereotyped, stigmatisation and scapegoating (Nyamnjoh 2010). The representation of business ownership in *7de Laan* illustrates how black people are excluded from the means of

productions. The representation of business ownership in the soap is not only creative but also constructed to serve a narrative of "white is better than black". It is an expression of a racial ideology meant to sustain the dominance and power of white people in post-Apartheid South Africa. Looking at the work of Gramsci, certain cultures maintain their dominance and control not only through violence and coercion, but also through ideology (Ives, 2007). *7de Laan* is used as a weapon to promote whiteness. This creation helps to maintain the status quo that white is a powerful culture. Because television permeates the daily lives of most South Africans (Ives, 2007), *7de Laan* is helping to construct a hegemonic culture of white people thus defying rainbow nationalism and the national and the public broadcaster's language policies.

Conclusion

Soap operas have ideological and political power (Knoetze, 2015). In the same line of argument, Bernard (2006:39) argues convincingly that "popular culture, alongside political and social institutions…chronicles the transformation of the country as well as imaginatively/materially creating a new South Africa". In the same vein, I have argued that *7de Laan* provides access to the linguistic and racial social realities of post-Apartheid South Africa.

The analysis in this chapter suggests that shows such as *7de Laan* sanction raciolinguistic ideologies linguistic racism. Using the words of Bonilla-Silva (2006), we live in a time dominated by "racism without racists" that is, there are racists who do not accept that they are racists. In the case of *7de Laan* this could possibility mean that the show has racist tendencies which they do not accept that they have. The whiteness produced by the show perpetuates racism. To support this argument, the thesis analyses the dominance of Afrikaans in the show, the setting of the show in an Afrikaans community and the lack of cultural diversity in the show. This thesis argues that these factors constitute whiteness.

7de Laan appears to be very hostile to indigenous languages and cultures. Such representations portray whiteness as untouchable. Using Steyn's argument (2019), those who control the media also control the media's representations and such representations are neither transparent nor innocent. *7de Laan* renders whiteness invisible, it is centralised,

dominant and rational. Whiteness is not directly addressed as a problem in the show, but functions as the norm.

Alim, Reyes and Kroskrity (2018) categorically state that political, economic systems and everyday interactions create race. Race and the connotations that come with race are not biological but constructed and made to look real. Thus, language and race are used to produce social realities. In *7de Laan,* it is evident that Afrikaans as a language, and as a race, is used to create a social reality in which whiteness is a norm. The soap does not critically engage with or challenge the construction of whiteness in the soap especially considering the historical realities of South Africa between white people and black people.

The existence of whiteness in *7de Laan* is deeper that what it appears to be. Such representations are exclusionary and ideological. According to Frankenberg, (1997:13) whiteness "turns out on closer inspection to be more about the power to include and exclude groups and individuals than about the actual practices of those who are to be let or kept out". In other words, whiteness is about the privileged modes of representation. *7de Laan* is largely homogenous. When black characters, and Indian characters to an extent, are excluded in *7de Laan*, it is not just about *7de Laan* being an Afrikaans soap opera, it is also about creating an environment where whiteness can be established and sold to the viewers. It is about rejecting the post-Apartheid notion of the rainbow nation. The 1994 democratic elections in South Africa meant that all South Africans had to muddle their way into a complex, nuanced, and different future from the life experienced under Apartheid. However, shows like *7de Laan* have not yet adopted to the life under the new South Africa.

Chapter 6: A Toothless Dog? Conclusions

South Africa is a multilingual society still trying to crystalise itself as a united nation. However, policy and reality do not match. Indigenous languages are not being promoted and used equally. And SABC soap operas are examples of contexts of hierarchisation of indigenous languages. This is despite the SABC's language policy clearly stating that all indigenous languages must be promoted equitably. In brief, there has been language planning and reform, but not enough implementation or realisation. This is because the key element towards realization of the language policy is the political will. However, if politicians are benefiting from this unparalleled and skewed utilisation of indigenous languages in the SABC, the status quo remains. One indigenous language remains at the top of the hierarchy while others are packed at the bottom of the hierarchy.

I undertook this study with an intention of finding out ways through which the SABC language policy implemented and achieved its mandate of transforming the linguistic practices of the broadcaster from that of the colonial and Apartheid era to the one of the democratic South Africa. Through analysis of five SABC soap operas, the discussions presented indicate that the SABC's language policy is not effectively implemented to address linguistic issues emerging in its soap operas. In analysing the usage of indigenous languages in four soap operas, *Generations: The Legacy*, *Uzalo*, *Skeem Saam* and *Muvhango*, it became evident that isiZulu is a dominant language in all the first three soaps, except for the fourth *Muvhango* which uses Tshivenda as a dominant language. The discussions on this thesis also revealed that *7de Laan* is the only Afrikaans soap opera playing on the SABC. The soap is constantly producing and distributing ideologies of whiteness, underrepresenting black characters, black languages, and black cultures.

The influence behind isiZulu's dominance in some of the SABC's soap operas is advertising. Advertising plays a big role as a source of funding for the SABC. Therefore, advertisers choose which programs they want to advertise through. They choose to advertise through a program that uses isiZulu as it is the most spoken indigenous language in the country. This marginalises other indigenous languages. The other element that creates the domination of isiZulu is the national ideology which seeks to maintain South Africa as a rainbow nation, especially linguistically. The rainbow nation discourse is a nation-building ideology and nation states always rely on one language to build the nation. Thus, isiZulu is being promoted through popular culture, it is being used as a tool to build and unify 'the black nation'.

Key themes that were also unpacked in this thesis are: (a) the production of *Uzalo* because of political interference, influence and/or meddling in the SABC operations and (b) the show's brewing of potential language ideologies. The thesis argues that such interference has the potential to negatively affect the editorial policy of the SABC (focusing only on the linguistic part of the policy). Issues of political interference, empowerment and disempowerment and language ideologies are discussed in length and revealed that *Uzalo* is actively producing these elements.

Using the case study of *Skeem Saam,* this thesis investigated how ecological dynamics of polyglossia were used in SABC 1 to maintain and create ethnolinguistic dominance. Key arguments made are: 1) polyglossia is a language ideology masquerading as ethnolinguistic pluralism, 2) there is a loss of ethnolinguistic pluralism in SABC 1 because of the polyglot culture and its transmissions, 3) isiZulu is emerging as a language and cultural flare of the channel.

In this thesis, I also analysed how some soap operas might offer a different perspective to South African audiences compared to what others are doing. *Muvhango* is analysed as a good case study of a local soap opera that has resisted the takeover of neoliberal multiculturalism. In *Muvhango,* Tshivenda has been a key language of the story for more than two decades without the soap resorting to more economic languages to sell the show, to increase viewership, and/or to win awards. For this reason, the thesis examined form (production techniques) and content (narrative) in *Muvhango* looking at the following elements and how their representation / utilisation challenged the neoliberal agenda: setting/location, the utilisation of Tshivenda, and the use of stars / "popular performers".

The last chapter of this thesis focused on *7de Laan*. *7de Laan* is one of the good case studies to analyse the extent to which the rainbow nation idea has been or has not been achieved. It is the view of this study that the linguistics setup in *7de Laan* is racialised. The use of Afrikaans culture and language in *7de Laan* elevates Afrikaners in the soap, are used to keep black characters, culture, and languages in minority in the show. Through such representations, it is inevitable that language issues are vital in postcolonial nations.

The discussions are contextualised into their political and economic surroundings that produce them. Ultimately, the thesis reaches the conclusion that these soap operas are produced within a political and economic environment (the SABC). The SABC is politically and economically operated by the elites who use it for their ideological agenda. Thus, the

politicisation and commercialisation of languages to score ideological points is eminent in how the soap operas use languages.

Applied linguists and sociolinguists have used a metaphor "killer language" (Mulhausler, 1996), to illustrate powerful languages that replace and infiltrate other languages in a language contact situation. The most well-known powerful languages are colonial languages: English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. This raises questions relating to isiZulu and other indigenous languages across the world. Therefore, it is worth paying attention to how the status of isiZulu progresses compared to other indigenous languages on SABC 1. It is certain that SABC 1 is responsible for overemphasising and overusing isiZulu in its programming, this is creating a hostile environment for other indigenous languages.

One of the major issues in relation to language inequality in these soap operas is the process of subtitling. English still dominates as the language of subtitling. When a character speaks any indigenous language, they are subtitled to English and no other indigenous language. For example, when a character speaks isiZulu in *Uzalo*, a show dominantly isiZulu, the translation is not in Xitsonga, or Setswana, which are languages outside the Nguni family, the translation is in English. This only enforces the dominance of English and Anglo-American cultures on indigenous languages and cultures. There is a great power relationship and struggle between local languages and colonial languages in the media. This observation is very relevant to this thesis because, despite policies put in place to redress the issues of language usage, inequality still exists among indigenous language themselves and between indigenous languages and English.

Despite the multilingual reforms of the post-1994 South Africa, there has been minimal language transformation in the country (Bailey and Herbert, 2004; Beukes, 2009; Prah, 2018). English and Afrikaans still enjoy great benefits especially in the education sector, commercial sector and Agriculture. In the case of popular culture, with the SABC as an example, it is a different story. English and Afrikaans do not enjoy the benefits that they used to enjoy in the Apartheid era. However, *7de Laan* ensures that the Apartheid ideologies of Afrikaans dominance are continued even in post-Apartheid South Africa. Indigenous languages have been incorporated in the SABC programming. IsiZulu is now the language of dominance, it dominates SABC soap operas and other indigenous languages are now competing with it. This only suggests that the value of indigenous languages (their social, economic, educational, and political value) is largely unchanged (Webb, 2009). The adopted

public language policy has not been implemented adequately and consequently, some indigenous languages (Xitsonga, isiNdebele, siSwati, and Tshivenda) remain marginalised.

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