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Subject positioning in the South African symbolic economy: Student narratives of their languages and lives in a changing place

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of the Witwatersrand

by

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Abstract

Language use is irreducibly social and historical, bearing the complexities of difference, location, and power. These dynamics are particularly visible in "post"-apartheid South Africa, where historical and contemporary asymmetries of race and class are refracted through language politics, practices and experiences. "Youth embody the sharpening contradictions of the contemporary world in especially acute form" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2005, p. 21) because they are often at the coalface of societal change. At this particular historical moment the paradoxes and challenges of South African students are acutely visible when examining the role of language in reproducing a bifurcated education system, and indeed society.

Methodologically, I examined 15 student narratives about their experiences of language in everyday life. The narratives were generated using a multi-modal approach to language biographies, where participants' linguistic repertoires are visually represented in different colours on a pre-given body outline (Busch et al., 2006). The inclusion of the visual component provided participants with a nuanced vocabulary for constructing their narrative accounts. This narrative data was then thematically analysed with a focus on participants' subject positioning.

Firstly, it was found that the notion of an authentic identity functioned as an ideological claim. The participants referred to a desire for authentic cultural roots, through reference to what they considered "pure" African languages. They articulated a sense that an authentic cultural identity might be lost by virtue the ubiquitous nature of English in their lives. Participants positioned themselves and others as either belonging or not belonging, depending how "authentic" a member of an identity category one was assessed to be. The narratives demonstrated that the nuances of language and voice become the site for the nano-politics of identity and authenticity (Blommaert & Varis, 2015), especially when cultural and racial identity categories appear to be in crisis.

Secondly, English was constructed as a variable symbolic asset across different fields. Representations of English and African languages were positioned in line with existing colonial and racial tropes where English was represented as the language of the mind and rationality, while African languages, even when positively described, were construed as languages of the body or emotion. For black participants, while it was appropriate and desirable to speak English at university, in other fields, such as the home, English could be negatively sanctioned. It is the relation of power between fields in the symbolic economy that influences the reception of a linguistic asset. I argue that English was negatively sanctioned (while still being desirable) as a way of containing the power of English *qua* whiteness. The link between desirability and derision that English represents makes claims to authenticity, as well as accusations of betrayal, pivotal in the subject positioning of participants in relation to their experiences of language across different fields.

These student narratives about experiences of language capture a particular historical moment and demonstrate how the youth straddle the contradictions of the past and the future. However, while these narratives are historically specific they also point to the universal process of becoming a subject through language.

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Dedication

I was once at a party and someone asked me about my research. I said I was interested in South Africans' stories about language. The prompt reply was, "*Every* South African has a language story; it's just one of those things".

This thesis is dedicated to all of us that have a language story, most especially those who shared their stories with me.

Preliminaries

1. Race and racialised terminology

In this thesis I use apartheid race categories that are still used in common parlance (and some legislation) in South Africa today, namely, African (black African), Indian (of Indian descent), Coloured (mixed race) and White. While I strongly believe that race is an ideological construct, racial categories have come to profoundly influence our thinking about ourselves and others, and indeed our material realities. For this reason, I think it is important to note how these categories are used, while at the same time attempting to work against their reification. I have chosen to not use scare quotes around race, because it is a lived reality in our context, and is aesthetically cumbersome in a piece of this length.

2. African language prefixes

As noted by Mesthrie (2003), "there is an ongoing debate about the use of prefixes for denoting African languages" (p. 6), for example, isiZulu or Zulu. Deumert, Inder, and Maitra (2005) point out that, "in the scholarly literature language names are usually cited without prefix" (p. 324). *The Greater Dictionary of Xhosa* (Ndungane, Pahl & Pienaar, 2006) has oscillated between choosing not to use a prefix and using one. In most instances the participants in this study dropped the prefix. Consequently, I have chosen not to use prefixes when referring to African languages in this text. I see the prefix as being necessary when used in the language of origin, but when used in English, I choose to use the anglicised version of the proper noun.

3. 'Mother-tongue'

I use the term 'mother-tongue' to denote the language of one's family or origin. It is often the case that one's mother-tongue is not the same as one's home language, or one's academic language. Where I use the other terms, this is because the document I am referring to (e.g. a policy document) uses a different term.

4. Glossary of South African terms

Bantu Education	'Bantu' is derived from the Xhosa word *abantu*, meaning people. The Bantu Education Act (1953) was a segregationist education policy under apartheid that enforced a mother-tongue education policy that was "used to indoctrinate black school children with a racist curriculum for social inferiority" (Alexander, 2000, p. 17). Colloquially, it is used to refer to the worst of the effects of the apartheid education system and connotes an inferior quality of education.
Boere/Boers	The Afrikaans word for 'farmers'. Often used to refer derogatively to Afrikaners, in reference to the early Dutch Settlers in South Africa.
Coconut	A colloquial (often derogative) term used to describe black South Africans that speak English, and are often also middle class. Makes reference to the idea of one's skin colour being brown, while being white on the inside.
Dis	Slang for 'insult' or disrespect
Eish	An expression of exasperation or disbelief. Originally from Xhosa, now used by South Africans generally.
Ja	Afrikaans for "yes", but used colloquially across language groups in South Africa.
Model C	Model C refers to well-resourced formerly white schools in white suburbs (Model A) that transitioned to open (to all races) schools in 1990, that were renamed Model C.
Robot	Traffic light
Twang	Often referred as an affected form of speech, that could be described as a Black Model C accent, or private school accent. Used specifically to refer to young black South Africans familiar with the "grammar of whiteness" (McKaiser, 2015b).
Vernac	Abbreviated form of vernacular, refers to African languages.
Yoh!	Exclamation. Similar to 'wow'.

Acknowledgments

The PhD journey is truly that, a journey. As such, it involved many different people at many different stops along the way. At times I felt alone, not knowing quite where I was or how I would reach my destination and at other times I felt the joy of adventure and community. That community comprised fellow travellers, and also those I met serendipitously along the way, offering much-welcome detours, respite and friendship. In particular, I would like to thank the following people who, variously, offered critical insight into my work, meaningful conversation about what it might mean to be South African, the special companionship of running, numerous breakfasts, lunches and dinners, spaces of retreat and reflection, and the general "propper-uppers" of my at times flagging ego:

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I have to make special mention of Tracy Morison, who started out as my mentor at the Human Sciences Research Council but quickly became a dear friend. She has been a huge source of emotional and intellectual support in the writing of this thesis. I aspire to her rigour.

Jill Bradbury has been a kind and supportive supervisor from the outset. I would like to express my deep gratitude for what she has taught me about being a teacher. She has shown me the value of allowing an over-zealous student the space to explore her own ideas, even when those ideas could have been communicated much more simply. Thank you for creating a safe space for me while I was doing this research, and for always tolerating my fastidious (and tearful) moments. You embody a rare ethic of care in the academy.

The Department of Higher Education and Training *Education and Emancipation Project* housed at the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has generously funded my research for three years. I would like to extend my gratitude to them for selecting and supporting my project.

My journey towards this topic began in high school. My parents chose to send me to a rapidly, what us South Africans euphemistically refer to as "transforming", Model C school in Bellville, in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town. Most other parents in our relatively conservative community chose the all too common path of white flight, aborting their support

of the local school. It is there that I quickly learnt (but could not yet articulate) that the voice was a powerful site of censure. Since then I have been fascinated, angered and saddened by the aetiology of racism. My parents started me on this journey and have been my most consistent interlocutors on the nano-politics of South African life. It is a truism, but without this wise pair as my parents, I would be someone entirely different.

Finally, Warwick. Thank you for being a soothing balm on my life. You have given me the gift of feeling safe and unconditionally loved. In this “caim” I have been able to explore, get lost and always come back. Thank you for believing in me.

Preface

Hello. This voice I speak with these days, this English voice with its rounded vowels and consonants in more or less the right place – this is not the voice of my childhood. I picked it up in college, along with the unabridged Clarissa and a taste for port. Maybe this fact is only what it seems to be – a case of bald social climbing – but at the time I genuinely thought this was the voice of lettered people, and if I didn't have the voice of lettered people I would never truly be lettered. A braver person, perhaps, would have stood firm, teaching her peers a useful lesson by example: not all lettered people need be of the same class, nor speak identically. I went the other way. Partly out of cowardice and a constitutional eagerness to please, but also because I didn't quite see it as a straight swap of this voice for that.

My own childhood had been the story of this and that combined, of the synthesis of disparate things. It never occurred to me that I was leaving the London district of Willesden for Cambridge. I thought I was adding Cambridge to Willesden, this new way of talking to that old way. Adding a new kind of knowledge to a different kind I already had. And for a while, that's how it was: at home, during the holidays, I spoke with my old voice, and in the old voice seemed to feel and speak things that I couldn't express in college, and vice versa. I felt a sort of wonder at the flexibility of the thing. Like being alive twice.

But flexibility is something that requires work if it is to be maintained. Recently my double voice has deserted me for a single one, reflecting the smaller world into which my work has led me. Willesden was a big colourful, working-class sea; Cambridge was a smaller, posher pond, and almost univocal; the literary world is a puddle. This voice I picked up along the way is no longer an exotic garment I put on like a college gown whenever I choose – now it is my only voice, whether I want it or not. I regret it; I should have kept both voices alive in my mouth. They were both a part of me.

"Speaking in Tongues", Zadie Smith, 2009,

New York Review of Books.

CHAPTER 1: Setting the scene

Introduction

The Subject is brought into being through language. "In the beginning was the Word… and the Word became flesh" (John 1:1-14). This founding Christian metaphor illustrates that language founds the subject, but also transcends it. Language is both Language in the abstract sense—the human capacity for speech, symbolism and meaning-making—and the literal sense—the fleshy reality of embodied speech. We do not speak Language. We speak in languages, dialects, accents – collectively: linguistic repertoires. The constitution of the Subject in Language thus catapults us into the politics of embodied experience.

Differing linguistic repertoires are socially and politically encoded by ideological categories such as race, ethnicity, class, and gender (Painter, 2008). While the subject is brought into being through language, this takes place through the hailing of the subject into complex social categories (Althusser, 1970). These categories are not neutral descriptions of variance, but rather *position* subjects in relation to each other within the particularities of their contexts. Language use, therefore, is irreducibly social and bears the complexities of difference, location, and power.

1.1 Language as a social marker in contemporary South Africa

Language is a controversial issue in South Africa. As Alexander (2000, p. 18) points out, very few things "inflame the passions" as do language and language education policies. Not only do they inflame the passions, but language also seems to present South Africa with an intractable set of relations and practical problems that cannot be resolved through political rhetoric or abstract philosophising. The South African landscape is flooded with anecdotal accounts of the complex, indexical, and political nature of language and the voice. In the media we see that accent in particular has been used for discrediting political opponents.

For instance, this year has seen President Jacob Zuma come under enormous pressure from parliament to answer questions about expensive upgrades at his personal home, Nkandla. This is a big political issue has received much media attention (Malala, June 2015). In a parliamentary session in May 2015 the president deflected questions on the matter through a performative use of accent. He ridiculed the opposition by saying, "You know some people who could not pronounce Nkandla have now learnt: Nka[aaa]ndla, Nka[aaa]ndla,

Nka[aaa]ndla". With an anglicised and extended "a" sound he mimicked "a fake English accent… repeating it four times while laughing" (News24.com, 28 May 2015). This was a fascinating performance from a president under great pressure from a disenchanted populace. While he did not engage with the claims of corruption levelled against him, in the moment he won people over by demonstrating that he was a "man of the people" through use of accent (Malala, 2015)[1].

Zuma's jibe was most likely directed at (amongst others) the leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA), Mmusi Maimane. As the official opposition in parliament, the DA has typically been seen as a 'white' party, espousing a liberal and 'colour-blind' agenda. Maimane has also been accused of using accent for political purposes. Patel writes that allegedly, "he adopts a different accent when speaking to black people or white people", while a prominent South African comedian quipped that, "the only thing more ambiguous than the ANC's economic policies is Mmusi Maimane's accent" (Patel, 2015, online). Asked about his accent directly Maimane apparently diffidently responded, "I don't wake up in the morning and say I want to speak to these people like this, and I want speak to that people [like this]. Mmusi Maimane is Mmusi Maimane" (Patel, 2015, online).

Further examples of accent being mobilised in political discourse include Member of Parliament, Mr Willie Madisha, mocking Minister Naledi Pandor's accent[2] in his outburst of "Hong! Hong! Hong!" (McKaiser, 2015a). He accused her of having an "arrogant and hostile" tone (Makinana, 2015). Minister Pandor is not new to attempts to undermine her position through reference to accent. Indeed in February 2009, Julius Malema, now Member of Parliament as leader of the Economic Freedom Front (EFF)[3], accused the Minister of failing to resolve management problems at a university in Gauteng. "Malema said Pandor was busy with her 'fake American accent' instead of addressing the problems at the university" (Timeslive, 2009).

[1] This is not the first time Jacob Zuma has adeptly used language to present himself as occupying the subject position of cultural purist. In this rape trial (2006), he chose to testify in Zulu. His style of Zulu was described as richly idiomatic, demonstrating his cultural 'authenticity' (Mkhwanazi, 2008).
[2] Naledi Pandor was largely educated in exile. See video at SABC news (2015, 11 June).
[3] The expelled leader of the African National Congress Youth League, Julius Malema, started the EFF.

President Zuma has not escaped the ire that is refracted through language politics in South Africa. In response to the State of the Nation address in 2014 Malema accused Zuma of being "scared of white people". In his critique of the African National Congress's (ANC) economic policy, Malema said that Zuma was protecting white capital. He said an instance of this is illustrated by the fact that, "All black people continue to learn the languages of white minorities" concluding that, "If you have a white friend as black person and he/she doesn't know your language or [is] not taking initiative to learn your language that person is no friend at all" (Malema, 2014).

What these examples indicate is that language, politics, race, and class are viscerally compacted in the spoken, material/real/actual/audible voice. Drawing attention to an English-sounding pronunciation of Nkandla, President Zuma was humorously engaging in a critique of whiteness. His claim to an authentic Zulu identity is meant to protect him from reproach. On the other hand, Maimane and Pandor cause such consternation because they are supposedly "speaking white while looking black" (Ratele, 2013, p. 124). They are seen as representative of the politically unfashionable position of 'coconut' (described as 'black on the outside, white on the inside'). The performative aspect of language in South Africa is particularly fascinating in how and when it is harnessed to obfuscate issues of privilege and power. My argument in this thesis is that we can trace these changing modalities of social forms through personal narratives of language experiences.

To understand the nuances of the vignettes offered above (and those that will be presented in this thesis), some work needs to be done sketching the historical and contemporary context of language in South Africa. As the focus of my study students at a South African university, the language in education policies from apartheid into the post-apartheid era are of great relevance, and it is to this that I now turn.

1.2 The apartheid regime and language in education

Tollefson (1991) argues that language policy is a means of connecting language with social structures that "determines who has access to political power and economic resources" (p.16). Accordingly, the language education policies of apartheid were, "part of the larger social-engineering project that would ensure the segregation of different racial groups and the hierarchical organisation of South African society" (De Klerk, 2002, p. 33). The racial

hierarchy determined what languages were valued and used in particular contexts, with Afrikaans and English existing at the top of the hierarchy and African languages relegated to the bottom rungs (Alexander, 2004).

African languages were used by the apartheid state in an ethnically-based 'divide and rule' approach through *The Bantu Education Act* (1953). Bantu education was a mother-tongue education policy that was "used to indoctrinate black school children with a racist curriculum for social inferiority" (Alexander, 2000, p. 17). Their education was supposed to be a means only to menial labour in society, with a government per capita spend of ten times more for white pupils compared to black (African, Indian and Coloured, in apartheid terms) pupils. Subsequently, the *Afrikaans Medium Decree* of 1974 forced all black schools to use Afrikaans as a medium of instruction from Grade 7/Standard 5. This was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back and this language policy led directly to the 1976 Soweto Uprising, where school children protested against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction (Alexander, 2000). The uprising was met with a violent response from the apartheid government, and was a watershed moment in the struggle against Apartheid, with protests spreading around the country.

Alexander (2000, p. 5) notes that the denigration of black African languages created a dilemma for those opposing apartheid. If African languages were devalued, and speaking an African language came to be equated with the apartheid homeland-based identities (see Dominguez-Whitehead, Liccardo & Botsis, 2013), how could those fighting against apartheid use African languages in a way that promoted their use and value? A similar quandary presents itself today. One of the lasting effects of Bantu education has been how it has hamstrung people's responses to African languages. In a context where English education is seen as leading to employment opportunities, promoting a mother-tongue language in education policy appears to ghettoize those who do not speak English as a mother-tongue (De Klerk, 1999). This was precisely the intention of apartheid education policy.

1.3 Democracy and language in education

The ideological value systems, upon which South Africa was structured during colonial rule and apartheid, remain tangible realities in the institutions we inhabit, including institutions of higher learning (Alexander, 2000, 2003, 2004; McEwan, 2005; Nyika & Van Zyl, 2013). In

an attempt to overcome past injustices related to language, South Africa has adopted an ethos of multilingualism (in line with Constitutional provision). The country adopted eleven official languages in 1994, namely: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho (or Pedi), South Sotho (or Sotho), Swati (also known as Swazi), Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. The table below, based on statistics collected in the most recent census (2011)[4], summarises the percentage of South Africans that speak a particular language as a mother-tongue.

Language	Zulu	Xhosa	Afrikaans	English	Tswana	Sotho	remainder
%	22.7	16	13.5	9.6	8	7.6	>5

Table 1: *Percentage of South African mother-tongue speakers*

While this multilingual ethos has been extended to education, multilingualism occupies an ambivalent space in the South African educational imaginary. It has been characterised as problematic, while at the same time much lauded in policy documents (see *The Development of Indigenous African Languages as Media of Instruction in Higher Education*, 2004; *Language Policy for Higher Education*, 2002). Indeed, many parents have demanded that their children are educated in English rather than their mother-tongue, because of concerns about the quality of mother-tongue education and future education and work prospects (Banda, 2000; Granville, Janks, Mphahlele, Reed, Watson, Joseph, & Ramani, 1998).

Blackledge and Pavlenko (2002) note that, "very often, multilingual societies which apparently tolerate or promote heterogeneity in fact undervalue or appear to ignore the linguistic diversity of their populace" (p. 125). This seems to be very much the case with South African rhetoric and policy around multilingualism. The inherently plural nature of South African society is constantly juxtaposed with an ideological drive towards homogeneity. This has led to what Heller describes as "a multilingual population" exhibiting "monolingualizing tendencies" (Heller, 1995, p. 374). This tendency has been borne out in the most recent census (in 2011). It was reported that, "although English is the fourth most-spoken home language, it is the preferred language of learning in South Africa. About 64% of the 11.5 million pupils in public schools in 2010 chose to be taught in English" (Ndebele, 2013).

[4] http://www.southafrica.info/about/people/language.htm#.VjH5CoTldFI

The first language policy for education in democratic South Africa was released in 1997 (*Language in Education Policy, July 1997*). The policy was meant to be central in the strategy to build a "non-racial nation" (Alexander, 2000, p. 16-17) and that the learning of two or more languages "should be general practice and principle in our society". Furthermore it was noted that, "being multilingual should be a defining characteristic of being South African" (Alexander, 2000, p. 16-17). This formal rhetoric has largely remained just that, rhetoric, with limited success in formally fostering multilingualism in higher education. While South Africans *are* by and large multilingual, it is a paradox of our education system that this lived reality is not harnessed for educational and economic success. How this is related to broader structural issues of the market and the relative value of languages will be taken up shortly.

The crux of the first language in education policy was its focus on "additive bilingualism" (Makoe & McKinney, 2014; see also Alexander, 2000, p. 17) as the new norm to be pursued in schools. Additive bilingualism is where one is taught in one's first language throughout one's schooling career, but with additional languages added as soon as possible (Alexander, 2000, p. 17). However, in the report on the President's Education Initiative (PEI) published some two years after it was introduced (Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999), serious backtracking had occurred. The report stated that "substantial resources" would be needed to pursue additive bilingualism and in essence that these resources could not be mobilised to provide the requisite materials for teaching in more than one language. The report concluded that:

> It would seem that modernisation in South Africa and, the inexorable urbanisation in particular, is undermining the possibilities for the first alternative [additive bilingualism] and that the more realistic option is a straight for English approach, except in linguistically homogenous [sic] classes where there is little exposure to English outside the classroom or where parents expressly request an alternative. (Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999, p. 225-226)

It seems obvious in retrospect that this would have led to the inevitable ghettoizing of indigenous languages and for English to become the cultural capital of those fortunate enough to be educated in better-resourced urban environments. Furthermore, the common sense understanding of the one-to-one relationship between "race", "language" and "ethnicity" that was forged under apartheid (Alexander, 2004, p. 117) has been reproduced through uncritical approaches to language policy. Consequently, languages understood as

bounded units, map onto race and then onto geographical location in a limiting ideological grid.

In this regard, Alexander (2004) points out that two opposing camps have emerged in response to the language question: "ethnic nationalism" and "anglocentrism" (p. 119). The ethnic nationalist tendency demands linguistic recognition (which is constitutionally protected) on grounds that often fuse language and ethnicity, and in that way ironically does not distance itself very much from the ideological logics of apartheid. On the other hand, notes Alexander (2004), we have a burgeoning black middle class who endorses the value placed on English as it secures an upwardly mobile trajectory. However, we are starting to see frustration and anxiety emerge about what buying into this form of cultural capital might mean for the black middle class, where its own upward trajectory has had little impact on structural racism, and indeed interpersonal racism (Chigumadzi, 2015).

The history of apartheid, coupled with contemporary language policies, has bolstered the value of English in two ways in the popular imaginary. Firstly, English was the language used by the liberation struggle to thwart the ethnicised divide-and-rule *bantustan* policies where language and ethnicity were mapped onto each other, and the Bantu education policy of Afrikaans-medium instruction (see Dominguez-Whitehead, Liccardo & Botsis, 2013). As a result of both of these policies English did not carry the same ideological baggage as Afrikaans or the politics of choosing one African language over another. But secondly, English is a global language that holds economic promise for all South Africans because of its economic power and dominance both within the country and globally (Nyika & Van Zyl, 2013). Good education, for many South Africans, is therefore synonymous with an English education. Further stratifying the population is the fact that certain varieties of English are considered more prestigious than others, with the "ethnolinguistic repertoire of White South African English" (McKinney, 2007, p. 11) as the gold standard.

While controversial, Alexander stands by the view that, in South Africa "the vast majority of black people simply do [sic] not believe that their languages can or should be used for higher-order functions even though they cherish them and are completely committed to maintaining them in the primary spheres of the family, the community and the church" (Alexander, 2004, p.121). The social outcome of the language policies outlined in this chapter, and the

concomitant language attitudes of South Africans, has been to exacerbate hierarchical divisions (across and between racial lines) between those guaranteed to succeed in life and those who are left behind. The elite English university space is a key stage where this drama is currently playing itself out.

1.4 South African university language policies and experiences

Engaging with the issue of language in higher education is central to deciphering the way forward in the broader transformation project of decolonizing the university (Habib, 2015). Indeed, as far back as 2011 the minister of higher education and training, Mr Blade Nzimande, publically announced his desire that "it would be a requirement that every university student in South Africa learn one African language as a condition for graduation" (Nyika & Van Zyl, 2013, p. 714). Ndebele (2005, p. 2) notes that, "what goes on in the lecture-rooms, seminar-rooms, and laboratories is most probably at the heart of the goals of transformation. It is there that institutional practices are handed down as well as challenged by historic change".

What then are the institutional language policies and practices of higher education spaces revealing? There appear to be two central poles of influence currently at play in South African higher education, namely, the market and contemporary politics of Higher Education, most recently driven by students. The market could be understood as a top-down influence on what counts as valuable in higher education, while contemporary student politics is a bottom-up push to engage with issues of decolonization. I will address each of these in turn.

1.4.1 The market and language Policy in Higher Education

Any debate around language and education must be considered in relation to the overall instrumentalist framing of higher education. Alexander has shown that "transnational capital has displaced the nation state as the raison d'être of the university and of most other significant social and economic institutions" (2003, p. 180). The question of language then becomes inevitably bound up with the demands of the market, and we see that government-led policy directives lack teeth. If one compares the demand for graduates from historically white universities and historically black universities (Gultig, 2000), and the success rates of students within HWUs with schools of origin, it becomes clear that language proficiency (in English) is something that is valued by the market. It must be noted that the demand for graduates from HWUs is not only to do with proficiency in English, but also to do with the

overall quality of education. The procurement of English as a linguistic asset is tied to class, which is only available to some because of the "bifurcation of schooling into working-class poor schools and well-resourced English medium middle-class schools" (Madiba, 2010, p. 334) this bifurcation is then reinforced in the university system.

The divergence between policy and practice has been the overriding conclusion of a number of studies (e,g,, Aziakpono & Bekker 2010; Beukes 2010; Dalvit & De Klerk 2005; Moodley 2010) examining uptake of language policies and practices since the promulgation of *The Language Policy in Higher Education* (LPHE) (2002) and *The Development of Indigenous African Languages as Media of Instruction* policy (2004).These initial policy statements instructed institutions of higher education to develop language policies to foster multilingualism on campuses and develop African languages for academic purposes. Currently all universities do have such policies in place encouraging varying degrees of engagement with multilingualism, from basic communicative competence to developing African languages to become media of instruction. However, while the student population is *de facto* multilingual, on the ground, all findings point to the fact that English is preferred over any other language because of its status as the dominant language of global capitalism.

At Wits, an historically white, English-speaking university where my study is located, the language question has been on the table for more than a decade (University of the Witwatersrand, 2003), but there has been little movement. Despite the push for the acknowledgement of African languages in tertiary institutions, the fact remains that academic success, and usually formal employment, requires competence in English. Thus, universities are faced with the challenge of how to support students' "access to English without entrenching its hegemonic position" (Madiba, 2010, p. 330). Janks (2000) also addresses this question in her scholarship on critical literacy highlighting the tension of providing access to dominant forms of language (English) while simultaneously acknowledging and creating space for the "diverse language and literacies of our students" (Janks, 2000, p. 176) and in society more broadly.

While creators of educational policy are committed to the idea of multilingualism, in practice this is often seen as something in the distant future, first requiring the "intellectualisation" of African languages. "Intellectualisation" is required to develop the lexicon and libraries for

African languages to be used as an academic language. The weight of research and publication in the knowledge economy; the history of literacy in specific languages (like English) required for academic purposes; works against African languages being readily adopted. But as both Madiba (2010) and Hlongwa (2011) have argued, language is developed through use, so until it is required academically, it will not be developed intellectually. The lack of practical application of African languages in academic literacies means that a functional divide has been created between English as the formal language of learning while African languages are relegated to the position of communicative tools in informal spaces.

This can be understood in relation to different forms of capital and their reproduction (Bourdieu, 1997. This will be elaborated upon in Chapter 2). Language is a crucial factor in maintaining the symbolic capital of an institution. Those with the cultural capital that matches the symbolic capital of institutions (i.e. English) are in some sense guaranteed success because of the shared values between the cultural elite and institutional need to protect its value. Graduates also have an interest in protecting the value of their degrees in the market place. Consequently, any critiques of educational institutions are in competition with historical ideological sediment of English, "race" and class in South Africa. Students find themselves in a double-bind in relation to English because "some view the language as indispensable for their future careers yet express the need also to learn through their indigenous languages" (Madiba, 2010, p. 336).

In the South African context "an educational system which emphasises the use of African languages will only be viable if the socioeconomic environment values these languages" (Ouane & Glanz, 2011, p. 24). Thus, the push for valuing African languages cannot just take place in higher education, it needs to be demanded by the market, supported by primary and secondary educational structures. But if higher education *did* meaningfully emphasise the value of multilingualism, because of the prestige associated with a university education, this might go some way to adjusting attitudes in other sectors.

Lest we parochialise the issue, it should be pointed out that contemporary language politics referencing the tension between the dominance of English and the recognition of indigenous/local languages exist across the globe, but especially in the global south. In Macedonia there are calls for an Albanian language university, the Berber in Algeria are

demanding to have their language officially recognised, the Oromo in Ethiopia have also made claims to recognition (Alexander, 2003, p. 183). In contrast Nyika and Van Zyl (2013) draw our attention to the fact that "studies from contexts other than Africa also point to the strong influence of the instrumental factor in the overwhelming support that English receives" (p. 729). In Malaysia, students said knowing English improved their chances in the job market and opted for a "straight for English" approach (Rahman, 2008). Similarly in studies across Indonesia, Thailand, Japan and Singapore it was found that English was valued for "competing in the internationalized society" (Bradford, 2007, p. 312). The political economy of languages in transnational markets is revealing of contemporary flows of power and capital.

The reproduction of privilege through English in higher education is a means of concealing the way in which power is maintained by those who speak English themselves. However, fissures are starting to emerge and the reproduction of privilege along traditional lines is starting to be challenged by student movements such as #Rhodesmustfall, #OpenStellenbosch, #Luister, and #FeesMustFall[5].

1.4.2 Contemporary student politics

In an era where the stock response to the language question is to refer to the unassailable position of English, the emotional nature of the debate and the fact that English is not universally accessible to all, indicate that the issue of language looms large. Public interest in the language question seems to wax and wane (Nyika & Van Zyl, 2013), but is once again firmly on the agenda, in part owing to the #RhodesMustFall student movement emerging in 2015 (rhodesmustfall.co.za) and magnified by social media. Rhodes Must Fall is a student movement concerned with decolonizing South African universities that was sparked by student protest against the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The protest began when human waste was flung at the statue. Subsequently, the statue was taken down amidst much publicity. The movement has continued to tackle issues of decolonization on the UCT campus, such as curriculum, academic exclusion, and the prohibitive cost of fees. The movement does not represent a homogenous agenda, but it has been a very powerful conversation starter in the academy on what a decolonised university might look like (Gamedze & Gamedze, 2015).

[5] The hashtag # is used in the name of these movements because it makes the term searchable on social media, and has become a recognised prefix for slogans and titles attached to the movements and demands.

When I began this research in 2013, despite annual student protests all around the country on bread-and-butter issues such as fees and financial and academic exclusions, particularly at historically disadvantaged universities, student politics captured very little national attention. Unlike the very visible role that students played in the apartheid resistance movement, until very recently South African youth were often criticized for their apparent political apathy. However, over the last year (2015) a number of student movements have formed at historically advantaged (white) institutions in the wake of the #RhodesMustFall movement at the University of Cape Town (UCT). For example, at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the #TransformWits group has formed and at Stellenbosch University, the #OpenStellenbosch. The latter was to the only movement to specifically mobilise around language policy[6]. Most recently, there has been national movement across a number of universities under the #FeesMustFall hashtag, where student protests against fee increases, started at Wits in October 2015, shut down Rhodes University, UCT and Wits, and eventually most other tertiary institutions across the country (Munusamy, 2015). This movement culminated in a march to the Union Buildings where the President announced that there would be zero fee increases in the next fiscal year.

The issue of language, however, has only received cursory attention in terms of the items on the broader decolonisation agenda of the student movements. Mbembe (2015b), a leading intellectual commenting on the student movement, speaking on what a decolonised university might look like, made the point that, "a decolonised university in Africa should put African languages at the centre of its teaching and learning project…The African university of tomorrow will be multilingual" (unpaginated). Despite these observations, Painter (2015) points out that, in terms of the student movement, there "has been no systematic critique of language in the context of higher education; no attempt to pay more than lip service to multilingualism or to imagine radically different linguistic spaces and practices for our universities and our intellectual lives" (unpaginated). Where language has been the specific focus, as is the case with #OpenStellenbosch, this was to lobby for English to replace Afrikaans as the medium of instruction.

[6] See the documentary, "Luister" (Contraband, 2015), Afrikaans for "Listen", available on youtube, for testimonials of racism and marginalization on Stellenbosch and the centrality of language to these narratives.

1.4.3 Historically White English Universities

How then have historically white, (English medium) universities, like Wits, responded to the hamstrung project of multilingualism? Nyika and Van Zyl (2013), discussing the case of Wits University, point out that if university administrators were to follow the popularly espoused language attitudes on campus as a basis for language policy, it would produce a politically conservative policy (one at odds with the constitution) because it would reinforce the "power of English" (p. 732). On the other hand, if the university decided to "implement more progressive policies… the chances are that the policy would meet with considerable resistance from a large section of the university community" (p. 733). This tension is apparent at many of the HWUs currently grappling with the language problem. I have chosen to briefly examine the case of three historically white English universities, and cursory glance at two Afrikaans universities because their language dynamics are closest to those at Wits and provide some comparative indication of how the issue has been dealt with in different institutions.

The **University of Cape Town** language policy (1999, and revised in 2003) has attempted to encourage multilingual education (Madiba, 2010). The aim is to use two languages as media of teaching and learning, with the addition of a second or third language to each student's repertoire. Nevertheless, English remains the primary medium of instruction in a context where 50 per cent of students are not English first-language speakers. Certain disciplines have taken steps to inculcate a culture of multilingualism within the curricula. For instance medical students are required to reach a level of communicative competence in Xhosa before graduating, and the economics department has a glossary project in place that draws on student discussions in tutorials to develop economic concepts in Xhosa (Neetling, 2010).

The **Universityof KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN**) adopted a bilingual policy in 2006, in line with the Higher Education Act of 1997, the Council of Higher Education policy of 2002, and the ministerial committee ("Ndebele") report (Hlongwa, 2011). There was much resistance to the language policy at the university, notably from the English Department claiming that UKZN should not promote "Zulu nationalism" (Johnson, 2012). Despite the ideologically motivated resistance, progress has been made and professional degrees requiring communication in Zulu and English have embarked on a pilot bilingual programme. The departments include Nursing, Education, Psychology, and Dental Assisting. However there are still capacity

constraints in terms of available materials, language practitioners, and academics able to engage with both the practical and intellectual issues of developing a language for higher education instruction (Hlongwa, 2011).

At **Rhodes University** a study of the language attitudes of Xhosa-speaking students (Aziakpono & Bekker, 2010) indicated that the majority of these students interviewed were in favour of a 'straight for English' approach. The reported motivations for this response were the economic opportunities English afforded, and the perception of English as a 'neutral' language. Thus, while there is a Rhodes Language Policy (2005) that has "critically evaluate[d] its historical narrative and practices", Kaschula (2013) notes that there is gap between policy, and attitudes and practices on the ground.

Similar sentiments are noted at historically Afrikaans medium universities, and I briefly provide two examples here. At the **University of Stellenbosch** the language policy was revised as recently as 2014. It states that Afrikaans is the chosen academic language, and that they utilise the value of English as an international academic language. They also state a commitment to developing Xhosa as an academic language. In terms of teaching and learning, Afrikaans and English are used in the following arrangements: parallel medium (separate classes for separate languages), interpreting of Afrikaans and English during lectures, and dual-medium. Study material and assessments are offered in both languages (Stellenbosch, 2014). However, students report that the institutional culture of the university is still alienating to those that do not conform to its white Afrikaner history.

Owing to pressure from the recently formed #OpenStellenbosch movement, and their call to replace Afrikaans with English, on the 12th of November 2015 Stellenbosch promulgated its intention to make English the main language of learning. The Rector's Management Team stated:

> Since English is the common language in South Africa, all learning at Stellenbosch University will be facilitated in English, and substantial academic support will be provided in other South African languages, according to students' needs. At the same time, by means of its Language Policy and Language Plan, the University is committed to the creation of spaces within which English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa and other languages can flourish. In particular, the University remains committed to the further development of Afrikaans and isiXhosa as academic languages. (Stellenbosch University, 12 November, 2015)

The **University of the Free State** is also an historically Afrikaans-medium university, where parallel instruction in English and Afrikaans currently takes place. While stating a commitment to multilingualism, the university is considering a switch to English-only instruction in classes because of the reported racial segregation that has resulted from the parallel language streams (Smith, 2015), much as has been argued is the case with Stellenbosch.

It would seem that it is the case that policy and practice pull in opposite directions in English-medium HWUs (and some historically Afrikaans universities). While I have focused on HWUs here, it must be noted that the case is not much difference at Historically Black Universities. As Nyika and Van Zyl (2013) point out, "with the exception of the University of Limpopo, very few universities have systematically promoted African languages for use at tertiary level despite the existence of language policies which commit these institutions to take practical steps to develop African languages and multilingualism in South Africa" (p. 714). Having outlined the context of South African Universities and language policy, I will now turn my focus to Wits.

1.5 Language at the University of the Witwatersrand

Wits, like the other universities considered, holds in tension the need to provide high-quality, sought-after degrees, while addressing historical issues of discrimination, access, and disadvantage. (For further discussion see Botsis, Dominguez-Whitehead & Liccardo, 2013.) As outlined in this introduction, these aims are often at odds with language attitudes. Wits has engaged with this tension in its policy documents on transformation and notes that, "excellence and equity need not be intractably cast in conceptual tension" (Wits, 2004, p. 30). If language is to be understood as a matter of equity, to date, Wits' language policy implementation has been minimal to non-existent.

The first iteration of the Wits Language Policy was adopted in 2003, in response to the LPHE requirements (2002). It stated the university's commitment to linguistic diversity, developing resources for students and staff to improve their language competencies and to engage in language research. According to the 2003 policy, the chosen African language for development and use at the university was Sotho, as Zulu was seen as represented at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Sotho is also widely spoken in the Gauteng province.

There were a number of phases for the implementation of this policy. Phase one focused on developing materials for teaching Sotho, and was not achieved. Phase two focused on getting all students and staff communicatively competent in Sotho, and offering language support for English. The deadline for phase two was set for 2011 and was not achieved. Phase three was to develop Sotho as a language of instruction in higher education, and finally phase four would usher in bilingual medium of instruction at Wits, with both students and staff able to switch between languages in the teaching and learning process.

This document seemed to largely pay lip service to the political goal of multilingualism in education and created unrealistic implementation goals. As yet, multilingualism on campus is only present outside of formal academic spaces of learning. As will be demonstrated below, the choice of Sotho would prove to be unpopular. This is in large part due to the particularity of Johannesburg as a city of many languages and cultures. There is no clear "ethnic group" that might be tied to the city and to a language, as might be the case in the former "homeland" areas. Gauteng according to the most recent census (2011) "is the most multilingual province in the country" (Bristowe et al., 2014). There is also the question of the dominance of Zulu in the province, were it is spoken by 19.8 per cent of people residing in Gauteng (SouthAfric.info). Thus, language politics in Johannesburg are wider than just the binary set up between colonial and African languages.

In 2001, during the development of the first policy, Wits commissioned research on language practices, attitudes, and competencies (Nyika & Van Zyl, 2013). The findings indicated that overall there was "strong support for the maintenance of one language, English" as the only language of learning and teaching (with a 72 % majority). A small minority (27.7%) of respondents felt that there should be more than one language of teaching and learning. More students indicated that they would like students and staff to be able to communicate in languages other than English. Around two fifths (40.5%) of respondents indicated that students should be required to communicate in a South African language by graduation and just under half (49.2%) thought that staff members should be able to communicate in another language. Zulu emerged as the language of choice across the board. It is clear from these results that while there is some support for more than just English to be spoken on campus, this is in a communicative, not an academic/intellectual manner.

The rationale for the language policy was to stimulate an interest in, and increase the value attached to, African languages and multilingualism more generally. However, not only were the language attitudes espoused by Wits staff and students at a distance from the normative expectations of the policy, but the fact that there was no implementation of the policy seems to point to the fact that limited political will lay behind it. Ironically, the fact that there was no implementation of the *policy* is corroboration of the findings of the language attitudes *survey* that African languages were not seen as important.

Nevertheless, in 2007 another round of research was commissioned to monitor any changes in attitudes or practices that may have occurred (Nyika & Van Zyl, 2013). The findings in this round indicated a slight difference to the 2001 findings and an overall shift away from favouring English. The same instrument was used and the findings indicated an overall decrease (from 72% to 65.35%) in the number of respondents in support of the maintenance of one language, English, as the sole language of learning and teaching. Accordingly, opposition to this proposition increased (from 27.7% to 34.65%), while support for Zulu as the additional language increased (from 49.7% to 53.89%), as did support for students being required to communicate in a South African language other than English by graduation increased (from 40.5% to 45.9%). Conversely, support for staff being able to communicate in a language other than English decreased (from 49.2% 46.4%). Zulu remained the language of choice, other than English, across the two surveys.

Items in survey	2001	2007
There should be more than one language of teaching and learning	27.7%	34.65%
Students should be required to communicate in a South African language other than English by graduation	40.5%	45.9%
Staff members should be able to communicate in a language other than English	49.2%	46.4%
Of those supporting an alternate language, Zulu as an additional language (other than English)	49.7%	53.89%

Table 2: *Wits research on language practices, attitudes, and competencies* (Nyika & Van Zyl, 2013)

All available evidence points to the fact that between 2003 and 2013 no implementation took place. Most recently, in 2014, another Language Policy Survey was conducted. The report on this 2014 Survey states that, “in 2003 the University of the Witwatersrand came up with a

'Wits Language Policy' which was never implemented" (Cele, 2014, p. 21). The report continues to point out that the old policy:

> Does not state whether the stakeholders were involved in the selection of the preferred languages. In addition, the reasons for the University's failure to implement this policy are not known or clear in the report. Be that as it may, there was a need, therefore, to undertake a study of this nature in which all stakeholders in the University would participate and help select a preferred language of instruction and conducting business [sic] from the nine indigenous African languages that are deemed official by the country's Constitution. (Cele, 2014, p. 21)

Furthermore the objective of the survey was to "rescue indigenous African languages from obscurity and irrelevance" (Cele, 2014, p. 21). While it is true that African languages are not being used in formal academic settings, the tone describing African languages as under threat of 'obscurity' and 'irrelevance' seems patently bizarre if one is just to set foot outside of the lecture theatres. Campus life is audibly multilingual. It seems that the bureaucrats are intent on fighting a battle that does not exist. We do not need evidence of what languages are being spoken so that we can revive them in an act of "ethnographic salvage" (Garuba, 2011). What is needed is the *implementation* of a workable and realistic policy. The university should create an environment in which it is costly *not* to be multilingual (Mbembe, 2015a), thereby increasing the value attached to multilingualism and penalising the monolingualising tendency. In other words, the policy framework should disrupt the power of the monolingual English habitus.

The 2014 Survey found that the University community wishes to keep English as its "main medium of communication" (this was supported by 80% of staff and 95% of students). It was found that Zulu was favoured to replace Sotho as the additional language to be "developed for wider use" (Cele, 2014, p. 7). While it is not possible to directly compare the findings from the 2007 and 2014 studies (given the different phrasings of questions, response rates and so forth), it is worth noting that in 2014, well over half (58.2%) of students felt it was important for Wits to use at least one African language in teaching, learning, and research. This is in contrast to the 2007 study, in which only around two thirds (34.65%) responded affirmatively to the question about whether there should be more than one language of teaching and learning at Wits. However, even in the face of potentially improving attitudes towards African languages many students (60, 64%) still felt that the preferred African language should *not* be used on an equal basis with English.

The outcome of this latest survey has been the drafting of a new language policy (Wits, 2014) that includes Zulu, Sotho, South African Sign Language, and English within its scope. Zulu and Sotho will be "developed incrementally over time through a phased implementation plan" (p. 2). Phase one (2015) "will focus on developing a multilingual landscape and branding". Phase two (2015-2016) "will focus on the development of the materials and resources needed for the teaching of Zulu and Sesotho as subjects for communicative purposes". Phase 3 (2016-2017) "will focus on developing the linguistic abilities of staff and students". Phase 3 requires:

> Staff [and students (implied)] who do not speak any indigenous South African language…to become communicatively competent in either isiZulu or Sesotho. Those who speak African languages will be required to choose from one of the two languages provided their language of choice is not from their home language cluster. Students and staff will be encouraged to acquire basic communication skills in South African sign language. Speakers of minority African languages (Xitsonga and Tshivenda) will choose either isiZulu or Sesotho. (Wits, 2014, p. 2)

While this phase may in some sense seem 'fair' in that all students and staff members are required to improve their language competencies, the argument could be made that this burden should not in fact be evenly spread. Rather, if it is the English monolingual habitus that we wish to make costly for the sake of transformation, why require those members of the Wits community that are *de facto* multilingual to be further burdened with excess requirements. Especially for what the policy refers to as "minority African languages". This logic implies a hierarchy within multilingualism itself, where the goal should rather be the democratization of languages. Furthermore, if one removed this requirement for *de facto* multilingual students (50% of the Wits community who responded to the survey speak three or more languages), it would also tacitly offer a necessary critique of language ideologies that wish to uphold languages as reified 'pure' and ethnically-based.

Phase three also includes a focus on "enhancing proficiency and academic literacies in English" (Wits, 2014, p. 2). This inclusion is due to the fact that while English occupies a prestigious place in the university, many students have poor literacy skills in English itself. Finally, the fourth phase of the policy (2018-2020) is carefully phrased to state that, "the university will play *a role* in the development of isiZulu and Sotho as the media of learning and teaching alongside English" (Wits, 2014, p. 2, my emphasis). To date, it is not clear whether any budgetary resources accompany this policy, raising questions about the potential efficacy of the implementation plan.

1.6 Rationale

Given:

- that the relationship between English and African languages has been historically hamstrung;
- the current tension between providing a first-class international degree (in English) while attending to issues of transformation and decolonisation (with regard to African languages);
- the way these concerns have manifested in survey findings and policy recommendations that point to issues that need to be further unpacked and contextualised;
- that policy could be said to lack teeth because of no fixed resource allocation;
- the seeming lack of political will with regard to policy implementation thus far (at least between 2003 and 2013);

What is to be done?

The rationale for this thesis is to re-engage with some of the facts about our context that seem self-evident, but are not easily resolved. Through examining the subject positioning of students in their narratives about their experiences of language across their lives, I argue that we can attend to shifting power dynamics in the minutiae of our everyday lives, or as Blommaert and Varis (2015, p. 24) call them, the "nano-politics" of identity. Furthermore, rather than trying to engage with the language question from a top-down, policy-driven perspective, I wish to engage with it bottom-up. What are the stories that students are telling about their languages? How are they interpreting their own experiences? This is what is left out of the survey data. I am attending to issues of structural power as they are articulated in the phenomenological accounts of the participants.

The narratives I engage with in this thesis allow for depth and nuance, which is needed in addressing complex and contextual issues. A multimodal visual-narrative approach offers up new insights into the intractable language problem, through a textured, situated account of language experiences. As Blackledge (2006a) notes, research in multilingual environments often does not engage with the social, political, and historical contexts that produce and reproduce the conditions that lead to the differential value of languages. This is true of the language survey research at Wits. While their rationale is based on the differential value of

languages as an historical *effect*, these considerations are not accounted for methodologically or analytically in their research. All that is ascertained is the language attitudes of the Wits community, not *why* they have them and how they are entangled with the flows of power in society.

Blackledge (2006a) argues that methodologies in research on multilingualism must reveal the hegemonic discourses that produce language ideologies. While research has been conducted that reveals the difficulty of those in marginal linguistic positions accessing domains of power, less research has focused on "the ways in which such domains are constructed, and their borders reinforced. Too little is known about the countless acts of recognition and misrecognition that produce and reproduce what Pierre Bourdieu called the 'magical frontier between the dominant and the dominated'" (Blackledge, 2006a, p. 22). That is my aim in this project.

1.7 Research Aims

The central aim of this thesis is to draw together an understanding of the relationship between language, subjectivity and the symbolic economy. I do this through examining students' interpretive accounts of their language experiences. By attending to subject positioning in their linguistic portraits and narrative accounts, I engage with issues of identification on the part of the subject in relation to the various social fields in which they are located. This will allow me to demonstrate how experiences of language constitute subjectivities through the ideological and discursive capacity of the symbolic economy to both regulate social relations and open up possibilities for change. The dynamism of the relationship between language, subjectivity, and the symbolic economy are especially noticeable during the period of university experience, a space characterised by learning and change, where the subject encounters new social fields.

I draw on a number of theoretical trajectories concerned with language and power. These various theories are deployed for particular purposes (as explicated in Chapter 2). To summarise here, my aim is to read the empirical interpretive accounts of participants through Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power (1991) and linguistic habitus (1990) so as to expand our understanding of the social life of language. I have chosen to use the term "symbolic economy" to describe the particular layer of the South African context with which I am

concerned. The idea of a symbolic economy draws on Bourdieu's (1991) understanding of certain objects and forms of being accruing value within particular fields of consumption. In this case, language is a symbolic commodity that accrues or loses value through shifting relations of power. There are many factors that comprise the complexity of a context, but here I am interested in pulling out the function of language in constituting a set of power relationships between subjects.

Drawing on the work of Althusser (1970) I understand subjection as necessarily paradoxical, where it is constraint that makes agency possible. Butler (1997), building on the work of Althusser, argues for an understanding of power that is discontinuous, in that the structures of power that initiate the subject do not continuously re/produce themselves in the same way. Rather, it is through incremental changes, which Derrida (1986) calls "citations", that shifts in the habitus of subjects occur.

This variability demonstrates that while there is a relationship between the material economy and the symbolic economy, the one cannot be reduced to the other. The mutable quality of language and discontinuous nature of power mean that the symbolic economy takes on a life of its own through the relationship between different social fields. Linguistic capital that is considered valuable in one field could be devalued in another, affecting one's subject position because of the relationship between these two fields, not because of their relationship to the material economy. The fact that meaning-making (ideals, symbols, and language) is the distinctive characteristic of the symbolic realm gives it a quality altogether different from issues determined by the material economy (or, structural forms of power). The relationship between the material and symbolic economies should be seen as a 'dotted line', mutually reinforcing but not reducible to each other. The relationship between the two is such that, "through repetition ideal constructs are materialized through time" (Hall, 2000, p. 27).

In this thesis I examine fifteen student narratives about their experiences of language at a South African university. With the title of this thesis I aim to draw attention to the fact that subject positioning is both something we do ourselves and that is done to us. This is because we are constituted as subjects within a particular context, but through language we have the agency to create meaning. Exploring how the participants interpret their own subject

positioning in the symbolic economy introduces the possibility for a nuanced understanding of reflexivity, where one might 'see' through an ideology, but nevertheless performatively re-enact it, as the analysis illustrates.

Methodologically, I generate these narratives using a multi-modal approach to language biographies, that is, a person's account of her/his language practices and experiences (Busch, Jardine & Tjoutuku, 2006). This multi-modal approach involves an exercise by the participants, where their linguistic repertoires are visually represented in different colours on a pre-given body outline. This portrait is then used to construct a narrative of their experiences of language in everyday life. The inclusion of the visual component reintroduces the physical body as constituent aspect of the subject experience in relation to language. The portrait offers an opportunity for moving discussions about language beyond cognitive, pedagogical and policy-orientated responses, to a fleshier, situated experience of the languaged subject.

1.8 Roadmap for the thesis

Having laid out the context and rationale for this research project, I will briefly outline the chapters that follow.

Chapter 2 ("Subjectivity and the Symbolic Economy") begins my *theoretical framework*, which spans two chapters. I outline the theoretical assumptions that underpin my understanding of the agency and constraint of the subject in the symbolic economy. I look specifically at how Bourdieu (1990, 1991, 1997) defines the relationship between fields and forms of capital in the symbolic economy, and what this means for the "limited generative capacity" (Bourdieu, 1990) of the subject's habitus. I relate this to Althusser's theory of ideology and subjection, or, the paradox of subjection.

In Chapter 3 ("Language and Identity") I extend my *theoretical framework* to examine identity and identification. I do not set identification up as something that takes place beyond the constraint of the symbolic economy, but the relative emphasis in this chapter is on understanding the affective dimensions of belonging which play a significant role in holding in place, or continuously renewing, the social locations into which we are hailed or

interpellated. I look specifically at how this has been written about in colonial and "post-colonial" literature on language and identity.

Chapter 4 is a *review of the literature* that has informed the thematic analysis of this project. I provide an overview of research on language and identity in the South African context that has adopted a poststructuralist lens. The bulk of this research is located in the school, and is often intertwined with issues of race and class. I have tried to draw out how English and African languages are positioned in relation to each other in this literature.

In Chapter 5 I explain my *methodological approach*, which fuses visual and narrative elements in a multi-modal approach to studying linguistic repertoires. I detail the design and production of data in the project, and then explain my analytical processes, namely, a thematic analysis that attends to subject positioning in the narratives of the participants.

Chapter 6 ("Vertical Linguistic Portraits") is the first chapter *data analysis* chapter. This takes the form of linguistic portraits, where the languages the participants speak and come into contact with are visually represented on a body outline using colour and shape. In this chapter I detail the participants' analysis of their portraits, and describe how and why they chose to represent their linguistic repertoire in the style that they did.

Chapter 7 ("Authentic identity as ideology") is my second *data analysis* chapter and in it I present the outcome of the thematic analysis. The key thematic areas in this chapter examine how participants spoke about language, culture and "loss", and, how changing notions of race (and ideologies of racial authenticity) are articulated through language experiences. The focus in this chapter is on the modes of identification of participants in relation to their languages.

Chapter 8 ("Language, power and the symbolic economy") is my third and final *data analysis* chapter. Here the analytical level shifts from individual identification, to consider how different "fields" produce different experiences and expectations of language. I detail the findings of the thematic analysis that highlight the role of language in negotiations of power and subject position. Three themes are teased out in this regard: (1) the representation of an

English mind and African body in the portraits, (2) the role of accent as part of the habitus, and (3) English as a variable symbolic asset across different fields.

In the final chapter, I provide a *concluding discussion* of the findings presented in this thesis. I argue that the paradox of subjection, that takes shape in the habitus, allows us to see different fields as constitutive of a larger economy of symbolic value that is constantly shifting. The shifts in subject positioning constitute a negotiation over the value of symbolic assets between fields, ultimately showing that constraint and agency are necessarily mutually constitutive.

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical framework (1)

Subjectivity and the Symbolic Economy

The power of suggestion which is exerted through things and persons and which, instead of telling the child what he must do, tells him what he is, and thus leads him to become durably what he has to be, is the condition for the effectiveness of all kinds of symbolic power that will subsequently be able to operate on a habitus predisposed to respond to them.

"Language and Symbolic Power", Bourdieu, 1991, p. 52

2.1 Introduction

The central aim of this thesis, as stated in the preceding chapter, is to draw together an understanding of the relationship between language, subjectivity, and the symbolic economy. In this chapter, I argue for a drawing together of work from theorists who have traditionally been labelled 'structuralist' and 'post-structuralist'. Through examining a number of theoretical trajectories concerned with language and power, I aim to show how they speak to each other in productive ways. I shall demonstrate how experiences of language constitute subjectivities through the ideological and discursive capacity of the symbolic economy to both regulate social relations and open up possibilities for change.

The geography of the chapter is as follows: first, I define what is meant by a "symbolic economy" through Bourdieu's (1991, 1997, 1997b) work on the relationship between language, power, and symbolic capital, explaining the key theoretical concepts used in this thesis. I then explicate what he means by "forms of capital" that circulate in different fields. I draw heavily on his notion of "habitus" to understand how the material body is inserted into the process of symbolic capital accrual. Habitus is a dynamic concept that emphasises the influence of the field, but also the generative capacity of the habitus. In this regard, I examine Butler's (1997) argument that the field and the habitus are mutually constitutive. I focus specifically on the concept of "linguistic habitus" because its intersection with different forms of capital is useful in understanding how subjects are positioned through language-use and style within the symbolic economy.

Second, I outline a theory of the subject based Althusser's (1970) notion of ideological interpellation offering us an account of the subject as always *positioned* in relation to others and the social world. Althusser's account emphasises the paradox of subjection: where one's

constraint is also the condition of one's agency. This logic is the same logic Butler (1999) uses to argue for an understanding of the field and habitus as mutually constitutive, but not determined (thus making change possible). The habitus can be understood as the effect of an ideology that has "materialized through time" (Hall, 2000, p. 27), and provides us with an empirical way of observing Butler's claim that "the power that initiates the subject fails to remain continuous with the power that is the subject's agency" (1997, p. 12). This formulation of power is necessary to build a framework that can account for a subject that is constantly *re/positioning* him/herself in relation to others *and* in relation to shifting fields where cultural capital is differently valued.

I argue that the work of Althusser, Bourdieu, and Butler, while hailing from different epistemological quarters, all illustrate that it is constraint that makes agency possible. Each of their accounts emphasises the mutually constitutive nature of social structures and subjectivity, and by implication, the discontinuity in the way in which power is reproduced. It is this discontinuity that makes incremental change possible, because every performance of the habitus is not repeated in the same way. And it is also this notion of discontinuity between utterances that highlights the role of language in the process of subjectification. Thus, we also need to understand how the symbolic and the material realms, or economies, are related.

The symbolic refers to the human capacity to use signs in order to express ideas, while the material refers to that which is concrete, or 'real', in the social world, like bodies and buildings. All of the theorists I have drawn on to construct my theoretical framework, to varying degrees, note the power of the material economy to position subjects hierarchically in society, as being of more or less value in terms of their proximity to capital. But they also, again to varying degrees, acknowledge that the symbolic realm while related to the material economy, is not reducible to it, and herein lies the discontinuous nature of power.

The symbolic realm is concerned with meaning. Meaning-making takes place in the space between the signifier and the signified and does not operate according to the same mechanisms of the material economy (e.g., selling one's labour to the owners of capital). To be sure, the content of specific categories of meaning might be economically determined, but the fact that these meanings are always open to change because of the "essential iterability"

(Morison, 2011, p. 68) of language and speech is a function that cannot be reduced to the distribution of capital. In this sense, the symbolic realm detaches from the material realm in productive ways.

Explaining this phenomenon, Eagleton (2000) argues that what is particular to humans, when we internalise cultural, social, and linguistic forms of meaning (where there is consensus about the indexicality between a signifier and signified), is that

> It is of its [human] nature to transcend itself. It is the sign that opens up the operative distance between ourselves and our material surroundings which allows us to transform them into history… language helps to release us from the prison-house of our senses, at the same time it damagingly abstracts us from them. (p. 97)

He continues that, "ideology happens wherever power impacts upon signification, bending it out of shape or hooking it up to a cluster of interests" (Eagleton, 2000, p. 108). In this last statement we see how Eagleton articulates the relationship between the material and the symbolic in terms of power *and* meaning-making. While the symbolic is, in theory, infinitely open to interpretation, the fact that we make meaning *within* the material constraints (and struggles) of our context, link these two economies.

Overall, I am interested in studying how a subject inhabits his/her languages and how this offers up an opportunity to theorise *the materiality of the ideological* in relation to the subject. As Painter (2008, p. 175) notes it is the "materiality of the voice", how it actually sounds, that holds ideological (symbolic) content and that propels subjects along different life trajectories. Bourdieu's theory of the habitus is concerned precisely with the materiality of the ideological, although he might not use these terms himself. The moulding of the voice and the body towards certain norms and expectations needs to be understood as at the nexus of the symbolic (ideological) and the material (fleshy everyday reality). My voice both really *sounds* a particular way, and also symbolically represents my subject position in relation to others through ideological categories. By attending to both these elements, I do not make the one epiphenomenal to the other, but demonstrate that ideology takes effect in material relations between people.

2.2 The Symbolic Economy

In the first chapter of Bourdieu's seminal work on language, *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), he writes (in part in response to Saussure) that while linguistic exchanges are

symbolic interactions, they are also, importantly, "relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized. In short, one must move beyond the usual opposition between economism and culturalism, in order to develop an economy of symbolic exchanges" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 37). The 'symbolic economy' in this thesis refers to the fact that the symbolic meaning attached to voices and bodies is allocated differential value across fields or markets, thereby materially affecting one's subject position. Bourdieu's theory of the relationship between field and habitus provides a framework that is more readily mobilised in empirical research than more abstract discursive theory, such as that of Butler (1997). However, I will show that post-structural discursive theory does offer valuable critiques of this framework and so I will engage with both here, utilising Butler to extend Bourdieu, and creating a theoretical framework most appropriate for the focus on language and power in the process of subjectification.

The symbolic economy can be defined as functioning as follows:

> Linguistic exchange – a relation of communication between a sender and a receiver, based on enciphering and deciphering, and therefore on the implementation of a code or a generative competence – is also an economic exchange which is established within a particular symbolic relation of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market), and which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit. (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66)

What Bourdieu draws our attention to is the fact that people's linguistic repertoires are not only about the languages they speak, and how we cognitively make sense of them. They are also "*signs of wealth*" and "*signs of authority"* (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66, emphasis in the original). Linguistic repertoires have material value within a capitalist economy, and some are more highly valued than others. To claim this value, one's linguistic repertoire needs to be "believed and obeyed" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66). So there are three key elements at play here: (1) the context in which we find ourselves that sets up what is considered valuable; (2) the value of our linguistic repertoire within this context; and (3) the extent to which our performance of this repertoire is sufficiently believable to legitimate our position within the symbolic economy.

In Bourdieu's theorisation, the linguistic habitus of a subject is an effect of the social conditions of linguistic production. This will be taken up later (in sections 2.3 and 2.4) but in order to make sense of the concept of habitus we need to account for the context of this

production. Subjects are always located and, as such, when they act, it is within the particularities of a context, which Bourdieu refers to as "fields" (Thompson, 1991).

A "field" is a social space that functions according to certain organising principles that mediate and reproduce systems of social classification (Bourdieu, 1993). He also uses the words "game" or "market", and denotes a similar logic of a context in which something has a consumable value that operates according to a particular set of rules. Different languages, and ways of speaking these languages, constitute a system of relational *value* (economy) and *meaning* (symbolic) that is constitutive of one's subject position in South Africa.

A complete system of value constituted through a set of relationships between different fields (or markets) is called an 'economy'. Thus, it is possible, through studying people's linguistic repertoires, to determine how power differentials between groups are structured through an economy of symbolic exchanges (Bourdieu, 1991; see also Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2002; Makoe & McKinney, 2014). A focus on language can therefore be used to study flows of power in a society.

The symbolic economy is constituted of a set of fields, and the "field" serves as a *metaphor* for "a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or 'capital'" (Thompson, 1991, p. 14). So what is valued, or can be converted from one form of capital to another, is *field* specific. For example, the field of the university has specific logics and forms of capital for its maintenance as an institution, "in which negotiations take place over resources or stakes and access to them" (Blacklegde & Pavlenko, 2002, p. 123). The university, while embedded in the global economy, also has its own specific historical circumstances and traditions that contribute to what is considered valuable in this field.

Similarly, different languages and accents are differently valued in across different fields. The value of language is not static, because people have vested interests in securing their own advantage (Naidoo, 2004). There will always be disputes and struggles within a field as "individuals seek to maintain or alter the distribution of the forms of capital specific to it" (Thompson, 1991, p. 14). While this logic is field specific, it is also a product of the broader symbolic economy, because what is valued in one field will have an effect on how it is valued in another. For example, mother-tongue education is lauded as a political and

pedagogical goal, but English is the language valued by the job market (field). Despite political commitments or ideological rhetoric, this will affect the choices people make in terms of language of education (field), and the most prestigious elements of the education system continue to function in English. We see therefore that what is considered valuable in one field, influences how it is valued in another.

Taken collectively, relationships between the forms of capital, habitus and different fields, constitute an "economy of symbolic exchanges" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 37). Those with access to English, a form of capital, will seek to maintain their advantage. Pursuing the maintenance of a system that advantages oneself to the detriment of others may not be intentional, because individuals who comprise a particular field or market will share certain assumptions about that field. Rather, to protect their social capital, "all participants must believe in the game they are playing, and in the value of what is at stake in the struggles they are waging" (Thompson, 1991, p. 14). Individuals need to "really believe" that English is the best option for a good education, and they may be blind to the reproduction of inequality to which their position contributes.

There is an interesting (at times paradoxical) tension between what is considered valuable within a particular field and the broader relationships between fields. Bourdieu points out that, "the relations of power that obtain in the linguistic market" lead to linguistic variations having "variations in the price [value]" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 69). This means that the same way of speaking may be differently valued in different fields. So, while in the example given above we see a symbiotic relationship between the job market, prestigious education and English, we may not see the same synergy between all fields. For example, while English may be valued in the field of education, it might not be valued in the field of the home. Or, conversely, the mother-tongue is valued at home, but not in educational spaces.

Bourdieu argues that because markets are "themselves socially classified" this contributes to "the law of price formation that obtains in a particular exchange" (1991, p. 67). The symbolic economy is not reducible to the laws of the material economy. The material economy influences what is valuable in the symbolic economy, but the different fields that comprise the symbolic economy (school, home, university, work place) have their own internal logics and sets of relationships between the fields. The value accrued to a symbolic asset, "which

can receive different values depending on the market in which it is offered" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 651), is a product of the relationship between fields. Since the habitus is generative and not always reproduced in the same way, there is an agency that emerges in each field. This will be taken up again later (in section 2.5.), for now it suffices to note that the mutually constitutive nature of habitus and field means that fields are not solely determined by the material economy, but also by the set of social and symbolic relationships between fields.

In the diagram below, we see that the relationship between the material and symbolic economy is mutually reinforcing, but not reducible to each other, illustrated by the big arrows on either side of the diagram going up and down.

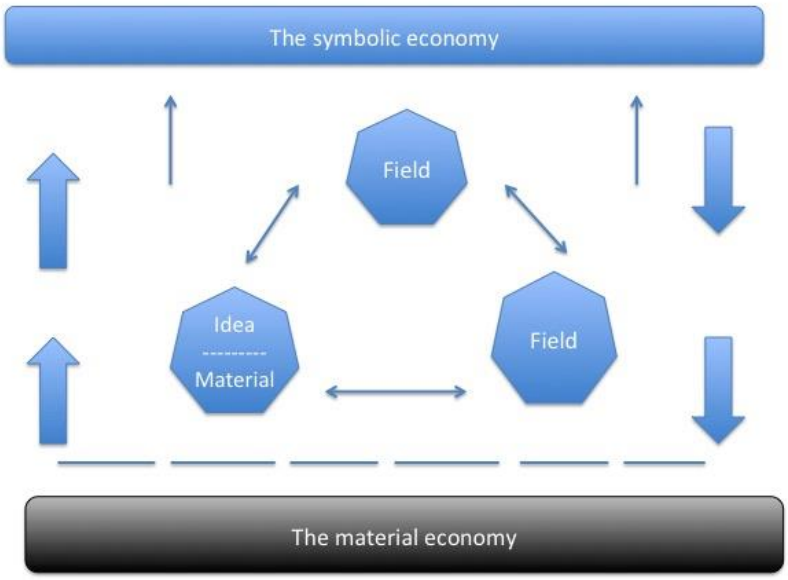


Figure 1: *The relationship between the material and the symbolic economy*

All fields fall within the symbolic economy and are (in some measure) detached from the material economy. The dotted line represents this non-reducible relationship between the two economies. Each hexagon represents a field and (like Saussure's sign) is comprised of material and ideal components. What is considered valuable in a field is a function of the material economy, as well as the symbolic economy. But, because meaning has the capacity to detach from its material beginnings (Eagleton, 2001), the value accrued to a symbolic

commodity is the product of the relationship between fields about the *meaning* of a symbolic asset.

It is possible within one material economy for symbolic commodities to have (apparently) contradictory values across fields. However, these differential values exist in dialectical tension rather than as binary opposites because they are related through a systemic necessity for difference (the complete system of language and symbolic exchange). This systemic set of relations might be considered as analogous to the construction of meaning in language in which meaning is possible in the play of *difference* between linguistic components rather than inhering within them. But these relations of differential value do not operate within closed systems and need to be considered in the context of particular power relations, at a specific historical moment. In the South African context, the advent of democracy has brought about a split between economic and political power, creating what might appear to be a disjuncture between the material and the symbolic economy, and thus, certain symbolic assets can be considered valuable, while simultaneously being sanctioned.

2.3 Forms of Capital

Within different fields, certain forms of capital connote value and power in the societal hierarchy. Social capital and the "rituals of social magic" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 11) are founded upon the value that certain languages are afforded, including certain ways of speaking within a context (for example, in the South African context the ethnolinguistic repertoire of white South African English is valued in educational settings (McKinney, 2007)).

Key to understanding this concept is that forms of capital can be converted from one form of capital to another (Thompson, 1991). For example, achieving the accent of white South African English would be valuable to a future employer and is therefore also valuable in the classroom. Since forms of capital can be converted, what is valued within a particular field will always be a site of struggle for either the maintenance or altering of the distribution of the forms of capital specific to it (Thompson, 1991, p. 14). For example, changing what is valued in the educational field (because it is related to the job market) will have consequences for those with access to dominant forms of cultural capital, thus they will fight to maintain the value of their cultural capital.

Bourdieu groups the forms of capital into three types, namely, economic, cultural, and social (Bourdieu, 1997). Economic capital refers to money, property, and the like, which are physical, materialised forms of capital that have pure economic value for the purposes of exchange. Cultural and social forms of capital are important to this study and so I will explain each of these concepts in turn. Importantly, these forms of capital are related to one another and are not purely taxonomic.

Cultural capital

Cultural capital occurs in three forms; embodied, objectified, and institutionalised, and is generally convertible to a form of economic capital. I like to think of cultural capital as kind of surety for one's class position. The first form, embodied cultural capital, includes the habitus (this will be more fully taken up section 2.4). All people have a habitus, but one's habitus is not equally valued in ideologically encoded society. Embodied capital refers to the dispositions of mind and body. Here "external wealth [is] converted into an integral part of the person, into a habitus, [and] cannot be transmitted instantaneously" (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 48). Thus, embodied cultural capital is something that is cultivated and inculcated over the course of a lifetime and not only something consciously taught or learnt. It is those aspects of taste and manner that could be thought of as unconscious (although Bourdieu disputes the division of the conscious and unconscious), but nonetheless "give away" one's class location. Bourdieu's classic work, *Distinction* (1984) examines how these forms of class distinction work in contemporary bourgeois France. He shows how matters of taste are used to construct difference between class locations, where the minutiae of aesthetic dispositions are actually symbolic acts of distinction. For example, one's sense of ease in a restaurant environment or sense of the "appropriate" dress for a particular setting, are acts of class distinction.

At the heart of cultural capital is Linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1997, 1991). This is an important concept for making sense of how language ideology is hegemonised, and replicated in tacit ways, that ensure the success of some and the failure of others in different settings, including the school, the university, and the workplace. Blackledge and Pavlenko (2002) point out that…

> …just as in the economic market there are monopolies and power relations which mean that all producers and their products do not start out equal, so too in the linguistic market there are power relations which mean that all speakers do not start out equal. (p. 123)

This limits the agency of newcomers without status or confidence (McEwan, 2005). For example, if we think of English as a form of embodied cultural capital with institutionalised rewards, it is easy to see why there is such reticence to changing language policies in higher education. Those currently succeeding in these institutions have a vested interest in protecting their cultural capital.

The second form of cultural capital is objectified capital. This refers to actual cultural goods one has access to, or owns, such as books, art, or musical instruments. The interesting thing about this form of cultural capital, is that it is also linked to the habitus, in that one does not just own these cultural artefacts, but should also know how to appropriately use or consume them (Bourdieu, 1997). This form of cultural capital includes the seeming natural ability to appreciate visual and other "goods" of culture. This sense of good taste, or an appreciation for these cultural goods, is often put down to personal style, but it is in fact an inculcated embodiment of a classed culture.

Third, the institutionalized state of cultural capital is the only form of cultural capital that can "confer original properties" (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 50). It can be learnt and is institutionally authorised (such as in conferring a degree), and thus technically anyone should be able to access this form of capital as it is autonomous from one's social position, and has "neutralizing potential" (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 50). However, it has been well documented that this is not true of educational institutions. Often these reproduce inequality covertly, through reinforcing, or drawing on forms of curriculum and institutional culture that mirror the cultural capital of those in positions of dominance. The dominant group succeeds because of what has been selected as worthy of inclusion in the curriculum. This notion of "selectedness" is key to explaining how inequality is reproduced even in spaces that appear to offer equality of opportunity (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; see also Bredo & Feinberg, 1979; Gorder, 1980).

The forms of cultural capital described above are related to one another and cannot be considered in isolation. The intersection of these different forms of cultural capital is useful in understanding how subjects are positioned through something like language-use or style in an educational setting. This is because if we are dealing with a symbolic economy, in other words the representation of meaning of languages in and across contexts, it is this "symbolic

logic of distinction" that leads to the positioning of subjects in relation to each other. This "secures material and symbolic profits for the possessors of large cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 49) and reinforces their positions of power and privilege.

Social capital

Social capital refers to social networks that give one access to power. This is possible through personal networks, political networks, and also institutionalised titles of nobility or status ("professor", for example) (Bourdieu, 1997). In the South African context, we might include here the political elite, traditional leaders, the clergy, the legal community, and the professoriate. What is interesting about this form of capital, is that the boundaries that define who has access to a particular form of social capital, say an "old boys' club", can be redefined to include new people, but only if it ensures the capital of existing members. This is of particular interest in the South African context, and at a prestigious South African university, because this means a fundamental transformation of the logic of privilege does not take place. Rather, new categories of persons are admitted into a continued space of privilege, while claiming to be diverse.

Social capital is also concerned with competition for the legitimate representation of a particular group (Bourdieu, 1997). This also offers interesting potential for analysis of the South African situation where language and styles of speech are often used as markers of belonging, gatekeeping, and legitimation, as illustrated by the examples of South African party politics in Chapter 1. What is important for Bourdieu is how forms of social capital relate to a particular field. While it is possible to change the status quo, one's ability to successfully do so is impeded by one's position within the social structure that determines which forms of capital are considered valuable. Indeed, it may be necessary to assume the dominant forms of social and cultural capital to be able to subvert the system from within, so to speak.

This understanding of social capital needs further elaboration in the South African context. Bourdieu (1984, 1990, 1991) was writing about a relatively stable set of class relations in France where political power and economic power were largely aligned. The peculiarity of democratic South Africa is that this alignment is often disrupted (Bradbury, personal communication, 2015). On the one hand, we have the political elite, who occupy government

positions, some may be owners of capital, but by-and-large the currency of this sector is one's involvement in the liberation struggle. On the other hand, there is privatised, largely white, capital. Historically, an institution such as the university was designed to accommodate the children of the owners of white capital, with all its related forms of cultural capital. In contemporary democratic South Africa, the economic power of white capital has not shifted significantly, but the requirements to accommodate a new kind of student are high on the transformation agenda. This pulls the academy in two directions. It is compelled to create an institution of learning that is commensurate with the constitutional requirements for broad access, but also for creating students who are desirable to white capital, so that they are employed.

This fracturing between political and economic forms of capital also produces an anxiety about becoming more and more a part of a world one did not create. Gaining access to the economic elite appears to require a particular habitus that mimics middle-class whiteness. If economic access is based on reproducing the symbolic power of whiteness, then this is not access at all. The insertion of the political demands of transformation in the academy, without attending to white capital, into who's employ students graduate, is to symbolically negate a hierarchy "without disrupting it" (Thompson, 1991, p. 19).

The forms of capital function just as an ideology: to conceal their essentially arbitrary nature and be presented as natural facts of the world. Bourdieu argues that all forms of capital are simultaneously underpinned by economic capital, but never reducible to it. This means that, "these transformed, disguised forms of economic capital…produce their most specific effects only to the extent that they *conceal* (not least from their possessors) the fact that economic capital is at their root" (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 54, my emphasis). The emphasis on concealment is key in making people believe in the subject positions in which they find themselves, and act in accordance with societal expectations of someone in that subject position.

2.4 Habitus

The concept of habitus is concerned with the embodied dispositions of subjects that are "constituted in practice" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52). Bourdieu (1990) uses the term "bodily hexis" to capture the notion that the bodily experience of the subject cannot be transcended. In other words, the concept of habitus attempts to circumvent the old binaries of,

"determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and the unconscious, or the individual and society" (p. 55). Bourdieu's theory is one of located practice where one could be expected to act in a particular way given one's subject position, but these ways are not determined or homogenous with others who share one's subject location. In this sense, the body is a "repository or the site of incorporated history" (Butler, 1999, p. 114).

Seemingly paradoxically, Bourdieu refers to the habitus as having an "infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 55). Infinite and generative in that each subject *could* act completely differently in the given circumstances, but limited in that one might expect a subject of a particular social location to be predisposed to a particular regulation of the body.

Bourdieu explains habitus thus:

> The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends of an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (1990, p. 53)

The habitus for Bourdieu is a practical disposition, and perhaps for this reason has been critiqued for appearing deterministic. In fact, because the habitus is a disposition or tendency, not a determination, it explains how the subject acts freely but within constraints. By disposition Bourdieu means how the body is predisposed to act, behave, and feel in particular settings. The habitus organises practices so that with each action it is able to adapt to the demands of one's context, but is not intentional or "presupposing a conscious aiming at ends" or "obedience to rules". What forms my disposition is the repeated experience of a particular set of expectations in relation to someone of my subject location.

Read thus, it would appear that Butler's (1990) theory of performativity is similar to the concept of habitus, but sees the durable disposition of the subject as an effect of language, rather than something that is *materially* determined. Butler (1990, 1993) argues that it is the *repetitive* performance of gender norms that produces the effect of a gendered body. It is the "repeated stylization of the body…within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Morison, 2011, p. 43). The "regulatory frame", like ideology, moulds the body materially over time. It is the

repetition over time, in both the theory of performativity and the theory of habitus, which creates the appearance of a durable structure and subject position.

By virtue of one's subject position, one carries an embodied expectation, the assumption that one is more likely to act/perform in accordance with (historical and ideological) expected outcomes, because of the "relatively durable set of social relations which *endows* individuals with power, status and resources of various kinds" (Thompson, 1991, p. 8, his emphasis).

> In reality, the dispositions durably inculcated by the possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions… generate dispositions objectively compatible with these conditions and in a sense pre-adapted to their demands. The most improbable practices are therefore excluded, as unthinkable, by the kind of immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the inevitable. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 54)

This "virtue of necessity" creates a kind of circularity or "self-fulfilling prophecy" in the habitus of subjects: people appear to act in accordance with their subject position exactly because they have come to believe in the "imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser, 1970, no page numbers). They act in accordance with what material reality mirrors to them, and, in doing so, materialise the ideological through their repetitive actions. They may have the freedom to act otherwise, but they do not.

Butler (1997) notes that in reproducing a particular disposition the habitus could be understood as a ritual where through repetition, "a belief is spawned, which is then incorporated into the performance in its subsequent operations" (p. 119). It is in the incremental shifts between each performance that agency can be found and the reproduction of power structures is attenuated. This is why Bourdieu (1990) calls habitus a system of generative schemes", because through reproduction, new forms are produced. Agency is limited because of the "internalization of externality" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 55). This process is not determined, but constrains the *apparent* available options of action to subjects, who experience the constraint as 'real':

> Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as *remote from creation of unpredictable novelty* as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 55, my emphasis)

Bourdieu clearly sees the subject's relationship to power as highly constrained and historically specific. He describes our capacity for creative action as "remote" because of our

conditioning to act in accordance with our social location, so as to appear like a "mechanical reproduction". Importantly, he is not saying that it *is* a mechanical reproduction. An institution or a set of social relationships takes on a fixed and normative feeling when it is materialised or objectified (like cultural capital). The logic of a particular field is evident in the bodies and voices, the material, "durable dispositions" that illustrate that subjects recognise, and comply with "the demands immanent in the field" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 58).

This could be read as a formulation of Althusser's theory of the interpellation of the subject in ideology. Althusser's paradox of subjection (1970), where constraint is a precondition of agency, will be taken up shortly. One needs to recognise oneself within an ideology for the ideology to be materialised. Once this has happened, it is not merely a psychic effect - one's actual body, one's accent, how one sits, one's tastes, become the embodied materialisation of this ideological effect.

Butler (1999) also notes this move. She says that Bourdieu draws on "the Althusserian formulation of 'subjection' to ideology as the mastery of a certain practice in showing how submission to an order is, paradoxically, the effect of becoming savvy in its ways" (p. 118). She continues that Bourdieu seems to imply that we will *always conform* to ideology and that, in insisting this, he does not deal with the ambivalence at the heart of subjection that Althusser initially introduced. The paradox of subjection, being a form of mastery where the power that initiates the subject is not continuous (Butler 1997), is not followed through to its conclusion in his account. Bourdieu's theory of habitus is a powerful explanation of how ideology is materialised in the body, but it does not clearly explain how *change* is possible. What Bourdieu's work provides is a rich conceptual framework for empirically tracing ideological effects from broad social structures into the intimate space of the body. While at times it may seem as if his theory treats social structures as static, a close reading of his formulation of habitus reveals that there is dynamism between habitus and field, which allows for a constrained agency.

2.4.1 Linguistic habitus

As noted above, accent, language, and disposition all form part of the habitus. The linguistic habitus forms a sub-set of the subject's general habitus. Thompson (1991) explains it as,

> …that subset of dispositions acquired in the course of learning to speak in particular contexts (the family, the peer group, the school, etc.). These dispositions govern both the subsequent linguistic

> practices of an agent and the anticipation of the value that linguistic products will receive in other fields or markets – in the labour market, for example, or institutions of secondary or tertiary education. (p. 17)

That a linguistic habitus can have varying values in different contexts alerts us to the fact that what, where, and to whom one speaks, is not a neutral matter, but is connected to issues of power, desirability, value, and subject position.

The linguistic habitus reflects the social conditions of linguistic production through "different ways of saying" and "distinctive manners of speaking" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 38), which come to be read as expressions of style.

> What circulates on the linguistic market is not 'language' as such, but rather discourses that are stylistically marked both in their production, insofar as each speaker fashions an idiolect from the common language, and in their reception, insofar as each recipient helps produce the message which he [sic] perceives and appreciates by bringing to it everything that makes up his [sic] singular and collective experience.[7] (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 39)

Thus, one's social position is marked by the social interplay of languages within the market or field. There is capacity for individual expression, but this happens within a field with a particular value set in circulation, one that existed prior to a subject's interaction with this symbolic field.

As noted earlier, a speaker with all of the legitimate qualifications, assured in her competence in a dominant form of expression is able to "negate symbolically the hierarchy without disrupting it" (Thompson, 1991, p. 19). Bourdieu's point is that in a moment of subversion, the process of exploiting a hierarchy, playing with it, also reaffirms the hierarchy. Through subversion the idea of difference is maintained, and the system between "proper" and not, is maintained. Only someone competent in the "game" can exploit it. If an "incompetent" outsider attempts to play with the rules of the game, the audience will not acknowledge this symbolic negation as legitimate. Through "speaking back" to the expected and dominant forms of speech, the speaker is implicitly referencing the dominant structure as existing, thus leaving all other forms of expression outside of the normative framework.

The linguistic habitus allows us to make sense of the voice as being "socially [and politically] encoded" (Painter, 2008, p. 175) through different accents, dialects and languages. These

[7] This is distinct from the Butlerian and Foucauldian use of the term. Here he refers to linguistic styles of talk.

aural markers perform similar functions to ideological categories of gender or race in that they are social signifiers that are constitutive of subject position. "They are principles of both visibility and invisibility; they propel subjects along different social and political trajectories; and they enable and restrict vertical and horizontal mobility across social and political terrain" (Painter, 2008, p. 175). Not only the language we speak ("natural" or culturally bounded units), but also how we speak it (varieties, dialects, accents) is imbued with socially created meaning and value in relation to a field.

For Bourdieu, forms of speech, like slang, or any expression that seems to involve a negation or subversion of the dominant use of language by speakers, should not in fact be read as an outright rejection of dominant modes of expression. This is because "they are, at the same time, highly euphemized forms of speech which are adeptly tailored to the markets for which they are produced" (Thompson, 1991, p. 22). Subversion can be read as a "pursuit of distinction in a dominated market" (Thompson, 1991, p. 22).

This again highlights how subjection and mastery are two sides of the same coin. For a subversive practice to be recognised as such, one's position as a legitimate speaker must also be recognised. To master a set of discursive practices is also to be subjected to them. To subvert expectations is an act of refusal, and while it distinguishes you from others, the refusal of identification with a category is only possible if it has been offered to you[8]. Paradoxically, subversion appears to be most possible for those secure in their subject position. For example, Chigumadzi (2015) has noted how the so-called "coconuts"; those "fluent in the grammar of whiteness" (McKaiser, 2015b, no page numbers); "instead of becoming the trusted go-betweens between black and white" are "joining their working class comrades in black anti-racist struggles" (Chigumadzi, 2015, p. 1). It is precisely their position of privilege, which makes them such valuable revolutionary assets (Chigumadzi, 2015).

2.5 The relationship between habitus and the symbolic economy

Having covered Bourdieu's theory of habitus and the symbolic economy, what is left is to explain is how this relates to power, continuity, and change. If the symbolic economy is shaped by structural power but not reducible to it, where is the actual site of observable

[8] See Butler's (1997) chapter, "Conscience doth makes subjects of all of us" for a discussion of the "bad" subject that refuses identification.

change? I argue that it is embedded in the distinctive habitus' of subjects located in shifting and over-lapping fields of contemporary South Africa. Bourdieu addresses this nexus of issues clearly in *The Logic of Practice* (1990).

> A given agent's practical relation to the future, which governs his [sic] present practice, is defined in the relationship between, on the one hand, his *habitus* with its temporal structures and dispositions towards the future, constituted in the course of a particular relationship to a particular universe of probabilities, and on the other hand a certain state of the chances objectively offered to him by the social world. *The relation to what is possible is a relation to power;* and the sense of the probable future is constituted in the prolonged relationship with a world structured according to the categories of the possible (for us) and the impossible (for us), of what is appropriated in advance by and for others and what one can reasonably expect for oneself. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 64, my emphasis)

Bourdieu is arguing that the subject's potential for agency, change, and subversion needs to be cast in terms of what is possible and intelligible given the current material reality of ideologically encoded subject positions and relations of power. The paradoxical outcome of this understanding of located, but agentic, subjects is that they "become the accomplices of the processes that tend to make the probable a reality" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 65), often reproducing the status quo without realising it.

Butler (1999) in her chapter "Performativity's Social Magic" critiques Bourdieu's conceptual distinction between the habitus and field. In Butler's (1999) reading, she argues that according to Bourdieu, the habitus "maintains a constrained but non-causal relation to the practice it informs" (p. 114). If habitus emerges at the nexus of the field and the body, then it might seem that the economy is the ultimately determining field. But, as I demonstrated earlier (in section 2.2), Bourdieu himself sets up the value accrued to symbolic assets, including the habitus, as a product of the relationship between fields (with socially constituted meaning), and is not reducible to the material economy. Butler argues that Bourdieu's theorisation sets up the field as if it were objective, and the habitus as if it were subjective, and that this distinction is difficult to make. Just as the social and the linguistic cannot be separated—because the linguistic is only given life through the social—so too she sees the symbolic economy and the habitus as mutually constitutive.

I agree with Butler's formulation, but I would like to argue that Bourdieu himself would have agreed with this formulation and that perhaps her critique is misplaced. The concept of habitus was developed because Bourdieu wished to overcome the dualisms between subjective and objective that plague the social sciences. The Althusserian paradox of subjection, both being subject to and subject of, is clearly present in Bourdieu's work. The

difficulty emerges when one tries to spell out the mechanisms and processes of this mutually constitutive relationship between habitus and field. The linearity of language does not allow one to accurately capture the dynamism of this mutual constitution. Bourdieu is forced to explain the logic of the field, and the constrained but undetermined nature of the habitus, *as if* they were separate, in sufficient detail so that we can see the mechanisms of different fields in relation to the symbolic economy at play. In reality these are happening simultaneously and continuously.

Having laid out the relationship between the habitus and symbolic economy, I wish to take a step back to understand how the subject might be formed in the first place. How is it that a subject comes to 'believe' in, and experience his/her habitus as a natural fact of their existence? This is an effect of the paradox of subjection, which is tacitly present in Bourdieu's work, the assumptions of which I will now make explicit.

2.6 The paradox of subjection

Ideology, according to Althusser, is concerned with how the world is represented to those that inhabit it, and how this representation is connected with one's position as a subject in relation to the circulation of power. Thus, where one is located will profoundly affect how one comes to "see", experience, and know the world and one's position in it. This notion is captured by Bourdieu in the epigraph of this chapter, "instead of telling the child what he must do, tell him what he is" (1991, p. 52). Departing from Marx, Althusser's (1970) theorisation of ideology sees the superstructure as having a degree of autonomy from the economic base (i.e., ideology is not epiphenomenal) and that the relationship between ideas and subject position are more complex than simply a matter of class location (Mills, 1997a&b).

"Althusser's distinctive contribution" (Butler, 1997a, p. 121) is how he fuses a theory of ideology and the symbolic realm with the materiality of everyday life in the structures of the Ideological State Apparatuses. He showed how the *representation* of reality comes to have a concrete effect in *material* reality. Althusser undermines "the ontological dualism presupposed by the conventional Marxist distinction between a material base and an ideal or ideological superstructure. He does so by asserting the materiality *of* the ideological: "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice or practices. This existence is

material" (Butler, 1997a, p. 121). What is ideological (the symbolic) has material effects; it physically changes people's experience of their worlds, their bodies, their languages, and their voices. In this sense it is constitutive of one's subjectivity.

How does Althusser explain this imbrication of the material and the symbolic? His starting point is that ideology is the "representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (1970, no page numbers). Individuals are asymmetrically positioned in relation to each other depending on their access to/use of power: the 'real conditions of their existence'. That they happen to find themselves in different locations (by virtue of birth and historical accident), Althusser argues, is "imaginary". This does not mean that subjects have a false perception of reality, but that it is imaginary in that relationships *should not* be asymmetrical. Yet, since we are located in the reality of a history of power relations, "real conditions" of existence flow from this. This makes the 'imaginary' relationship take on a 'natural' or normative character. Thus, I am located in a dominant or subordinate position and I do not doubt the reality with which I am presented.

Central to Althusser's theorisation are the Ideological State Apparatuses, such as the school, church, and family, which contribute to an individual's knowledge of their place in the social structure. The Ideological State Apparatuses reinforce the ideological 'reality' that one is presented with and contribute to its normative quality. The role of the Ideological State Apparatuses dovetail well with Bourdieu's theorisation of the forms of capital, the habitus, and how these work together to reproduce patterns of dominance and inequality (as explicated above). A concrete example of this is Derrida's autobiographical account of his experience of French in Algeria, in which he noted how the sanction against specific languages through the school created "circles of socio-lingustic closure" (Derrida, 1998, p. 41). We saw the same in South Africa with African languages under apartheid, as noted in the previous chapter. But more on these issues presently.

Ideology, as a set of ideas that represents reality to subjects in a particular way, is *not setup once and for all.* Ideology has to be continuously reinforced through the State Apparatuses to be successful. It is these Apparatuses that reinforce the content of a particular ideology, making the content of ideology historically contingent. Through these subjects are interpellated, hailed or called, into a particular subject position through which they come to

know the social world. From before birth, subjects are called into being, in line with existing ideologies. Importantly, this process of calling into being is done in such a way as to conceal the production of these norms and present them as natural.

What makes this process so successful is the psychic dimension, the unconscious categories through which material conditions are represented and experienced (Weedon, 2004). It is because the subjects *recognise* that is they are being called out to that they are interpellated in to a particular subject position. For example, I am treated a particular way because of how I phenotypically 'look'. It is inculcated in me, through the school, church, family, that people who look like 'x' are treated like 'y' (for example equating blackness with inferiority or whiteness with superiority). Soon I realise that I am being treated like 'y', it follows that I assume that I must be 'x'. I recognise myself in the treatment of the category and so I identify with it. The way I am explaining the process here is obviously a truncated explanation for what in reality is a lifetime of experience. As Weedon (2004) (and similarly Butler, 1997a) notes, "the individual is hailed, and responds with an identification through which s/he is a subject in a double sense. S/he becomes both the agent of the ideology in question and subjected to it" (Weedon, 2004, p. 6). Subjection becomes the precursor to, and the constraint of, agency.

Ideology then cannot function without material individuals and the material structures through which it takes effect. This is what Althusser means when he says, "there is no ideology except for concrete subjects" (1970). Thus, the meaning of an ideology, which is symbolic (and historically specific), for example, females should be feminine, only takes material effect when subjects are physically moulding themselves toward this norm, for example, as a woman I sit with my legs crossed. This is both material and symbolic, my legs are both really crossed and I am female (material), *and* it symbolically represents a particular idea of femaleness as feminine and demure (symbolic). I use the example of gender only because it is now widely accepted that this is an ideological conflation, but the same could be said for issues of race, class, and accent. I sound like I come from a particular class (material), and how my voice sounds reinforces the symbolic ideology of people of a certain class sounding like me. It is the embodied state of ideology which is most powerful and which Bourdieu picks up in his theory of habitus.

The materiality of ideology is reproduced through the minutiae of every day practice, something both Butler and Bourdieu are acutely alert to. Butler (1997, p. 125) argues that,

> If ideology is material to the extent that it consists of a set of practices, and practices are governed by rituals, then materiality is defined as much by ritual and repetition as it is by more narrowly empiricist conceptions. Moreover, the rituals of ideology are material to the extent that they acquire a *productive* capacity and, in Althusser's text, what rituals produce are subjects.

This means that the subject only exists in practice; one's identity can only be understood as a relationship between people in the social world, and the meaning of these relationships in the context of power. This continuous productive practice that moulds (or materialises) bodies towards a particular norm is what Bourdieu refers to as the habitus. What is the impetus for subjects to adhere to these norms, which may or may not be in their best interests? Althusser argues that the impetus is the desire for recognition. This idea is not new. Indeed, in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit,* it is the desire for recognition that is the foundation of consciousness (Hegel, 1977).

Recognition entails us being acknowledged by others as (normatively equal) subjects in the world, as existing in particular ways for others (Taylor, 1994). Recognition implies a relational posture that is at the heart of subjectification. As outlined above, I come to recognise myself as a particular subject by responding to the ideological 'hailing'. On the other hand, recognition also implies the possibility for misrecognition. I may be recognised as 'x' (a white subject), but the fact that 'x' (white woman) is treated as 'y' (as 'normal' or maybe better than a black subject because recognition is inherently relational) is a misrecognition insofar as my human dignity is undermined. I am not recognised as an equal. Busch (2012), examining notions of linguistic citizenship notes that, "the inclusion resulting from the conferring of citizenship and the exclusion resulting from the withdrawal of citizenship are interpreted both as an act of recognition and as an act of misrecognition" (Busch, 2012, p. 508). Recognition and misrecognition take place simultaneously. The subject is constituted insofar as s/he is assigned to a specific category, and so must be 'this', not 'that'. Thus, our relationship to the Other is critical to our identification with a category of difference (Hall, 2000).

We respond to being hailed because we desire to be recognised, to be seen in the world. Paradoxically this recognition is often only offered on the terms of an ideological misrecognition. For example, the phrase "you speak well, *for a black person*" is highly

offensive because it involves a mis/recognition of the category of 'black' as denigrated. For Althusser, the paradox of subjection involves a misrecognition, a "false and provisional totalization" (Butler, 1997a, p. 112) as a subject of an ideology. For example, in order to be intelligible to the structures of the social world, I need to identify *as* woman/black/white/Zulu, even though the symbolic content of this category may fundamentally be in opposition to how I understand and experience myself, owing to personal history and the particularity of biography. I accept this category because it offers me the possibility for recognition. Because of our desire for our own existence, viability as subjects, we respond to the misrecognition to secure our existence in some form.

Importantly, Althusser's argument also highlights how it may be impossible to understand ourselves outside of available symbolic content and cultural repertoires. If we are constituted in language, there is some sense in which there will always be a slippage between how we experience ourselves and the symbolic means we have to make sense of our experience. We are subordinated to language in order to become subjects.

Thus, "submission and mastery take place simultaneously, and this paradoxical simultaneity constitutes the ambivalence of subjection" (Butler, 1997a, p. 116). The identification of the subject with a category of belonging is a more sophisticated movement than mere submission. We are not giving in to some outside order, rather,

> The binary frame of mastery/submission is forfeited by Althusser as he recasts submission precisely and paradoxically as a kind of mastery. In this view, neither submission nor mastery is *performed by a subject*; the lived simultaneity of submission as mastery, and mastery as submission, is the condition of possibility for the emergence of the subject. (Butler, 1997a, p. 117, emphasis in original)

I find this formulation of subjection compelling because it shifts away from the idea of a master discourse or ideology that is uni-directionally exerting its influence on us. The cycle of interpellation is started, and we continually renew it. This formulation lessens the possibility for economic (or any other form of) reductionism, and opens up the possibility of multiple forms of symbolic content existing in any one category. Furthermore, this theorisation of the subject also offers unique possibilities for understanding change in the subject and society. In Butler's words, we see that "the *power that initiates* the subject *fails to remain continuous* with the power that is the subject's agency" (Butler, 1997a, p. 12, my emphasis). If power is not uni-directional, and we play a role in our own subjection, how can we theorise change?

2.7 Power, Continuity and Change

It is clear that I adopt a reading of the subject as constituted in and through ideology where through the process of interpellation we are hailed into a particular subject position in society. However, I have tried to emphasise that the power that initiates the ideological interpellation of the subject is *discontinuous* (Butler, 1997a), not always repeated in the same way. It is not continuous exactly because of the ambivalence apparent in the process of subjectification itself: that constraint is a precondition for agency. Writing in *Excitable Speech* (1997a) on censorship, Butler describes this "ambiguity of agency". A subject comes to inhabit a social world of language in "an already circumscribed field of linguistic possibilities" (p. 129), languages and ways of speaking these languages, and how these produce particular subjects are already "decided" before one enters a field. However, every subject will not inhabit a language or social world in the same way, because with every repetition of action that produces a subject's habitus. Change is possible, because action is not repeated in the same way.

As Butler notes, "this repetition does not constitute the decision of the speaking subject as a redundancy. The gap between redundancy and repetition is the space of agency" (Butler, 1997b, p. 129). Agency is constrained, limited, but present. One's subjectivity may be initiated through an ideology that seems to curtail one's agency, or determine one's social position, but once this power has been established, founded, germinated in the subject, "power shifts from its status as a condition of agency to the subject's 'own' agency" (Butler, 1997a, p.12) allowing for the subversion of the very categories that seemed to 'give it life'. This subversion cannot however be seen as replacing one set of meanings wholesale for another. Rather, as alluded to earlier, it is the minute difference in every iteration of action that brings about change. This, Derrida refers to as "citationality" (1986).

The concept of citationality ties in well with an understanding of the ideological interpellation of the subject. Subjects are compelled to "recite" the norm in order to maintain their viability as subjects (Morison & Macleod, 2013), in other words, to remain intelligible within the ideological framework to which a society subscribes. To be understood within the system, one has to perform in accordance with the norms of the system, and with one's expected position within it. The language system we are born into, and how we speak (accent, dialect etc.) is not a choice, but rather a forcible re/citation of a norm, and thus the

question becomes not *whether* to repeat it but *how* to repeat the norm (Morison & Macleod, 2013). This Derridean concept of citationality has its roots in Austin's Speech Act Theory (1975). Austin's work focused on performatives, a category of verbs that do what they say, and produce an effect in the world: "I bet you" or "I pronounce you husband and wife", for example. Thus, a performative statement changes the nature of reality in its enunciation.

Citationality refers to the need for statements to be iterable in multiple contexts, so that they can be understood (Morison, 2011). However, through this iterability linguistic signs become vulnerable to appropriation, because they are not always repeated in the same way.

> Derrida does not consider the vulnerability of linguistic signs to appropriation, reiteration and re-citation as a potential downfall of language. For him this is rather an essential feature which he terms its 'essential iterability', and the very necessary condition of its existence… in order to be intelligible language needs to be 'iterable', that is, moveable between contexts and so utterances cannot be entirely contained or circumscribed by any context, convention or authorial intention. (Morison, 2011, p. 68)

The 'essential iterability' of linguistic signs means that there is always an element of undecidability present in language and speech, this allows for novelty and is the space of agency. Derrida (1986) gives us the example of signing one's signature, it is always referring back to the individual whose identity it authenticates. Yet, every iteration of the signature is different to the previous one; it is never *exactly* the same. There are small changes in the repetitions of our actions that incrementally bring about change over time, but still index the original subject. Thus, an identity relation may be continuous over time, while the content of this identity may shift radically. This is evidenced through the slow bending of norms (Morison & Macleod, 2013).

2.8 Conclusion

My aim in this chapter has been to synthesise various theoretical resources to create a framework that is able to account for the relationship between language, subjectivity, and the symbolic economy as an example of materialised ideology. A theory of the subject where subjection is seen as the precondition for a limited agency was highlighted in the work of Althusser, Bourdieu, and Butler. This nuanced understanding of how power initiates the subject, but does not reproduce itself identically in every re/iteration, is necessary to be able to account for change in modes of identification in the South African context. Indeed, only through a theorisation of the subject as constrained—that is *simultaneously* enabled and restricted—does any reference to identity, identity politics, and struggle for representation make sense. All of these hinge on a desire for recognition.

The work of all three of these theorists points to the fact that the symbolic realm, while related to the material economy, is not reducible to it, and herein lies the discontinuous nature of power. The material economy is powerful in positioning subjects hierarchically in society, inculcating a certain habitus that is of more or less value. However, because the symbolic realm is also concerned with meaning and social relationships, how value is accrued to symbolic assets is a product of the relationship between fields. Meaning detaches from the material economy and becomes a property of the symbolic economy in negotiating one's subject position in the context of shifting power relations. In the symbolic economy we see that meaning is not always reproduced in line with the hierarchies of the material economy. The "essential iterability" (Morison, 2011, p. 68) of language and meaning is a function that cannot be reduced to the distribution of capital, and thus opens up the process of identification on the part of the subject. Through opening up this process we see that power and affect as a site of meaning-making work in tandem to relationally position subjects in the symbolic economy. The process of identification in relation to language is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: Theoretical Framework (2)

Language and Identity

There, a birth to language, through a labyrinthine maze of names and identities coiling up, one around the other: a nostalgic ring of the unique… In this story, I deeply believe that language itself was jealous.

"Love in Two Languages", Abdelkebir Khatibi

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored the abstracted process of subjectification. I argued that constraint is the precondition of agency and change. I also outlined how the limited, but generative, capacity of the habitus of the subject is formed in relation to the symbolic economy more broadly; but what of the closer, more immediate experiences of "being-in-the-world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1996) with others? How do we choose to describe ourselves through categories of belonging, refusal, inclusion, and exclusion? In this chapter my aim is to build on the preceding theoretical constructs and provide a theoretical framework for dealing with issues of identity and identification. Identification occurs within the constraints of the symbolic economy, but, as I shall show, alongside the experiential and affective dimensions of belonging. These dimensions play a significant role in continuously renewing, or possibly shifting, the social locations into which we are hailed or interpellated.

Who we feel ourselves to be, and how we articulate this—what has commonly been called identity—has been the focus of much psychological and social research. In this chapter I begin(in section 3.2) by reviewing some of the problems with the concept "identity" and how some theorists have reworked, or redefined this term so as to make it analytically productive (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000).

Central to such an attenuated understanding of identity is its relationship with language. After having explicated the critiques of identity as a concept, I turn (in section 3.3) to examine how we use language to articulate our sense of belonging in the world and how the relationship between language, identity and affective dimensions of belonging might be understood. Often the "turn to language" and the "turn to affect" are seen as at epistemological odds with each other. Yet, meaning-making (including meanings of emotions) is constituted in language,

which indicates that there is "little point in trying to decompose affective activity into its bodily and discursive constituents" (Wetherell, 2012, p. 53). As Wetherell suggests, we should rather take affective-discursive practices as "interwoven phenomena" (2012, p. 53) in the process of identification/subjectification.

Building on such a view, I engage (in section 3.4) with the idea of identity as an articulation of momentary fixedness in a sea of change, that is contextual and intersectional, as opposed to 'authentic'. What one claims as an "identity" becomes tied up with ethical questions about what rights and responsibilities accompany claiming a category of belonging in particular contexts and in relation to others.

Following this, (in section 3.5) I go on to argue that Yuval-Davis's (2006b) theorisation of belonging is productive in separating out the issues of subject position in the social world, affective attachment to an identity category, and the ethical dimensions of identity politics. These three aspects of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006b) provide a helpful framework for engaging the relationship between language, identity and identification in the colony and the "post"-colony. In moving closer to my empirical research context, I turn to the writing of Derrida (1998), Fanon (1967), Wa Thiong'o (1981), and Achebe (1975), who engage with these universal issues through the particularity of their own contexts.

I examine Derrida's account of his relationship to the French language as an Algerian Jew in his monograph entitled, "The monolingualism of the Other, or the prosthesis of origin" (1998) (in section 3.6). This work is particularly powerful in its articulation of our relationship to language. Derrida sees our relationship to language as always in relationship to an Other, so that any form of belonging we may feel is in some senses "prosthetic" or artificially and temporarily necessary. We are interpellated into a social location as a rule of the paradox of subjection (Althusser, 1970), but the content of this position is always prosthetic, or not "true"/real. The understanding of the subject as prosthetically interpellated helps us to read other work on the colonial and post-colonial relationship to language. In this regard, I look to the work of Fanon, Wa Thiong'o and Achebe, who all acknowledge the plasticity of language, which allows it to become both a means of oppression and liberation depending on how is it used, and by whom. It is through their work that we see how profoundly the politics of language inform the process of identification.

3.2 Identity, Identification, Subjectivity and Subject Positioning

In recent times the concept of identity has been deployed so variously, across epistemological orientations, so as to have dramatically weakened its analytical capacity. As Brubaker and Cooper (2000) note, "conceptualizing all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness and cohesion, all self-understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of 'identity' saddles us with a blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary" (p. 2). While identity issues are pertinent to this thesis insofar as they are invoked by participants in their narratives about language experiences, analytically my focus is on *subject positioning*, a concept that is not inevitably captured by the broad term "identity".

A helpful distinction that Brubaker and Cooper (2000, p. 4) make in their formative paper on the conceptual messiness of "identity" is that certain terms used in the interpretive social sciences can refer to "categories of social and political *practice* and categories of social and political *analysis*" (emphasis in the original). "Identity" is just such a term. They go on to point out that just because a practice is salient to one's area of study, it does not follow that the *practice* has to be used as a "category of *analysis*" (p. 5). To use "identity" as such would be to reify identity itself as something fixed and stable, an assumption that has long been done away with in post-structural theory (Weedon, 1997, 2004; Hall, 2000; Hall & Du Gay, 1996). Paradoxically, "identity" *has* been used as an analytical category in studies where the epistemological assumptions at play seem to undo the concept itself. As Brubaker and Cooper argue, "It does not contribute to precision of analysis to use the same words for the extremes of reification and fluidity, and everything in between" (2000, p. 36).

"Subjectivity" is a much more accurate concept for a study that is interested in understanding how flows of power constitute different subject positions. It is important for me to highlight this because, inasmuch as I am analysing narrative accounts of life experience produced in an interview, which would seem to presume an "individual self" who speaks (Parker, 2002, p. 135), my theoretical concern in this study is understanding how this "sense of selfhood" is produced "in relation to others" (Parker, 2002, p. 135). This is why I prefer to use the word subjectivity as opposed to "identity" or "self", which are often used interchangeably. In doing so, I aim to "account*"* for the "process of reification" in relation to identity and language (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 5). Focusing on subject positioning allows me to attend to the

"processes and mechanisms" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 5) that produce a particular reality, without reinscribing this reality in normative and essentialist terms. In this regard, thinking about identity as a verb (Bauman, 1996), allows us to see what work is being done when the idea of an identity is invoked.

Hall's (1996) seminal paper, "Who Needs Identity?" traces the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of various ways in which identity has been theorised in the post-Cartesian era. Hall (1996) notes that mind/body dualism is no longer a stable assumption of the subject. He traces discursive theories that argue for an understanding of the constitution of the subject through language thereby influencing our experience of our bodies. He notes how psychoanalytic theory has at times seen the internal world of the "drives" as the ultimate determinant of who we are, while comparing this to Althusser's theory of interpellation, which has been accused of an economic determinism. It is much more likely that all three of these components (discursive, psychoanalytic, and materialist) play a role in constituting who we feel ourselves to be and how we come to experience ourselves in the world in relation to others.

Without resolving these tensions here, I argue, following Hall (2000), that in order to engage with the concept of identity it is useful to approach it as a concept "under erasure" (Hall, 1996, p. 1). Following Derrida, Hall explains that terms used under erasure mean that, "they are no longer serviceable – 'good to think with' – in their originary and unreconstructed form. But since they have not been superseded dialectically, and there are no other, entirely different concepts with which to replace them, there is nothing to do but to continue to think with them" (Hall, 1996, p. 1). Derrida uses the term erasure to emphasise our dependence on terms that are "useful, necessary and wrong" (Sampson, 1989, p. 7). A term under erasure is written down and then crossed out to indicate that we need the term for the point being made to be intelligible, but simultaneously emphasising that this is the incorrect term, or does not capture the fullness of what might be meant.

Identity then, is not used to index a fixed position in the world, or a stable sense of belonging, or even an authentic sense of self, but rather is the "thing" that feels contested whenever we speak about our social location, our feeling of belonging, and a set of parameters being set on who we "really" are. Thus, in line with Bauman's (1996) suggestion to see identity as a verb,

it might be more appropriate to speak of the identification of the subject with social categories of difference and feelings of attachment. In Hall's (2000) words identification is "a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption" (p. 3). Hall's metaphor of the suture is particularly effective in describing something that feels natural, but bears the scars of being held together. The suture leaves a scar on the body, so one always knows that area of the skin was sewn together, but once the tissue has healed, the scar becomes a part of our bodies in a way that makes us unique and feels natural. The suture has also been referred to as an "intersection" (Heath, 1981, p. 106), a term now common in social sciences and humanities research through Crenshaw's (1993) work on intersectionality. Intersectionality refers to that particular set of circumstances that comprises our social location in the world in relation to others, but that is not reducible to one of our constitutive categories of difference (Yuval-Davis, 2006a).

The suturing metaphor, the idea of stitching things together but leaving a scar so that we are able to "see" the "history" of the suture, for me brings to mind the image of a palimpsest (Berman, 2004). The Oxford Dictionaries (online) define a palimpsest as a manuscript "on which later writing has been superimposed", "something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form". The metaphor of the palimpsest, like Hall's (2000) surture, is also related of Derrida's use of the term "erasure" and his reading of Freud's metaphor of the Mystic Writing Pad as a metaphor for the psychic apparatus of subjects (Sampson, 1989, p. 7-10). Derrida provides a reading of Freud's (1925) "toy slate known as the Mystic Writing Pad" (Sampson, 1989, p. 10). Sampson explains that with each peeling away of a wax layer on the writing pad:

> The surface layer is open and permeable to the reception of incoming materials; it remains forever fresh however, only by virtue of the erasure that occurs each time the surface is lifted from its wax underbase. Derrida sees it to be significant that the virgin status of the first layer is assured only through its being erased so that a fresh surface can remain exposed: the erasure of presence is thus essential to the continuing awareness of presence. The inner surface of the pad consists of the underlying wax layer. While it does not receive fresh imprints, it records imprints as permanent traces inscribed in its surface. (Sampson, 1989, p. 10)

The new layers of the palimpsest are in "dialogue" with the original. The new layers function in the same way that the presence of an Other might, and we construct our sense of belonging in relation to others or new layers of experience. Seeing the term identity as "under erasure" helps us to think through aspects of belonging in relation to others, particularly how people

experience their realities or who they "feel" themselves to be, without fixing identity as something permanent.

3.3 Language and identity

We use language to articulate our sense of belonging in the world and for this reason we need to understand the relationship between language, identity, and belonging. The "turn to language" emphasised that one could not see past the language that was used to describe experience, and thus it was necessary to analyse language or discourse to understand the constitution of the subject. Parker (2002) argues that, "you have to be sure not to let your eye slip from the text, not to be lured into looking right through it to where you imagine you are really seeing…the facts are storied in the text, and we then have to locate the text, culturally and historically" (p. 9). For some discursive theorists there is nothing knowable outside of the text, outside of language. And it is through language that we construct knowledge about the social world.

It is necessary to draw a distinction between two meanings of the word "language" I use in this thesis, as I alluded to at the beginning. First, there is what could be called Language with a Big "L". This refers to Language as the universal human capacity for speech, communication, and symbol making. This is also the post-structuralist discursive notion of language in which meaning is made and power is circulated (Weedon, 2004). So, all humans have the capacity for Language and it is a socially structuring force, which can be understood as the "force of discourse" (Price, 1999). But how does this relate to the politics of becoming a subject in a *particular* language?

The particularity of becoming a subject in a specific language is what could be called language with a little "l", or natural or cultural languages. This includes both different languages, such as Zulu, English, and German and the variety of ways (dialects, accents, registers) in which these are spoken. There is a fairly large body of work on language ideologies that critiques languages being referred to as fixed, bounded units, or reifying languages as if there might be a "pure" language form (for example, see Blackledge & Pavlenko 2002; Blommaert, 1999). While this critique is well established, it is the case that most people speak of languages, and their common sense experience as language users, in a relatively fixed sense.

To be sure, there is an inextricable relationship between these two usages of the term "language"; as Saussure has shown us: "the social nature of language is one of its internal characteristics" (Butler, 1999, p. 121). The differences in the usage of "language" that I have set up here follow the distinction between "langue" and "parole". Langue refers to the abstract, rule bound, signifying capacity of language, while parole refers to the particular ways individuals speak a language (Saussure, 1959). It was the distinction between these two levels that was foundational to the understanding of parole as a performative speech act (Austin, 1975) (as outlined in the previous chapter).

What I mean to emphasise is that Language (as the abstract system of discursive power) has to find expression in particular languages. Languages are constitutive of discursive meaning, but also spoken by individuals, in physical bodies, in particular material locations, with particular feelings and with particular effects. It is here where the discursive argument that there is nothing outside of Language might be critiqued, or at least attenuated. It is helpful to bear this distinction in mind going forward because, while the subject is formed in Language, the subject is embodied and uses particular languages in living relationships with others. Embodiment requires an understanding of Language as located in the fleshy reality of languages and their politics, and therefore requires attending to issues of affective-discursive meaning-making (Wetherell, 2012).

3.4 Identity and authenticity

The term "identity" often seems to imply the sense of a singular authentic self. While the notion of an authentic identity is in some part key to the politics of recognition (Taylor, 1994), it is also a mechanism for constructing new boundaries of difference. I argue that it is much more helpful to think of people engaging with processes of identification and subject positioning, when they attach themselves to, or are attached by others, to certain social categories. However, it is difficult to let go of the term identity altogether, because it is a concept that people experience as real and meaningful, and often use to reference a particular sense of belonging. This again speaks to Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) emphasis on the distinction between categories of practice and categories of analysis. The categories mobilised in people's talk need not be the same as the categories used to analyse the talk.

The relationship between the concepts of identity and authenticity is of interest because of the fixedness identity often implies. Identity connotes a sense of there being a correct or authentic way of belonging to a category, because it is in the singular, an identity relation of one to one. 'Authenticity' has become the battleground for cultural practices in a context where meanings are constantly shifting and modes of identification opening up (Blommaert & Varis, 2015, p. 27). In these shifting terrains, it is often claims to authenticity that offer a sense of security to the subject. This is particularly relevant when considering issues of identity in relation to language as a social marker. The impact of this marking can only be appreciated within the context of power relations. As Blackledge and Pavlenko (2002) note, "ideologies of language are rarely about language alone" (2002, p. 121). To understand the ideological function of language, we need to situate our understanding of identity in terms of social location and the various forms that power can assume (institutional, political, economic, discursive, and so forth).

Personal claims to authenticity are of particular importance because they do not only function at the individual level. As Bucholtz (2003) points out, "particular political interests are served by particular cultural beliefs about language" when considering who is constructed as an authentic or legitimate speaker of a language (p. 404). Bucholtz (2003) examines the history of the concept "authenticity" within sociolinguistics and how language becomes tied to an "authentic" notion of identity.

She starts by looking at what she terms the "nostalgia" of sociolinguistics, for trying to find some authentic source of language unpolluted by modern forms. In this pursuit she finds that linguists often lapsed into a "romanticism [valorising] the rural population as the authentic source of traditional cultural knowledge and practice" (2003, p. 399). This is what Garuba (2011) referred to as the approach of "ethnographic salvage" that informs much research on African languages, where a "shift away from [their] language of heritage" is seen as a "shift away from an authentic past" (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 400). This ideology of an authentic and essential identity is based on two assumptions: "(1) that groups can be clearly delimited; and (2) that group members are more or less alike" (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 400). But these types of claims to authenticity can be troublesome. Not because the concept of "authenticity" is morally dubious (although it does have moral and political implications), but because it is epistemologically dubious. The notion of an "authentic" identity slips all too easily into

essentialist terrain reifying identities that are always in a state of becoming (Appiah, 1994). Just because one demands recognition on, (for instance) cultural, racial, sexual terms, does not imply that there is one way of being any one of these categories, or that these categories are permanent or necessary. Appiah describes as "monologic" (1994, p. 156) an approach to identity that fixes authenticity into place as an immutable set of characteristics.

In place of this notion of authenticity, Bucholtz argues for the concept of "authentication" (2003, p. 407). She notes how the research on style and identity usefully examines how speakers assert their agency within the available set of discourses, resources and socio-historical contexts in which they find themselves. This type of research lets go of the notion of the authentic speaker and engages with the process of identification (Hall, 2000). Identification and authentication appear to be very similar processes. Bucholtz argues that identity is authenticated by the "outcome of constantly negotiated social practices" (p. 408). So, "it is the tactic of authentication that produces authenticity as its effect" (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 408). One becomes acknowledged as an authentic member of a group, but this does not limit one's authenticity to one set of characteristics attached to a particular category. So we see that what is claimed as an "identity" is an *effect* of socially negotiated practices.

The idea that one is acknowledged as a member of a group without limiting the ways of being a part of a group is reminiscent of Bhabha's (1996) use of the term "hybridity", to explain "the construction of cultural authority within conditions of political antagonism or inequity" (Bhabha, 1996, p. 58). He argues that hybridity involves subjects subverting what is considered "authoritative" in terms of cultural belonging. Where attempts are made to homogenise or codify what cultural belonging might mean in terms of a specific category or group, "the hybrid strategy" which he sees as a function of discourse (or language), "opens up a space of negotiation where power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal" (1996, p. 58). People may be socially located asymmetrically, but how those asymmetries are taken up, lived, made-meaningful is not reproduced in the same way in every re/iteration. This is precisely Butler's (1997) point when she notes that the flow of power from structures *through* the subject fails to remain continuous. While we are hailed into particular subject positions, "the power that initiates the subject fails to remain continuous with the power that is the subject's agency" (Butler, 1997a, p. 12). We are all subject to the constraints of our subject position, and thus we might make pragmatic decisions about how to operate within

our context that might appear to reproduce social forms or be assimilationist. However, Bhabha notes that negotiation as a hybrid strategy of identity "is neither assimilation nor collaboration. It makes possible the emergence of an 'interstitial' agency that refuses the binary representation of social antagonism. Hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialectic that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty" (Bhabha, 1996, p. 58).

3.5 Identity as belonging

I have argued that the notion of an authentic identity might function as a form of "social antagonism", and that our agency might be best articulated in terms of the notion of hybridity (Bhabha, 1996, p. 58). This by no means implies that identity does not invoke an affective dimension in people's day to day lives. Indeed, the anxiety about being inauthentic indicates just how powerful this ideology is. I argue that this anxiety highlights the affective attachments of the relational subject and can be understood as an anxiety about belonging.

Yuval-Davis' (2006b) work on belonging and the politics of belonging helpfully differentiates between these two aspects: belonging as an affective dimension of the subject and belonging as politics. It is in the latter (identity politics) where the debates around authenticity are most likely to be most prominent. Bauman (1996) notes that, "one thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs" (p. 19).

Yuval-Davis (2006b) defines belonging as an emotional attachment, where one feels "at home" and "safe" (p. 197). She argues that this sense of belonging has a natural feel and is only brought into focus and made political "when it is threatened in some way" (p. 197) (see also Ndlovu, 2012). Much social psychological research has shown that it is "out of fear of exclusion" that individuals often conform to apparent group identities (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 198). It is the felt sense of belonging, the affective dimension of belonging, which becomes a way of thinking of oneself and one's relationship to the world. However, as Giddens has pointed out, in modernity "people's sense of belonging becomes reflexive" (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p.198). In other words, people are able to reflect on their subject position in relation to others and social structures, and reflect on their feeling of belonging within a particular social location. Belonging can be seen as "an act of self-identification or identification by others" and is always in process, not a fixed entity (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p.198). A sense of

belonging *feels* natural because of the ideological effect of interpellation where "ideal constructs are materialised through time" (Hall, 2000, p. 27).

Yuval-Davis (2006b) outlines three analytical levels for engaging with the notion of belonging: "social locations; identifications and emotional attachments; and ethical political values" (p. 199). I have found these three levels productive for distinguishing between belonging and identification as a practice in the social world, compared with a category of analysis by social scientists (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). I now engage with each of these in turn.

3.5.6 Social locations

When people are seen as belonging to a particular social category (such as race, gender, nationality or class) Yuval-Davis (2006b) argues that what is being referred to is a subject's social or economic location. These categories-as-social-locations have material implications for the lives of people so categorised because of the flows of power in society at a particular historical moment. One's social location carries with it "a certain positionality along an axis of power, higher or lower than other such categories" (p. 199). Yuval-Davis (2006b) emphasises that these axes of difference and power are never singular, but that they intersect with one another, and thus cannot be considered in isolation. At particular moments in history one or other of the categories into which we fall may become more important than another, because of how the category affects our position in relation to power. Our sense of belonging to a particular social location is also bound up with issues of recognition from others. However, Yuval-Davis (2006b) notes that belonging to a particular social location "cannot be conflated with the belonging discourse on identification and emotional attachments" (p. 202). For this reason, social location is more a matter of analysis than a practice of identification.

3.5.7 Identifications and emotional attachments

Identifications and emotional attachments, as the second level of analysis for engaging with belonging, can be seen more as a social practice. For the purposes of this chapter, this axis of belonging is most important. It highlights how identities are used to articulate a feeling of belonging or exclusion, rather than suggesting that these identities are fixed entities in themselves. Yuval-Davis (2006b) sees "identities as narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not)" (p. 202). Importantly, these stories will not *only* be about belonging to a particular social category, but will also be about the

meaning individuals construct in relation to one's body, personality, biography and so forth. The stories people tell about themselves will be particular. This means that the way in which group identities are articulated from generation to generation, or person to person, will be open to incremental change. Again, this echoes Butler's (1997) notion of citationality, and her argument that power is dispersed and discontinuous and therefore will not be repeated in the same way from utterance to utterance. Emotional attachment is constructed and articulated through language in stories (Wetherell, 2012), and we use language performatively to repeat cultural narratives in a new and particular ways.

The stories people tell about themselves "reflect emotional investments and desire for attachments" with others, which articulate both a sense of "belonging and a longing to belong" (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 202). There is a productive tension between a secure sense of belonging and the feeling that this belonging is not stable. We can observe this shifting tension through "the emotional components of people's constructions of themselves and their identities becom[ing] more central the more threatened and less secure they feel" (p. 202).

Social location, identification, and emotional attachment do not necessarily map onto each other (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). Yet, because identity categories can be, and have been, forced onto groups of people, "identities and belonging/s become important dimensions of people's social locations and positionings, and the relationships between locations and identifications can become empirically more closely intertwined" (p. 203). We see this in all colonial and post-colonial contexts, and specifically in contemporary South Africa. Nevertheless, as Appiah (1994; 2005) has noted, the conflation of social location and identification, is productive only so far. Fanon (1967) argued that we need to be able to distinguish between the social and economic location of the oppressed and "their internalisations of forced constructions of self and identity" (Yuval Davis 2006b, p. 203) in order to resist the strictures of power. The project of identity politics short-circuits if it is not seen as only a step in the dialectic of inter-subjective recognition.

3.5.8 Ethical and political values

The relationship between social location and identification highlights the ethical and political values that also accompany belonging in Yuval-Davis's (2006b) framework. The "specific attitudes and ideologies concerning where and how identity and categorical boundaries are

being/should be drawn" (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 203) stem from these ethical and political considerations. Since people of different social locations are differently valued, there are ethical values and political implications involved in claiming belonging and also on judging whether someone is part of "us" or "them" (p. 204). Subjects who have a vested interest in a category in terms of their own subject positioning continually perform exercises of boundary maintenance and transgression (Davies, 2006). This is also often the basis of identity politics: given that people who are differently located and labelled are differently valued, combatting this injustice needs to proceed through affirming historically denigrated identities.

While one might believe in inalienable human dignity, this universal claim becomes particularised in and through history (Appiah, 2005). I argue that if I do believe in universal human equality, I am compelled to ethically engage with what dignity and belonging mean in the particularity of context. The debate over enlightenment ideals and the question of human dignity (Appiah, 2005) is an important one in terms of position taking about what the ideal ethical subject is/should/could be, however this falls beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice to say that I agree with the Enlightenment ideal of human dignity and find theories that highlight the human compulsion to seek out recognition from the Other (the seminal philosopher here is Hegel, 1977) to be cogent. In the words of Appiah,

> Of course, Hume's or Kant's or Hegel's inability to imagine that an African should achieve anything in the sphere of 'arts and letters' is objectionable, not because it is humanist or universalist but because it is neither. What has motivated this recent antiuniversalism has been, in large part, a conviction that past universalism was a projection of European values and interests. This is a critique best expressed by the statement that the actually existing Enlightenment was insufficiently Enlightened; it is not an argument that Enlightenment was the wrong project. (2005, p. 250)

Particular groups have been denied recognition, and thus the politics of identity and authenticity become complicated. While I am interested in the subject positioning of my participants in the symbolic economy, which would fall within Yuval-Davis' (2006b) category of "social location" as belonging, we can see that issues of subject positioning and social location are not easily separated from emotional attachments and ethical considerations which facilitate the process of identification (or dis-identification) with others.

3.6 Language, identity and the colonial situation

3.6.1 Prosthetic interpellation

In this section I examine Derrida's theoretical-autobiographical account of his relationship to the French language as an Algerian Jew. It has been a helpful example of biographical work

that illustrates how subjects inhabit their social worlds through language (Busch, 2012; Painter, 2008; Derrida, 1998) and builds on (explicitly and tacitly) many of the theoretical resources I have outlined in this and the previous chapter.

Derrida was a monolingual French speaker, sometime-citizen of France who grew up in Algeria, in the Mahgreb. Algerian Jews had French citizenship from 1870 to 1940, by virtue of French colonization. Their citizenship was revoked in 1940 because of the wave of anti-Semitism that swept Europe during that time. Derrida notes that within two generations, from the time Algerian Jews were offered French citizenship, there was a "profound, rapid, zealous, and spectacular" assimilation into French culture and language (1998, p.17; see also McNamara, 2010). French was the language of education and administration and Arabic (while spoken by the majority of the population) was not recognised in any formal capacity (McNamara, 2010), mirroring the colonial language politics elsewhere in Africa, and indeed around the world.

The argument that Derrida makes is that all Language can be considered universally alienating to the subject, in that language exists prior to the subject, but it is through language that we are constituted as subjects and hailed into position (Althusser, 1970). Derrida argues that the alienating capacity of language is more noticeable when one's political circumstances highlight the power of language to "colonise the mind" (Wa Thiong'o, 1995). He says of his experience of his mother-tongue as alienating that, "in spite of appearances, this exceptional situation is, at the same time, certainly exemplary of a universal structure; it represents or reflects a type of originary 'alienation' that institutes every language as the language of the other" (Derrida, 1998, p. 63).

In this "originary alienation" we might consider Language to be the original ideological form, as all subjectivity is produced, enabled, and restricted through Language. We could understand language-as-ideology that interpellates us as subjects. McNamara (2010) says that this points to the "necessarily conflicted nature of identity and its relationship to language" (p. 23). This is because what *feels* most intimately "myself" is an *effect* of this "originary alienation", and I cannot lay claim to the language which feels as if it is intimately "mine". Derrida notes that French for him was an "absolute habitat" because it constituted him, preceded him, and it was what he had to live in (1998, p. 1). Derrida asserts, "Yes, I only

have one language, yet it is not mine" (1998, p. 2). No language is ever "possessed" in a manner that offers a fixed and immutable relationship to the world.

Derrida speaks of this relationship as a "performative contradiction" (1998, p.3). It might appear that if one has only one language, and it is the language in which one's subjectivity is forged, it must be something that is "mine". If, as we have seen, performativity is the constant reiteration of a norm that materialises my symbolic relationship to the world (renders it intelligible), language is a performative *par excellence*. Nonetheless, Derrida argues that in this performative moment, a language cannot be fully yours, because language only takes form in relation to the Other.

This theorisation of the formation of subjectivity in relation to the Other through language has its roots in Hegel's Master and Slave dialectic (McNamara, 2010). McNamara (2010), commenting on Derrida's text, notes that "subjectivity is constructed through the terms in which one is *recognised* by the Other" (p. 29), but that "the Other which identifies or recognises the subject is itself the object of the subject's desire" (McNamara, 2010, p. 31). We saw earlier that this was also the basis of the Althusserian formulation of subjectivity and recognition. McNamara (2010) articulates the content of desire in relation to the Other and his/her language as containing "a range of complex, even contradictory feelings: on the one hand passionate attachment, even physical desire, and on the other shame, pain, anger and the desire to hurt" (p. 32). And thus, "one's innermost sense of linguistic and cultural identity is experienced as a contradiction" (2010, p. 34). This contradiction, which is a result of the paradox of subjection (Althusser, 1970) expressed through the originary alienation of language, points to the fact that the conflicted relationship between language and the subject is universal, and not just the predicament of speakers fluent in only the colonial language.

Derrida (1998) puts forward two propositions to explain this paradoxical relationship: "1. We only ever speak one language, 2. We never speak only one language" (1998, p. 7). He notes that these propositions are not only contradictory within each statement, but also between the statements. He frames the statements as "taking the form of a law", that forms an antinomy, in other words a form of paradox that, while seemingly contradictory, reveals something that is true, or at least possible. I would argue that this paradox, this antimony, is the same as the paradox of subjection we saw in Althusser's (1970) account of the interpellation of the

subject, and elaborated on by Butler (1997). The very power to which we are subjected is the productive space of agency. Language, and our relationship to languages, is a constitutive aspect of this paradoxical moment of becoming. These two statements articulate the distinction, and relationship, between Language with a Big 'L' and languages with a little 'l' (outlined above in section 3.3 of this chapter). We all only ever speak one Language, but this Language must be expressed through specific languages. The languages that we speak are soaked in biographic particularity; historical specificities and language ideologies that produce a certain subject position; and an individual with a certain set of experiences.

What does the relationship between the subject and a language that is "mine and not mine" produce? Derrida writes that we become "fascinated" by our own "division" (1998, p. 8). I like this phrase very much. To be fascinated with one's division against oneself, through language and social location, requires us to weave a narrative or reach for a logic that offers *prosthetic* coherence of our life experience. The emphasis on prosthetic here highlights our ambivalent relationship to the notion of authenticity, our relationship to others, and to our very selves. Is this language mine? Only in an artificial sense. As with a prosthetic limb, it comes to feel *like* mine, it becomes *necessary*, I cannot function without it, yet it is not mine. The meaning of, and relationship to, any language, is constituted through the "prosthesis of origin", a form of prosthetic interpellation, if you will. Indeed, it seems that all forms of interpellation, calling the subject into place, are prosthetic because they are based on "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser, 1970). The imaginary or *artificial* relationship to language comes to be experienced as natural, as a mother-tongue. The 'originary alienation' in language Derrida speaks of, is the ideological effect.

If this is the logic for language in general, what about a context where a language is politically forced onto a population or taken away? In a colonial situation, an "appropriated language" (Derrida, 1998, p. 23) gets mapped onto race and station, this has the effect of colonial control however Derrida would argue that this cannot reach *into* languages themselves. He speaks of the colonial appropriation of languages as "politico-phantasmatic construction[s]" (1998, p. 23). When language is used in an act of political domination, this is an ideological act, and this, in Althusser's terms (1970), constitutes an *imaginary* set of relationships. These relationships are "phantasmatic", or imaginary, to the extent that they are

based on the illusion of racial (or other) difference, and deny the plasticity and capacious nature of language. Language is not the possession of the coloniser and thus he/she must "pretend" that it is, through "cultural ursurpation" (Derrida, 1998, p. 23).

To this extent, Derrida argues that the "law" (1998, p. 8) of originary alienation is readily observable in the colonial situation, but is also a law for those "whose experience of his own mother tongue is sedentary, peaceful, and without historical drama" (Derrida, 2005, p. 101). Explaining what he calls the "prosthesis of origin" he says, "all culture is originarily colonial. Every culture institutes itself through the unilateral imposition of some 'politcs' of language. Mastery begins, we know, through the power of naming, of imposing and legitimating appellations" (1998, p. 39).

As if citing Butler's (1997) reading of Althusser (1970), Derrida draws our attention to the paradox of subjection, where "mastery" or agency begins in a "legitimating appellation" (Derrida, 1998, p. 39), but is not continuous with it. However, inasmuch as this first ideological appropriation of language is an illusory one held in place by violence or the threat thereof, similarly we cannot speak of a complete "reappropriation" (Derrida, 1998, p. 24) post-liberation. "There is never any such thing as absolute appropriation or reappropriation. Because there is no natural property of language" (Derrida, 1998, p. 24). Language is relational, performative, constitutive, not a possession. As demonstrated by Derrida's concept of citationality (1986), the essential iterability of language, means we can never fully pin it down. As we try to possess a language, it changes; it finds new life, in new mouths, in new bodies.

Each new embodiment of language and iteration of voice contains within it the history it appears to erase. And this is Derrida's point; there cannot be a revolutionary moment where things are 'put back in their places', returned to the original owner, because this would assume that there *is* some originary state, that is fixed, authentic, owned. Instead, since power is brokered *in relation to* the Other and is negotiated *between* subjects, the idea of a language being 'mine', is not possible. This relationality obviously includes damaging relations, not just fashionable notions of openness and fluidity.

Power as foundational to our subject-structuring, relies on the structure of language. In this sense, the political effects of colonialism are not unique, but rather a subset of laws inherent in the relationship between language, power, and the subject. The colonial form of power provides specific permutations and damaging psychic scarring, but it is not a form unique to itself (Derrida, 1998). However, Derrida continues that while there is an "originary alienation" that institutes every language as a language of the other, this "must not lead to a kind of neutralisation of differences, to the misrecognition of determinate expropriations against which war can be waged on quite different fronts" (p. 63).

In this Derrida may be seen to be advocating for a form of "strategic essentialism" (Spivak, 2012). He acknowledges that even though there is a universal abstracted structure to the relationship between Language and the subject, this does not mean the *materialized effects* of an ideology should not be taken to task. He says we should be alert to the "symbolics of appropriation" (Derrida, 1998, p. 64). In this way, we always need to examine historically how a phenomenon came to be known as belonging to one culture, group, nationality and, in the excavation of this history, be alert to the politics, and thus political deconstruction, that will be necessary, so as not to reproduce this fiction of linguistic "ownership".

3.6.2 The (post)-colony and language

Colonial domination was ensured through both material (physical) and symbolic means; what Derrida has called a "symbolics of appropriation" (1998, p. 64). As Wa Thiong'o recounts, "The bullet was the means of physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (1995, p. 265). Language was not an epiphenomenon of colonial rule; it was a constitutive property of subjectification (Butler, 1997a). Language was, and continues to be, a central pillar in the efficacy of psychosocial forms of domination. Colonial language was the only route to some form of recognition in colonial society, while indigenous languages were devalued and used in an ethnically-based divide and rule strategy (Painter & Dixon, 2013). In this sense, the relations of power in the colonial and post-colonial context are particularly pertinent to the constitution of identity in relation to language.

In Alexander's seminal paper "English Unassailable but Unattainable" (2000), he draws attention to the imbrication of the modern power flows of globalisation and the colonial history of Africa. He writes that the "ever-expanding" global hegemony of the English language" is an "inexorable corollary [of the] marginalization of local, national and regional

languages" (p.3). Thus, our colonial and "post" colonial history in forging the language politics and practices we see today is critical in any understanding of language and identity in contemporary South Africa.

Language is a fundamental site of struggle, because the colonial process begins in language (Wa Thiong'o, 1995). This happens through the displacement of local languages, while making the colonial language the standard means of communication between the colonial powers and its subjects. Indeed, in colonial and apartheid South Africa, there was no use of African languages in "high-status functions" (Alexander, 2000, p. 6). Language became an instrument of cultural and political control, particularly through education, because the colonial language was the language through which "reality" was constituted. Demonstrating Althusser's (1970) theory of ideology, racial hierarchies became known as what was real and true, precisely because this morally false ("imaginary") situation was mirrored in the reality of colonial subjects. This is what Wa Thiong'o (1995) has called the "mental control" of the colonisers who used "a people's culture" to "control their tools of self-definition" (p. 16).

Fanon's (1967) first chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*, "The Negro and Language", is dedicated to the problem of language in the colonial context. The chapter highlights the psychosocial nexus of language and subject position in the colonial encounter. To have to speak the language of the coloniser is "to exist absolutely for the other" and "to assume a culture" (p. 17). Having to express oneself in a language that is not one's own, and that represents the system of domination, is to create an intimate psychic schism. Fanon (1967) describes this condition thus:

> Every colonized people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality - finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation. (p.18)

Likewise, Wa Thiong'o (1995) notes this alienating process from one's own language. This alienation is a double alienation, much like Du Bois's (2007) "double consciousness" (p. 8). Not only do subjects lose their local language, but they are also forced to express (or stronger, constitute) their identities in a foreign language.

The terms of recognition for being considered fully human are granted only to those who are able to adequately express themselves in the colonial language. Even then, it is not a full

recognition, because it is never *as a black subject* that one is offered respect, but rather in spite of one's blackness (Fanon, 1967). It is closeness to whiteness that offers up a truncated and distorted form of recognition. In Fanon's (1967) words, "the Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter – that is, he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language" (1967, p. 18). In a racialised system of dominance, whiteness equates with being human. This form of alienation and domination has deep and lasting psychological effects for entrenching subordinate *and* dominant subject positions (Hook, 2004). The language of whiteness is then seen as a means of achieving a form of recognition. This is not a desire to be white, rather a desire to be seen as human.

Given that the language of the coloniser is taken to be the path to humanity, the local language is left to languish in its apparent backwardness. Fanon (1967) explains that, "it is understandable that the first action of the black man is a *reaction*, and, since the Negro is appraised in terms of the extent of his assimilation, it is also understandable why the newcomer [back home from being educated in France, or in our case the School or the University] expresses himself only in French" (p. 36). Assimilation in this arrangement is the impossible requirement of some form of recognition, but this leads to a "self-division" (p. 17). The permanent ambivalence of having to reject oneself in order to be recognised as an/Other self means that the colonial mode of being prevents the colonial subject from engaging with new worlds, without seemingly being assimilated by them (Fanon, 1967).

Access to, and competence in, the colonial language has also set up internal, largely classed, divisions within black communities. Those competent in the colonial language were offered more opportunities than those who were not, and this particular issue has had a complex effect in the (so-called) post-colonial era. (See, for example, Chigumadzi, 2015.) In Fanon's framework, humanity is denied, and one's identity is characterised as a *replacement* of some "authentic" self, and not an addition, synthesis, or tactic of hybridity (Bhabha, 1996). As already discussed, the notion of authenticity requires the subject to be fixed into a particular mode of identity. Yet, the "authentic" subject is a necessary (and nostalgic) category, because the colonial form of misrecognition has destroyed any possibility of being "at home" in the world or with oneself. Home becomes a foreign place (that paradoxically indexes authenticity) and the world in which one must live offers no possibility of a dynamic sense of belonging.

The impossible state of being described above has left a legacy in our current language politics and practices. Ashcroft (2001) notes: "language has always 'inscribed' rather than 'described' human difference through chromatic signifiers. Those signifiers have had an indispensable function in colonial relations and have been notoriously difficult to dislodge" (pp. 314-5). This inscription of difference has meant that lived experience as a raced subject has taken on an almost ontological quality. The reification of race, often through language, has led to fundamentally different experiences of being-in-the-world (Manganyi, 1973).

The divide and rule approach to indigenous languages under colonial rule has had a devastating impact on their current status. At the time African countries started gaining their independence an argument was made by many new governments that using the colonial language as the language of national unity would work against ethnic divisions that might threaten stability if one indigenous language was chosen over another (Alexander, 2000). This meant that the educated elite (both black and white) retained and reproduced their class status through their monopoly on access to the colonial language of power (Alexander, 2000). This also reproduced the binary of the colonial language being the language of intellectual life, while African languages were relegated to the domestic realm.

What is the appropriate response to the dominance of the colonial language? Work on decolonising language politics appears to be divided along two lines: either a rejection of the colonial language, or a belief that it can be subverted through new forms of use (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1994). These differing approaches represent the poles in a continuum of opinion on language. Wa Thiong'o's (1995) and Achebe's (Ashcroft et al., 1994) arguments are emblematic of the poles in this debate, and so it is through their work that these two positions will be briefly outlined.

Firstly: rejection. Wa Thiong'o (1995) argues that the use of colonial languages colonises people's minds. Accordingly, resistance is most effective through conscientisation in the mother tongue. People need to be educated about the history of the denigration of indigenous languages and they will change their attitudes. His argument is akin to an understanding of false consciousness: if only the truth of how material reality functions were revealed to those oppressed, they would change their ways, value their languages, and use them in place of the

colonial language (Ashcroft et al, 1994; Alexander, 2011; and Freire, 1993 also take this view). The trouble with this argument is that it assumes that some kind of "essential" identity can be regained and that the subject is continuously rational across his/her beliefs, knowledge, and actions. Post-modern/post-structural approaches have shown this this assumption to be inaccurate, or at least an incomplete description of human experience. We are contradictory, feeling, and intersectional beings (Yuval-Davis, 2006b).

Secondly: the argument that the colonial language can be subverted is characteristic of Achebe's response. This approach takes seriously the inherent plasticity of any language. Accordingly, hypothetically, English (or any other colonial language) could be used to resist imperialism. Language is capacious enough to communicate different lived experiences. Its syntax and grammar can be localised to create an African English (Achebe, 1975). Achebe (1975) argues that English can be made to bear the weight and texture of a different experience, because it will be "a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings" (p. 62). English should be able to communicate non-English experience, because meaning is created within the use of language itself. No language is inherently good or bad, but it can be *used* to oppress or liberate (Derrida, 1998). This approach fundamentally departs from the idea of any language as "authentic" or "pure", and rather treats "living languages…like living things" (Okara, 1963, p. 15 in Achebe, 1975). Nevertheless, Achebe (1975) is also aware of the complex identity politics of the "post"/-colonial space. He asks,

> Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it (p. 62).

But—according to Wa Thiong'o's (1995) line of thinking—if languages are inherently malleable, and we can agree on the unjust politics that led to the imposition of English, why do we insist on developing *English* to have the capacity to communicate our experience. Why not grow indigenous languages to bear the weight of intellectualisation, for example. By choosing not to use indigenous languages, the politics of this choice implies that they *cannot* be used, undermining the very argument for an understanding of language as inherently plastic. This is now the standard colloquial response to the question of why we cannot use African languages in high-level functions (Alexander, 2004).

Wa Thiong'o's critique of the use of English is that it positions English as incontestable. He asks, "How did we arrive at this acceptance of the fatalistic logic of the unassailable position of English?" (Wa Thiong'o, 1995, p. 264). The oft-cited position that English is a global language comes to mind in response, as though English has permeated every sphere of life. If English is so pervasive as to be thought of as a possible unifier across positions of difference, then why do so many people still not have access to it? It is *this* structural inequality of the symbolic economy that Alexander laments when he uses Wa Thiong'o's words in the title of his essay: "English *Unassailable* but Unattaintable" (1999, my emphasis).

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that what is called "identity" is in fact the articulation of our sense of belonging to social categories through language. Through the work of Brubaker and Cooper (2000), Hall (2000) and others we can see that identity is best understood as a *process* of identification. Through the work of Yuval-Davis (2006b) we see that categories locate us socially, but are maintained through our affective sense of belonging or intimate attachment to them. It is the result of history that certain identity categories have been more or less valued and it is the intersection of identity categories with the distribution of power that has led to the need to articulate belonging as either authentic or inauthentic (Appiah, 1994).

I have also noted in this chapter that Language works in two ways in terms of the process of identification. Firstly, our capacity for speech makes us human. We use abstract Language to articulate our sense of belonging and make meaning of our social location. Yet, secondly, languages in the particular, are carriers of history, meaning, and power, which contribute to our social positioning in the symbolic economy. Not all speakers of every language are valued in the same way, but we all have to articulate our sense of belonging through Language. It is between the abstract structure of language and the politics of particular languages that the affective dimension of belonging lies.

We see this tension illustrated in Derrida's (1998) account of being a monolingual French speaker in colonial Algeria. He argued that all language takes the form of an originary alienation, which could be understood as a form of prosthetic interpellation into categories of difference. Fanon (1967), Wa Thiong'o (1995), and Achebe (1975) all demonstrate the political (and ethical) difficulty that ensues from understanding language as universally

plastic, when particular languages are entangled in efforts at liberation or oppression. This is the space in which individuals engage in struggles over authenticity and belonging in relation to particular subject positions in the symbolic economy.

CHAPTER 4: Review of the Literature

Shall I admit now that sometimes my son's voice used to unsettle me?

"Does He Speak Xhosa?", Ratele, 2013

4.1 Introduction

The founding tenet of a post-structural orientation to language and identity is that language is constitutive of subjectivity and difference (Painter & Dixon, 2013). Given the power of language, it is of utmost importance that we understand how the cultural alienation and false superiority experienced under colonial and apartheid rule has left a lasting psychological impact on all who live in this context. Racialised thinking has proved tenacious, and its pernicious effects should not be underestimated (Hook, 2004; Painter & Dixon, 2013). In contemporary South Africa we can see that issues of language and dominance are not just between two individual speakers, but rather reference an entire history that has resulted in our skewed present (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2002).

In this chapter, I review literature that demonstrates how language was, and continues to be, a visceral site of identity construction, where people position themselves and others in relation to their particular beliefs, needs and politics of language. Often the common-sense response to colonialism and apartheid involves a rhetoric that implies that African languages should simply be brought into the mainstream as if this would lead to an appreciation in their value. This response is too simplistic and disregards the complex politics that now surrounds these languages. African languages were tainted by the politics of colonial rule (Painter & Dixon, 2013) and bear the scars of being both devalued, and being the weapon of ethnic division within the colonial scheme. African languages were both the battleground and the weaponry. As such, Makoni and Pennycook (2005) argue that indigenous languages need to be 'disinvented' of their colonial logics instead of uncritically embraced.

The broad sketch of the colonial relationship toward language recounted in the previous chapter (chapter 3) is of course also the South African story. The "post" in "post-colonial" or "post-apartheid" is merely a signifier of chronology. We are *post*-apartheid not because we have resolved historical injustices, but because we have dragged all the baggage with us into a new time and it mutates, creates new forms. Today the effects of Bantu education in

maligning African languages through a debased project of ethnicisation by the apartheid government are still felt (De Klerk, 2000). The 1976 Soweto Uprising of students protesting against Afrikaans as the medium of instruction, coupled with denigrated African languages, paradoxically meant that English came to be used as the language of the liberation movement, as alluded to earlier (Alexander, 2004; Kamwangamalu, 2003).

The choice of English as the language of the liberation movement was, however, only one part of a complex quotidian language politics. For instance, academic research in the early seventies focussed on an apparent dichotomous relationship between English and Blackness set up in terms of betrayal. Wilson and Mafeje (1963) documented the pejorative labelling of black, well-educated township residents as "Ooscuse Me*"*. This was because success in English was seen as often corresponding with the devaluation of African languages. How this plays out in contemporary research on language and identity is detailed below.

The dominance of English across the globe today is without question (Mazrui, 1997). Of course, the politics of English is experienced differently in different places (see Nyika & Van Zyl, 2013). (The growing influence of Mandarin and the Chinese influence should not go unacknowledged either; though this is beyond the scope of my current project.) Mazrui (1997) has noted that the World Bank's influence on education has meant that the "global north" still largely exercises "intellectual control" so that capitalism, in part, has been promoted through teaching English (Mazrui, 1997, p. 46). The power of capital to determine which languages matter in an economic sense has meant that African countries have struggled with "intellectual self-determination", such as promoting local languages (Alexander, 2000, p. 13). This fact is borne out in the literature reviewed below. English, tied to quality education, as the language of economic opportunity is a pervasive theme that manifests in many ways, from issues of access, to identity construction, cultural belonging, and to new forms of inclusion and exclusion in social spaces.

Having laid out in the previous two chapters the theoretical resources I make use of in this thesis, this chapter provides flesh to the theoretical bones. I start (in section 4.2) by reviewing the terrain in which research on language and identity in contemporary South Africa has taken place, and asking how this research has been conceptualised. I then move to examine how shifting theoretical frameworks on identity, and youth identity in particular, have

produced a discursively-orientated form of scholarship on language and youth identity (section 4.3). In this regard, I examine how critical sociolinguists use the concept of "superdiversity" (Vertovec, 2007) to critique identity work based on notions of "authenticity". I argue that a revised notion of a linguistic repertoire (Busch, 2012, 2015), which is situated within the superdiversity framework, is much more productive for making sense of people's experiences of language in post-apartheid South Africa than a seeing linguistic repertoires as indexing a fixed identity category.

Having laid out these frameworks, I turn to empirical research that addresses the thematic ambivalences that emerge in relation to language and identity in the "post"-colonial, "post"-apartheid space. I review work on race, blackness and whiteness and show how notions of authenticity are both mobilised and problematised in these accounts (section 4.4). I also look at literature that engages with notions of heritage, culture, and loss, and how this can be understood within a context of superdiversity that challenges notions of authenticity (section 4.5). Finally, in I include literature that highlights the economies of English and African languages, and the relationship between them (section 4.6). Here I am concerned with literature that details how English represents a space of openness and change, but also reproduces the power of whiteness through the devaluation of African languages. I conclude (section 4.6.1) by noting the literature that highlights the role of accent in relation to English, and how these accounts reveal the complex manoeuvring of power between subjects, within and across different contexts, positioning English as a variable symbolic asset.

4.2. Research on language and identity in contemporary South Africa

Given the centrality of the role of language in the history of colonialism, and the lasting psychosocial impact of this on the South African subject today, what does this mean for *how* issues of language and identity are conceptualised and researched?

Social psychology has by-and-large adopted an uncritical approach to the study of language attitudes, with research on the social dimensions of language that has focused largely on language attitudes (Barker & Giles, 2004; Dixon & Mahoney, 2004; Painter, 2009). There has also been research on issues of accent and how these are perceived by various groups, drawing attention to how accent is (often negatively) connected to issues of race, class, and ethnicity (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Painter, 2009). The potentially problematic outcome of

this type of research is that it conflates linguistic repertoire with group/social identity, as "an ethnic group whose language is held as a primary defining characteristic" (Finchilescu & Nyawose, 1998, p. 53). In this type of research, the social marking of accent is supposedly indexing some or other "identity" (Painter, 2009), presupposing the idea of authenticity in relation to an identity category.

According to Painter and Dixon (2013), the research that has been done in the South African context has shown that attitudes toward African languages are largely negative. This negativity has two underlying reasons. One, it is a pragmatic choice to adopt the colonial language because it offers improved life chances owing to the dominance of the colonial language. Two, African languages have been devalued in the colonial and post-colonial context (De Klerk, 2000). It must be noted that attitudes towards African languages and the relationship between African languages and identity are not *only* negative. Though, there is emerging work that shows that young South Africans do cherish their mother-tongues, even if these emotions do not necessarily translate into a political commitment towards their use in high status functions. (For example see Bristowe et al., 2014; Makoe & McKinney, 2014; Rudwick, 2008b.)

Attitudes toward English in the South African context are on the whole much more positive and also varied (Painter & Dixon, 2013). English is seen as the language of upward mobility and prestige. However, what research on language attitudes neglects is the "ideological values of different English varieties and speech styles" (Painter & Dixon, 2013, p. 115). This is where the work of discursively orientated sociolinguistics is useful in helping us understand the significance of language in the constitution of racial, ethnic, class, and other forms of identity by attending to issues of power and inequality (Painter & Dixon, 2013).

The study of language and identity in South African is starting to shift toward post-structural, discursive orientations. Wiebesiek, Rudwick and Zeller (2011) note that future research is needed that focuses on the "positioning of different varieties of English in a context of increasing deracialisation in many facets of life in South Africa" (p. 267). Painter and Dixon (2013) add that while there are aspects of deracialisation, "the positioning of English and other languages in relation to continuing practices of *racialization*" (p. 115, my emphasis) is also worthy of attention. My research lies somewhere in between studies of deracialisation

and re-racialisation. My interest is in the subject positioning of students in the South African symbolic economy across spaces, and how this is discursively achieved. The drawing together of these psychological and ideological concerns in relation to language means that I move away from the documented weakness of an uncritical social psychological approach to language and identity. As Blackledge and Pavlenko (2004) note, "social psychology tends to oversimplify real-life sociolinguistic contexts [because it has] ignored power relations and complex sociopolitical, socioeconomic and sociocultural factors" (p. 117). My research pays close attention to issues of power and ideology in relation to one's subject positioning.

Social psychological studies that frame attitudes towards a language as sitting in the head of an abstracted individual exclude discursive and ideological factors and thus severely limit their explanatory power. This type of research has been critiqued for "reifying what are in fact variable, situational and dialogical processes of evaluation into abstract, static and above all individualistically conceived psychological structures" (Painter & Dixon, 2013, p. 117). To be sure, these individual evaluations are a *dimension* of discursive practice, but have been treated as if they were an underlying *cause* (see Durrheim & Dixon, 2006). Research that attends to discursive language practices inherent in the processes of identity construction offer a more nuanced account than the standard social psychological model.

4.3 Lenses for researching identity and language

4.3.1 Youth identities research

Choosing to focus on the narratives of university students in relation to language is more than a matter of sampling. University students, although from a range of ages and backgrounds, fall broadly within the category of 'youth'. Focussing on youth offers "a dynamic vantage point from which to view a variety of larger cultural processes. It is both a subject of inquiry and a perspective to occupy" (Luvaas, 2012, no page numbers). As Comaroff and Comaroff (2005) have argued, "youth embody the sharpening contradictions of the contemporary world in especially acute form" (p. 21) because they are often at the coalface of societal change. At this particular historical moment these dynamics are acutely visible in the paradoxes and challenges of the South African Higher education institutions, especially in relation to the role of language in reproducing a bifurcated education system, and indeed society.

University students are inheriting old knowledges and ways of being through the curriculum, institutional structures, and in their families, but are also interacting creatively with these received forms of culture. They are trying to make sense of their experiences in relation to the past and the future. As such, studying youth perspectives offers an analytic lens for engaging with subjectivities that are both shaped by, and shape, broader socio-political, economic and cultural shifts (Durham, 2000; Furlong, Woodman & Wyn, 2011).

Youth identity construction, indeed any form of identity construction, should be seen as a process. Soudien (2001) has argued that the identities of young people, because they are inheritors of a disparate range of discourses, are continuously positioning themselves in relation to different spaces and people, at different times. He defines youth identity as necessarily "incoherent and discontinuous" (Soudien, 2001, p. 314). This discontinuity opens up possibilities for social change, but also provokes anxieties about who one is and where one belongs (Yuval-Davis, 2006b), as outlined in the previous chapter.

A general overview of empirical studies on South African youth identity since 1994 reveals a wide range of topics and analytic approaches. These topics are not mutually exclusive and often intersect, they include: children's identities in democratic South Africa (Akande, 1999; Barbarin & Richter, 2000); adolescent identities (Alberts, Mbalo, & Ackerman, 2003; Coetzee, 2004; Stevens & Lockhart, 1997); youth social identities (Ackerman & Botha, 1998; Campbell, 1994; Campbell, 1995a; Swartz, Harding & De Lannoy, 2012); youth identity and race (Bagnol, Matebeni, Simon, Blaser, Manuel & Moutinho, 2010; Braungart & Braungart, 1995; Dolby, 2001a, 2001b, 2002; Erasmus, 2001; Franchi, & Swart, 2003; Moosa, Moonsamy & Fridjon, 1997; Pattman, 2011; Smith & Stones, 1999; Stevens & Lockhart, 1997); youth identity and gender (Campbell, 1995b); youth identity and culture (Eaton & Louw, 2000); youth identity, popular culture and media (Künzler, 2011; Mooney, 2005; Siyahhan, Barab & James, 2011); youth identity and politics (Marks, 2001; Dlamini, 2005); youth identity and education (Swart, 2001; Soudien, 1996, 1998, 2004; Toni & Olivier, 2004; Vandeyar, 2008; Vandeyar, 2010; Fataar, 2011), youth identity, higher education and transformation (Cross, 2004; Walker, 2005a; Walker 2005b); youth identity and the future (Miller, 1996; Bradbury & Miller, 2010), and youth identity and language (Kajee, 2011; Sennet & Foster, 1996).

More specifically, work in the South African context that has been done examining *discursive language practices and identity construction* is steadily increasing and will be examined in this chapter. As the theoretical orientation for this thesis is post-structural, in the main, I have identified research that operates according to similar epistemological assumptions. By and large the site for this kind of work is educational settings, particularly the school (see Makubalo, 2007; McKinney, 2007; Makoe, 2007; Nongogo, 2007; Painter & Baldwin, 2004) and a focus on youth identity (Bock & Hunt, 2014; Dolby, 2000; Hunter, 2010; Hunter & Hachimi, 2012; Rudwick, 2008a, 2008b). I am particularly concerned with literature that engages with language and identity through a poststructuralist lens and troubles the notion of authenticity and sees language as a constitutive practice of self (Busch, 2012, 2015; Canagarajah, 1999; Makubalo, 2007; Pennycook, 2004). Accordingly, I have drawn on literature that understands identity, or, rather, identification as fluid, shifting and contingent (Hall, 1992, 2000; Weedon, 1997).

I have engaged with the literature through two conceptual *lenses* that helped to shape my understanding of the nuances of my project, namely: 'superdiversity and enoughness'; and 'linguistic repertoires'. I will outline each of these concepts before moving onto to a closer examination of some of the empirical studies that have been done on discursive language practices and identity construction in South Africa.

4.3.2 The context of superdiversity: being 'enough' or 'too much'

Vertovec (2007) uses the word "superdiversity" to describe our contemporary context of high mobility, fluidity, and multiple intersections of identity. Superdiversity is used for the sake of brevity. Superdiversity refers to a "multiplication of significant variables that affect where, how and with whom people live" (p. 1025). These variables are "mutually conditioning", and it is the "interplay" of these variables that is indexed by the term "superdiversity" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1025). It is not just that these axes of difference intersect, but that, like a chemical reaction, they change the nature of difference itself. Meissner and Vertovec (2015) remark that the term has erroneously come to be used simply to refer to "more" ethnicities or categories of difference. When in fact what is crucial to the context of superdiversity is not just that there are more, or new forms of identity, but that the way they intersect (Crenshaw, 1993, Yuval-Davis, 2006) requires new forms of analysis. The term superdiversity may seem similar to the concept of intersectionality, however I choose to use superdiversity here as it

refers more to the *context* in which subjects find themselves, as opposed to the intersecting axes of difference that comprise an actual subject position.

These new forms of complexity point to new and complex patterns of inequality, prejudice, and segregation (Vertovec, 2007). As there are "new experiences of space and 'contact'", "new forms of cosmopolitanism and creolisation" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1045), there are also new competitions for power, money and prestige. These types of conglomerates of power might look quite different to what they did in the past. However, this does not mean we cannot trace the genealogies and histories of power, inequality and so forth. It just means that we need to be alert to how, within categories of difference, it is not enough merely to claim that there are different expressions of identity, but also to trace how these are connected to issues of access, power, resources and inequality.

The local and global are constitutive of each other through novel flows of people, capital, ideas, cultures, and languages. I argue that much of the research conducted within a post-structural framework on language and identity in South Africa implicitly references aspects related to the context of superdiversity. This research however, would be much more productively analysed if the concept of superdiversity was brought more explicitly to bear on our context. This is because although the epistemological orientation of this research is supposedly toward openness and fluidity, fluidity or openness is still treated as a variance *within categories*.

Superdiversity points to the need to use categories as terms under erasure (Hall, 1996), as outlined in the previous chapter, by attending to modes of self-styling, where people "orient towards entirely different logics in different segments of life" (Blommaert & Varis, 2015, p. 4). This means that no one category of identification holds across contexts in the same way. People's experiences can be explained in a more nuanced manner than is possible with the broad strokes of oppressor/oppressed, local/global, mother-tongue/colonial language binaries. We see that positioning takes place continuously, and is always contingent on a range of factors. For example, how I feel about English in one context may be entirely different to how I feel about it in another. It is for this reason that Blommaert (2012) emphasises the need to analytically engage with *complexity* rather than with *plurality or multiplicity.* This is

because the idea of the plural can imply a completeness *within* a category, as opposed to complexity within a category.

An example that illustrates the context of superdiversity can be found in Stroud (2001)'s research on language in Mozambique. Stroud (2001) distinguishes between language citizenship and language human rights when thinking through challenge of a monolingual ideology. The latter, he argues, is a product of a neoliberal agenda, while language citizenship aims to engage with social categories of language and identity much more critically. He argues that there should not be a false dichotomous relationship between learning a "global" or "metropolitan" language (the colonial language in our case), and sacrificing one's home or indigenous language. Both should be able to co-exist. He thus makes a move against the zero sum game between indigeneity and assimilation of the colonial language and culture. Situating this research in the context of superdiversity, we are able to trace the complexity of attachment to both the indigenous and the metropolitan language within one subject. By troubling our understanding of the competition between the colonial and metropolitan language and the home-language and culture, and how both may exist within one subject, we enter directly into the debates on identity and authenticity presented in chapter 3.

In the context of superdiversity, where nuanced responses to differing contexts are articulated, one can appreciate how reading other identities becomes a project of assessing individuals in terms of "'degrees' of authenticity" (Blommaert & Varis, 2015, p. 6). Blommaert and Varis (2015) use the idea of "enoughness" to articulate this measuring up to imaginary categories of belonging. If one has enough of the "emblematic features" of a particular group, then one might be characterised as an "authentic member of an identity category" (Blommaert & Varis, 2015, p. 6). Of course, what these emblematic features may be is a slippery business, constructed out of ideological bits and pieces about what identity category "X" should look like. Bourdieu's work in *Distinction* (1984) illustrates this point about "enoughness". One has to display belonging to a group with an effortlessness that characterises one as being "'enough" of X. As soon as some kind of effort is identified in the performance of being a member of that category, one's authenticity is called into question. Blommaert and Varis (2015) call this a "fluency" (p. 7) that must be part of one's habitus.

Developing this fluency is to be *au fait* with the rules of the game. However, the rules of game, the boundaries and judgments of "enoughness" themselves, are constantly shifting.

In the context of superdiversity, it is not the broad differences between people that are used to qualify a person as authentic or inauthentic. Rather, because of the diffuse modes of constructing the self, it is the minutiae of our choices that become important in positioning us in particular ways. Accent (as a social marker) is read off the body with attention to fine-grained differences in modes of speech that weigh-in on judgments of authenticity. Blommaert and Varis (2015b) accurately note that, "details are metonymically inflated so as to stand for something far bigger and more profound" (p. 23). This means that small details of the habitus are used to refer to fairly broad categories of difference, to locate people socially, and potentially indenture them in ideological categories. For instance, Yagman and Keswell, (2015) found that in the South African context "accentedness is a statistically significant predictor of trust" (p. 4) with varying implications for those of difference race, class and gender backgrounds.

4.3.3 Linguistic repertoires

If it is the small, shifting details of our lives that are used as markers of belonging to certain groups, then merely speaking a particular language is not enough to assess both one's own and another's location in a particular subject position. This is because of apparently contradictory lines of identification, such as being black and English-speaking, or white and Zulu-speaking. Greater nuance is required to assess one's subject position in the symbolic economy. How does one speak the language, with what degree of fluency, to whom, in what dialect, with what knowledge of slang, in the appropriate register, and in what location? All of these questions about the minutiae of our talk metonymically (Blommaert & Varis, 2015b) refer to the notion of "linguistic repertoire" (Busch, 2015, 2012).

The notion of a linguistic repertoire emphasises "multilingual biographic trajectories" which "valorise all linguistic resources on which speakers can draw, regardless of whether these are second or third languages, standard, dialectical or other varieties" (Busch, 2013, p. 215). Originally used by Gumperz (1964), the linguistic repertoire refers to, "all the accepted ways of formulating messages… the social etiquette of language choice is learned along with grammatical rules and once internalized it becomes part of our linguistic equipment" (p. 138). Busch (2015) points out that what was unique about Gumperz's contribution is that it moved

away from an understanding of language as an index of belonging to a particular group, rather subjects can use their repertoire "as a means of positioning which speakers use in situated interactions" (Busch, 2015, p. 5).

The notion of linguistic repertoire in Gumperz's (1964) original formulation has come under recent critique because of the assumption that speakers we part of stable speech communities (Blackledge & Creese 2010, Bristowe et al., 2014; Busch, 2015). The argument has been made that the notion of the linguistic repertoire needs to be recast or extended to fit within a poststructuralist epistemological orientation. This would include paying attention to the biographic, ideological and discursive elements of one's linguistic repertoire (Blommaert, 2008; Busch, 2012, 2015). The linguistic repertoire does not reference something fixed but allows and understanding of a subject's shifting positions throughout life. Moreover a "recalibrated" (Bristowe et al., 2014) notion of linguistic repertoire attends to emotional, experiential and contextual aspects of language in relation to the biography of the subject.

In educational contexts we see evidence of superdiverse linguistic repertoires, that are not representative of plural monolingualism, but rather, syncretic language practices involving language-mixing (Paxton & Tyam, 2010). Paxton and Tyam (2010) make the point that hybridized language practices open up a "third space" (Bhabha, 1990) for identification and subject positioning of multilingual subjects. They argue that it is "through language that individuals enact multiple subject positions; they activate different parts of their linguistic repertoire selectively in order to foreground particular aspects of their social identities and to downplay others in their social settings" (Paxton & Tyam, 2010, p. 248-9). They draw on Bhabha's idea of the third space, which is productive for moving our understanding of language and identity beyond the home/campus distinction. Paxton and Tyam (2010) show that the students' hybrid of English and Xhosa, is a way in "which they can define and express themselves on their own terms rather than being positioned by discourses such as the dominant one, English, or the home discourse and its culture" (p. 251). However it must be noted that this self-articulation cannot to be seen as separate from the social location that necessitates this form of speech.

Similarly, Makoe and McKinney (2014) speak of learners' linguistic repertoires as including "translanguaging" and "polylanguaging" (Makoe and McKinney, 2014, p. 4).

Translanguaging is "the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages" (Garcia, 2009, p. 141). While, *polylanguaging* is "the use of resources associated with different 'languages' even when the speaker knows very little of these" (Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen & Møller, 2011, p. 27). Polylanguaging is particularly interesting in the South African context, where individuals may in fact only be marginally literate in what they refer to as their mothertongue and equally, their competence in English may be questionable even though it is their only academic or literate language.

These complex linguistic repertoires should not be seen as random, chaotic assemblages (Blommaert & Varis, 2015, p. 5). Rather, the "micro-hegemonies" of different contexts require different responses on the part of the subject that may not be continuous or coherent across contexts. As Blommaert and Varis point out, "one can be perfectly oneself while articulating sharply different orientations in different domains of life or on different issues" (Blommaert & Varis, 2015, p. 5).

In this section I have illustrated that the drawing together of an understanding of youth identity in South Africa that includes considerations of "enoughness", coupled with an appreciation of complex linguistic repertoires within the context of superdiversity, is a valuable framework for engaging with the literature on language and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. The body of South African research on language and identity from a critical and/or post-structural perspective that has emerged over the past few years has largely been located in educational settings, particularly the school. In this research language and identity are seen as intersecting with conceptions of race, class, ethnicity and space/location. Below I examine some of this literature as it pertains to race, culture and loss, and the shifting economies of, and between, English and African languages.

4.4 Blackness and whiteness and the space in between

Colonial conquest set up racialised class structures as the intractable reality of South African social life. This has meant that when considering issues of language in South Africa, one cannot escape the realities of race and class (McKinney & Soudien, 2007). I examine literature that engages with these thematic concerns in the South African context, but that

points to the epistemological shift from an historically stable identity politics, to a much more complex present.

Observations on race in South Africa today point to an "intimate separateness" (Peterson, 2014) between groups of people. We live cheek-by-jowl and yet maintain a separateness that Ndebele (Ndebele, N.S., 2013) describes as a "fatal intimacy" (p. xi). Steyn (2012) speaks of white South Africans adopting a form of wilful ignorance. This ignorance is not the ignorance of a stranger or a new-comer; rather, it is akin to a family feud, a deliberate snub. We see each other, but we do not know each other. Ndlovu and Bradbury (2011) point to the contingency of notions of race and nationality in South Africa that function as "ties that bind and lines that divide" (p. 3), the lines of division in society are at times the very thing that creates some kind of whole to refer back to or articulate oneself in relation to.

It is not only the relations between groups that highlight the continued racial tensions in South Africa. With regard to issues of authenticity and identity, the racial 'legibility' of the individuals that comprise these groups is also highlighted as a space of "unease" (Ratele, 2013, p. 125). Ratele (2013) writing about an encounter where a shop assistant asks whether his son can speak Xhosa notes that,

> In my country, a child whom society thinks of as black, but who does not have an African language as his or her mother-tongue, gets entangled in the struggles of society to reimagine itself. These subjects might create new divisions, true. But the tongues these children grow up speaking, because they look different from how they are 'supposed to' speak, and because they speak differently from how those who look like them speak, also alert us to historical breaks and continuities, to possibilities and inherited constraints which shape how we speak. They alert us to the forces which made us into the kinds of people we became. (p. 125)

What we see above speaks to South Africa's history of the mutually constituted ideological categories of language and race (Makoni, 1999; McKinney, 2007). The increasing illegibility of racial forms points to the ideological underpinnings of what is considered an 'authentic' identity. The qualities of the material voice (Painter, 2008) viscerally interrupt who and what we thought we were as racialised subjects. Nevertheless one cannot dispute the fact that language has, and does, still largely operate as a proxy for expressing concerns related to race, ethnicity, and culture (Blackledge, 2006b).

Makubalo (2007) notes in his study on the identity construction of high school students in relation to English, that even when essentialist notions of identity are claimed, this is not

without contradiction in practice. One of his participants, Thabo, saw being "African" as "associating only with 'black people' who do not speak English 'all the time'" (p. 30). However, despite his claims to what he considers an authentic blackness (he described himself as struggling with English), he displayed an adept competence in English. Makubalo (2007) points out that while "proficiency in English seems to be a marker of assimilation, Thabo's positioning of himself as a learner who struggles with English is a way of distancing himself from those who have assimilated in the mainstream" (p. 31). The worry for Thabo, and students like him, illustrates Blommaert and Varis's (2015), concept of "enoughness", where one may be accused of being "too much" or "too little" of something to be authentically part of an espoused identity category. Kapp (2000) also found that "appearing too 'invested' in English may earn a learner derision for aspiring to 'white' norms" (p. 253). Thus, it is through the nano-politics (Blommaert & Varis, 2015) of identification that claims to authenticity are made.

McKinney (2007) also engages with questions of race, language and authenticity in her research with high school learners. She opens up the different ways in which we can understand language style and choice as resources in identity construction and positioning. For instance, she sees the sanctioning of black identity through phrases such as "coconut" as being modes of empowerment for those who do not have access to the English and other forms of cultural capital. She notes that, "for these young people who are usually viewed as disadvantaged and relatively powerless, it is empowering to be able to label and exclude those usually considered as the privileged and elite" (p. 11). However, on the other hand, there are also those learners who contest the "apartheid linguistic ideology that attempted to separate and divide people according to ethnicity matched up with language" (p. 20). Here, students who predominantly use English, and are often accused of being "coconuts", question what this has to do with authentic blackness. In the words of Maria, one of McKinney's participants, "If I speak English, does it make me less black anyway?" (McKinney, 2007, p. 20).

Ndlovu (2012), writing about blackness and authenticity, makes a similar point and says we should pay attention to when and how singularity is conferred or asserted in terms of "authentic" or essentialised identity categories. Indeed, in contemporary South Africa many so-called "coconuts", considered "black on the outside, white on the inside" are critiquing the

idea of homogenised blackness through problematising this label as necessarily pejorative. Chigumadzi writes that, "I choose to appropriate that term 'Coconut' and self-identify as one because I believe it offers an opportunity for *refusal* and this very refusal allows for an anti-racist politics to emerge" (2015, p. 2). She argues that it is her fluency in "white grammar" (Chigumadzi, 2015, p. 2) by virtue of attending former Model C schools or private schools, that makes this subject position a "Trojan horse" (p. 7). "Instead of becoming the trusted go-betweens between black and white" (p. 1), an expectation often projected onto the black middle class, this category of persons is now offering a radical critique of the still highly racialised nature of South African society. She argues that, "it's no longer shocking when a comrade says 'nationalise the mines', but of course, it is surprising when a Coconut who is 'not like other blacks' says, 'give back the land'" (p. 7).

This refusal of the subject position as an "agent of whiteness" (Chigumadzi, 2015, p. 2) in pursuit of broad black solidarity, while critiquing the expectation of black homogeneity, has also spurred on much South African debate. McKaiser (2015b) (a popular South African commentator who uses his Facebook page to introduce, moderate, and engage in debate on contemporary issues) wrote a reflective column on responses to black anger from the position of a Coconut. He writes that, "for some coconuts, the anxious desire to be affirmed as fully acquainted with black struggles runs so deep that they think the quickest way to prove cross-class solidarity is to express hatred towards white people" (2015b). The diversity of black experience in South Africa today presents a complex set of issues for an identity politics that rightly promotes black dignity. He continues that, "I think that the new radical coconut needs to be much more honest and nuanced. We have often, as black middle class people, been complicit in keeping poor black people poor. We benefit from our relationship with white capital, and many of us do not give a damn about poor black people. We theorise about them, but avoid them" (2015b). He says that even as the Coconut engages in acts of refusal, the permutations of class position and life experience cannot be glossed over in the call to radicalism. Here, the politics of language and 'authentic' blackness is a debate only for those for who already have access to the cultural capital English provides. It is clear from the literature cited above that young people do often "deploy their repertoire of identity options" in strategic ways which "index shifting alignments" (Bock & Hunt, 2014, p. 3).

Turning from literature that considers the politics of an authentic blackness, I now turn to consider research on South African whiteness, language, and identity. Salusbury and Foster (2004), writing about "white English-speaking South African" (WESSA) identity, note how WESSAs are conscious of displaying "their belonging to South Africa" (p. 105). The authors argue that it is no longer politically acceptable to be oblivious to the privilege of whiteness, and so this is often engaged with through claims to an authentic South African identity. However, Salusbury and Foster (2004) note that the obliviousness to the privileges of *English* is not treated in the same way as race by WESSAs. They argue that "English may therefore serve as a socially acceptable means of claiming the privilege of 'whiteness', while managing to obscure the injustice of a system in which privilege is only offered to certain groups and not others" (p. 107). Because English is something that can be learned it is treated as a different phenomenon to the power of whiteness. This functions much like Bourdieu's category of institutional cultural capital where original properties can be conferred on a subject, so this category of habitus is seen as something that does not tacitly reproduce privilege.

This obfuscation about the position of English in South Africa, does not curb the power of whiteness, it reproduces it. Painter and Baldwin (2004) point out that "the construction of English as universal hides the fact that… English is associated with the values, and safeguards the interest of, a particular section of the population. The very permeability of its boundaries and its willingness to present itself as inclusive, masks the ideological effects its imposition might have" (p. 19). This points to the tension Derrida alerted us to between the universal capaciousness of language and the highly politicized particularities of context.

Steyn (2012. p. 8) speaks of an "ignorance contract" between subjects in particular social locations as a "tacit agreement to entertain ignorance…understood as a social achievement with strategic value". The strategic value in this case is maintaining one's subject position as a privileged white subject. Thus, to maintain our subject position, we need to become "appropriate performers of ignorance" (Steyn, 2012. p. 8). Ignorance and domination are interrelated because ignorance is "actively constituted or reproduced as an aspect of power" (Feenan, 2007, p. 509). The ignorance of many white South Africans with regard to other South African languages is indexical of a deeper form of the ignorance contract, which maintains their positions of privilege. The added peculiarity of the South African situation is

that this active ignorance is not at a distance. It is maintained in intimate spaces: the home, classrooms, university campus, and the workplace.

4.5 Heritage, culture and loss

Heritage, culture, and loss in relation to authentic identity categories have also received some (although limited) attention in the literature on language and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. Learning English, or adopting an English (read: white and suburban) lifestyle, is often seen as a leading to a loss of one's cultural or ethnolinguistic roots (De Klerk, 2000; Makubalo, 2007; Rudwick, 2008b). Clark (2003) describes culture as a "tinderbox" (p. 3) because of the heightened political and emotional attachment to, and power associated with, claims to authenticity. This is because even as epistemological frameworks around culture have shifted to embrace a more fluid notion of culture, most people still "perceive their own (or another's) culture and identity as immutable" (Rudwick, 2008b, p. 108). The relationship between language and culture in this regard is important, because many people interpret loss of a language as loss of a culture. As Fishman notes, for many people "the language *is* the culture" (1999, p. 45).

In the special issue of the *English Academy Review* (2007) on language, identity and English education in South Africa, a number of articles touched on the subject of language *as* culture and the issue of loss. Makubalo (2007) writing in this volume points out that the purported cultural loss through English is hardly as straightforward as it might appear. In his study of identity construction and the use of English by high school learners in a desegregated school space, one of his participants, Anna, denies the plasticity inherent in culture, by fixing it in the world as something permanent that she would inevitably move further from or closer to. She does not see cultural identity as being able to change and absorb new modes of being. But even though loss is expressed in these rather fixed terms, in reality it is not clear what, in actual fact, is lost. She still sees herself as '*herself*', even though what she has access to may be changing.

In the same volume, Nongogo (2007) highlights the complex way cultural heritage is engaged with by learners in her study on language and identity. She focuses on how learners harnessed ethnicity to implicitly critique the notion of cultural authenticity. What she found was that the learners expressed a belief in their pure African ethnicity and linguistic identity,

yet also "stat[ed] that their English [was] better than their African language proficiency" (p. 52). So even though they spoke very good English, this did not detract from their claims to a pure cultural belonging. The question of whether others would recognise their claims to cultural purity was left answered.

Rudwick, in work on Zulu identity in a large township in KwaZulu-Natal, argues that these feelings of loss and ambivalence in relation to English are because, their "feelings are based on a perceived dichotomy between the economic values of English in South Africa and their love for isiZulu" (2008, p. 111). Bristowe, Oostendorp, and Anthonissen (2014) used language portraits (Busch et al., 2006) with multilingual teenagers in Johannesburg. They found that there was an emotional attachment to the learners' home languages. In their portraits, the participants often placed their home languages in their hearts denoting an emotional closeness. While their home languages were cherished, the same participants appeared to adopt a pragmatic attitude toward English as the gatekeeper of opportunity and upward mobility. Bristowe et al. (2014), building on Rudwick's work (2004), argue that "ideas of ethnic purity" can be used "subversively… as a means to play with and make sense of identity" (p. 229).

What this work alerts us to is that "the language of both politics and everyday life… is rigorously categorical, dividing the population into mutually exclusive ethnonational categories" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 27). People talk about themselves and others through reference to categories to make sense of their experience. Yet what the accounts of participants also tell us is that in a context of change, while these categories are still useful codes for indexing aspects of social relations and identity, they may not be "faithful descriptions of them" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 27, emphasis in original). In other words, there is a slippage between categories as they are used in talk to make sense of one's experience and what is happening on the ground, because we do not have a new language of description at our disposal just yet. Thus, we use these categories "under erasure" (Hall, 1996, p. 1).

It would appear from this limited work on language, culture and loss that there is an economy that exists between the value of English and the value of African languages in different contexts. The shifting value of each of these categories is reliant on a racialised and classed

experienced of languages as in competition with each other. It is to this body of literature I now turn.

4.6 Economies of English and African languages

English has received substantial attention in the literature on language and identity in education (Chick, 2001; de Klerk, 2000; Dolby, 2000; Makoe, 2007, McKay & Chick, 2002; McKinney, 2010). The question of whether English represents a fixed locus of colonial power or whether it can become a new language, bearing the weight of African experience is, as we have seen, much contested (Ndebele, 1987; wa Thiong'o, 1995). Questions about new varieties of South African English operate largely at an academic level, while people in everyday life still use hierarchically racialised language to describe the prestige associated with a particular variety of English. Indeed, studies on school integration over the years have indicated that the dominant mode of integration has been assimilationist (McKinney, 2010; Soudien, 2004) with students finding a way to fit into the dominant linguistic culture of the school, where whiteness, cleverness, and English are often equated.

Kamwangamalu (2007) has drawn attention to the fact that one language can in fact occupy multiple identities across the course of history, and even within one space. He examines the relationship of English to different racial groups across the history of South Africa and pin-points the shifts in relationship at different points in transition. He uses Gumperz's (1982) nomenclature of a "*we*-code" and "*they*-code", to illustrate a group's relationship to a language as either intimate or Other. However, he further differentiates these codes when he looks at how black communities have had a varied relationship to English across history, and differences *within* the categories of class and application (e.g. political goals, educational settings, government and policy communications). He uses the terms "ideological *we*-code", "pragmatic *we*-code", and "naturalized *we*-code" (2007, p. 263) to label the different positions in relation to English. What is helpful about this taxonomy is it allows us to see that English can be used to construct and maintain different subject positions.

For instance, the ideological we-code refers to the use of English by the liberation struggle as a reaction to the policy of Bantu education (and perhaps this is what we are also seeing now with the call for English at Stellenbosch University). The pragmatic we-code for those members of the black community who have access to English and can use it for their own

progress. This is constructed in opposition to those who do not have access to an English education for example, and who maintain a they-code towards English. And then he speaks of a naturalised we-code for "black elite families that are currently undergoing language shift from African languages to English" (2007, p. 264). Language shift (Fishman, 1991) refers to speech communities whose home languages are shifting to fewer speakers inter-generationally.

Kamwangamalu's (2007) type of focus on language in the literature is unique because it is not so much how "individuals or groups maintain, construct, project or negotiate their social identities in and through linguistic practices" (Kamwangamalu's (2007, p. 264) (e.g., Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) but how a language can itself have multiple identities, even for one person. It is the mutually constitutive nature of the linguistic, social and political variables that changes the relationship of individuals to English over time and within different spaces.

Our census data provide an example of how 'racial' identity categories that were once attached to language are changing and now privilege the dominance of English. As Deumert and Masinyana note,

> The number of Black South Africans using English as a home language increased by over 60% between 1996 and 2001 (Statistics South Africa, Census 1996 and 2001), and localised case studies such as de Klerk (2000), de Kadt (2002) and Deumert (2006) have shown that English is making inroads into the home domain in some Black families and communities, especially in sibling-sibling interaction and friendship groups. (2008, p. 124)

Reporting on the Census 2011 results, the South African Institute of Race Relations reported that black households accounted for 1.2 million of the 4.9 million South Africans who speak English as a first language. This number shows an increase of more than 12 times compared to the 2001 Census (Ndebele, 2013). But is it a zero sum game between the mother tongue and English?

When examining language in education policy, "hard linguistic capital is minted in the mould of essentialist, pure, non-syncretic, distinct forms of language" (Stroud, 2003, p. 20). Engaging with language in this way also necessarily implies that identities map onto these monolingual modes, creating social categories of difference that seem to refer to some kind of essentialist ethnicity. However, Stroud (2003) notes, what is actually happening in practice

is that people's linguistic contexts and repertoires are fundamentally multilingual, he calls them "multilingual ecologies" (p. 20). In people's day-to-day lives their language practices reveal a "multilingual mix and syncretism of form and function" (p. 20). These ecologies cannot be understood outside of the globalised markets in which these practices are constituted and thus Stroud (2003) notes that people's linguistic practices must be seen as comprising "capital investment and capital accumulating strategies" (p. 20). This may speak to the cherishing of mother-tongue languages, while being able to simultaneously adopt a pragmatic attitude towards English (Bristowe et al, 2014). Moreover, the mother-tongue is not some immutable entity, but is itself responsive to changing patterns of interaction and necessity in the face of the economic pressure of the market.

Stroud (2003) continues, "the mix of metropolitan and local language in informal markets offers marginal groups a historically specific, socially determined, competing and complementary range of ways of giving meaning to social reality, codifying different 'lived relations' to material life" (Stroud, 2003, p. 20). What Stroud (2003) draws our attention to is how new "sociosymbolic" resources have to be created by marginalised speakers in order to give meaning to and navigate "material social relations" in which they find themselves. People's linguistic repertoires are curtailed or enabled by the "discursive resources and positions open to speakers" (p. 21).

Stroud (2003) is pointing to the power of the market in producing particular language practices. He is rather hopeful of the opportunities this may produce for syncretic language practices in the informal economy (as is Alexander, 2011), but of course in more formal setting this could easily go the other way. For instance, Makoe and McKinney's (2014) study on how linguistic ideologies function within the school environment, indicated that many black parents believed that education in English would lead to economic security and employment. Furthermore English was positioned as the language choice of the more naturally intelligent, while speaking in vernacular was often positioned in relation to those learners who were not high academic achievers. These findings corroborate the idea that "minority languages are taught for identity, and metropolitan languages for pragmatic and economic purposes" (Stroud, 2003, p.22). While the hegemony of English seems to be affirmed because of market necessity, on campuses it seems that "English is rapidly losing its

prescriptive normative status as students tend to use their home languages and urban slang in communicating with one another outside the classroom situation" (Madiba, 2010, p. 340).

The dominance of English in the post-colonial context seems to take us in two directions. Firstly, there is the obvious lauding of English as the language of opportunity for the middle class and upward mobility. This often seems to be to the detriment of local languages. However, Stroud (2003) argues for a different trajectory of thought about the relationship between local languages and the colonial language. He emphasises the need to take seriously the idea of syncretism. We should not just characterise damage done to marginal languages as a violence that destroys something that was once historically 'pure', but rather, to take seriously the idea that languages, as with identities, are living, changing, fluid entities. Pennycook (1994) and Canagarajah (1999) note how people have the agency to engage with the metropolitan language in creative and strategic ways that do not point only to a loss, or reduction, or unfavourably positioned linguistic repertoire, but might point to the change these local languages are bringing about in the dominant language. In line with Achebe's (1975) argument for subversion of the colonial language, one could see a critique of the dominant language as being implicit in how it is used.

The emphasis on how a language is used opens up interesting questions in relation to other aspects of speech such as accent. A focus on the aural quality of the voice, what Painter (2008) calls the materiality of the voice, is the last body of literature I wish to engage with. It is not only the idiosyncrasy of language use but how this is received by others that contributes to the push/pull relationship between language as having a normalising (in the South African context normalising could be equated with racialising) effect, and language opening up opportunities for change. Appropriately, the title of the next sub-section succinctly points to this imbrication of the market with language and identity in the post-apartheid context.

4.6.1 "I pay a lot of money for that accent" (Ratele, 2013, p. 129)

Painter (2008) argues for a focus on what he calls the "materiality of language", in relation to subjectivity, politics and social psychology. By this he means that we need to focus on the voice, how it actually sounds, how it is accented, the way it is "domesticated" (p. 175) in the body of the subject. In this sense, he sees the voice working in the same way as gender or

race to not only mark the body, but constitute a particular subject experience. He argues that social psychology has typically disregarded language in its material form. In the discursive turn, language has been treated as a form of "discourse" where the emphasis is placed on meanings and their effects. This type of work is located within the poststructuralist tradition and has pointed to a dematerialising of concerns related to language and subjectivity. In this way the embodied voice has disappeared from analysis, when actually it is central to issues of subject positioning. Thus Painter argues for a "developing 'social psychology of language'" that "foregrounds subjectivity as constituted in relation to particular languages and particular ways of speaking these languages, and acknowledges that these particularities are politically encoded" (Painter, 2008, p. 174).

By referring to the voice as politically encoded, Painter highlights that the voice is not merely idiosyncratic, but its material quality references an entire history of colonialism, apartheid and continued racialisation and class politics in post-apartheid South Africa. It is the material quality of the voice embedded within particular ideologies and discourses that allows us to read and describe voices in particular ways. As will be seen in the literature below, the idea that one can 'sound white' draws on a racialised discourse of entrenched and essentialised differences between groups of people. Whether 'sounding white' positions one favourably or not is then a more nuanced matter of teasing out the power dynamics at play in different contexts. The fact that 'sounding white' can be received differently points again to the new patterns of intersecting identities in the context of superdiversity.

English operates as representative of a certain subject position in relation to one's social world. The type of English one speaks, the accent that is adopted, is a vector for the flows of power between people and spaces. A young medical student at the University of Cape Town wrote what has become a popular novel dealing with the issues of "speaking white while looking black" (Ratele, 2013, p. 124). Matlwa (2007) writes in her novel *Coconut*,

> It is because I am smart and speak perfect English. That is why people treat me differently. I knew from a very young age that Sepedi would not take me far. Not a chance! I observed my surroundings and noted that all those who were lawyers, doctors and accountants, all the movie stars that wore beautiful dresses all the singers that drove fancy cars and all my friends who owned the latest clothing, did not speak the language that bounced beserkly from Koko to Tshepo to Malome Arthur to Mama and back to Koko again. I did not care if I could not catch it. I spoke the TV language; the one Daddy spoke at work, the one Mama could never get right, the one that spoke of sweet success. (p. 54)

What we see in her account is a ratification by the world of the power of speaking "perfect English". This is important; it is not just English, but "good English", an English that "Mama could never get right", an English that represented wealth and opportunity of the workplace and education. In line with the tension around what an authentic identity might entail, the type of English one speaks also has the power to compromise one's authenticity. One might be "not enough" or "too much" (Blommaert & Varis, 2015). In the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie's protagonist comments on the quality of his master's voice saying, "Master's Igbo felt feathery in Ugwu's ears. It was Igbo coloured by the sliding sounds of English, the Igbo of one who spoke English too often" (2006, p. 4). Too much English taints one's possibility of authenticity in the eyes of others.

Rudwick (2008a) corroborates this description with her study on the politics of speaking English in a predominantly Zulu context. She found that "speaking 'immaculate' English – i.e. with no trace of an African accent – is not necessarily desirable for Zulu-speakers in a KZN township environment because they run the risk of being labeled a 'coconut'" (p. 102). It was the "status of English vis-à-vis isiZulu" (p. 111) that presented the problem because of the presence of "too much" (Blommaert & Varis, 2015) English in relation Zulu.

The shifting of contexts is important for noting the different attitudes adopted towards English. It seems that there is a tricky balancing act taking place in the nano-politics of accent between subjects. For instance, the privileging of a specific form of English was noted in a climate survey conducted at the University of Cape Town. The survey reported that,

> Students felt they were not able to ask questions in class as they were embarrassed at being laughed at on account of their accent, not by white students, but by their fellow black students, the so-called 'coconuts' – that is, black students who, in one student's terms, 'because they have attended ex-Model C or private schools, spoke English well. (Madiba, 2010, p. 334)

There is a dual move being made here, students who do not 'speak white' are hesitant to ask questions because of their accent, but yet those doing this kind of gatekeeping are also sanctioned because they are pejoratively described as 'coconuts'. The power of what the variety of English spoken represents is constantly being negotiated between subjects.

Makoe and McKinney (2014, p. 11) note in their research on language in schools that the type of English that was valued by participants was "a particular high prestige variety, which draws its features from the 'ethnolinguistic repertoire' (Benor, 2010) of White South African

English (WSAE)" (McKinney, 2007, p. 11). This included teachers who saw accent as a marker of correct pronunciation demonstrating very little awareness of the complex race, class, and language ideologies that are invoked to reach such a conclusion. For example, a white teacher in their study speaking about the use of English by her learners said, "Yes, there is an improvement for most of them, but some of them never lose the (pause) (CM: yes) township accent or whatever" (p. 12). The same teacher described her own accent as "neutral", reproducing the normative power of whiteness because of its supposed neutrality, positioning herself as normal.

A similar sentiment was documented in Hunter and Hachimi's (2012) study of call centres in Durban. English spoken with a "prestigious" accent was held in high-esteem in the work place, associated with high quality education, and reproduced the power attached to whiteness. Blommaert (2009) has also noted the normalising impulse towards the dominant mode of speaking. He examined American internet-based courses that aimed at "reducing" people's accents so that they could sound more American and supposedly be more successful in professional environment.

What this literature on accent highlights is the complex manoeuvring that takes place for subjects in relation to language and purported identity categories. Soudien and Botsis (2011) trace the role of desire in the way subjects are positioned and position themselves in relation to accent and show how racialised identities are often reconstituted through accent. They found that "South Africans 'can deviate from the identity descriptions attributed to them or to which they attach themselves'; however, this deviation involves both transgression and 'category-maintenance' work that simultaneously enables and constrains the subject (Davies, 1989, p. 88)". While words like "deviation", "transgression" and "category-maintenance" may appear to fix the subject in particular ways, I argue that the opposite is also possible. It is the compulsion to identify with categories in circulation before the subject enters the world that requires this kind of side-taking. In reality though, we see that subject positioning is a fluid, contested and negotiated practice and this is precisely why something like a particular English accent shifts connotations according to context. The tension between language ideologies and lived experience is articulated in the nano-politics of accent and identity.

4.7 Conclusion

What is evident from this review of the literature is that language ideologies are often articulated so as to conceal the gatekeeping work that is being done. In the South African context, as in others, "the language of racism is dressed in the clothes of liberal, educated, articulate, common-sense discourse" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2002, p. 132). A particular version of the 'well-spoken' subject is constructed as the neutral position from which all other varieties are measured and understood.

This, as we have seen, can be understood as a result of the torrid history of language in the colonial and post-colonial periods. While languages were positioned in opposition to each other, with the colonial language being the language of power and the local languages being devalued, there has not been a simple reproduction of this binary as history has progressed. Indeed, as was noted in chapter two through Butler's (1997) work, power is not continuous with the conditions of its emergence. This has meant that both politically and personally, there are myriad positions in response to the initial imposition of the colonial language.

In a context of superdiversity, questions of identity and authenticity are complexified and this is nowhere more evident than when considering people's linguistic repertoires. The multifaceted composition of the repertoire holds within it personal biography, emotional attachment, and broader language ideologies and economies that position speakers. I have engaged largely with South African literature on language and identity from a post-structural perspective that has focused on educational spaces, particularly the school. I position my own work as building on this tradition, but focusing on university students, who represent the "elite" of the South African education system. In a space of increasing economic inequality, formally de-racialised spaces coupled with re-racialised practices, I argue that student narratives of this experience in relation to language will offer insight into the process of subjectivation in the South African symbolic economy.

CHAPTER 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

My theoretical and methodological approaches are contained within the thesis title: "subject positioning within the South African symbolic economy". I did not use the phrase "subject positions" precisely because the word "position" connotes a fixedness of the subject that is critiqued by post-structural theories. Rather, as I have already touched on in the theoretical chapters, the notion of "positioning" highlights the fluid, shifting nature of the subject in relation to their social world, in this case, to the symbolic economy of languages. "Positioning" is accommodated in my reading of more traditional structural theory through a post-structural lens (see discussion of Althusser's theory of interpellation and Bourdieu's theory of habitus in Chapter two). In this chapter I show how these theoretical assumptions guided my methodological rationale. I demonstrate how insights from Bourdieu's theory of habitus and field were productively applied to experience-centred narratives (Squire, 2008) by pairing Bourdieusian theory with a version of positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) in order to conduct a critically-oriented thematic narrative analysis (Riessman, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012).

Althusser (1970), Bourdieu (1990, 1991) and Butler (1997) all emphasise the mutually constitutive nature of the subject and social world, which my methodological approach is attuned to. Though the participants' stories of their language experiences contain meanings that were in circulation prior to the telling (ideologies, discourses, or master narratives)—and these meanings constitute their subject positions - this does not preclude an agentic movement within the constraints of available meanings and discourses. That is why I speak of subject position*ing*, a present participle, it is a verb as well as a location (Bauman, 1996). As we see with Bourdieu's theory of habitus, it has a generative capacity and is performatively realised. This generative capacity means that even within the constraints of a particular ideology, discourse, or master narrative, subjects are enabled to manoeuvre within these discourses. We cannot predict the outcome of their actions or how they will work within the meanings in which they find themselves. As a result, each citation of a story is different, but is intelligible because of the master narratives (Mishler, 1995) on which it draws. The subject is constrained—that is, simultaneously enabled and restricted—and

constituted, through this paradoxical relationship of being at once 'subject to' and 'subject of'. (This process was detailed in chapter two.)

In this chapter I begin by examining the rationale for using visual and narrative forms of data collection. I explain how this approach coheres with the idea of subject positioning within narrative accounts. I then outline the procedures for recruiting participants and data collection before turning to explain how my theoretical orientation was mobilised in a thematic narrative analysis of the data, with a focus on subject positioning. The analysis was undertaken and is presented in three phases, moving from a close reading of the visual data, to a thematic analysis of their narratives, and concluding with a more abstracted theorisation of the participants' narratives in relation to their subject positioning in the symbolic economy. I conclude with some reflexive comments on my own positioning as researcher.

5.2 Methodology: narrative portraiture

I used a multimodal approach to language portraiture (Busch et al., 2006; Busch, 2010, 2012) to study the subject positioning of participants in relation to accounts of their language experiences. I used both visual and narrative modes of data collection. As I briefly indicated earlier, the participants visually represented their linguistic repertoires (see Gumperz, 1964) in the form of a language portrait on a body outline. These portraits were then used to construct a narrative about participants' language experiences. The overarching methodological approach to this study fell broadly within a narrative frame (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2011; Georgakopoulou, 2006b; Pavlenko, 2007, Riessman, 2008; Squire, 2008), supplemented with a visual approach, following Busch's poststructuralist approach to analysing language portraits (2006, 2010, 2012). Given that the subject is constituted through language, the use of a dialogic narrative (Bakhtin, 1981; see also Squire et al., 2008) approach to understand participants' subject positioning in stories about their language experiences is appropriate.

Combining a visual and narrative approach, with a focus on the body, allowed for explanations of languages practices and abilities, but also opened up a space for participants to consider a more metaphorical relationship between language and embodiment (Busch, 2012). I interpreted the use of specific metaphors in both visual and narrative accounts as constitutive of their subject positioning in the interview. This multimodal approach is a fairly

novel technique for collecting data on language. Where Busch's method has been replicated, it did not include an explicit combination with narrative methods (see Bristowe et al., 2014 for a South African perspective; Dressler, 2015; Prasad, 2013, 2014 for a Canadian perspective; and Lundell, 2010 for a mini-dissertation on the representation of English in the portraits of Sami children in Scandinavia). Usually explanatory notes or comments simply accompany the language portrait and provide supplementary data. Busch's (2012) emphasis on a post-structural reading of the portraits and the participants' "explanations regarding language practices, resources and attitudes" (p. 511), as part of a *biographic* narrative, is unique. I have extended this method, firstly, by increasing the time I spent with each participant to be able to broaden the biographic narrative beyond the immediate language portrait exercise, and, secondly, through my analytical interest in power and subject positioning.

The analytical focus on subject positioning within these accounts brings together empirical research and a post-structural approach. As Squire (2014, p. 40) notes,

> …narratives express experience, not as summative and authoritative wholes or internal truths, but as processes of linguistic and social engagement. They may seem to be 'personal', but they enact personhood as a changing social strategy, rather than as a single stable formation.

The subject of post-structural theory is understood as constructing the meanings of personal experience through master narratives (Squire et al., 2014). Master narratives are the dominant, structuring discourses and ideologies apparent in an account. "Master narratives structure how the world is intelligible, and therefore, permeate the petit narratives of our everyday talk" (Squire, 2014, p. 40). The participants' narratives in relation to their language experiences highlight the tension between the social and the individual and produce an account of the psychosocial subject. The narrative portrait is particular to the individual, but is constructed through the meanings, values, and cultural resources circulating in society. I now look at each of these aspects in more detail.

5.2.1 The Narrative Mode

There are numerous theoretical approaches to narrative (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2011; Georgakopoulou, 2006b; Pavlenko, 2007; Riessman, 2008; Squire, 2008, Riessman; 2005). Some approaches are deeply humanist and realist, seeing narratives as revealing something about an essential self. A more performative orientation towards narrative stands in juxtaposition to this, placing emphasis on the subject as constituted through discourse

(Parker, 2002). I am operating in a post-structural epistemological framework and so I am interested in a narrative approach to data collection that holds in tension the traditional, structural preoccupations of narrative and "a more performance-based, pragmatic approach to narrative and narrative analysis" (Bamberg, 1997, p. 335). A post-structuralist approach to subject positioning within narrative allows us to engage meaningfully with the question, "Why this utterance here?" (Wethererll, 1998, no page numbers). (See also Josselson, (2004) and Riessman, (2008) on this.) This question encourages reflection on the contextual and ideological underpinnings of a narrative.

Furthermore, as narratives are constructed in an interview setting, they need to be understood as "collaboratively" constituted in conversation (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 95). Participants draw "on a knowledge of social structures and the roles that are recognizably allocated to people within those structures" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 95). These roles are not stable, they are open to contestation or at the very least are variously understood and taken up, rejected and renegotiated by individuals. Narratives then also contain within them moments of instability and negotiation in relation to dominant structuring motifs.

I have, as alluded to earlier, adopted an experience-centred narrative approach in my research (Squire, 2008, p. 24). As opposed to an event-centred approach that might emphasise time, sequence and structure, I was able to focus more on the specific theme of language rather than whole life narratives (Squire, 2008). The experience of language as a social marker, as well as a practice, became the focal point for the stories that were told, providing a synthetic account of subject and context. The synthetic character of narrative has the potential to bring contradictory strands of meaning, produced in the intermeshing of the subject and the social world, into dialogue with each other (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013).

Shuman, (2006, p. 152) notes that, "the biggest challenge to the study of personal experience narrative continues to be to avoid the conflation of experience and the personal with the authentic and the real". One way of avoiding this danger is a greater focus on what narratives accomplish, how people are positioned within the stories that are told (Bamberg, 2006), and where power is located in these modes of telling. (This last concept will be taken up more fully later in the chapter.) The shift from older forms of narrative research concerned with what Bamberg (2006) and others (e.g., Georgakupoulou, 2006a, b) call "big stories", to a

"second wave of narrative analysis" (Georgakupoulou, 2006b, p. 123), where "small stories" (Barkhuizen, 2010; Bamberg 2003, 2004) are foregrounded, helps avoid the pitfalls of totalising narratives that ostensibly represent stable, authentic identities.

In this regard, it is worthwhile quoting Bamberg (2006, p. 144) at length:

> When we study narratives, we are neither accessing speakers' past experiences nor their reflections on their past experiences…. Rather, we study talk; talk that does not reveal immediately or directly… the speaker's internal organization of his/her self (if there actually is such a thing). However, in and through talk, speakers establish (i) what the talk is about (aboutness/content), and simultaneously (ii) the particular social interaction in the form of particular social relationships.

When we study talk that is the product of experience and interaction, we are studying subjects that "position themselves vis-à-vis the world out there and the social world here and now" (Bamberg, 2006, p. 144). My focus in the narrative interviews was on small stories: the "ephemeral narratives emerging in such every day, mundane contexts, which it is argued constitute the performance of identities and the construction of the self" (Watson, 2007, p. 371). Riessman has noted that, "narratives come in many forms and sizes" and can include "brief and tightly bounded stories" (2008, p. 23). Accordingly, small stories also limit the emphasis on narratives structures and content, and are more amenable to a post-structural approach with a discursive emphasis. To make sense of the small story, one needs to account for the context, interaction and subject position that produced the small story.

5.2.2 Subject positioning

When I speak of subject positioning in this thesis, I am referring to the notion of "being positioned in talk" (Morison, 2011, p. 102). This idea has its roots in both Foucauldian discourse theory and Althusser's theory of interpellation. As demonstrated in chapter 2, I draw on the Althusserian model of power and the subject which emphasises that although a subject is positioned in talk, this produces effects in the material reality of their lived experience. The concept of subject positioning is effective precisely because of its ability to place an analytic focus on the *effects* of power that we see in and through stories, and how these are taken up by the participants.

In a seminal, and much-discussed, article by Davies and Harré (1990), the authors argue that in the social psychology of selfhood the concept of "positioning" offers more dynamic opportunities for analysis than the older concept of "role". Subject positioning is much more

amenable to the assumptions of post-structural theory than the static, fixed concept of a role that emphasised a solid sense of identity (Davies, 1997; Weedon, 2004; Wetherell, 1998).

However, the idea of subject positioning as contingent and shifting is not infinitely open. Agency in the notion of subject positioning is both enabled and limited by the ideologies and discourses that constitute available subject positions. Discourses here are understood as ideologies, master narratives and discursive practices that give social reality its sense of structure, durability and intelligibility. There is constant competition over how certain meanings become dominant in particular contexts, which is undoubtedly connected to the flow of power.

By flows of power I mean the distribution and movement of power among and between groups, individuals, countries, and transnational capital. At the macro level this can be considered an historical asymmetry between the (so-called) global north and south, the history of capitalism, slavery, colonialism and the impact of these in the continued dominance of the neoliberal agenda of financialised capitalism fuelling global inequality. At the micro level, it is how relations between people, and the politics of recognition and ethics of the self, either corroborate or challenge constructions at the macro level (Appiah, 1994; Taylor, 1994). Importantly, in explaining the distinction between the two it appears as if they are distinct realms of concern, however, I argue that Althusser's theory of ideology (1970) helps us to see how they are mutually constitutive.

Davies and Harré (1990, p. 89) explain the relation between subject position, discourse, power and agency as follows:

> The constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions. A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those who use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts that are made relevant within the particular discursive practices in which they are positioned. At least a possibility of notional choice is inevitably involved because there are many and contradictory discursive practices that each person could engage in. Among the products of discursive practices are the very persons who engage in them.

What Davies and Harré refer to as the "structure of rights" refers to the power expressed or curtailed by virtue of occupying a particular subject position. This very clearly draws on Althusser's (1970) notion of the subject being hailed into a particular location, which the subject necessarily comes to identify with even as s/he might contest this location. The

metaphors, images, and stories invoked by the participants alert us to their available "interpretive repertoires" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1988). And thus "notional choice" refers to a subject's control over how, when and why they engage with the discourses through which they are constituted. This is exactly the point Bourdieu makes about the constrained but generative capacity of the habitus. Bourdieu shows that one's available interpretive repertoires, "instead of telling the child what he must do, tells him what he is, and thus leads him to become durably what he has to be" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 52). This is both a condition for, and effect of, the effectiveness of symbolic power.

To sum up, the key contribution of adopting an analytic lens that attends to subject positioning is that it accounts for the circulation of power in the stories of the participants. Through looking for shifts in the subject positioning of the participants, we "direct our attention to a process by which certain trains of consequences, intended or unintended, are set in motion" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 94). The way in which the participants position themselves, and are positioned by others, produces *effects.* Located in a subject position, certain ways of being are opened up or shut down depending on one's ability to mobilise power. As Davies and Harré argue, "if we want to say that someone, say, A, has been positioned as powerless, we must be able to supply an account of how that position is taken up by A; that is, from whence does A's understanding or grasp of powerlessness derive?" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 94).

5.2.3 The Visual Mode

In line with a post-structuralist view, a visual mode of collecting data complemented the narrative method because it worked against, "the hegemony, in the narrative field, of interview-obtained transcripts of people talking, usually one at a time, often reflexively, about their life experiences" (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008, p. 16). Traditional narrative approaches have been critiqued for implying that there is some coherent self behind or *a priori* to the narrative (De Fina & Georgakoupoulou, 2012), where a narrative frame superimposes a sense of sequence and linearity on the lived life. The visual mode, on the other hand, "steers one's vision toward the whole (the *Gestalt*) and toward the relationality of the parts" (Busch, 2012, p. 518). The visual helps to circumvent some of the possible epistemological inconsistencies of a narrative approach: an approach that speaks fluidity,

change, movement, but often methodologically imposes coherence, fixedness, and unified subjectivity (De Fina & Georgakoupoulou, 2012). By supplementing the narrative interviews with this visual mode a broader range of experience could be included.

Busch (2012, p. 511) explains that the language portrait "first serves as a means of eliciting explanations regarding language practices, resources and attitudes" but also, in having the portrait to talk from, the "body or colour metaphors frequently structure the ensuing narrative". This insertion of the visual exercise provides the participants with a nuanced language of description of their experiences and feelings about different languages. Using the body outline to speak metaphorically about languages resists imposing a linear form, as in life history narratives. For instance, the narrative might be thought of as *sequential*, while in the body image *proportionality* is demonstrated (Busch, 2012). In the narrative emphasis is often placed on *time* in the participant's account, whereas with the visual the participant is able to demonstrate the *space* a language has taken up in their life, thereby juxtaposing the linearity of time with a spatial understanding of events in one's life (Tamboukou, 2010).

In using a body shape, the embodied nature of language is emphasised. Language is not limited it to a cerebral understanding of ability. Rather, the body is included in what it means and feels like to be a subject with a particular linguistic repertoire. The meanings of bodies are constructed through discursive practices, where bodies are read like texts (Breckner, 2007). There are a number of epistemological orientations to the visual mode of data creation. First, the visual can be seen as something reflecting or representing as aspect of social reality. Second, the visual can be seen as constitutive of social reality. Or, third and finally, the visual could be seen as different ontological object altogether, a "reality of its own" (Breckner, 2007, for more on this see Boehm, 1994). In this case, the introduction of the visual mode assisted in making overt the participants' feelings and meanings that were attached to particular languages. So, it is not the portraits that are used to make claims, but how the participants explain these portraits, using language, that came to be analysed. The analytical steps involved in this process are detailed later in this chapter (in section three).

5.2.4 Research questions

My theoretical and methodological approach, outlined in this and the preceding chapters, prompted the following questions that framed the empirical project of data collection and analysis:

1. How do the participants position themselves and others in relation to the languages that they speak and the languages they come into contact with in their interpretive visual-narrative accounts?
2. How do the participants interpret the position of the languages they speak and the languages they come into contact with in their interpretive visual-narrative accounts?
3. To what effect are linguistic markers, such as accent and dialect, mobilised in their interpretive narrative accounts?

5.3 Data collection

5.3.1 Context

This study was conducted with students from the University of the Witwatersrand, a historically white, English medium university in the Gauteng Province. (See chapter 1 for a description of this institution and its history in relation to language policies and practices.) As outlined previously (in Chapter 4), the notion of "superdiversity" is a useful way of understanding language practices in Johannesburg, and at Wits in particular. Vertovec (2007) uses the term to describe increased global mobility that leads to complex social formations and changing networking practices. We no longer exist in bounded communities with exclusive language units.

Gauteng, where the university is located, is the most multilingual province in the country (Bristowe et al., 2014). Gauteng is also the wealthiest province in South Africa, and Johannesburg, where Wits University is situated, bills itself as a "World Class African City"(City of Johannesburg). Johannesburg is indeed a diverse and cosmopolitan city, encompassing the extremes of South African life, poor and rich, local, foreigner, a range of religions, cultures and of course, languages. Johannesburg is also a city where many South Africans migrate to for work or study, hoping to make a life for themselves. The city is the crucible of emerging South African identities (Nuttall, 2009), and Wits forms a microcosm of

this cityscape. The city represents a burgeoning class of people who are able to change their geographic, class, linguistic positions, within one generation.

This is the context of the students that were participants in this study. I chose students as my participants, because I was interested offering up a textured account of the language politics, policies and practices in higher education from 'below'. As stated in chapter 4, youth are at the coalface of social change as they "embody the sharpening contradictions of the contemporary world in especially acute form" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2005, p. 21). The students that I interviewed were in their third year or above and had an extended experience of the university. The majority would have begun school after 1994 and thus have been educated entirely within the democratic period.

5.3.2 Sampling and recruitment of participants

As I am interested in the context of the South African university and its language politics, I wanted a diverse group of participants so that stories from various subject positions could be documented. Through gaining a diverse range of experience-centred narratives and portraits I was more readily able to provide a sketch of the constituent positions relating to language in the university context. Of course, since the study is qualitative, I did not want to make generalisable claims about a representative group. Rather, I wanted to trace their subject positioning in relation to issues of language, so that the complexities of language could be highlighted. My focus is not on the individual, but on what a range of individual narratives can tell us about a context.

For this reason I used convenience sampling (Bryman, 2008), recruiting participants through personal networks at the University of the Witwatersrand. I drew up an information letter (see Appendix B) that I asked colleagues in various faculties to circulate among their students, and that they passed onto other staff members.

5.3.2.1 Participants

In total I recruited 15 participants. A good mix of cultural and linguistic backgrounds and identity categories were included in the final sample. As highlighted in the table below in total there were five males and ten females. Within the group there were nine black participants, four white, and two Indian participants. Of the total number interviewed 12 were

South African and three were foreign national, with all except one participant being schooled in South Africa. English was the most widely spoken first language, with five of the participants describing it as their first language. This was followed by, two Tswana home-language speakers, two Venda home-language speakers, with Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa and Tsonga making up the remainder of the sample with one speaker each. This mix of language, culture, and race, is not representative of South Africa or Johannesburg, but does represent a diverse range of students at Wits.

Race is without question a salient factor in my analysis and in my sampling as I was concerned with collecting a diverse set of narratives. I did not wish to detail the language experiences of one racial group. Rather, I wanted to understand the diversity of language experiences in this group of students and what this tells us about the university context. For instance, what types of identities and ways of speaking are affirmed at the university? Does this differ between spaces (on and off campus, in class and outside)?

A diversity of prior positionings shaped the participants' accounts, illustrating the complexity of the context. The same argument could be made for home language. I was not concerned with developing a profile of Venda speaking students, for example. This was similarly the case for gender. My interest was in the subject positioning of different students within a particular context. It was the context of the university that was the same for all participants (in terms of location, not experience) that makes this a case study, not the homogeneity of my sample group.

Participants					
Pseudonym[9]	**Home language**	**Race**	**Cultural group**	**Place of origin**	**Gender**
1. Akani	Tsonga	Black	Tsonga	Limpopo	Male
2. Annika	Afrikaans	White	Afrikaans	Gauteng	Female
3. Chipo	Tswana	Black	Tswana	Botswana	Female
4. Dakalo	Venda	Black	Venda	Limpopo	Female
5. Duncan	English	White	English	Gauteng	Male
6. Faye	Xhosa	Black	Zulu	KwaZulu-Natal	Female
7. Fhulu	Venda	Black	Venda	Limpopo	Male
8. Franco	English	White	Portuguese	Gauteng	Male
9. Ntombi	Swati	Black	Swazi	Swaziland	Female
10. Orli	English	White	Jewish	Gauteng	Female
11. Ruth	Swahili	Black	Kikuyu	Kenya	Female
12. Shehaam	English	Indian	Muslim	Gauteng	Female
13. Sibusiso	Zulu	Black	Zulu	KwaZulu-Natal	Male
14. Tseki	Tswana	Black	Tswana	North-West	Female
15. Vanessa	English	Indian	Catholic	Gauteng	Female

Table 3: *List of participant pseudonyms and demographic information*

5.3.3 Study design

The study design comprised **of two stages** of interviews with each participant, totalling 30 interviews. The first stage was a semi-structured **biographical interview**, ending with participants completing their **language portraits**. A few days later a second interview took place in which the portrait was used as a basis for a discussion about the role **of language in the life of the participant**. In order to test the procedures and guides, a pilot interview was conducted.

Pilot interview

I completed one pilot interview and the data from this interview are included in the final dataset. This interview was with Franco, and the only difference in the structure of the interview procedure was that I asked him to complete his language portrait[10] first before any other kind of discussion took place. On reflection I found this approach to be estranging to the participant. Not only had we not established any kind of rapport, but the method itself, of

[9] As far as possible the pseudonyms that have been used belong to the same cultural categories as the participants' real names. For example, if a participants' real name was Khuleka (a Xhosa name), I would have chosen another Xhosa name to use as a pseudonym.

[10] Franco and Orli had hand-drawn body silhouettes that I provided. After Orli's interview I switched to a computer generated silhouette for a more consistent and generic outline.

drawing and colouring in, was something that was quite out of the ordinary in terms of what the participant might have expected from the interview.

I realised after the pilot interview that beginning with a brief biographical interview would give the participants and me a chance to relax and get used to each other. Then, by the time the drawing exercise was introduced, even if it was still a 'foreign' exercise, the rapport that had been established made the process of explaining and engaging with the portrait exercise more meaningful. I think also by talking through some of their life experiences, to a greater or lesser extent, made it easier to think about language in a representational mode for the portrait exercise (Busch, 2010, 2012; Busch et al., 2006). The biographic and visual elements of the interview were more complementary and mutually reinforcing than I had initially anticipated.

5.3.4 The interviews

Initially, I had hoped my interviews would follow a more traditional or first wave narrative approach (See Wengraf, 2001; Riessman; 2008; Bamberg, 2006). For example, I began by saying, "Can you tell me a bit about yourself and how you got to be where you are now?" I had been aiming for a similar starting point to Wengraf's (2001) one open question approach. I almost immediately realised that this was an overwhelming approach. Participants often did not know what to include or where to start, or were just incredibly brief in their first reply. This has also been experienced by other researchers attempting narrative interviewing (Emerson & Frosh, 2009; Riessman, 2008; Squire 2008). It became apparent that the small stories would not only be easier to enter into conversation about, but that these were just as valuable in producing an account that could be analysed in terms of subject positioning in relation to various language experiences.

For this reason, I decided to use a semi-structured interview schedule (Potter & Hepburn, 2005) of topics I wanted to cover in the interviews. This meant that the interviews were conversational in nature and small stories were produced through the interaction between the participant and me. This is what Potter and Hepburn (2005, p. 281) call "open-ended or conversational qualitative interviews". If there was a lull in the discussion, or certain information was not forthcoming in the natural flow of the conversation, I was able to refer to

my interview guides (Morison, 2011). This was the case for both sets of interviews. (Please see Appendix E for a detailed copy of the interview guides.)

I see the interviews as an interaction and myself as playing a part in the data that were produced. Both the participant and I were active in the co-construction of narrative and meaning (Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Riessman, 2008). While I was aware of my role of influence in what was being constructed, I tried as far as possible to have conversations with the participants that privileged their "perspectives and processes of sense-making" (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p. 33). I did this through "reflecting back responses, floating possibilities, normalizing, tracking" and recycling core questions in different ways throughout the interview (Emerson & Frosh, 2009, p. 34). I will now turn to the procedure for each interview session in more detail.

Interview 1: biographic interview and portrait

Biographic interview

In the first interview I wanted to get a sense of who the participant was, what her/his family, cultural, linguistic, educational, class and geographical background was like. I also wanted to get a sense of what s/he deemed important to her/his identity. For example, did racial, gender, and ethnic categories matter to them? How and why/not? Some participants offered up "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1994) of their context and personal histories, while others were brief and perfunctory.

Drawing the portrait

The language portraits were a simple exercise adopted from Busch (2006, 2012). This is a simplified version of the body mapping techniques that have been used in other visual qualitative research approaches. Body mapping is a creative therapeutic tool that brings together embodied experience and visual modes of expression. It involves drawing one's body outline onto a large surface and using colours, pictures, symbols and words to represent experiences lived through the body ("Body Mapping Art", Arts in Health South Africa, 2011). As mentioned earlier, the aim was to have the participants represent the different languages they have been exposed to on different parts of the body, using a variety of colours. We would then use this portrait for further discussion. The body template below is what was presented to the participants in A4 size.

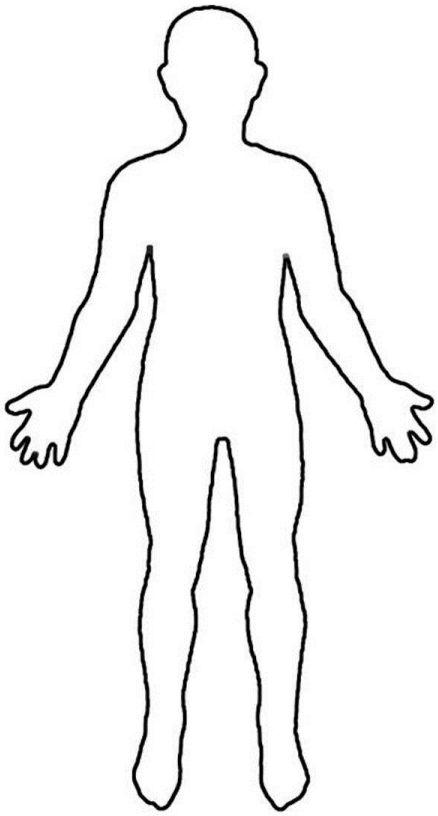


Figure 2: ***computer generated body silhouette***

I presented the silhouette to the participants with a box of different coloured crayons. I then would assure them that there was no incorrect way of doing the exercise and that it was at their discretion to decide on categories of language and how things represented in their portrait were related (Busch, 2012, p. 511). I asked them to think of all the languages they spoke or had been exposed to in their life. I emphasised that the languages that they included did not necessarily have to be languages in which they were competent speakers, but any exposure to a language or even a desire to learn a language or know more would be reason enough for them to include it in their portrait. I also mentioned that what they chose to represent need not be specific languages *per se*, but could include different ways of speaking, accents, dialects, and forms of slang.

For each of these languages, they were to choose a different colour, and colour-in or represent it on the body in any way they wished. A complete set of the portraits is presented in the following chapter.

Most participants seemed to engage with the exercise quite easily, and, as can be seen from the copies in the next chapter, there was a wide range of creative expression. Some portraits were very simple and straightforward, some chose to include a key to explain their portraits, others used patterns, shapes, or symbols. Even the simplest representations proved productive for generating conversation. When they had completed their drawings I asked them to state each language, colour, and place on the body so that it could be audio recorded and we had a way of checking back during the next interview. The biographic interview and the portrait exercise took on average about an hour to complete.

My overall impression was that most participants found the exercise childish to begin with. However, once they had applied themselves to the task and we opened up the exercise for

discussion, most acknowledged that it surfaced many experiences related to language that might have not been easily accessed otherwise. The portrait exercise therefore provided the participants with a novel language of description. It created a vocabulary to articulate how they saw their relationship to specific languages and the relationship between languages.

Immediately after each interview I would jot down some initial impressions about the person and how I felt the interview went. From what the participant included in the biographic interview and the portrait, I was able to make notes as to what I wanted to follow up on in the next interview, which would focus specifically on language experiences. This allowed for a richer set of stories to be produced and fleshed out in the second interview, drawing on the narrative and visual representations of their life stories. To this I now turn.

Interview 2: language interview

The second interview was generally much more relaxed because of the rapport that had been developed in the first interview. We had got to know each other, even if just a little. As stated above, because of the content in the first interview, I was able to follow up on certain issues that were related to my research questions. The gap between the first and second interview had also given both the participant and me a chance to reflect since the first interview. This meant that from both our perspectives we were able to delve more deeply into the language issue than would have been possible with only one meeting. Furthermore, having the physical portrait to talk from made discussing unconsidered aspects of language easier.

I started the second interview by asking participants to talk me through the portrait in a more detailed fashion and explain how they had gone about the exercise. As with the biographic interview, some participants were brief, while others took time and care in their explanations. The conversational nature of the semi-structured interview meant that I could also participate in the discussion by asking for clarification or more detail on particular points of interest.

Most of the topics I wished to discuss came up as a matter of course as our conversation expanded from the portrait to include their lives more generally. When this natural progression did not happen, I was then able to refer to my interview guide as a prompt. As stated above, the detailed guide can be seen in Appendix E, but some of the topics covered included:

- How their languages were acquired
- Where various languages were spoken
- A family history of languages
- Different accents and whether they meant anything to the participants
- What have been their languages of learning

5.3.5 Transcription as an analytical phase

After each interview I typed up any relevant observations about the interview, our interactions and general impressions I had of the participant. These were kept in separate word documents, creating a profile of each participant. I then transcribed each set of interviews keeping these notes as a form of introduction. I also made cursory notes in the margins as I transcribed. This functioned as a first level of analysis and allowed for a deep reflection on the data generation process. I was able to note my role in co-constructing the texts that were eventually analysed. I did not 'delete the interviewer' (Potter & Hepburn, 2005) from the transcription process, and included my own comments and responses in the transcripts. (Please see appendix A for my transcription conventions, which I adapted from Riessman (2008).)

As part of this reflexive practice, I highlighted moments in the interviews where I superimposed my own agenda onto the participants' accounts. It also made me reflect on my own subject positioning in relation to the participants and I became acutely aware that the dataset was a product of a particular conversation, between particular people, in a particular place, at a particular time. This however did not function as a limitation, but rather offered a chance to engage with the question of "why here and why now?" (Watson, 2007, p. 374) mentioned earlier. While an interview is only ever a snapshot in time, the fact that a particular statement is made is indicative of a journey to making that particular statement in this particular setting. By accounting for the 'here and now' one is able to engage with the ideological and discursive constraints and opportunities available to the subject.

Although I followed a selective transcription procedure that was not linguistically or discursively detailed, I feel that the level of detail include is sufficient. I argue that the preoccupation with including ever-greater levels of detail in the conversation transcript succumbs to a positivistic impulse to capture the conversation as it "really was". Any

capturing of the conversation in textual form is already a new iteration of that occasion (Riessman, 2008).

5.3.6 Ethics

Ethics in narrative research could be considered as requiring more nuance compared with standardised ethical procedures in positivist approaches to research. While the institutionalised procedure around research ethics clearance was followed (please see Appendix F), there were some additional considerations.

I sought free and informed consent from the participants, and ensured their privacy and confidentiality. As far as I was aware my research did not inflict any harm or cause any distress for the participants, and there was no deception involved as to what the research was about (Smythe & Murray, 2000). Nevertheless, because I was asking people to share aspects of their life experiences with a complete stranger, this form of research could be considered intrusive (Smythe & Murray, 2000). To account for this, I continually sought informed consent prior to each interview, when I gave the participants a hard copy of the information and consent letter (see Appendix C) stating that they could withdraw at any time. The consent form to record the interviews was then signed, and we each kept a copy for our records. I also explained the design of the interview process. I reassured them that if there was anything they did not feel comfortable discussing, then they were more than welcome to decline to answer the question.

Furthermore, a few of the participants did not seem concerned with issues of anonymity. Despite them saying they did not mind their names being used, I have kept all participants anonymous and changed various aspects of their stories that might identify them. This is because of the sensitivity around what Smythe and Murray call “narrative ownership” (2000, p. 324). While the participants might have felt that their stories in and of themselves did not give away too much intimate detail, it is my contention that because they were not involved in the subsequent analyses, that seeing their stories analysed in a manner that might not always portray them in the best light (or in control of their stories), may leave them feeling judged. They may not realise that in giving consent for me to work with their narratives did not imply a straightforward reproduction of the interview process. Rather, through transcription and analysis I have reconstructed their narratives to create a set of data that I

have analysed using specific theoretical lenses that allowed for layers of analysis and critique.

5.4 Analysis

The analysis entailed **three phases.** The first layer of analysis was a close description of the participants' portraits and their experiences of languages, recounted using the visual to establish a phenomenological vocabulary in relation to language. (This phase is outlined in section 5.4.1.) The second layer of analysis involved a thematic narrative analysis (Riessman, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012) across the participants' narratives (which is outlined in section 5.4.2). Finally, in the third phase of analysis, these thematic observations were infused with an attention to the subject positioning of the participants in the symbolic economy more broadly. Drawing on aspects of positioning analysis, I paid attention to the power relations and forms of interpellation apparent in the participants' stories. (This phase of analysis is outlined in section 5.4.3.)

While my data were of a narrative type, (though arguably not strictly so) I did not conduct a traditional narrative analysis. More traditional analyses are concerned with the form or structure of the narrative itself. Following a discursive approach to narrative (such as those taken by Bamberg (2004, 2006) and others), which views narrative as co-constructed talk-in-interaction and is attuned with subject positioning of participants *and* the researcher/s, I was not primarily concerned with the shape or structure of the individual narratives in my analysis. In this vein, the "interpretive process begins during the conversation" with the participant (Riessman, 2008, p. 26). Accordingly, the shift from data collection to analysis is in some senses an artificial one, making procedural matters easier for the researcher. The basic conversational structure of the interview had an analytical component built-in. I asked clarifying questions, and drew out one aspect over another, thus contributing to what type of narrative was produced. The portrait exercise also entailed an inbuilt first level of analysis, co-constructed between the participants and I, interpreting and analysing their drawings in relation to the questions that I asked. This will be dealt with in more detail below.

Following a discursive narrative approach (Wetherell, 1998; Riessman, 2005), I focused on thematic patterns in the data as they related to the subject positioning of the participants within the symbolic economy. I asked: How did their stories about language contain

meaningful patterns with regard to how and where they were enabled and constrained through the flows of power? I now outline each phase of the analytic process in turn.

5.4.1 Visual analysis

As was noted above (in section 5.2.3), the portraits themselves were not understood as objects that could be analysed in their own right. Rather, all that could be engaged with was the language that participants used to describe and explain their portraits. For this reason, the participants themselves conducted the primary form of analysis done on the visual component. This allowed "those who [were] the subjects of research to change how they [saw] themselves and [were] seen by others" (Riessman, 2008, p. 171). Their subject position was constitutively realised through the act of telling a story using a visual that they were interpreting for themselves and for me. The portrait was not merely stimulus material used to "elicit" a narrative. Rather, it provided participants with a language of description, a vocabulary for articulating their experiences of language, that otherwise might not have been possible.

The first analysis chapter (Chapter 6) contains a close description and limited commentary on this process. The portraits are reproduced for the reader in visual form, and this is accompanied by a summarised explanation and interpretive gloss provided by the participants. This chapter is the closest to what would traditionally be called the "presentation of data" chapter in a thesis. My analytic role here involved carving up and synthesising the meanings that they inferred about the various parts of their portraits. In doing so I drew on the participants' explanations of the sizes, shapes, colours, and patterns they used in their portraits (Busch et al., 2006; Busch, 2012).

To give the reader a sense of the texture of the interpretive layer offered up by the participants I draw on a previous instance of linguistic portraiture (Busch et al., 2006). For example, one of Busch's participants in her 2006 use of this method used gold and shaded in the heart area of her portrait. She said this represented Otijiherero, her mother-tongue, which she described as the "language of my heart" (Busch et al., 2006, p. 10). In contrast, she used green to represent English. In her analysis of this choice she said that English had opened doors in her life, and offered the opportunity for greener pastures.

The participants in my study performed a visual interpretation drawing on their own imagination and prior experience, which are also socially shared resources (Breckner, 2007). This offered up a comment from them on their own choices *vis-à-vis* their representations in the portrait. Their interpretation is a vertical or internal analysis (internal to the interview) of their own drawing. The next level of analysis involved a horizontal analysis (across the interview set) of the portraits on my part. The horizontal analysis was the beginnings of a thematic analysis (more on this below), and involved looking for patterns of similarity or difference in the metaphors, shapes and colours used across the set of portraits (Breckner, 2007).

The first level of analysis, for both the participant and me, was conducted through "looking" at the drawing. But the challenge of working with visual data is that this "looking", in which we take up the image as a whole, can only "express what we see simultaneously and multi-dimensionally… in a sequential order of words and sentences when we want to share our perceptions, views and interpretations with others" (Breckner, 2007, p. 130). Thus, the words that were used to describe the portraits and were the basis for subsequent stories, constituted a second layer of data that was thematically analysed.

In summary, the process for analysing the portrait with the participant involved the following steps (taken from Breckner 2007, p. 130-1):
(1) As we had to *talk* about what we were *looking* at, and could not talk about the *whole* as it appeared before us. We had to divide the sections of the portrait into distinct objects or segments for discussion. For example, "why did you make the arm yellow?" This description would then lead to further small stories.
(2) We would then analyse what these segments meant in relation to the whole. What did it mean that the head meant "x" and the heart meant "y"? This required a second layer of interpretation from the participant.
(3) The meaning of the portrait in relation to broader experiences of language was then discussed together.
(4) The fourth step was a synthesis of the analysis of the portraits as a dataset.). This involved two further sub-steps in the analytic process, and did not involve the participants.

> (4a) First, I wrote up what I called *vertical portraits* of each participant, which contained ideas about what meanings this particular portrait may point to. I called them vertical because I was concerned with describing the themes that were contained

within one interview. For insight, I drew on the broader dataset that included their biographic interview.

(4b) The second sub-step was the beginning of the thematic narrative analysis. I wrote *horizontal* notes on the context, similarities and differences across the portraits. This process was broadened and made more systematic in my thematic analysis, which is outlined below.

The following chapter (chapter 6) presents the results and discussion of this first layer of analysis. The vertical portraits are reproduced along with a close description of what the various components meant or represented to the participants. The topical issues arising from these descriptions in relation to the research questions are dealt with in the subsequent chapters, which were a product of the thematic analysis. I now move to discuss the analytical procedures for building the thematic analysis.

5.4.2 Thematic analysis of narratives

The second phase of analysis was primarily thematic in focus (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012) within the broad rubric of narrative analysis (Riessman, 2005) across the set of interview data. The analysis was what Braun and Clarke (2012, p. 58) would refer to as a "deductive or theory-driven data coding and analysis". This means that themes that were eventually chosen for discussion and are reported on in this thesis were not grounded in the sense of "emerging" from the data. Rather, the themes elaborated on spoke to my research questions and theoretical framework in relevant ways. Thematic analysis enabled a focus on "the *underlying* ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations – ideologies – that [were] theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

I was concerned with the participants' subject positioning in relation to Language/languages and interested in tracing the shifts in subject positioning as an effect of the flows of power. For this reason, I conducted a thematic analysis across the narrative accounts in order to "theorise the sociocultural contexts and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts" that were provided (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). The thematic analysis was an iterative, recursive process (Braun & Clarke, 2006), moving from theory and other literature, to the data, and then moving back and forth between the two until stable thematic patterns were established between the data and the literature. Drawing on Braun and Clarke's (2006,

2012) guidelines, below I outline the steps in the process of analysis to identify the themes that are discussed in the following chapters.

Steps for analysis:

1. I began by familiarising myself with the data. This involved a raw transcription of all the interviews and the vertical portrait documents described above. I kept track of my initial thoughts (using *MS Word's* track changes function) as I transcribed. I then pulled the transcripts into a qualitative data analysis computer programme and re-read the interviews, filling in more linguistic detail where necessary. While doing this, I also created memos, which I was able to attach to certain "punchy" chunks of text that seemed to hold within them the kernel of what a theme might eventually look like. For example, some of the memo headlines were: "blacksified"[11], "African identity and historical complication", and "truncated multilingualism"[12].
2. After having read through the data and creating these memos, I created a codebook of what I thought might be relevant units of description based on my transcription and reading. I then started working through the dataset and used these codes to "tag" the data[13], in almost line-by-line detail. If I came across information that was not accounted for in the codebook, I would create a new code. In total I created 81 codes, largely describing the content of the interviews.
3. These codes were then analysed in relation to the theory and literature that I had read and grouped into broader themes. I noted where things that were separately coded were actually speaking to one over-arching concept. For example, there were many ways in which race was spoken about which I had coded separately but all had to do with "race", which could be considered one conceptual theme. I also realised that sometimes I had coded something in a general manner, "accent" for example, when perhaps it actually had to do with notions of assimilation or authenticity, which had separate conceptual trajectories. In this way the codes were decomposed and then synthesised (Maxwell & Miller, 2008). The synthesised, more nuanced, and broader themes then contained varying subthemes. These subthemes might at first have

[11] A term used by Tseki for the description of a particular student habitus.
[12] A term that Blommaert et al (2005) use to describe the ability to speak a little bit of many languages.
[13] The tagging process allows me to access data quotations in varying outputs. For example, I could see each code by quotation, but I could also pull up quotations and see where they were tagged, coded, and number of times commented on.

seemed contradictory to each other, but grouped conceptually, rather than descriptively, they allowed for multifaceted interpretation.

4. I then reviewed the themes to see if these broader themes were accurately related to the textual content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
5. In the end, seven clustered themes provide an organising sense of the "overall story of the analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87):
    i. Traces of culture,
    ii. Race and Change,
    iii. "Real" Blackness,
    iv. Whiteness and Ignorance,
    v. English mind/African body,
    vi. Accent and the Habitus, and
    vii. English as a Variable Symbolic Asset.

6. This thematic analysis is discussed in two chapters, as outlined in the introduction. Chapter 7 ties together themes related to the topic of "Authentic Identity as Ideology" (i – iv). Together, these themes enable a theoretical account of how the participants conceive of themselves in relation to their languages, and how they articulate belonging to identity categories through language as a social marker. The remaining themes (v – vii) are addressed in Chapter 8 under the title, "Language, Power and the Symbolic Economy". All three of these themes relate to the positioning of subjects within the symbolic economy, focusing on how the body is read and positioned as a constitutive aspect of meaning-making in relation to the value attached to various languages. Each of the three findings chapters present one of the three phases of analysis.

While these phases were intertwined, the relative emphasis in each chapter is slightly different. Chapter 6 is a close description of the portraits, retaining the participants' voices and remaining close to their own interpretations, and offering a phenomenological account of language. In Chapter 7 I focus on the politics and choices attached to the identification of the subject with particular social categories. In Chapter 8, I focus on how the symbolic economy shapes the positioning of subjects. Thus, I progressively move from what could be called an immediate reading of the data, centred on the individual subject, to increasingly more

abstracted levels of analysis, ending with a focus on the social structures through which the subject is positioned.

A note on substantive and structuring themes

The thematic analysis process detailed above dealt primarily with what might be termed *substantive* themes, or *what* was said, the content of the narratives. These substantive themes are relatively "transparent" to the participants in that they reflect the patterns of meaning-making in which the participants engaged, telling a story or producing a narrative about their lived experiences.

However, in analysing the participants' narratives, I became aware that this process of meaning-making entailed more than just relatively conscious thematic content. There were also more embedded threads of discursive meaning thematically present across the accounts, what I term, *structuring* themes which operate discursively, influencing how the interview text works to make both the narrative and the life, intelligible. These structuring themes framed the stories that the participants told. They positioned participants in particular ways in their social worlds and could be thought of as prevalent ideologies, discourses, and master narratives in their accounts. The structuring themes were not necessarily, or even typically, "transparent" to the participant themselves and were often silent in their own interpretations of their linguistic portraits and life stories. These (con)textual forms of understanding are made possible through a theoretical reading that focused on *how* the narratives were produced in the interviews, or how participants chose to articulate their stories, and locate them-selves in particular subject positions.

In the first two phases of analysis, I noticed what Davies and Harré (1990) refer to as positioning, which, as outlined previously, relates to the discursive production of the subject. Many other researchers have attended to the idea of subject positioning as an analytical strategy in lesser or greater detail (Davies & Harré, 1990; Bamberg, 1997, 2006; Barkhuizen, 2010; Watson, 2007; Wetherell, 1998).

These phases of analysis are, however, not discrete or oppositional and should not imply that the researcher's theoretical perspective creates a truth that is entirely opaque to that of the participants. The interpretation of the substantive themes involved layers of meaning that were discursively and iteratively constructed, enabling and contributing to the final, critical,

theoretical phase of structural analysis. Consequently, the thematic substantive analysis was infused with an attention to subject positioning. And it is to this specific analytic focus that I turn next.

5.4.3 Subject positioning

The inclusion of a focus on subject positioning is intended to enhance the thematic analysis, not provide a second full-fledged form of analysis. Thus, this cannot be considered a "fine-grained" (Barkhuizen, 2010, p. 295) positioning analysis. As such, I have integrated insights from positioning analysis (adapted from Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 90), focusing on four aspects in particular:

1. How the participants learn and refer to the categories that include some people and exclude others;
2. How the meanings that were attached to these categories were constructed by drawing on "the storylines through which different subject positions are elaborated" in their accounts;
3. How the participants would position themselves through these categories and storylines; and
4. How the "recognition of oneself having the characteristics that locate oneself as a member" of a particular identity category functioned, emotionally, materially and otherwise.

Thus, drawing on the above steps, when comment is made on the subject positioning of the participants in the subsequent chapters, what I am referring to is "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 91).

The subjects can be located or positioned in a variety of ways. They can be positioned interactively, "in which what one person says positions another" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 91). They can be reflexively positioned, where the position themselves by virtue of how they refer to themselves in their stories. They are also positioned in society prior to the interview. Yet, as Davies and Harré point out, "it would be a mistake to assume that, in either case, positioning is necessarily intentional. One lives one's life in terms of one's ongoingly produced self, whoever might be responsible for its production" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 91).

While positioning may not be *necessarily* intentional, this does not exclude the possibility that it *can* sometimes be used intentionally. What is not explicitly noted in Davies and Harré's (1990) theory, but is tacitly invoked, is how power is critical to how one is positioned. Including a focus on power, one necessarily has to include a focus on what position the subject is interpellated into as an effect of dominant ideologies and discourses. Thus, there are three aspects key to subject positioning the self, the interaction, and the context. Bamberg's (1997) approach to subject positioning in narrative accounts attends to all three of these levels (see Bamberg, 1997; Barkhuizen, 2010; Morison, 2011; Watson, 2007, all who also engage with these). He explains that the levels function as follows:

1. The *first level of analysis* is concerned with the participant's subject positioning in the story or narrative itself. Attention is drawn to how the narrator and characters are positioned in relation to each other.
2. The *second level of analysis* pays attention to the interaction between the interviewer and the narrator. These are the micro-politics of the interview that would have a profound effect on why this specific story is told in this way to this audience.
3. The *third level of analysis* is where my main interest lies in inflecting my thematic analysis with subject positioning analysis. Here attention has to be paid to the positioning of the subject beyond the immediate confines of their story or interview. Issues related to macro-politics: the ideological and discursive positioning of the subject outside of the story and interview setup is highlighted. How is this person positioned from the outside? What master narratives or ideologies interpellate this subject, what interpretative repertoires do they draw on to locate themselves in the social world?

While these levels of analysis are helpful, they attend more to the subject, especially individuals shifting sense of who they are, rather than focusing on what this story, with subjects so positioned, tells us about the social world (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, p. 164). Hall (2004) for instance critiques Bamberg's third level of positioning analysis for departing from the actual talk produced and inferring conclusions about their positioning in relation to master narratives that cannot actually be evidenced in the text (this is also the argument for conversation analysis). This is a justified critique if dealing internally with one narrative. This is why a thematic analysis across of range of narratives on a particular topic with an emphasis on subject positioning circumvents the problem. I have not relied on one

narrative from which I extrapolate, rather I am making extrapolations about subject positioning in the symbolic economy based on a set of narratives.

In a later article, Bamberg (2006, p.7) simplifies this analytic approach and sets up two levels in positioning analysis that need to be taken into account. These are: 1) the content of the story being told and 2) the coordination between speaker and audience. These two levels are akin to what I have called my *structuring and substantive themes.* By attending to these two levels I am more able to make assumptions or inferences about the ideological positions and master narratives within which participants position themselves. I was able to note where they were complicit with dominant discourses or subverting them.

Through attention to the structuring and substantive themes I was able work up to the point of making claims about how the participants are positioned within particular discourses on language. This brings us "full circle by showing how narrators position themselves in relation to discourses by which they are positioned" (Bamberg, 2006, p. 145). I was thus able to answer the question of how the participants were positioned and how they position themselves within the symbolic economy. This is in accordance with a post-structural reading of the subject and creates the space "to circumvent the *aporia* of two opposing subject theories, one in which the subject is determined by pre-existing discourses and master narratives, the other in which the subject is the only ground from which narratives (and selves) are constructed" (Bamberg, 2006, p. 145).

Working off this theoretical assumption, I analysed their subject positioning by identifying in their stories aspects that brought into focus the tension between how they positioned themselves and how others (present or absent in the interview) positioned them (Davies & Harré, 1990). I did this through (steps adapted and elaborated on from Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 92):

1. Analysing the words they used that contained images and metaphors that assumed particular meanings about their positionality;
2. By analytically drawing attention to their awareness or lack of awareness of the language they used in their stories. For instance how their descriptions constituted the characters in their stories in particular subject positions and thus tacitly revealed their own assumptions about their location;

3. Paying attention to the contradictory fragments and variability (Wetherell, 1998) of their stories, which illustrated the shifting subject positions of the participants.
4. Attending to how subject positions through social markers are spoken about as taken-for-granted, "real" categories of identity, and who benefits from this categorisation. For example assessing whether one is "enough" or "too much" of one category or another (Blommaert & Varis, 2015).

In relation to the fourth focus of analysis above, an added explanation is needed. When I referred to subject-positions-through-social-markers, what I am referring to is the "indexicality" of the semiotic resources (De Fina and Georgakupoulou, 2012, p. 176) and subject positions (Wetherell, 1998) mobilised to tell the story. Indexicality means that something is being pointed at outside of what is immediately being referred to. For example, "phonological traits and styles of speaking may become symbolically associated with complex systems of meaning such as ideologies, social representations about group membership, social roles and attributes, presuppositions about all aspects of social reality, individual and collective stances, practices and organization structures" (De Fina & Georgakupoulou, 2012, p. 176). Something like accent, for example, is indexical (or as Blommaert and Varis (2015) point out, metonymical) because in participants' stories about accent, accent is only important because of what it refers to outside of itself. I am interested in how they talk about accent insofar as it indexes ideologies about how a subject ought to be.

In this section I have explained how I have braided together how talk about (1) visual data was (2) thematically analysed with a focus on (3) subject positioning. These three components are consistent with a post-structural epistemological orientation, and are specifically nuanced considering the aim of addressing experiences of language outside of a cognitive or abilities focused framework. This analytic approach keeps the focus on the issue of power in constituting subject positions within the symbolic economy of language as a social marker. The final section of this chapter will reflect on some issues in relation to the research process and the positionality of the researcher.

5.6 Reflexivity

It is appropriate, having just completed detailing the analytic procedure for subject positioning of the participants, that I turn to myself and my own positionality and positioning.

It is argued that a narrative approach helps to build equality in the researcher/researched relationship (Riessman, 2008). I would have to say that I found this to be both true and untrue. The participants' analysis of their own portraits put them firmly in control of how they read their portraits, but nonetheless my own theoretical preoccupations meant that perhaps how they viewed their portraits and narratives was very different to how I read them. As researcher, I was also the final arbiter in the overall (research) narrative.

In this regard, a number of the participants were not concerned with anonymity, as mentioned earlier. Nonetheless, I chose to use pseudonyms to enable me to feel freer in analysis. It was interesting that some participants felt confident to keep their names attached to their stories. I think this is because it was assumed that issues related to, and experiences of, language were largely factual and therefore a neutral topic. If the participants were to be further involved in the analysis of their narratives, I am sure that they would have been more concerned with anonymity.

I noticed at certain points in the interviews I would lead the participant to believe that I agreed with their worldview, ethical or moral position on a subject in order to keep the conversation going. This, Braun (2000) and Morison (2011), refer to as collusion with the research participant. I noticed while transcribing how this behaviour encouraged the participant to go down a certain line of conversation. In certain research orientations, this could be considered a form of dishonesty or misleading the research participant. Yet, it also could be argued that affirming the participant's worldview is respectful of their perspective (Morison, 2011) and makes the process of talking about oneself with a relative stranger, easier. I do not consider this to be a major issue, because, firstly, I have included my involvement in the conversations in the transcripts (I have included my speech where it affects the analysis in the excerpts that follow) and secondly, have ensured the anonymity of my participants. I would imagine some participants may experience a sense of disaffection when reading this thesis, especially since their stories and positions are a snapshot in time and may appear fixed by being represented in a study with finite boundaries. Still, I think any research participant seeing their talk represented as data available for analysis might experience a similar estrangement from how they experienced the initial conversation. This being said, I have attempted in my analysis to show my participants the utmost respect, rationalising their opinions and positions, and I have not operated in bad faith with regard to their stories.

Clearly the 'veracity' of what they shared is something I cannot objectively assess. And indeed truth itself is something that is contested in narrative theory. One cannot say that someone's story is true or false any more than one can it is right or wrong to like grapefruit. In this regard, I found it more productive to operate off the basis of a hermeneutics of faith *and* suspicion (Josselsohn, 2004). I would weigh up the likelihood of someone in this position telling this story in this way. Since my interest was primarily in the *effect* of what was said, I did not have to resolve this tension, but rather engage it in my analysis.

Related to the issue of the type and the amount of sharing participants did with a particular audience, I believe it was a good decision to include personal experience narratives not public narratives (the type that would be included in focus groups) (Morison, 2011). There was a time when I thought it may have been productive to bring the participants together for a focus group. I floated this idea with some of the participants and they did not respond favourably. One of the participants (Tseki) noted that the nature of the topic meant that people's frank comments about language and identity could be read as judgmental and thus in a focus group she would not have been as forthcoming about the effects of accent, for example, as a socially stratifying issue, for fear of offending someone in the focus group.

In terms of encouraging conversation about language that went beyond issues of ability, using a non-linguistic method proved successful. For a study that examines language and identity the visual component was enlightening. In the interviews language was portrayed as either a very simple matter or something deeply personal. Without the visual component I do not think I would have been able to get the texture that I did in their narratives. This was because the portrait rendered their languages as something curious. The method allowed for emphasis to be placed on their stories, their life experiences, and not only on their linguistic competences. The use of the visual method also disrupted the usual interview expectations. Rather, the visual allowed for the conversation to include reflections on metalinguistic issues.

I do not mean to overstate the case though, because this kind of metalinguistic reflection was often challenging and difficult to articulate. For instance, what did it mean to include observations on accent and power? How did this position the participants? Did they see themselves as judging others or betraying themselves? What did it mean to speak about the immaterial aspects of language to a white, English first-language, middle class female? What

did they think I expected of them? Indeed, how did my own preoccupations draw out specific types of narrative? My race, age and linguistic abilities were definitely salient factors in the types of conversation that took place. Gender seemed to play less of a role, but I definitely felt more of a rapport with my female participants. Let me start with looking at my language ability.

I thought that English might have been a problem for conducting the interviews considering the subject matter. (Would people feel uncomfortable talking about language vulnerability in the language they were possibly vulnerable in?) This turned out to be unfounded. Rather, what struck me in the interviews was that it very quickly became obvious to the participants that I was not conversant in any African language. Because of this, at times I felt like I was reifying other languages as fixed entities. The participants had a much more fluid understanding about the languages they spoke. I was trying to fix into place something that for them was lived, embodied, and dynamic.

Related to this was the feeling that some of the participants took on the role of cultural broker. Since I cannot speak any other language (except Afrikaans and rudimentary Xhosa), they would explain things to me about how the language would work idiomatically, or what language groups might be used interchangeably. For instance, if one could speak Zulu one could understand Xhosa. Much of what they "brokered" I did in fact already know, but I think this role provided them with a sense of ownership of the interview. I might have originally been in a position of power as the researcher, but my inability to speak an African language fluently counted against me, and the power shifted to the participant who was clearly the expert on the topic.

My race was also a salient factor. The white participants treated me as a cultural insider, some more overtly than others, assuming that because we were of the same race we shared worldviews, which was not always the case. With other participants this was more tacit. I tried as far as was possible to be alert to these moments of insiderness and I would follow up with questions or clarification where there was an assumed shared understanding. I did this even when there *was* a shared understanding, so that their assumptions had to be made explicit.

With the black participants, my whiteness was only overtly invoked when referring to my language ability, otherwise it was an unstated presence in the conversation. I think appearing to be somewhat younger, than I am (31) or at least appearing to be close to the participants' age, may have mitigated against some of the racial politics that may have been present in the interview had I been an older white person. Of course, this is purely speculation and I could be entirely incorrect in this assumption.

Similarly, I speculate that some participants might have thought that my focus on language was strange for a white, English speaker. Why would I have a vested interested in this topic? However, the fact that I was a student at Wits, familiar with the neighbourhoods and social dynamics surrounding the university, and was bringing up what felt like taboo topics of accent, positioned me as a youth insider of sorts. For instance, more than once participants would say things like, "but you know this", meaning that these kinds of attitudes around language were commonplace. I would then say to them, try and explain it to me as if I was not from here, this country, this university.

It must be noted that since the advent of the Rhodes Must Fall movement (2015) I think the social aspects of language are being debated much more frankly than ever before; for instance what it means to be a black middle class student who "speaks like this" (Chigumadzi, 2015), i.e. has a model C type accent, and how this intersects with other forms of politics, identity and solidarity. However, in 2013 when I was conducting my interviews, social aspects related to language and accent were not the kind of thing participants were used to talking about directly. It was the kind of structuring "elephant" (in the room) on campus that everyone knew about, but did not mention for fear of being seen as judgmental, hypocritical, or perhaps not measuring up. This political climate on campus is undoubtedly changing, and more robust debate about transformation and decolonising the university is afoot, and I cannot help but wonder how my interviews would have been different only a year later. This points to the fact that the narratives of the participants are only ever a limited reflection of a particular time. It is for this reason that it is more important to unpack how these narratives are constituted than to use them as evidence of a stable way of being in the world.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how my methodological approach coheres with my theoretical framework by detailing the assumptions inherent in the processes of collecting narrative portraits. I examined the visual and narrative components and explained that I have chosen to focus on the subject positioning of the participants so that I could adequately attend to issues of power in their accounts. I have detailed the data collection procedure and production of my data, and noted that the portraits were analysed by the participants while I analysed their talk about the portraits. I explained how these narratives were analysed, namely, through a thematic narrative analysis with an emphasis on subject positioning. I contend that a contribution of this thesis is that I have drawn attention to how issues of power can be taken up in a thematic analysis with a focus on subject positioning.

In the following chapter I present the portraits and the participants' explanations of the portraits, accompanied by some biographical data. These I have called vertical portraits, because I am concerned with presenting them as standalone entities and they are closest to the voice of the participants. Then, in chapters 7 and 8, I present my horizontal analysis of these narrative portraits, as outlined above.

I have designed the presentation of my findings to tend towards greater levels of abstraction as the chapters proceed. Chapter 6, "Vertical Linguistic Portraits" has limited commentary and analysis, with the portraits being presented as the participants presented them, as a first layer of analysis. Chapter 7, "Authentic Identity as Ideology" engages with more thematic literature and narrative excerpts on issues of identity and authenticity in relation to language. And chapter 8, "Language, power and the symbolic economy" is a more abstract engagement with the idea of the subject in the symbolic economy, and illustrating how this economy works with narrative excerpts. In presenting the data in this way, I aim to build from the ground up, so that the reader can see the progressive analysis that took place.

CHAPTER 6: Vertical Linguistic Portraits

6.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to introduce the participants and their portraits. I called these portraits vertical, because I was concerned with describing the representation of languages as contained *within* each portrait, not across the dataset. As pointed out in the previous chapter, this first level of analysis is largely descriptive, with interpretations of the portraits offered up by the participants themselves. In this sense, this chapter might be called a phenomenological account of the participants' portraits (Merleau-Ponty, 1996). How they, individually, represented the metaphorical relationship between language and the body, using colour, is reported on.

A biographical synopsis of each interviewee is provided, alongside a reproduction of their portrait. In the biographical summary I draw on aspects that they emphasised in their interviews, and thus the information included differs from participant to participant. There is much that could be said about each of these portraits. For instance, the languages of their life and learning alone tell us much about the educational policy environment in which these students grew up. This chapter serves as the first layer of analysis, that is, an interpretation closest to the participants' own analysis of their lives. The chapters that are an outcome of the thematic analysis (Chapters 7 and 8) engage with more substantive questions.

The inclusion of the visual in researching language is innovative for the textured type of narrative about language it makes possible. The portrait exercise gave the participants a metaphorical language of description for their experiences and feelings about different languages. I felt it important to include the base body metaphors, representations and interpretations offered by the participants so that in the subsequent chapters the narrative excerpts used to engage with the research questions are given context. The portraits and linguistic biographies are presented in alphabetical order, by pseudonym.

6.2 Portraits

6.2.1 Akani

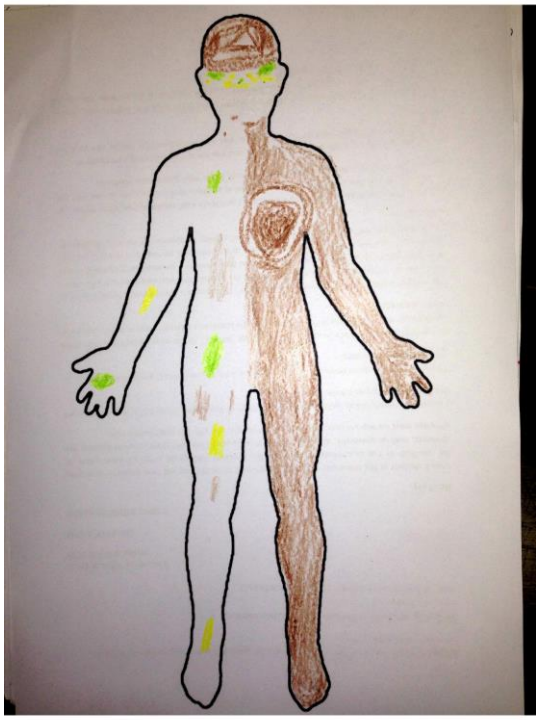


Figure 3: Akani's Linguistic Portrait

Akani is a third year mining engineering student from rural Limpopo and he speaks Tsonga. While his first language is important to him, his Christianity seems to overshadow any kind of cultural identity or practices of Xitsonga culture that are otherwise common in his community. He grew up attending government schools in his own and nearby villages, all of which had Tsonga as their medium of instruction. He achieved well academically and went on to study engineering at Wits. Akani describes going to university as the first time he would move out of his rural hometown and encounter the frenetic chaos and university of Johannesburg, and the technologically advanced, academic world of Wits.

Now he lives in Hillbrow, is very involved with his church, on-campus Christian social activities, and has started a small business with friends at the weekends. His goal is to work in a management position in the mines of the country, get "rich", and then move back to Limpopo where he would like to become a teacher, and help others in his community achieve new possibilities.

In the portrait exercise Akani divided the body silhouette in two halves, brown and white representing Tsonga and English respectively. He placed Tsonga in his head as well as drawing rings around where the heart would be and these also represented Tsonga. He then had green and yellow dotted around the body representing Zulu and Pedi.

Akani said he placed Tsonga in his head and heart because he believed those areas to be the "most important part of a human being". The rest of the body being split proportionately

between English and Tsonga he said represented the dominance of these two languages in his life. The rings around the heart he said, "shows that I'm Tsonga at heart, and I've got influences of English as well". Akani is literate in Tsonga, as it was the dominant medium of instruction at his school and he took Tsonga as one of his matric (final year) subjects.

When talking about English, he noted its ubiquitous nature in South African education, "if you check the way people grow up, um, more especially in South Africa, um kids are taught to speak English from the age they are still young, although some parents, um, teach their children to speak, their home language". I asked whether the colour white signified anything and his response was, "not necessarily, but obviously, the main people that speak the English language is usually white people (Mmm)[14], I'm sure that it had maybe an influence of some sort in me choosing the white colour"[15].

In Akani's discussion of Zulu, he said he saw Zulu people as proud of their language, which at times could be seen as a form of dominance, but he did not necessarily see or experience this as problematic. He observed that if you approach a Zulu-speaking person in another language "*most* of them, when you approach them, um, what you get is, they respond to you in Zulu, although sometimes, okay, even though sometimes you can go them speaking in English language, that is mainly common, um, eh, when they respond to you, they will respond in Zulu".

When I asked him to compare the dominance of English and Zulu, he attributed the dominance of Zulu to pride, but for white people he said he could not say, because he does not spend much time with them. English was seen as "for me mainly, its communication"; it was a pragmatic necessity and there did not seem to be a visceral relationship to the language. This being said, he did offer an account of his academic struggles with English and also, interestingly, said his Bible was an English Bible.

Akani, despite his emphasis on English in his narrative, has become a polyglot since moving to Johannesburg. His competence in different languages could be described as a truncated multilingualism (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouk, 2005). He speaks a little of many languages. While he heard a few languages on television growing up, it was through making

[14] My comments during the conversation are placed in parenthesis.
[15] All excerpts have been reproduced verbatim, and I have not made any grammar corrections.

friends and everyday necessity in Johannesburg that he learnt to speak other languages. “For me experience is much better than, any other thing, so I try as much to, to engage the guys, in their own language, so in that way I get to learn, and become more fluent in the languages. And as well, I encourage them to speak in their languages when I’m with them so that I can hear and when they are communicating, this is what they are saying, what does it mean?”.

Akani said that he would very much like to learn Venda. Despite this linguistic group being geographical neighbours in his place of origin, Limpopo, he has never learnt to speak it. In this regard he referenced tensions in local government politics that have been cast in ethnic terms.

6.2.2 Annika



Figure 4: Annika’s Linguistic Portrait

Annika is a third year science student at Wits. She comes from a white, middle class, Afrikaans family. Her father is a university professor, while her mother, once involved in finance, is now a stay-at-home-mom. She described a shifting linguistic habitus in her family from Afrikaans to a bilingual mode (English and Afrikaans). This shift she casts within two frameworks for making sense of their linguistic identities.

First, her family is of Dutch descent. She was at pains to distance her family’s heritage from that of what she calls “*boere*” (Afrikaans for “farmers”) Afrikaans history. The label “*boere*” has political overtones, meant to connote conservatism. As such, the label “Afrikaner” still causes much consternation for her. This is because no matter how much narrative work she did in recasting her identity as “African” in relation to Afrikaner history in the interview, she explained that she was acutely aware of her Afrikaans name and how she imagines people may respond to this.

Thus, second, in an effort to work against the negative connotations with which she assumes an Afrikaner identity is associated, she has adopted the identity label, "African". Being "African" for her seems to do the work of jettisoning her now politically unfavourable heritage. She communicated a strong desire to be considered liberal, not racist, and for her family to been seen as on the "correct" side of apartheid history. However, this desire seems more to be cast in terms of personal feeling and self-appraisal than in any clear political commitment.

Annika described her portrait as "scientific", because the amount of colour in the portrait she tried to make proportionately representative of the amount of a particular language she knew. As can be seen above, she represented all the colours and languages she included, in her head (as a form of index), and she also provided a key for the languages.

Pink represented Afrikaans, which she said there was very little of (contradicting her previous statement on proportionality/knowledge ratio in the drawing). Pink could be seen in a thin line in her head and then a decorative strip up along her leg, like a ballerina's shoe ribbon. Notably, the pink was not represented as "running through my veins", as some of the other languages were. She also put pink on her fingertips because she says she uses Afrikaans with her family at home.

In her interpretation of the portrait, purple represented "African" languages, which she further specified as "Tswana", "Seycheloi", "Zulu, Xhosa and Shoto" (sic). Interestingly though, before moving onto explaining "African" languages she immediately remarked that "Afrikaans is an African language because it was made here", something that she acknowledges is much disputed. She does acknowledge that it is has a particular history that distinguishes it from other African languages, "it is, um, we still separate it, and I think it's important to separate it because, we think that way". She notes that South Africans in general see the language as politically distinct and this precludes Afrikaans people from being considered African, which she finds frustrating. She chose purple to represent African languages because she saw purple as very close to pink on the colour spectrum. In this way she was able to demonstrate the relationship she saw between Afrikaans and African languages through her choice of representation in the portrait.

Despite these general comments on African languages and the (rather arbitrary) inclusion of a dialect of the Seychelles (her father once went there), she remarks that in comparison with Afrikaans, "I just wanted to make the distinction, because there was a lot more purple in my picture than there is pink" and "I put purple in a very specific place". African languages were placed running down the arms and chest and, "signifies that it runs through my veins", because she feels "I'm an African". She continues that in comparison to the African languages "pink is very separate", indicating that her Afrikaans identity separates her in some way. It is worth noting that she could not in fact speak any African language, despite the intimacy inferred in the portrait.

Red represented French, which she took briefly in primary school, and also reminded her of her father saying "*Je t'aime*" (French for "I love you") to her as a child. She also commented that putting French on her shoulder and leg indicated that it was decorative and she wanted to "wear things that seem French".

Annika said orange represented the language of her heritage, Dutch. Again, comparing Dutch and Afrikaans she noted that "they're a part of me I think, and I want them to be a part of me, um, but it's not really sort of, it's not intensely who I am, it's not really what I use to come across to people". A distinction is set up between her heritage and who she "really" considers herself to be.

Blue represented her "aspirational" languages, namely, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish, because she wishes very much to travel and study there. She has not travelled abroad before. What appeals to her about these languages is twofold: history and contemporary popular culture. She is attracted to Scandinavia's sense of ancient history, something she sees South Africa as still developing. Scandinavian history is positioned as holding much more cultural capital than our own. Second, she listens to a lot of Scandinavian music, feels intensely connected to the language through this music, and wishes that she could understand what they are saying.

Green represented the "language of nature" which she sees as important to her. Yellow she used to indicate "personal" language, this included body language and perceptiveness to non-verbal communication in general.

Finally, black she described as representing “me, because everyone has their own language” (ll 506), she thought of black representing a chalk board, where you can draw on it, “erase things from a chalkboard or add, fill it up completely”. This colour represented a basic canvas on which aspects of her identity could be added and removed, replaced or layered on top of each other.

6.2.3 Chipo

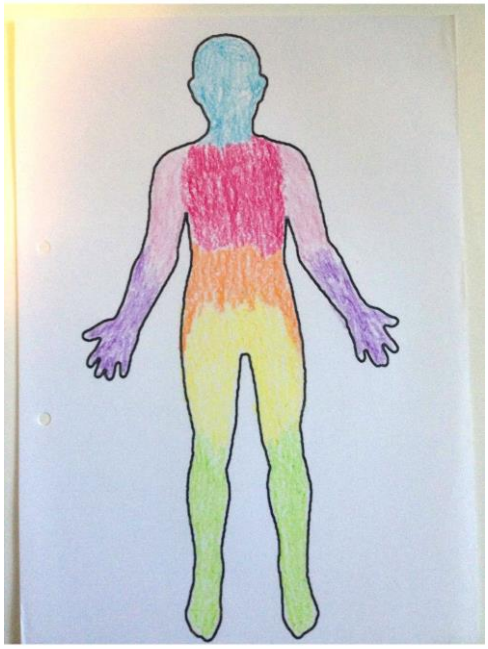


Figure 5: Chipo’s Linguistic Portrait

Chipo is a third year social sciences student from Botswana, who completed her schooling in South Africa. This is her second degree, having completed a bachelor of arts at another South African university. Drawing on her account, she appears to be from a very wealthy family in Botswana. She attended multiple top private schools in South Africa, moving between schools because of her father’s displeasure with the standard of education, discipline and so forth.

In her portrait, blue represented English and was placed in the head. Chipo is bilingual, with both English and Tswana spoken at home. For her English is, “most clear, it’s most automatic”. Her functional language, English, is placed in her head, while her “identity” language is placed in the body.

Tswana was represented in red, in the chest and heart area. It is the language she uses with many of her family members, including her grandparents. As such, she describes it as part of her identity, which she sees as important, because being able to speak another language for her shows that one is a dynamic person who is open to others. She also argues that the Tswana of Botswana was a much more authentic language than the syncretic mix she has come across in South Africa, where it is “mixed with Pedi and Sotho”. She sees Tswana as a “unique language”, and described it as “close to me, it’s my core”.

Her attachment to Tswana occupies a paradoxical space in terms of her identity. She says that compared to her mother's family who are "100% Tswana", she is teased because of the "inauthentic" variety she is accused of speaking. She says her mother describes her as "not of Africa". She says this is because, "I'm very international … let me not say I don't like Africa, but I just believe there is more for me…".

Included in the red portion of the portrait was Kalanga. Kalanga is what she refers as her "home language", meaning it comes from her father's family or home. However, she cannot speak it very well as she was not exposed to it much. She said that this was "actually quite a shame" considering that Kalanga is by definition her "home language". She remarked that she saw her Tswana identity as predominant over her Kalanga identity.

Sotho, Pedi, and Tswana were represented in pink and purple down the arms, because they are "easy to reach", as they are "close to mine [my language], yet they are so different". She learnt these languages "just by being in South Africa", but contrasts them with the expectation that she should speak Zulu.

In orange on the lower torso was an anomaly: Afrikaans. She included this language because her grandparents used to live in Cape Town and could speak Afrikaans, so she says she wanted to learn that language too, despite the history associated with the language. She sees it as a language that is "not like, in the family, but it's close to the family".

Finally, in yellow and green, Mandarin and French were represented on the legs. She took French at school, as this was compulsory for international students, but never properly learnt the language because she wasn't able to speak it beyond the classroom. Mandarin she only took for a semester at university, and found it very difficult to learn.

6.2.4 Dakalo

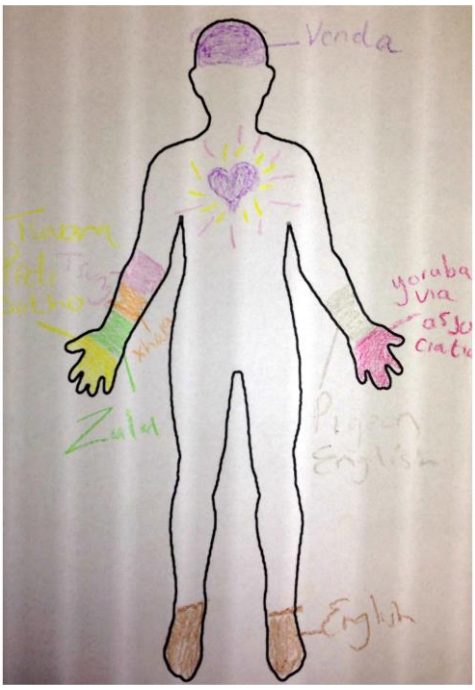


Figure 6: Dakalo's Linguistic Portrait

Dakalo is a master's student in the social sciences. She speaks Venda and grew up between a plush northern suburbs neighbourhood in Johannesburg[16], where her mother was a domestic worker, and in a rural area of the Limpopo province that she considers "home". Owing to this itinerant experience of growing up between worlds, being in but not of the suburbs, she has had varied exposure to different schools, communities, and circles of friends. She attended a former Model C school in primary school, where English was the medium of instruction. From a young age she was fluent in English because of her educational background and interaction with the daughters of her mother's employers. She explained this as something that became a defining feature of who she was once she moved to Limpopo. Her competence in English meant she was characterised as elite and academically successful.

Turning to her portrait, in her head and heart she placed her mother tongue, Venda, in purple. She describes Venda as "always being there", in both her heart and head, noting that purple is her favourite colour. When she is sitting by herself she says Venda is "the language I think in… when I'm reprimanding myself".

On her arm, and displayed around her heart like sunbeams, were the languages Tswana, Pedi, and Sotho, but representing mostly Pedi. These are the languages of her province that she associates with home. Here, in her portrait, Tsonga or Shangaan[17] are included in light pink just above the yellow languages on her arm, and a light pink ring around her heart. When asked if she could speak these languages she said she could speak Pedi, but would mix Sotho

[16] Coincidentally Annika grew up in the same suburb that Dakalo lived in with her mother. They in some ways represent opposite sides of the South African coin. Their childhoods coincide geographically but represent very different lifestyles, what Peterson has described as the "intimacies of our separateness" (2014).
[17] Shangaan is similar to Tsonga and spoken in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, these languages are at times referred to interchangeably.

and Tswana, and then she used the phrase "I can only hear it" to refer to Tsonga, meaning she can understand, but not speak the language. She said the languages were placed on her arm largely because she uses them to communicate, she knows many people who speak these languages, and has developed friendships with them. The arm represented a reaching out or connection to others.

Zulu was also placed on her arm, in green, representing a language she comes into contact with, although, with Zulu she seemed to resent its dominance in city spaces. She says that the dominance of Zulu is, "why I've stopped greeting people in like Zulu or Sotho, 'cos then you greet the person in Zulu and then you find out that they [are] actually Venda". She makes a similar observation about the dominance of English where she says that "we've been biting our sides all this time with English, but you're Venda kind of thing". By this she meant making the effort to speak a language that is not one's own, only to find that the person whom you are speaking to has the same mother-tongue. She is frustrated by the dominance of other languages that leads speakers of "smaller" languages not to speak their own language. She says that while she can speak Zulu, "people tell me that I sound like a Venda when I speak it".

Xhosa was also represented on Dakalo's arm as a language she can "hear", and that is part of her life in terms of interaction and friendship with people who speak Xhosa.

Dakalo is currently in a relationship with a Nigerian foreign national. For this reason she included Yoruba and Pidgin English on her left hand, in red. She placed these languages on her left hand, because she said that this is the hand on which one wears a wedding ring, and she hopes the relationship will eventually lead to marriage. She said she could not speak either of these languages, but that they were part of her life "via association" as indicated on her drawing.

English was placed on her feet in brown. English performed a very interesting function in her repertoire. While she described English as something that "gets me places" it was also clear that it caused some consternation in her life. On the whole she saw English as "a tool to manoeuvre success in the world", but also that which was used to label her as "the English Girl" during her schooling years.

Despite her ambivalence toward English she is aware of the social capital it has accrued for her. For example she recounts going home to Limpopo, "and I was like YOH [exclamation], things are *real*, I was glad, I was very happy that eh, you know, I know I can read a question paper without having to – there-, t-h-e-r-e or m-y [phonetically sounds words out]".

6.2.5 Duncan

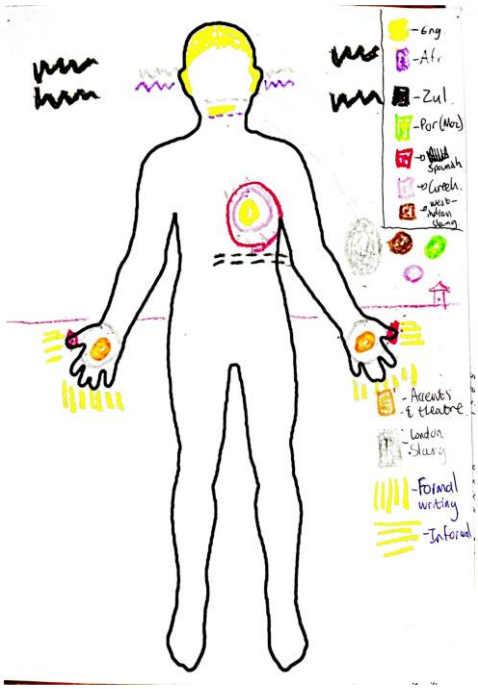


Figure 7: Duncan's Linguistic Portrait

Duncan is a master's student and researcher in the Faculty of Engineering. He is white, middle-class, and a fourth generation Johannesburger. His family arrived in South Africa from the United Kingdom in the 1820s. In his interview Duncan repeatedly expressed embarrassment at not being able to speak any South African language, despite his family's long presence in South Africa. He is interested in urban resilience and he sees his professional interests as requiring him to speak a language that is reflective of the city in which he works.

Duncan reflexively engaged with the complexities of being a white South African of his own accord. For example, he recounted that, "I grew up sort of fairly well-off with my family and that, I mean it's, it's attributed to them working very hard, but also I mean, if my parents were black, I would have had a very different life, so um, I suppose, ja, you always feel a bit guilty about that".

Duncan's portrait included a key that represented his different languages and ways of speaking/communicating. He created symbols to depict different language techniques and said that the colours he chose were arbitrary.

Yellow, around his head area, mouth, and hands represented English. Horizontal lines were drawn on the thumbs to indicate informal means of writing, such as texting, and then vertical lines on the fingers to represent formal types of writing, which would include typing. Yellow was also included in the heart area, indicating that it was a language that he was familiar

with, shared with family and friends, and could also be used romantically. He described the heart as being the place one might feel love, through language.

He used purple to represent Afrikaans. He drew zigzag lines around the ears and a dotted line on the mouth in purple. This was because he could speak and understand the language, but not that well. He also included a purple ring around the heart, saying that this represented that it was a familiar language to him.

Black represented Zulu in zigzag lines further out of the head than English and Afrikaans. This he said was because Zulu was something peripheral in his life, but that he felt it to be important, and a cause of consternation for him. These lines had more emphasis than Afrikaans for example. They were also represented as dashes underneath the heart area. Duncan said that he did not "know why I did these black lines here, um, I think it's like sort of saying, in my heart I feel bad about not being able to speak Zulu and that's something I'm ashamed about".

In circles away from his body, representing languages he had had passing experience of in his life through travel, he included green as Portuguese, pink as creole, red as Spanish, brown as West Indies slang, and then grey in a bigger circle as "London slang". On his hands were also orange circles representing how parodying what he considered stereotypical [white South African, from different geographical and class backgrounds] accents was a humorous activity between friends. Finally, red on the fingertips represented his texting a Spanish woman, a continuance of a holiday romance.

6.2.6 Faye

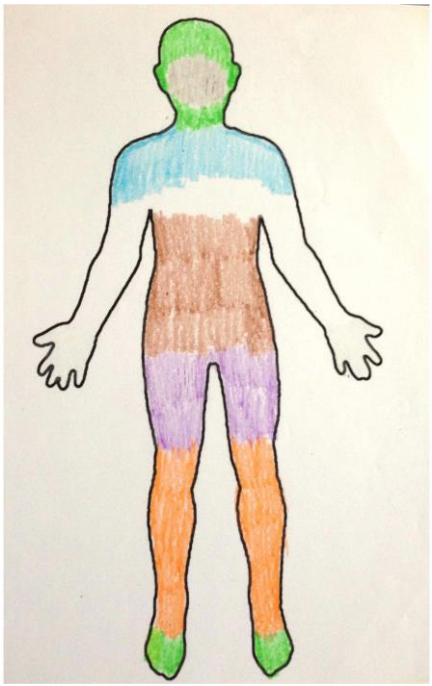


Figure 8: Faye's Linguistic Portrait

Faye described herself as "born Zulu, bred Xhosa" (ll 18/19). She hails from KwaZulu-Natal and now lives in the student neighbourhood of Braamfontein (Johannesburg). She attended mainly former Model C schools. She is a third year Bachelor of Arts student hoping to get into honours the following year. According to her, she uses two names interchangeably, Khamvelihle is her birth name, and Faye is her second name. She used different names to construct different aspects of her narrative. I asked her whether she felt different using the different names and she said that she does, because "Khamvelihle, I need to be that Xhosa girl, and when I'm Faye I'm myself". Her Xhosa identity positioned her as part of a collective, while the name Faye seemed to offer a sense of individuality.

In Faye's portrait she placed English in the head and on her feet in green. For her English is "the language of knowledge". Zulu was also placed in the head, but more deeply embedded and she chose grey to represent this language.

French was placed on the shoulders in blue. It is a language she would like to learn because it is used in many parts of Africa. She said it was on her shoulders because "I feel like if I knew that language it would carry me through so many, um, so many conversations".

Then across the chest and down the arms in white was sign language. She learnt sign language in first year and she sees it as a "language of peace" where one is "reaching out to someone". As such she sees it as "pure, it's genuine" and that is why she placed it across the heart area, in white.

The torso was filled in brown and represented Xhosa. For Faye, Xhosa was placed in the stomach because, "that's what makes me, and all the activity happens in the stomach like, you [are] fed there, everything, so that's where I get nurtured". She also saw Zulu and Xhosa

as syncretic aspects of her linguistic repertoire, saying that "when I say Zulu and Xhosa, let's just combine them because they really the same thing".

The thighs were coloured in purple and represented Portuguese. It was unclear why this language was included in the portrait other than learning it briefly, although she did not go into any detail in this regard. She placed it on the thighs because she said this was not an active part of the body.

The knees and calves were coloured in orange and represented Afrikaans. Here Faye said that, "if your knees are broken, they paralyse you, so Afrikaans kind of paralysed me in high school [laughter]". She had to learn Afrikaans as her second language in school, and today she says she still cannot speak it.

6.2.7 Fhulu

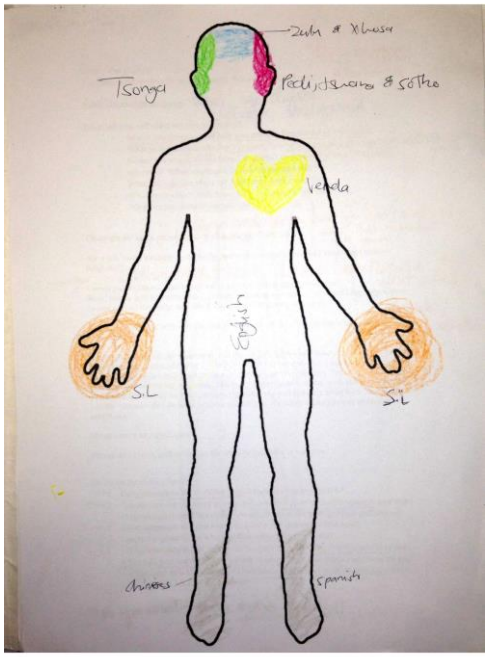


Figure 9: Fhulu's Linguistic Portrait

Fhulu is a fourth year social sciences student completing an apprenticeship. He is from Limpopo province and grew up in a small village, in a large working class family. He attended boarding school for most of his life, and even though his mother-tongue is Venda, he ended up taking Tsonga as his first language to matric[18] because he was better at it academically. This was largely a matter of happenstance.

He describes himself as, "I'm more of, (p) a new kind of a person…I'm a person of this world, I'm a person of this new South Africa, who is open to learning anything, who is, open to learning other cultures, but not really being that cultural". He equally rejects racial labels and identification, but as with most South Africans slips frequently into racialised descriptions of everyday life. For example, describing one of his schools he says it was "black dominated, so ja, even though it was just a private school, but you still had your white people there".

[18] Final year of schooling South Africa.

Fhulu demonstrated a fairly upbeat attitude towards everyday life and its challenges, however, when speaking about his future aspirations he became somewhat wry, "I'm tired of imagining things, I'm tired of setting goals (starts laughing), 'cos I think I get more disappointed you know, and it makes me feel, I don't know, I get so tired when, I, realise that oh my word, it didn't happen".

Fhulu has a rhetorical habit of interrupting his own speech with a question to move his sentence forward. For example, "at the end of the day I'm just proud, um, of what? My language…". "So he was marrying someone from what? From royalty…". This was noticeable throughout his narrative. He also had a rushed manner of speaking, which meant he often hurried over words or left them out entirely, as can be seen in the transcripts.

Fhulu chose to represent Venda in yellow at his heart area, because it was a language he associated with love. Yellow for him was a bright colour that "means that at the end of the day I'm just proud…of… my language, um, and Venda people are known to be colourful [laughs]". The yellow he said he definitely chose intentionally, but then all the other colours were largely chosen at random.

Despite Venda being Fhulu's mother-tongue, he is not literate in the language, "I cannot really read *per se*, I'm very slow with Venda". Owing to his shifting between schools and the languages that were offered, he ended up being more literate in Tsonga. For matric his languages were English and Tsonga, although he said they "hardly spoke English unless it's [a] class where it's related to English".

Tsonga was represented in green on the left ear and "the brain". This language, he said, was one that he needed, and as he could "hear" (i.e. understand) it, he placed it on the ear, but then he added that seeing as he also spoke it perhaps he should have included it on the mouth area.

Pedi, Tswana, and Sotho were represented in red around the right ear. He said that he mixed these languages and that, "I can't sometimes differentiate what exactly which term, but I know how to speak [them]". This form of truncated and syncretic multilingualism was evident in many of the participants' narratives. They could speak a little bit of many

languages, and used them interchangeably. He learnt Pedi once he started school, but mixed this with Sotho and Tswana, largely through watching television. Zulu and Xhosa were placed at the top of the head area in blue, he said he knew a little bit of Zulu and because of this he might easily learn Xhosa. Sign language was placed on the hands in orange, which he had some exposure to through a university course.

Two incongruous languages, "Chinese" and Spanish, were drawn on the feet, but no colour was used. These were aspirational languages representing his desire to travel, "I'm hoping! So I put it in the legs".

English was represented through the use of blank space as the colour white. This blank space took up the majority of the body, including space in the head, torso, arms, and legs. He says that, "English is, just a language that we need, so it's just, I don't know every day, this, this body needs English, everywhere!"

Despite Fhulu saying the colours he chose were at random, when I asked if the white meant anything (as I did with the other colours) he started laughing and then said, "clearly it does…clearly it does, I think, this one, I don't if it was, I think it was conscious, or unconscious yesterday, but not I'm really, thinking about, you know about when I took the colour, if was more of English – white, you know? Um, that's when I related the English, that at the end of the day that English has been described as a white person, if um, somebody speaks English, it's still associated to, what? To the whiteness, so that's why you still colour white".

6.2.8 Franco

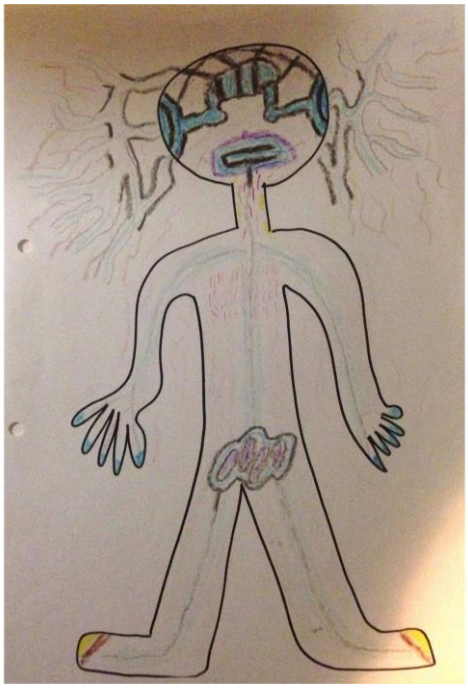


Figure 10: Franco's Linguistic Portrait

Franco[19] is a fourth year humanities student. He is white, middle class, and English, and has lived his whole life in Johannesburg. As noted in the previous chapter, his was the pilot interview and started immediately with the drawing exercise, before any biographical information was shared. I think providing him with the silhouette before entering into any kind of discussion led to him interpreting "language" more broadly. As a result, Franco's portrait was the most esoteric of all the participants.

He included music, body "feeling" and sexual tension as forms of language or expression. He drew black lines extending out of the head and in the pelvic area and included the body outline all representing language-as-form. He described these black lines as illustrating that his ability to communicate outlined everything in his life. This was similar to Annika's black lines, which she saw as her "self". He also said that because his mother (and only) tongue was English, black represented English.

Blue, in his head, around the mouth, on the pelvic area and on the fingertips represented music. As he plays the guitar he said that he felt music to be very important to him, and the blue represented the "oceanic" feel of music. Purple around the mouth and in the pelvic area, represented French, a language he would like to learn. He said this is because he was very taken with Paris when he travelled there.

There was yellow on the tips of the feet, and a few small lines drawn on the throat, which represented Afrikaans, which he learnt at school. He said the colour yellow meant that he had "been stained with it". For me this was associated with yellow nicotine stains on the body, and his use of this phrase implied a negative connotation surrounded Afrikaans for him.

[19] Franco and Orli (number 10 in this chapter) were early interviews when I was still using a hand-drawn body outline. After Orli's interview (my second interview), I switched to a digitally generated body outline.

The small red lines on his throat and dots on his chest (depicting "manly" chest hair) represented Portuguese. He said his father was of Portuguese heritage and so this language had a tacit presence in his life. He used grey to represent his relationship with his body as a form of language. By this he meant that one would feel something in the body in certain situations, and that this feeling he saw as a form of language.

Finally, there were thin brown lines on the tips of his feet representing African languages *tout court*. In relation to these languages he said he was "kicking them to the curb". He said he knew this would be controversial, but chose to do it anyway, as he did not feel he needed these languages in his life. The thinness of the lines, and their location on the feet represented how they were completely marginal to his life.

6.2.9 Ntombi

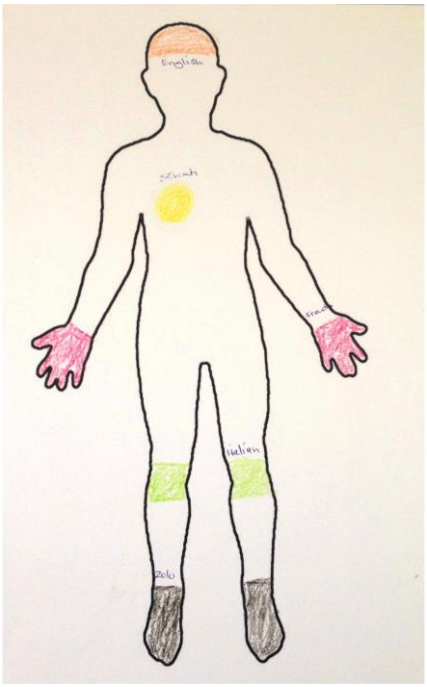


Figure 11: Ntombi's Linguistic Portrait

Ntombi is a third year humanities student, originally from Swaziland but schooled in Mpumalanga. She has been in Johannesburg for a number of years. Ntombi spoke a mixture of English and Swati at home, and describes herself as fortunate for the cultural capital with which an English education provided her. She sees Swati as her cultural mainstay, but is also actively involved in questioning, deconstructing, and reconstructing what a "cultural" identity means to her. She attributes this opening up of a new way of thinking about culture to her university education. Her training as a humanities student was evident in her analysis of her portrait and linguistic biography. She was proud of her heritage, but not blindly accepting of all that was said to part of "tradition".

She is aware of the barriers and challenges faced by those at university who have not been educated in English and for this reason she is firmly in favour of a more diverse representation of South African languages in the education system.

Swati was placed at the heart area in yellow. Ntombi notes that, “I’m Swati and I think, for me um, {.hhh} the language just, its more than a language it’s a sense of identity, so I just kind of, close to the heart”. She said the yellow indicated brightness and warmth.

English was placed in the skull of the head in orange, and she said it was placed in the head because, “I’m expected to think in English, to you know, rationalise my every being in English, my academics are expected of me, to be deliberating in English, so I guess, English pretty much, assumes most of my head”. She said she chose orange because she saw it as a natural progression from the yellow used to represent Swati. She used the colour spectrum as representative of relationships between different languages, as Annika did.

French was placed on the hands in red. She took French throughout her school career, but, because there was no one to practice with, it has remained a “book language” for her, with little to no spoken competence. She did however see benefit in learning it as it is a global language. She aspires to work in the world of international non-governmental organisations, in which French is often a core language of communication.

Italian was represented on the knees in green to symbolise her relationship to Catholicism. She is a practicing Catholic, and at her church she said that some masses are held in Italian, which I take to be a Latin mass. She placed Italian on the knees because, “it symbolises my most humblest moments, so that’s when I’m on my knees, praying”. The green is said to symbolise nature, “just being in sync with your Maker”.

Finally, Zulu was placed on the feet in black. She describes Zulu as a “strong” language that “commands presence”, while this is admirable in some ways, she says that “sometimes it commands presence in the most negative way”, this is why she chose to place it on the feet. Zulu and Swati genealogy are bound up and in her narrative she stereotyped Zulu speakers as “aggressive”, and as a “bully tribe”. Her mother, who was originally from South Africa, speaks Zulu, and thus she picked it up before coming to South Africa, which made it relatively easy to learn here. Campus was a predominantly Zulu space according to Ntombi and she said she speaks Zulu to “everyone” here.

6.2.10 Orli



Figure 12: Orli's Linguistic Portrait

Orli is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Engineering. She is also a sessional lecturer who has worked at Wits for some time. Orli is Johannesburg born and bred, English and self-identifies as a secular Jew. She strongly resists being labelled as "white", but despite this, referred to others by race in her narrative. She is socially aware, and acknowledges her privilege as a white middle class South African, but not without some display of exceptionalism.

She used the colour blue to represent English. She placed blue in her head, neck, right hand and foot and then down her chest/abdomen area and in her uterine area. This she said was because English dominated her intellectual life, "my mind, how I think, the language in which I think, the language which I've chosen to make an academic and intellectual career". The chest part represented her love for English. She described herself as dominantly right-handed and put blue on her right hand and foot, because she sees English as "the language which operationalizes my life, in a way. It's also a tool". Her inclusion of the uterus area represented her decision-making around having children and the languages they would be exposed to (her partner is Israeli and Hebrew-speaking). She said she included her throat and neck area because this is where she feels her emotions while speaking.

She chose to represent Hebrew in green, which she placed on her mouth/head area, around her heart area, her hand, and again in her uterine area. She stated that, "I'm very keen on our kids being raised bilingual, I think it's important for all kinds of things, cultural reasons, I think you know, historical, all that kind of stuff". She took Hebrew lessons for most of her childhood, until high school where she dropped the subject in favour of biology. She thought biology would enhance her career options whereas, "I thought I would never use it [Hebrew]" but she's "always regretted it, because, my sister then immigrated to Israel, I landed up with an Israeli partner".

Pink represented Yiddish, the language of her grandparents and cultural heritage. She placed Yiddish around the mouth area and around her heart, not unlike other participants placing languages of cultural importance in their hearts. She describes Yiddish as filtering around her life experience, "for me that part of my more cultural identity as being an Ashkenazi Jew, and it informs some of the way I think, but it's not a big part of it, I don't speak a lot of Yiddish". She continued by saying that "it kind of wraps its way around my heart and around myself, in a way, that I love, and feel connected to but I don't actually know a hell of a lot of it, that's why it's such a little, little line".

Orli recalled a childhood memory of Yiddish being spoken around her, which beautifully illustrated the quirk of syncretic language experiences. When her grandmother arrived in South Africa they settled in Bloemfontein and she became fluent in Afrikaans. At home a mix of Afrikaans and Yiddish became the *patois*, "they would mix Afrikaans and Yiddish and trying to study it at school, I never quite figured out which words were Yiddish words and which words were Afrikaans words". "It took me ages to go, "*nogal*[20], *nogal*, *nogal* is actually Afrikaans, okay, *schmuck*[21], *schmuk*" *schmuk* is Yiddish, right".

Yellow and orange represented "South African" and Nguni languages and were placed on the circumference of the body. She said she chose yellow, because South Africa is a sunny, happy place in her mind. She offered the following explanation of why these languages were positioned *around* the body:

> *I feel like I live in this world where, um, all the, all these people all around me speak, all these languages all the time, and I feel like, they kind of attach, but they don't penetrate, you know, I don't feel like it gets in, and as a result I feel like there's this barrier between me and a whole lot of um, my compatriots where, I just don't connect. So we have this very, like on one hand it's a barrier, and on the other, it's kind of a superficial touch and of course then, the vast majority of South Africans speak very good English, well certainly more than adequate and communication is fine, but it feels like it's on my terms. And I get quite uncomfortable with that*.

For this reason she said that she would very much like to learn an indigenous language, and had recently started Zulu lessons that were being organised by her department.

[20] Afrikaans, loosely interpreted as "rather" or "is it?".
[21] A stupid, foolish, or obnoxious person.

6.2.11 Ruth

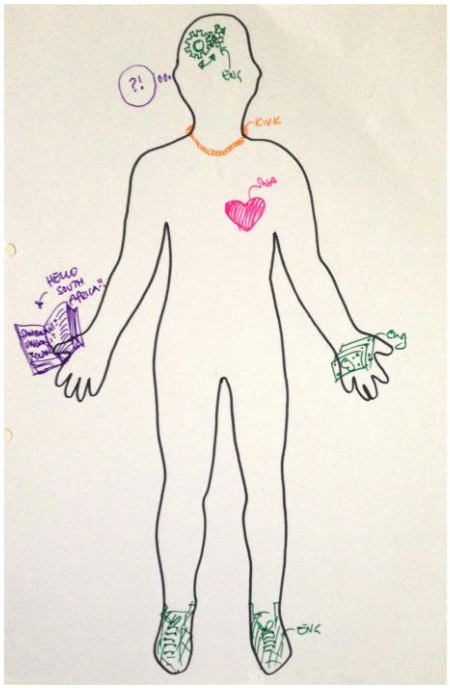


Figure 13: Ruth's Linguistic Portrait

Ruth is an advanced post-graduate student in urban studies. She came to Wits three years ago on a scholarship from Nairobi, Kenya. Ruth grew up in an urban middle class family in Nairobi, but frequently went back to their ancestral home, in a rural area, to see her grandmother. Her parents now live in a peri-urban area, between the rural area of her parents' childhoods and the city.

Ruth highlighted the importance of land to a "traditional" Kenyan sense of identity, one with which she does not identify. She explains that, "I don't think I need land to be happy myself", because she sees an obsession with land as tied to colonial roots and ethnic tribalism. She believes that these tribal differences still run deep today and likens the politics around ethnic differences to racism: "I'm telling you this because people like to say they're not tribal, or you know, because it's like saying you're racist [laughter], but as much as you like to say you're not tribal, it's almost engrained in your system that, as soon as my surname… a Kenyan would know immediately what tribe I'm from, and the fact that you're from this tribe it has certain, you know, connotations". Ruth and her family are Kikuyu and she noted that while this group was exploited by colonials, it was also better off than some of the other ethnic groups, owing to missionary education and other forms of colonial political favouring of one group over another.

Ruth's portrait was clear and simple. She chose the colour green to represent English, which she placed in her head, left hand, and both feet. In her head she drew cogs that represented her thought and capacity in English, "that allows me to, to, move around the world and make a living and to communicate and to think and to reason". For her, engagement with the world happened through English. She then put green bank notes in her hand to illustrate the power of English to make money, presenting opportunity, and financial security. She also drew

green shoes on her feet because English is a language that allowed her to travel and interact with the world.

Kikuyu was represented in the form of an orange necklace. She said that the necklace for her symbolised something decorative and precious. She maintained that it was like a piece of jewellery or beads that you would wear to remind you of something; not necessarily to be seen by the world, but a physical artefact that reminds you of your heritage. A part of one's life that is non-essential but beautiful and filled with joy.

In the heart area, in pink, she placed Swahili. While Kikuyu represented her heritage, Swahili represented her contemporary life, a fluid, syncretic language of city-life that was critical to her identity as a young Kenyan. For her it did not have the same baggage as other languages, like English and Kikuyu, but rather represented a part of her identity that gave her pride as a Kenyan. She explained that "Swahili is more like our Kenyan language or east African language, but it's sort of something that gives you pride so to speak, because English is a colonial language, and just has some bitterness towards it but you use it".

Finally, on her right hand in purple were all the South African languages, which she chose to represent by drawing the book "Hello South Africa!" which she had been reading to try and learn a few phrases. She said she grouped all of these together because she had not learnt any particular languages yet, although she would very much like to. From her stories though, the language of urban South African life was undoubtedly Zulu, represented in the form of taxi drivers whom she encountered every day. These encounters represented a source of great self-consciousness and frustration for her.

6.2.12 Shehaam

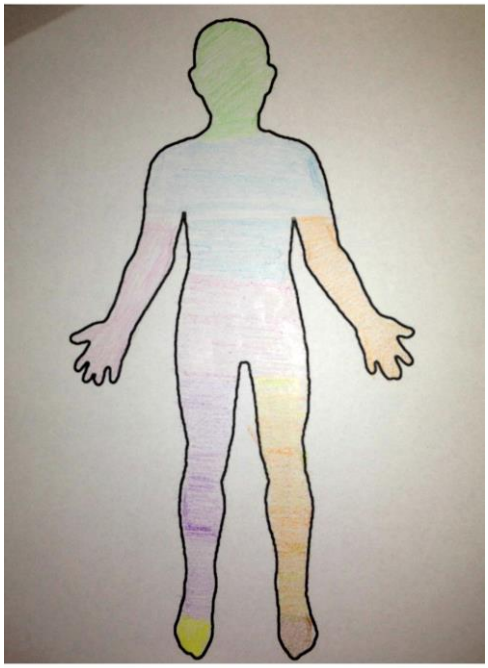


Figure 14: Shehaam's Linguistic Portrait

Shehaam is a Muslim, English-speaking fourth-year student at Wits. She started out in the commerce faculty and subsequently changed to the humanities. She is a devout Muslim, but is quite critical in her stance towards the "culture" of Islam, taking major exception to the cultural relegation of women to a subordinate position, arguing that this is not inherent to Islam, but a product of culture.

Her family is of Indian descent and has been in the country for generations. Despite their long heritage in South Africa, the caste system still seemed to exert a fairly strong cultural expectation of how people would act, and who was suitable to marry whom in her narrative. By her own account she is of the higher, wealthier, Memon caste. Her grandparents and parents speak Memon, although for her parents this is becoming less and less frequent. She says she can understand a bit of Memon, but not very much, but it is still present in their lives.

She started her schooling career in the traditionally Indian area of Fordsburg, near the Johannesburg city centre. This is a largely Islamic suburb, and as such she attended an Islamic primary school, where she said girls were actively subordinated to boys and not given the same opportunities. According to her father, the school had a poor standard of education. Owing to this, the fact that her father believed that women should have more opportunities, and the increased crime in the area, the family moved to the upmarket, traditionally white, suburb of Houghton. Here the children entered private Christian schools. Her summation of this shift in location is as follows, "I must be honest that moving didn't just change where we stayed, it changed how we thought". Her identity seems to be characterised by ambivalence between her devout religious identity critical of the dominant influence of western culture, and a criticality of the culture of Islam itself.

In her portrait English was represented in green and placed in the head, as the language of the brain. It is her home language and also the language in which she was educated. On the torso, in blue, her second favourite colour is Memon, the language of her family heritage. On her right leg in orange is Hindi, which she saw as similar to Memon, and she picked up through watching Hindi soap operas over many years.

On the hand and arm in pink was Arabic. Arabic was precious to her, because it connected her to her religion. She can read Arabic because she had to learn it at Madrassa[22] in order to read the Quran. However, she says that on her recent pilgrimage to Mecca it became clear to her that she could not actually speak it. This is now her goal, to become fluent in Arabic.

In orange, on the other arm, is sign language, something she would like to learn. This desire is spurred on by the fact that her sister teaches at a school for the deaf in Johannesburg.

On the left leg, in purple, are Afrikaans and Zulu, the languages she had to learn at school. She started Afrikaans and then shifted to Zulu, which she took until matric. Much like Arabic, she describes these as 'book languages', because she has not had the opportunity to speak them. Owing to her class, cultural, and religious background, she is not required to extend her linguistic repertoire.

Finally, on her left foot in yellow is French, which she also learnt a bit of at school, but cannot speak at all. She concluded her portrait by marking the right foot in brown and described this as her openness to learning all languages.

[22] Islamic religious school

6.2.13 Sibusiso

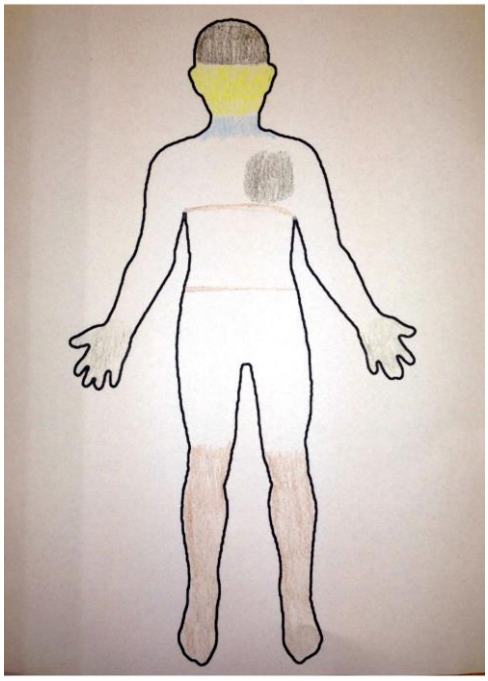


Figure 15: Sibusiso's Linguistic Portrait

Sibusiso (Sbu for short) is a final year Bachelor of Science student. He is originally from KZN, now living in Braamfontein, a largely student area of the city. He grew up in a township[23] on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal. He describes his transition to university as relatively easy. He says that he is a self-motivated student, happy to work hard to succeed academically.

Sbu describes himself as "Zulu Zulu", which he offered up by way of explanation for his lack of fluency in other South African languages. However, he said he could also understand Sotho and Tswana. He said that when comparing himself to others who speak a multitude of languages, where they might have grown up in a multilingual, often urban, settings, for him "it was just Zulu".

Nevertheless Sbu is very keen to learn other languages, as he believes it is good to connect with people in their own language. He mentioned his parents influence in that desire, saying that "in order to grow, as a person, you have to learn different things".

His father is a taxi owner, and his mother is a high school maths teacher. He was quick to point out that despite the stereotypes of taxi owners his father is "not that arrogant". He is one of four siblings and at home they speak mainly Zulu, but he notes that his sister, "likes speaking English".

In Sbu's portrait he seemed to shift between group stereotypes and actual languages, and I have included both here.

[23] An under-resourced urban area, usually situated on the outskirts of the city. A remnant of the apartheid era's Group Area Act, which excluded black, coloured and Indian South Africans from living in the cities or suburban areas reserved for whites.

He placed Venda in the stomach area in white. He said that this represented the pap he always saw Venda people eating. He noted that Venda speaking people "usually know a lot of languages" and he put this down to the fact that most people don't know how to speak Venda. By this he implied that because of their minority language status, they have had to learn other people's languages (not dissimilar to the logic of the Wits language policy, 2014). Xhosa was represented on the hands in grey and he said this was because of the stereotype that Xhosa people were "stingy". He used to have a Xhosa housemate and so was referring to this in, allegedly, good humour. He placed Sotho in the neck area in blue, as a language he finds very beautiful. Blue is one of his favourite colours and he said he would like to learn to speak Sotho at some stage.

Yellow was placed on the face area and referred to Swati and Tswana people. He said they are known as "yellow bones" and are "beautiful, hey". I asked whether he could speak these languages and he said he could not because, "I'm full-blown Zulu". On the head was the group "Indian" not really referencing any language, but he said he included it because he thought of Indians having "black hairstyles".

Then in the heart area, as with other participants, he placed his home language. Zulu was represented in black. This was because he said that Zulus have "dark hearts", "Zulus are eh, are aggressive man, they, they, like fighting, you can see even in our traditions…I know it's not looking at Zulu people as a whole, but if you look at taxi drivers and how, how aggressive and violent they are". He said that, "we have this mentality of being superior to other races". He saw Zulu language and culture as inseparable. He also noted how the Zulu that those from KwaZulu-Natal speak is considered a "deep" Zulu in comparison to the urban Zulu patois of Johannesburg.

Finally, on the legs and feet he placed the group "African people" in brown. Brown was chosen to represent their complexion. He included this imagery because as he said whenever he thought of (black) African people they were always walking. He set this up in contradistinction to white people whom he saw as always either in cars or shopping malls. Interestingly, he did not include English in his portrait at all. Later in the interview he did reference the conflation of language, race, and educational quality, but these issues will be addressed in the following chapters.

6.2.14 Tseki

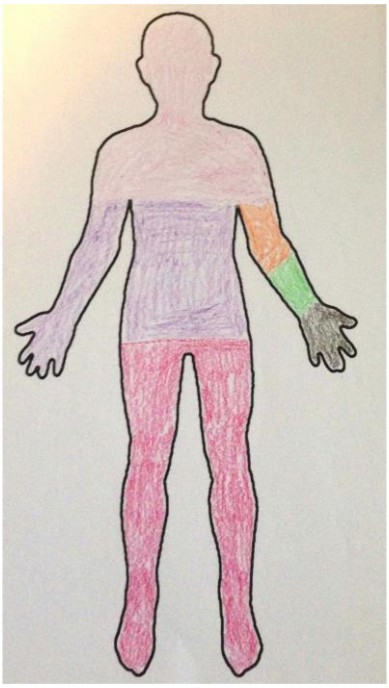


Figure 16: Tseki's Linguistic Portrait

Tseki is a postgraduate humanities student, passionate about her cultural heritage. She describes herself as "a fully bred Tswana girl". She is alert to the complexities of moving between traditional and urban life, and the privileges as well as the social constraints that accompany a good "English" education. She is a returning student to the University. After starting a business degree she had to leave due to financial constraints and enter the world of work. She has since married and has been able to return to her studies fulltime.

She was born and raised in a Tswana-speaking and "cultural" area, moving between rural and peri-urban locales until moving to Johannesburg for her university education and work. Here she met her Zulu-speaking husband, who she describes as a "Joburg child", a syncretic multilingual with little attachment to cultural heritage.

One of the formative moments in her life educationally and linguistically was moving to a boarding school at the end of her primary school years. This school was private and English medium with students from a variety of backgrounds. It was here that she learned to speak English; it was a tough learning curve for a young child who until that point had been educated only in her mother tongue, Tswana. Nonetheless she relished the opportunity to learn in English and did very well academically. She noted that, "It was difficult, especially grade, I went in grade 7 because I had to switch from predominantly learning in Tswana to English…".

In her portrait, Tswana was represented in pink in the head and shoulders. "I considered the head the top is like the top of everything. You kind of need it for, like, you know, your eyes are there, your nose [is] there, so, it influenced who I am and it spoke a lot into my identity". She also noted that pink is her favourite colour.

English was represented in red and was placed on the legs. “The red, is the English, which, I put towards the legs, because I thought that, should I travel, English is going to be the language that I use to be able to communicate with people who are not from South Africa, so I think English is very important to me to be able to communicate with people who don’t speak Tswana or vernac…the legs represent travelling or meeting different people, so not being in my own comfort zone and my own space”.

Zulu was represented in purple and was placed on the torso and left arm. She said that purple is her other favourite colour, and she associates Zulu with her husband and thus has a fondness for the language.

Xhosa, Venda, and Afrikaans were placed on the right arm. Xhosa was represented using orange, Venda in green, and Afrikaans in black. She said she finds Xhosa a romantic language. Venda she associates with a friend, and chose the colour green because of the avocados and bananas grown in Limpopo where Venda is spoken. Afrikaans she associates with learning in school and with the television programmes she watches. Where the other languages were associated with social relationships, friends, and family, or even pragmatic necessity, with Afrikaans she notes, “I just love being able to reply in Afrikaans, shocking people”. This speaks to the South African habit of attaching languages to bodies that supposedly represented a racial category. The body becomes legible in these ideological terms, and when the body does not match the category, there is shock. The black colour, she says, represents “our dark past”. She notes that even though meanings around the contemporary use of Afrikaans are changing, its history is inescapable. “Even though, I watch *Sevende Laan* [Seventh Avenue, a popular Afrikaans soap opera], even though I like to be able to reply in Afrikaans, I can’t forget the fact that its associated with June the 16th [uprising], and the students not wanting to be taught in Afrikaans”.

6.2.15 Vanessa

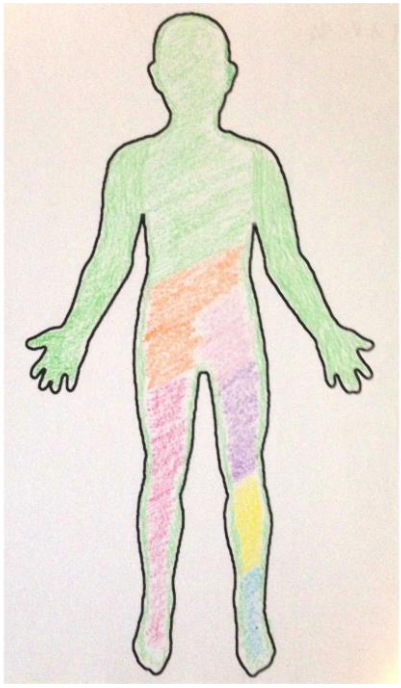


Figure 17: Vanessa's Linguistic Portrait

The final participant, Vanessa, is a third year Bachelor of Arts student, who was born and bred in Johannesburg, and comes from a middle class family. We did not speak explicitly about race, and it only came up in passing. She did not seem to attach much importance to it for herself, but under apartheid categories her family would have been classified as Indian.

In her portrait, English was represented in green on the circumference of the body, and then the upper torso, arms, and head were filled in. Vanessa is ostensibly monolingual, and said this is why she put English "around the whole body, and mainly like the hands and the head, because I find those the most, like, functional parts of the body. I use English a lot, so, I only use English".

Blue was used to represent Afrikaans on the left foot, which she learnt in school. She said she found blue to be a dull colour and saw Afrikaans as a dull subject. She said she felt forced to study Afrikaans in order to pass, but that no one at home or in her family speaks this language.

She chose yellow to represent Zulu on the left knee/shin area. She was also exposed to Zulu at school, and said that, "I don't really like yellow, I don't really enjoy the subject". She only had to learn Zulu in primary school, and thus has very little ability in the language.

Sotho was represented in purple on the upper left thigh. Commenting on Sotho she said that, "my helper [domestic worker] at home, she was trying to teach me Sotho" but that she did not enjoy it. "For me it was very uncomfortable as well and I just found like, this is so strange and why can't we all just speak in English you know?". So, in this language too, she has no competence.

Vanessa has family in the United States and represented their American accents in orange on the right side of the torso. Orange was also a colour she was not particularly fond of. The red on the right leg is Spanish, which she was exposed to on a trip to Spain as part of a Catholic youth conference. Finally, the light pink on the left hip represents Portuguese, which many of their family friends speak.

6.3 Concluding discussion

In these portraits I have shown how the participants chose to visually represent the languages in their lives, and a close description of their narrative interpretations of their portraits provides a first layer of analysis. The visual portrait exercise supplies a language of description for the participants for speaking about language/s in the stories of their lives. The part of the body they chose as the location of particular languages, the meaning the participants attached to that part of the body; the colour, and meaning of that colour used to represent the languages in the exercise, were productive metaphors enabling the participants to articulate how they position themselves in relation to the languages they speak and with which they come into contact.

While the participants' own individual interpretations are fascinating, further analytic interpretation becomes possible when examining the portraits horizontally, identifying common threads and important differences, and casting these in a broader social context, taking into consideration issues of power. Focusing on the subject positions that were constructed in and through this exercise, we are able to make observations about the contexts that would produce these types of narratives.

For instance, some of the common metaphors included the mother-tongue being the language of the heart or stomach, as was the case with Akani, Chipo, Dakalo, Duncan, Faye, Fhulu, Ntombi, Ruth, and Sbu. English, on the other hand, was often represented as the language of the head, an intellectual language, as was the case with Chipo, Ntombi, Orli, Ruth, Shehaam and Vanessa. English was also commonly placed on the feet or legs as a language that would 'take you places', emphasising its relationship to upward mobility and opportunity, as was the case with Dakalo, Faye, and Tseki.

There were three cases where English was left out of the portrait entirely: Annika, Franco, and Sibusiso. In all three of these narratives the ubiquitous nature of English was acknowledged. Annika and Franco used black lines on the body, which they said represented some kind of 'true self', but that this could also be understood to be English as it was their mother-tongue. Sbu did not include English at all in his portrait, but did refer to the pervasive power of English as an effect of apartheid in his narrative.

Often secondary languages were placed on the arms, indicating that they were languages used between friends, a way of being in contact with the world around them, or offering the potential to reach across to other worlds. Languages of discomfort or frustration were also placed in uncomfortable or difficult to reach parts of the body. For example, Faye spoke of the breaking of her knees, creating a form of paralysis, as a way of describing the role of Afrikaans in her life.

Colours, while varying too widely to comment on across cases, were useful to participants in articulating what language was their favourite, through the use of their favourite colour. It was also a useful means of illustrating relationships between languages; for example, red, pink, and purple are close to each other on the colour spectrum and thus could be used to represent relationships of closeness, likeness, context of languages x, y, and z on a continuum rather than as discrete entities.

Finally, the use of the body outline to represent depth, purity, authenticity, and "self" in relation to language was also productive. For instance, participants used the inner body to represent the core, or the "inner" head space to represent the mind or "true self", a language running through their veins. Conversely, the use of the body's boundaries was also helpful in illustrating distance between the subject and a language. For instance, for almost all of the white participants African languages were represented as at a distance from the body, not penetrating or as peripheral.

For the concerns of this thesis, the key benefit of this visual method is the way that the metaphors chosen by participants simultaneously provided salient contextual information about the position and power of both the languages listed, and the speakers of these languages. It was noticeable that Afrikaans was generally negatively described, as was the fact that English was often represented through the use of whiteness and blank space

(invisibility). Which languages were considered essential for day-to-day life also mirrored the way in which languages were valued and utilised in the lives of the participants. Often the monolingual (English-speaking) participants saw no problem with their monolingual habitus precisely because they did not need anything else. Their monolingual habitus was an indicator of their class status. Students of a lower class location needed to make use of public transport and could not do so without a language like Zulu, which Faye described as "the English of black people". Similarly, those who listed foreign languages were often those participants who had been afforded the privilege of travel, or at least people in their family had travelled abroad, or they connected with these distant places through originary family narratives or potential imagined future destinations.

Overall, the portraits offered a rich and textured illustration of the participants' metaphorical relationships to language, which opened up the possibility for nuanced narratives about their language experiences to be constructed. The following two chapters engage substantively with the themes and patterns that are contained in the talk about these portraits across the dataset. I endeavoured to include extracts from all the participants, but the final iteration of this thesis does not include extracts from Shehaam or Vanessa, both monolingual English speakers. I have still opted to include their portraits in this chapter, because their narratives and portraits informed the broader analysis that contributed to the themes that were apparent in the dataset.

The first level of analysis presented in this chapter has dealt with the each participant's description and interpretation of her/his own visual portrait. In looking at the images that they had created and talking about them in individual interviews with the researcher, narrative data were generated. A thematic narrative analysis was conducted of this talk, with particular attention to subject positioning in the narratives produced. Chapter 7, drawing on feelings of ambivalence, anxiety, guilt, love, and relationality that were prevalent in the portraits, culminates in my argument that 'authentic' identity functions as a form of ideology in the participants' narratives. In Chapter 8, I examine how language, power and the symbolic economy produce different experiences of language and differential value for both these languages and the subjects themselves.

CHAPTER 7: Authentic Identity as Ideology

Who am I? Where do I belong in the South African scheme of things? Who are my people? … It often pains me to realize that even my speech cannot really be called me.
…
I am supposed to be a Pondo, but I don't even know the language of that tribe. I was brought up in a Zulu-speaking home, my mother being a Zulu. Yet I can no longer think in Zulu because that language cannot cope with the demands of our day. I could not, for instance, discuss negritude in Zulu. Even an article like this would not be possible in Zulu.

I have never owned an assegai or any of those magnificent Zulu shields. Neither do I propose to be in tribal wear when I go to the U.S. this year for my scholarship. I am just not a tribesman, whether I like it or not. I am, inescapably, a part of the city slums, the factory machines and our beloved shebeens.
…
It is the insistence of the whites that they are "Europeans" which has, in part, inspired such silly slogans as "Africa for the Africans". The Africa of today is simply not the product of assegais and rain queens. Johannesburg was built by the White technical know-how and enterprise plus the indispensable co-operation of Black labour. To that extent, this city will never be Black or White. Black men cannot look at the tall buildings and say "this is ours" without feeling fraudulent. Nor can the Whites.

"It's Difficult to Decide My Identity",
Nat Nakasa. *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 June 1964.

7.1 Introduction

My argument in this chapter is that varied and intersecting modes of identification, articulated in relation to language, point to the fact that an authentic self is not lost when one is changed by interactions with new fields and people (Hall, 2000). However, because the flows of power between fields position speakers of different languages and ways of speaking differently, this contributes to senses of belonging, loss, inclusion and exclusion that are felt on the part of the subject (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). Thus, the idea of the authentic identity, in this case articulated in relation to language, functions as an ideology that positions people as insiders or outsiders with political implications for identity politics.

In this first analysis chapter I focus on four of the seven substantive themes, which engage language in relation to discourses of race and culture: 1) Traces of Culture, 2) Race and Change, 3) "Real" Blackness, and 4) Whiteness and Ignorance. Participants invoked the idea of an authentic identity, under threat of being effaced or replaced when encountering new fields or shifting modes of speaking. Through attending to the participants' subject positioning in their accounts it was possible to see how race and culture were construed as stable rather than dynamic, and constitutive of an authentic identity in terms of language-use.

In section 7.2 I deal with the theme "Traces of Culture". Here I have chosen excerpts that illustrate participants' changing cultural identities as expressed through a sense of a loss or belonging to one's culture. Language is seen as a means of assessing authentic cultural belonging. In section 7.3, under the theme "Race and Change", I examine excerpts that highlight issues of race, articulated through language politics, in the participants' accounts. In the first instance, language is hierarchically racialised and positions (raced) subjects differently in institutional (particularly educational) settings. Furthermore, South Africa's changing racial landscape is undergirded by instances of in-group racial policing, often conducted through language policing, dialogically constructed in relation to other identity categories. These issues are dealt with by examining the themes '"Real" Blackness', and 'Whiteness and Ignorance' in sections 7.3.1 and 7.3.2, respectively. It is worth noting that in much South African-speak the conceptual differences between race and culture are elided as a result of the apartheid conflation of blackness and ethnicity, and whiteness supposedly unmarked by culture. This can also be seen as an attempt to sanitise instances of racism through euphemistic reference to cultural differences.

The findings of this chapter point to an apparent anxiety and ambivalence expressed by predominantly black participants (but also to some extent, by Annika, as an Afrikaans mother-tongue speaker) about becoming more and more part of a world which requires, according to them, some kind of pragmatic assimilation into dominant forms of cultural capital. Through this kind of pragmatic assimilation they have attained some access to dominant forms of cultural capital, but are concomitantly contributing to the reproduction of structures that would have previously excluded them through their (raced) language and cultural practices. This is evidence of Althusser's paradox of subjection, where we are active participants in our own subjection. Participants also articulated a concern that being hailed into a more powerful subject position in a shifting symbolic economy also produced feelings of loss, as if their so-called authentic selves might be erased by their changing language practices. This concern often manifested itself through claims about what authentically belonging to a group identity category entailed.

In claiming or recognising collective identity categories, norms are constructed around what is appropriate for someone of that category. Appiah calls these norms "scripts" or "narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their life stories" (1994, p. 160).

This is not necessarily the external projection of stereotypes onto a group but rather, that members of a group themselves identify with a "narrative unity". He writes that one's "story should cohere in the way appropriate by the standards made available in my culture to a person of my identity" (1994, p. 160). This is especially important for groups that have been denied recognition. As we have seen, Blommaert and Varis (2015) demonstrate how the idea of "enoughness" is an opaque but salient means by which people categorise each other in terms of their appropriate claims of belonging to a particular category. Language is a powerful tool for measuring whether someone is enough or too much to be a legitimate member of a particular group. It is in the nano-politics of subject positioning that one's identity is seen as authentic or compromised in some way.

7.2 Traces of Culture

The first substantive theme to be examined in this chapter is concerned with cultural identity, heritage and loss. Participants emphasised changing cultural identities in relation to what they considered an authentic (prior or originary) ideal. Here, heritage, generational change, and a sense of loss were emphasised in relation to language. Participants across the board largely attributed this to a modernising, urbanising culture, where English is the language of the global world of work. In the participants' accounts there seemed to be a cultural gap between generations and geographical locations, but also a deep longing to stay connected to one's roots in some form. I first examine excerpts that highlight how the participants' languages contribute to a sense of continuity or loss in relation to heritage and culture. Then I move to examine how African languages were spoken about as pure and authentic, while participants' own talk and experiences constructed a more synthetic language practice.

Ruth, as noted in the previous chapter, is Kenyan. She is the oldest sibling in her family and can still speak their mother tongue, Kikuyu; though her younger sisters cannot. Ruth sees this as something that cuts her siblings off from fully communicating with their grandmother, and by implication, their family's community and historical roots. Despite this observation, her own relationship to Kikuyu is something she holds loosely. She sees Kikuyu being spoken less and less frequently, but does not see this as a personal identity crisis so much as a pity of history. Her attempts at keeping Kikuyu alive in her life extend to reading literature and speaking to her grandmother, but she draws a distinction saying, "I try to keep it up for my own sake", not as a political effort to keep Kikuyu alive.

In Ruth's portrait (Figure 13: *Ruth's Linguistic Portrait,* p. 169), Kikuyu was represented in the form of an orange necklace around the neck area. She describes Kikuyu in this way because it represents something decorative and precious to her. She sees it as a piece of jewellery that one wears to remind one of something, not primarily to be seen by the world, but a physical artefact that reminds one of one's heritage.

> *I represented it as um,* ***a necklace****, you like those traditional necklaces that people wear, they don't,* ***some have meaning, some don't****, but I just um, ja, I see it as something that you carry whether or not it has meaning to you… A reminder of something,* ***something we shouldn't lose whether or not it has value anymore in today's world***[24].

This intimate description of Kikuyu as something precious is contrasted later in her interview with the pressures of modern life. She sets up her cultural heritage and her contemporary success in competition with each other, offering up a narrative that confirms much of the literature around a "double" identity or consciousness (Fanon, 1967; Wa Thiong'o, 1995; see also Du Bois, 2007) that is fostered by those that are compelled to move between social worlds. Indeed she uses the word "double" herself:

> *Again it's, the same* ***sort of double,*** *what's the word, two extremes, so you've got, you want to show how well you've* ***modernized by speaking very good English*** *at the same time you want to show how you* ***haven't lost your roots by speaking good Kikuyu*** *and* ***fluent and without an accent****, you sort of trying to balance both ends that ja [yes], I'm good enough to fit in this system that's now English, but I'm not so, modernized that I've lost my touch with my people… you have to be good on this end and good on that end.* ***Impress on that end, impress on this end****. So ja, have your cake and eat it, so to speak. 'Cos* ***no one wants to lose their traditional role****. I think ja, at heart we all want to keep our roots, whatever we call our roots, everyone wants to show that I come from this place, and this is what I speak, but at the same* ***time you don't want to lose your link with the modern world****, (inaudible 34.38) in our minds we have to speak, and communicate in certain ways,* ***you have to talk in a certain accent****.*

In Ruth's narrative above she expresses the frustration of having to perform the perfect identity of the "modern" subject, in fluent, unaccented English, what Blommaert and Varis (2015) have called "fluency" (p. 7). At the same time she is required to demonstrate that she is culturally authentic, in other words, that she has not lost her roots. This is a very difficult position to maintain, but also necessary. As she notes, inasmuch as one wants to be considered part of the modern world, there is a deep and necessary attachment to "whatever

[24] Bold typeface in the narrative excerpts are to draw the reader's attention to my analytical emphasis.

we call our roots". An affective dimension of belonging is therefore evident in her account (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). Even when one cannot rationally articulate what this cultural belonging means, it is important to one's sense of place in the world. Each identity, the traditional and the modern in her words, threatens to undo the other, but without both dimensions of her identity the project of being a viable subject in this time and place is not possible. There is a paradoxical symbiosis between her English identity and her Kikuyu identity; at the nexus of these is what she considers her*self*. This sentiment is gently and humorously articulated, when she describes communication between herself and her grandmother:

> *Ja, sometimes you're just like, ah,* ***let me just speak my English-Kikuyu, and sound like a colonial missionary*** *and let her [grandmother] laugh her head off.*

The reference to her own accent as that of a "colonial missionary" trying to speak an African language is a remark on the irony she feels about her own voice. Her voice can be explained in words one would use to describe someone else (a "colonial missionary"), but it is her voice nonetheless. Her comments on her style of English serve as evidence for Achebe's (Ashcroft et al., 1994) argument that English can be appropriated and take on new meanings, in new bodies. Yet her words also indicate that in terms of what is considered an "authentic" identity, she is damned if she does and damned if she doesn't, in both her use of English *and* Kikuyu.

Similarly, Chipo's identity as Motswana (national identity) and Kalanga (cultural identity) are important to her. She describes her culture as undergoing change. She says that her cultural heritage is still valuable to her, "as liberal as it [the culture] has become".

> *At the end of the day,* ***your culture does say something about you, as much as maybe you want to be as universal as possible,*** *you still come from somewhere, you know, and your parents still believe in something, whether you like it or not, those beliefs have been instilled in you. And you may think that,* ***'oh no, I've been educated I've got a liberal way of thinking'****, no buddy, no. [laughs].*

Here Chipo draws on a similar motif to Ruth. Her idea of being a "universal person" I read in the same way Ruth spoke of being a "modern" person. The contrast between the apparent openness modernity, or universality, promises, to the particularity of cultural heritage is interesting. This distinction reinforces the normative assumption that there should be an authentic cultural identity. The universality of "the modern" is seen as contingent one's ability to speak English (Nyika & Van Zyl, 2013), while one's cultural heritage appears

static, even as we know this not to be the case. Indeed, the participants' narratives on their changing relationship to their cultural background bear this out. Chipo highlights that the process of identification is such that, "whether you like it or not", one's heritage will have some kind of purchase on your identity.

Faye placed her mother-tongue, Zulu, in the head of her portrait (Figure 8: *Faye's Linguistic Portrait*, p. 160). She said that this signified that it was deeply embedded as part of her identity. She describes Zulu as:

> *The inside because, um, the reason I say it's inside is because,* ***there's no escaping*** *it, it's it's there for life and, like it's, you know when you draw, you know the earth, sometimes they say there's* ***the core*** *and then there's the outside, ja, that is what they say, so the core is always there, and it's* ***already formed****, and everything outside it develops, so I feel like the English and it's already formed, and everything outside it develops, so I feel like the* ***English is what develops*** *because it's my language of instruction and my language of learning, but then my Zulu will always be there, ja, and because I don't learn any Zulu, I feel like it's limited, it's only this part, it's only this portion*.

Here Zulu is articulated as the fixed substrate upon which the rest of her linguistic identity is built; she describes it as "already formed" and "there's no escape", playing on the trope of authenticity and fixedness around ethnic identities and selves (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Nongogo, 2007), and of language and authentic identity more generally (Bucholtz, 2003). Similarly, the previous two participants also saw their cultural language as something static and intimate, while English was representative of change and a connection to the wider world. English, and by implication this aspect of herself, was seen as mutable, because it "develops".

Nevertheless, Zulu functions as an anchor for how she thinks about herself in relation to the social world. English, for Faye, is layered on top of her "original" identity, her "core". Faye's description of her linguistic biography can be understood as a palimpsest, in that her "original" Zulu identity is in some way effaced, but traces of it remain, and the new aspects of her identity are added as another layer. When speaking to her about her languages, one can see the biographic layers built up over time. The metaphor of the palimpsest, as with Derrida's use of the term "erasure" (Sampson, 1989, p. 7) indicates that Faye' attempt to articulate her how she feels about her various linguistic identities do not capture the fullness of what might be meant. Her relationship to Zulu "contains both itself and its other" (Sampson, 1989, p. 8), in this case English. She can only articulate her relationship to Zulu

and English in terms of the relationship between the two languages, one being the core, the other as developing. With every citation (Derrida, 1986) of her identity, the self is annotated. It is important to note that annotation is not a deletion. Using the language of Freud's mystic writing pad (Sampson, 1989), Zulu is a permanent trace on her identity, or in her words, her "core". However, with each new life experience, a new surface layer is opened up and made available for new imprints.

Ntombi offered a reflexive narrative about the nexus of her cultural heritage and contemporary life, and demonstrates how her identity is constituted *between* the two. When asked how she would describe herself culturally, she responded:

> *Uh, wow, {.hhh}, um, mmm, okay. This is difficult… [smiles]…I don't know… I feel like* ***I've lost myself*** *coming to Jo'burg, so I, ugh, I don't know, I don't know, I mean previously, I was,* ***staunch cultural****, and, the values and you know practices that we follow back home, I subscribed to, but then, now…[sighs], I don't know, I think* ***I'm cultural when it suits me****, I mean I'm Swati, so obviously, that means you're conservative, you're obedient, respectful, and so many other things, but… ja. It's a patriarchal society, so when you get* ***exposed and you, going to classes*** *where you're taught about, liberation and so many other things, feminism and you think, "****no, I actually, don't agree with certain things*** *that have been happening" so, I'm kind of in that period in my life where I'm trying to, you know****, develop my identity*** *and just kind of, sort myself out, and find out who I really am, and what I believe in so, I'm not sure*.

In this excerpt, Ntombi also implies that there is a binary between her cultural heritage as static, and the modern world of university as a place of change (which is somehow seen as not cultural). This distinction suggests that change equates with "losing" oneself, and being "cultural" means being only one way, "staunch", and she lists ways of being "obviously" Swati. Her exposure to the field of the university, presented her with new ways of thinking, new schools of thought, and has brought about a critical distance between herself and her heritage. She is actively aware of the identity construction work in which she is engaging as a result. Ntombi also adds an emphasis that was not overtly remarked on by the other participants: she wonders whether her critical orientation towards her culture really does the "undoing" many imagine it to, thereby critiquing the traditional/modern binary:

> *But* ***does this make me less Swazi*** *because now I'm, you know, subscribing to that type of thought, or that school of thought, I don't know, so….*

Ntombi, through engaging with her culture that seems to offer up only one way of being, realises that interrogating one's culture, or even disagreeing with aspects of it, does not mean

it is no longer there, no longer part of herself. This is what Bhabha (1996) refers to as "hybridity", where her "negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration. Hybridity makes possible the emergence of an 'interstitial' agency which refuses the binary representation of social antagonism" (p. 58). She challenges the claims to authenticity that a static understanding of culture would otherwise reproduce. Is it possible to be less or more Swazi depending on one's beliefs? In the words of Blommaert and Varis (2015), what counts as Swazi *enough*? It is unclear precisely because of the ideological underpinnings a fixed notion of identity claims. The ideology of an authentic identity in only necessary in reference to a *particular* political end, because one would demand recognition, secure rights, and aim to produce effects in the world as a member of a particular group that might have been previously excluded or denigrated. Once this political goal has been exceeded what is left in its place is a form of social policing for category maintenance. It is worth noting that holding onto this form of identification could be for power, status and/or for affective dimensions of emotional attachment, such as feeling 'at home' in a group (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). These aspects could be independent or mutually reinforcing, but are particular to individuals and not generalisable.

Moving further along the cultural continuum, from fixed and authentic to fluid and changing, Fhulu locates his cultural understanding of himself in a thoroughly cosmopolitan way. Fhulu describes himself as:

> *I'm more of, (p)* ***a new kind of a person****…* ***I'm a person of this world****, I'm a person of this new South Africa, who is open to learning anything, who is, open to learning other cultures but not really being that cultural*.

Fhulu sees himself as open to the world, learning from other people and cultures, and seems not to put too much stock in his own cultural heritage. His use of the phrase, "I'm a person of this world" is somewhat ambiguous, because it is not clear what "this world" refers to: This modern world? This world of the university? This non-traditional world? He does not seem to be implying the same binary as the previous participants. Even though he is from a small town in a rural area, he disputes the idea that this means this space is a conservative place ruled by traditional authorities, and characterised by minimal development. Fhulu is proud of his community, and seems to map onto it the same understanding he has of his own identity:

> *So we just,* ***a free-spirited community*** *where people just do whatever they do… there is that oneness you know if, for example, they want to build a school, they got together and spoke about it and then it was built [claps hands], clinic,* ***they got together and***

> ***spoke about it, and it was built****, so it's that community where um,* ***leadership is just from the community, it's not really from maybe a chief****, something like that*.

What is interesting about Fhulu's narrative is that he seems to be able to jettison the modern versus cultural heritage binary, appealing to a hybridized notion of identification (Bhabha, 1996). He notes that the community which he comes from is more concerned with the day-to-day development of their locale and that, within this community structure, people are still free to be themselves, they are not subsumed by their traditional structures.

Finally, Annika, whose mother-tongue is Afrikaans, is least eager to claim her cultural heritage compared with other English second-language participants. Although, in spite of her overt claims of moving away from Afrikaans, we see that aspects of her cultural identity are in fact safely intact. Her narrative also expressly engaged with identity as something that is fluid and open to change. In explaining her portrait, she chose black to represent her*self*. She explains that:

> *I wanted to use black because, because, I sort of thought of a chalk board, where you take all these chalky colours and just draw on it, you can always* ***erase*** *things from a chalk board* ***or add, fill it up*** *completely and then there's no black left and I thought that's these currently are the only languages that I'm involved with but like, what we said about the* ***Afrikaans, if it falls away there will be something else to replace it****,* ***or maybe not****, something else will grow a bit bigger, um, and then, there needs to be space for that, and there always needs to be space for it, so there will always be a bit of black which is me, sort of the space to incorporate everything, and where everything exists, the universe, it's black and got stuff in it, colourful things, ja. So that's my person*.

She sees her identity as constantly having to make space for experiences she may encounter which then change her in some way. For example, she says of Afrikaans that perhaps it will "fall away", and something will "replace it", or not. The palimpsest metaphor (Berman, 2004) could make sense here where identity is seen as an articulation (Hall, 2000) of layers of history and personal experience. She sees herself as a blackboard, where things will be rubbed out and replaced. One could also see a blackboard as something on which traces remain once the chalk has been rubbed out. This Derridean understanding of the blackboard could accommodate her awareness that Afrikaner identity cannot remain unchanged, but this need not insist upon complete deletion.

Despite her intermittent discomfort with her Afrikaner identity, Annika is still attached to what could be considered cultural artefacts of her heritage. Not unlike black participants, she

notes the cultural value in her particular history. Afrikaans literature, poetry, and art are important to Annika, and while she seems pragmatic and at times even *blasé* about the "falling away" of Afrikaans in her day-to-day life, she is clear that these works of art and history are things she would want to pass on to her own family one day, even if not Afrikaans as a mother tongue. Annika says she does not feel sad about losing Afrikaans because:

> *It will always be there, you know, sort of part of the* ***bone marrow*** *in a way, but* ***hidden*** *and um, inept of sorts, unused. Losing it wouldn't be tragic for me because, that's just the way it goes and* ***I'm okay for losing it because it means I've picked something else up***.

There is an ambivalence here that is again captured by the palimpsest metaphor. Afrikaans she says will always be part of her "bone marrow", implying some kind of core self. The traces of Afrikaans will always be there, however the biographic layers of time and experience might mean it is not as readily visible as it once was. Simultaneously she claims it would not be "tragic" to lose Afrikaans. I would argue that she can only be this casual about "losing" her language because, in fact, she is not losing it. The cultural repository of Afrikaans artefacts is there for her to draw on, locate herself in, if she so wishes.

The same cannot be said for African languages, and thus her subject position in relation to Afrikaans as a language of power in the symbolic economy is evident. African languages are devalued for different reasons to Afrikaans. Unlike African languages, no-one is suggesting that Afrikaans cannot do intellectual work or is unmodern. The art and texts of Afrikaans exist as inscriptions of her culture. That is why she can take up and put down her Afrikaans identity on a whim. Her position of power in the symbolic economy is not under threat if she does so.

A similar attitude was seen in Ruth's narrative about Kikuyu, perhaps this is also because of her secure, if not dominant, subject position in relation to others in society. As middle class people, with more than one type of cultural capital to draw on, if they lose one aspect of their identities, they have other forms of capital that will swell to fill the gap. This notion of loss is again called into question through the use of the palimpsest metaphor. Nothing is finally erased. This is evident in both Ruth and Annika's narratives in that neither of them feels compelled to 'save' their languages. They feel secure in the fact that it will continue in some form, with or without them. For those secure in their subject position, heritage does not have to be a safe haven.

It must be noted that the particularity of subject position is important here. White South Africans who are concerned about the supposed political insecurity of Afrikaans occupy a very different subject position to someone like Annika. Paranoia about cultural loss by those self-evidently in positions of power demonstrates the skewed historical power relations between groups. This is Bourdieu's (1991) point about how power differentials between groups are structured through an economy of symbolic exchanges. Those in positions of power with multiple forms of cultural capital can convert one form of capital to another. Annika might no longer speak Afrikaans in a particular field, but the objectified capital in the form of cultural goods remains (Bourdieu, 1997). This subject position is very different to many poor, black South Africans on the margins of metropole, who might be very threatened by children who now speak different colonial tongues (Ratele, 2013), because their limited cultural capital is non-transferrable. It is the precarious nature of certain subject positions that requires them to hold onto that which grounds their subjectivity through claims to authenticity. This is what Bauman (1996) points to when he notes that, "one thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs" (p. 19).

7.2.1 "Pure" African languages

Participants engaged in discourses of authenticity when describing the various languages they spoke. However, these discourses of authenticity paradoxically serve to undercut the notion of pure African languages existing in some untouched, pure form. The participants used examples of the contrast between old and new, or urban and rural, ways of speaking to illustrate how languages have changed. These examples are evidence of the inherent plasticity of language. References to "pure" African languages highlight the way the language of everyday life "is rigorously categorical, dividing the population into mutually exclusive ethnonational categories" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 27). What the accounts of the participants also tell us is that while claims to purity may be a means of describing or even asserting identity, they may not be "faithful descriptions of them" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 27). Thus, we can see that the tacit valorising of the older, "pure" form of language is an ideological move rather than a factual claim.

For instance, Ntombi emphasised that the Swati spoken in Swaziland was different from the Swati spoken in South Africa:

> *It's **still** very **pure**, it's not a mixed language, like you know, how, if you live in a country **with mixed tribes**, with mixed cultures, there, they kind of diffuse into each other and you know, it's still in its purest, um, ja, sense, so ja. I don't know, it's just, there's something about it, **some element of pride**.*

Here Ntombi is hesitantly describing the difference between Swati from Swaziland, her home country, and South Africa. She tacitly positions "mixed tribes" and "mixed cultures" as something less than authentic, where she is speaking about South African variations of Swati, while the "pure" version offers her a sense of "pride". The pejorative connotation of "mixed" tribes and cultures contrasted with her "pure" way of speaking does ideological work in securing her subject position as more authentic, closer to the 'original', than the syncretic mix of South Africans.

Tseki also draws this distinction between mixed and pure in explaining her cultural and linguistic background:

> *I come from a Tswana family and because I grew up in an area that was mostly Tswana, my dad, my biological dad is Tswana and so is my mother and so are my grandparents… so I come from a, **I'm not mixed in any way**, I come from a, **fully bred Tswana girl** [laughs] you seldom find that in Jo'burg because everyone is like, 'oh my dad is Xhosa', 'my mom is Zulu', 'my grandmother is Tswana'. I don't have any of that, everyone is like, Tswana.*

Tseki's tone is less disapproving than Ntombi's, but she uses the same language of being "mixed" versus a sense of purity. For instance, she describes herself as a "fully bred Tswana girl", reminiscent of the phrase, "100% Zulu boy" used to describe President Zuma when he was on trial for rape in 2006 (Moya, 2006). She also notes how language mixing is more prevalent in an urban area like Johannesburg, where families are comprised of a variety of cultural influences.

Chipo also sees the Tswana spoken in Botswana as a more authentic language than the syncretic mix she has come across in South Africa, where it is "mixed with Pedi and Sotho". Again the description of mixing versus purity emerges in her account.

> *For the first ten years of my life, I was with my mom's family, and they are Tswana, like they are **like 100% Tswana**, so I guess that just contributes to the, Tswana, (ja) and um, I never used to be able to speak Tswana properly, my cousins would always dis me (ja), like, 'dude, **you are not speaking Setswana', I'm like, "I am though**, I am", I'd really try but, is something my mom would identify from a very young age that, I am not, of, [chuckles], "**not of Africa"** as she likes to put it, because, {.hhh} [swallows], I'm very international, very, very international, I, let me not say I don't like Africa, but, I just believe that there's more for me (ja).*

The quote from Chipo's narrative contains within it a number of moves in relation to authenticity, purity and identity. She speaks of her extended family with whom she lived as a young child, describing them as "100% Tswana". Their identity is totalised in this category. But then she implicitly disputes this claim when she says that when her cousins criticise her way of speaking as "not" Tswana, she responds by pointing out that, "I am though". She may not be speaking what is considered the pure and authentic version, but it is no less Tswana. She then seems to go back on this implicit critique and identify herself as an exception to this group identity. She says her mother sees her as "not of Africa", which she corroborates with her explanation that she is "very international". The effect of such an understanding of Africa is that there is no room for variability in an African identity, either one has to be pure, authentic, or one is "not of Africa".

This resistance to a more syncretic, fluid understanding of African identity is also present in Ntombi's account. Alexander (2011) suggests that to make multilingualism a viable practice in education we need to work with Nguni languages as a group, instead of seeing Xhosa, Zulu, and Ndebele as separate languages. He argued that these distinctions were an external imposition that has come to reify these language categories. In a discussion about the possibility of grouping families of languages together for the sake of language development, Ntombi categorically states that this would not work.

> *It wouldn't work, because um,* ***language is associated with identity****, and and,* ***a certain value system and culture****, now if you try and group them together you are actually, I just feel that you are* ***diluting*** *being, you know, you* ***taking away*** *their identity, and ah, it's not going to happen (ja), one thing I've noticed is, I don't know if it's* ***an African*** *thing or not, but it could exist anywhere else but I've only just travelled throughout southern Africa and picked it up from there you know, there is a sense of* ***pride, in the culture****, there is a sense of pride in language, there's a sense of pride in identity, and all these things are so interlinked you know, the way people carry themselves, the way people speak, it, I don't think it would work. Ja. It wouldn't.*

Here Ntombi invokes authenticity as being the key to an African sense of identity and pride. She notes that language, culture and identity all link together, conferring an identity on a group. The value placed on what is experienced as unique and authentic, while in some ways necessary for a sense of pride and recognition, also carries within it the potential for "compulsion" (Appiah, 1994). This compulsion implies that there is only one way of being African (or to be African *enough*), and variation will "dilute" African identity itself. The fear

or threat of losing oneself to the flotsam and jetsam of a fluid cultural identity is clear in the following excerpt from Ntombi.

> *I mean in certain areas you can, I mean it's true, because well, Swaziland is still quite cultural, there are nations that* ***have lost their culture****, because of industrialization (//can you give//), South Africa is one. South Africa is one. I mean in Jo'burg for example, how do you, how do you identify with a certain culture? Because it's just* ***such a mixture of everything*** *and you need to,* ***coexist, and coexist means compromising,*** *and obviously once you compromise that means you take certain aspects (ja), of other people's um, cultures and values and you internalize them as well (ja), to a certain extent, I* ***mean you, you lose yourself*** *in that as well*.

Ntombi argues that modernisation and urbanisation, which she calls industrialisation, means a loss of culture. It is interesting that mixture is associated with loss, as opposed to the "adding of this to that" (Smith, 2009). In fact even "addition" assumes a stable and secure base that might be left unaltered. Mixing seems to bring the threat of absence, rather than the promise of presence. But as Derrida, (1978) has shown us, presence and absence are coterminous. Coexistence for Ntombi does not seem to be coexistence at all, for her, compromise means losing oneself. What we see in these claims to authenticity is a form of "ethnographic salvage" (Garuba, 2011); trying to retain something that was never fixed to begin with. Or in the words of Busch (2012), claims to authenticity can be understood as "the memory of something that never existed" (p.509). Vertovec's (2007) description of the context of superdiversity helps us see that holding onto a parochial, fixed notion of one's culture seems a guarantee that one will lose it. The world is changing, we are moving, coming into contact with people different to ourselves, and this reconstitutes the notion of difference itself.

In the excerpts that have been examined we see that cultural ties to identity were felt to be maintained or frayed depending on one's language proficiency. This finding concurs with Fishman's (1999) argument that, language *is* cultural belonging or heritage. One's relationship to a mother-tongue, as noted in Derrida's account (1998), offers a sense of place and identity, provides an anchor for an otherwise fractured existence. However, this "prosthesis of origin" (Derrida, 1998) interpellates us as subjects of a particular position in society and so culture cannot be considered in isolation. The varied and intersecting modes of identification of the participants points to the fact that, an 'authentic' self is not lost, rather, this experience is an ideological effect that maintains our asymmetrical subject positions. The flows of power between fields position people differently, and this contributes to the sense of belonging, loss, inclusion and exclusion that is felt on the part of the subject (Yuval-Davis,

2006b). How this type of cultural positioning functions in conjunction with race in the narratives of the participants will be explored below.

7.3 Race and Change

The second cluster of substantive thematic material to be considered in this chapter relates to race and changing notions of identification, and how language impacts on acts of racial labelling and categorisation. The relationship between race-as-social-location and emotionally identifying with a racial label are not inevitably one-to-one (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). However, it is evident in the South African context that "identities and belonging/s become important dimensions of people's social locations and positionings, and the relationships between locations and identifications can become empirically more closely intertwined" (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 203). This is because identity categories, have been, and in some cases continue to be, ascribed to groups of people.

The long lasting effects of colonialism and apartheid were evident in the participants' narratives about day-to-day life. Blackness and whiteness are mobilised as racial identifications, and seen as illustrative of flows of power in society. Many of the participants were reticent to say that racial labelling had any meaning for them but, in their narratives, the power of racial thinking, and historical continuities of racialised power and privilege are clear. As Bock and Hunt (2014) found in their study of racial discourses among South African youth, young people often "deploy their repertoire of identity options" in strategic ways which "index shifting alignments" (p. 3). The participants in this study displayed a similar ambivalence and complexity in relation to racial identity in South Africa. Nevertheless, language still mapped onto race in clear ways. When asked about issues of language, the response would often invoke a racialised explanation. This was nowhere more evident than in educational spaces, which were still described as "white" or "black", where English and African languages were spoken respectively, and which reproduced racialised understandings of spaces.

Ashchroft's (2001) explanation of the link between philology and ethnology is helpful in understanding the imbrication of race, culture and language in the South African context. The history of colonial relations meant that English came to be seen as attached to whiteness and indigenous languages attached to blackness. Language became imbricated with race, such that it became customary to think of linguistic "races". This was of course compounded by

the ethnicised homelands of the apartheid regime. The fiction of race was attached to languages, thereby reifying race through languages. Today we see that everyday South African talking and thinking is still informed by this reified understanding of race through language.

In the following excerpt, Tseki explicitly uses racial demarcations to describe her school experience. I asked her what primary school was like and she responded:

> *Black. Ja. [laughing] I don't want to say* ***Bantu Education****… it wasn't like your* ***Model C****, it wasn't mixed, so it was in the township,* ***black, sometimes, they taught in Tswana even, unless if they really had to introduce English****, so most of my primary school was taught in my mother tongue so then, my high school… its only black students, but taught by white teachers, so that brought an element of speaking English most of the time*.

I asked her about school experience and Tseki immediately took this to be a question about the racial composition of her school. She uses "black" to describe a school with a majority of black learners. She then uses apartheid labels to try to describe the type of school. "Bantu Education", no longer in existence by the time she would have attended primary school, is still the label that comes to her mind, although she realises it's not quite accurate. In this sense she is using the term "under erasure" (Hall, 1996, p. 1), because she does not have a new language of description for her experience. For her, Bantu Education means a school that was located in a township and did not use English as its primary language of instruction. This is also a comment about the quality of education on offer, which she articulates through reference to different languages. The township school taught in Tswana and only occasionally used English. She compares her school to a "Model C" school.

Tseki also highlights the racial dynamics of her high school experience in her narrative, where the notes that the learners were black but the teachers were white, which meant English was spoken "most of the time". The linking of the racial makeup of the school with language maintains the idea that an English education is a white education and vice versa. The implication is that a good quality education is associated with whiteness, maintaining the myth of whiteness as superior, even though this is not explicitly noted. However, it is also true that these schools are better resourced than many township schools. Many parents and learners know this, and thus their decision to send them to English schools could be seen as pragmatic, even though by their participation they are contributing to the reproduction of the existing symbolic economy. Her access to an English/White education, as we see in the rest

of her interview, has stood her in good stead in terms of accruing the necessary cultural capital for successful tertiary education and possible career paths.

Other participants also used similar racialised descriptions of schooling. Sbu, for example, when I asked him if he attended the school his mother taught at, said: "*No, it's* ***'cos it's, a black school****, not that I have anything against, black schools"*. The irony of Sbu saying that he does not have anything against black schools is clear. He is black himself, and yet the racialised descriptions and the value contained within these labels shows the distance at which he holds race for himself. By implication, his mother, who teaches in this "black" school, thinks that other "English" schools would be better for her son. He barely referred to his or anyone else's race at any point in the interview. What strikes me here is that, as Bock and Hunt (2014) noted about the participants in their study, Sbu is ambivalent about what the label "black" means, both in relation to the school and himself. The use of "black" to describe the school indexes the quality of schooling, not blackness in terms of his identity. There is a slippage between the label used and what it indexes. "Black" could refer to an identity category or to the quality of schooling; these are very different things, and I do not think he is conflating blackness with poor quality in his general narrative at all. But, because it is a racial term being used, it maintains the nexus between race, language and quality of schooling.

Sbu attended an "Indian school, well, for primary, I went to an English school, and then to an Indian school". Again in this description the way in which racial and linguistic labels were used was interesting. English (which indexed whiteness) was afforded a linguistic label, while the other schools were only referred to by their racial demarcation. For instance, an "Indian" school would also be an English school, but the racial label is used. This elevation of English above race paradoxically protects the privilege of whiteness by placing it outside of the raced world. This is a critique often levelled against white people: they see themselves as unraced and cultureless while everyone else is raced and belongs to a cultural group (Steyn, 2001). In the description of schooling experiences we see this logic being reproduced in the talk of the participants.

The distinction between whiteness and white people is also significant in the language used to describe schooling experiences. Akani's narrative demonstrates the insignificance, largely, of white people in his life. In his quotidian life, white people do not really feature. In his own

words, “I don’t really spend much time with white people, ja”. He had little to say about white people other than that it was noticeable that they are largely monolingual and, if and when they do choose to speak a new language, it is often foreign. The separateness and ignorance of white people is something that will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. However, what is important to note for now in relation to race and change, is that the absence of white people does not equate with the absence of the power of whiteness. The hegemonic norms of whiteness, which most often took the form of English is evident all the time, even in the most banal of descriptions, as we see with both Tseki’s and Sbu’s accounts above.

The excerpts above demonstrate both the changing emptiness and fullness of racial descriptors. In some instances, ‘race’ was used to refer to something other than race (e.g. quality of schooling). The racial idiom is used because no other descriptor, in the South African context, captures the specific nexus of material issues. The participants see themselves and others as belonging to a particular social category, in this case, race. Yuval-Davis (2006b) argues that what is actually being referred to is a subject’s social or economic location, or subject position within the symbolic economy, which she describes as, “a certain positionality along an axis of power, higher or lower than other such categories” (p. 199). What we see is that race was rarely used as a category of identification in their narratives (in terms of an affective sense of belonging, while language and culture are), yet participants had very clearly racialised vocabularies and experiences to recount (in terms of their social location) (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). In the following section I examine the more affective dimensions of ‘belonging’ to racial categories, as the participants recounted them.

7.3.1 “Real” Blackness: “What did your parents do to you?”[25]

The ‘authenticity’ of blackness was a central concern in the narratives of the black participants. Much of the contestation around forms of blackness deemed appropriate or inappropriate by the participants, had to do with the material quality of the voice. Ratele (2013), writing about his son’s accent, discusses the phenomenon of “speaking white while looking black” (p. 125). By this he means that the presence of black body brings with it the essentialist expectation of a particular script, or in this case, linguistic habitus. This is the tension Appiah (1994) points out in relation to individual and group identity. Ndlovu (2012)

[25] Excerpt from Dakalo (ll 817).

makes a similar point and says we should pay attention to when and how singularity is conferred or asserted in terms of "authentic" or essentialised identity categories. The reality is that there are always multiple identities in competition with each other for any one person. Some categories of belonging matter more than others depending on the context, and this is where contestations of singularity occur.

Ndlovu, drawing on Hall (1996, p. 17), speaks of an "improvised identification", which is a product of over-determination, rather than a one identity being subsumed by another. Thus, when a singular aspect of our, or someone else's, identity becomes relevant to the story we are telling, we improvise as to what this might mean and perhaps overstate its salience. This is not because blackness is the ultimate form of identification for that subject, but rather that we are all over-determined from the outside; many meanings are projected onto what blackness should/does mean. The visual is important to us in making sense of our worlds. While the visual is the signifier, what is signified is open to debate. As Ratele (2003) notes elsewhere, blackness is difficult to hold together because it is in the process of being opened up and reconfigured.

Not knowing any African language was seen as a contravention of an authentic form of blackness. In this following excerpt from Dakalo she refers to "looking black" (Ratele, 2013), and not being able to speak an African language, as an aberration. She also relates this "speaking white while looking black" (Ratele, 2013, p. 124) to issues of class:

> *I mean there are those who went to the **Model C schools**, [you can] tell that they always group together (okay), and I mean, you find those that say they **don't know any South African language** (oh wow) and **they [are] black and you look at them and you're like, are you serious? What did your parents do to you**? And then, so you do find, and they tend to group together, and you find that they're **of the same class** even, so that there are those who can go to the PIG [post graduate pub] and just have lunch every day at the PIG (mm) I'm not going to spend, R50 at the PIG every single day (mm) so it also goes with that, I think it also goes with class as well*.

Dakalo implicitly sets up different categories of blackness. She describes those people who cannot speak an African language as coming from Model C schools. The assumption is that one would speak English if coming from a Model C school. She is incredulous that one could look black, "they [are] black" and yet cannot speak a South African language. She also lays the blame firmly at the feet of their parents. This comment contains within it a judgment about what being black *should* mean, according to her. If one looks black, one should be able

to speak an African language; if one cannot, something is at fault. She goes on to explain how this group of people "sticks together", and that class is a large determinant in this regard. She speaks about the post-graduate pub and the means required to eat there frequently. For her this is not an option. So she sees these groupings of different types of blackness as a product of (or at least aligned with) class difference.

Chipo, as we will see below, would be considered one of the students that Dakalo takes issue with in terms of not conforming to her expectations of blackness. Dakalo might politically choose to close the boundaries around a particular type of blackness because people of different social locations are differently valued. There are ethical values and political implications involved in claiming belonging and also judging whether someone is part of "us" or "them" (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 204). As we saw through the work of Yuval-Davis (2006b) in Chapter 3, the relationship between social location and identification do not necessarily map onto each other but, because identity categories influence one's subject position in the symbolic economy, the relationship between social location and identification has ethical and political implications. This is why there are "specific attitudes and ideologies concerning where and how identity and categorical boundaries are being/should be drawn" (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 203).

Chipo's unapologetic positioning of herself as aligned with whiteness could be read as a form of 'betrayal'. Chipo speaks about herself as having what she calls a "white girl mentality". She explains it as follows:

> *Because, I've got a very <**I don't want to say a white background**, but, all my friends had been white growing up (okay), and I was always **bullied by the black girls**, so obviously I had a bit of a, like, oh my gosh, (p), black girls are just so, ja, I can't deal with them*.

Chipo starts by trying to explain how she sees herself fitting in with other black students. The 'lesser than' sign (<) is a transcription convention indicates that she runs into this phrase (please see Appendix A for transcription conventions), in a hurried, almost embarrassed admission, "I don't want to say white background". In terms of race and change, what we see here is Chipo trying to explain the social dynamics of her life, with race being the only description at her disposal. She is aware of the absurdity of referring to her background as "white" because she is black. This could also be because being a "coconut" is not a socially desirable position, as Dakalo's comments make clear. Because her blackness does not fit

within the expected conventions of "authentic" blackness, she uses racialised language to narrate her position in relation to others. She had white friends growing up and felt bullied by black girls. This experience has left her critical of other black girls, "I can't deal with them". I pressed her to try and explain why she adopts this label of a "white girl mentality". She said:

> *I actually have no idea, I really, [.hhh] in a way, I think it was some of my dad, 'cos my dad, he was doing,* ***he was bowling****, (okay)****, how many black men actually bowl in a green*** *(laughs), so my dad used to do bowling and then, obviously all his* ***friends there are white****, and then, (P), all their daughters became my friends, which was Lauren and Claudia and we were all in the same year, so (okay, okay), so I guess it just happened….*

Chipo's explanation is interesting for the singularity of blackness (Ndlovu, 2012) she simultaneously invokes in explanation, but that her lived experience palpably denies. Why does she have this relationship with whiteness, why is her background "white"? She chooses to put it down to her father's hobby, playing bowls. Playing bowls is "metonymically inflated so as to stand for something far bigger and more profound" (Blommaert & Varis, 2015b, p. 23). She invokes a singular conception of blackness in the phrase, "how many black men actually bowl in a green", but the very fact that her father is playing bowls interrupts the expected script of blackness, showing that this singularity is not in fact reality. Later in her narrative she expresses frustration with this group identity compulsion:

> *So then I got to Rhodes [University], once again, ja, you know [breathes out [hhh], black girls also just have that thing, '****you're black you should be hanging out with us****' (okay) kind of thing, you know, but I just really didn't gel//.*

In her narrative it appears as if she sees herself as betraying this singular black identity, and that invoking whiteness to describe her life experience is frustrating. Is she really "less black" or not black *enough* because her life does not conform to expected scripts of blackness (McKinney, 2007, p.20; Blommaert & Varis, 2015)? Authentic blackness (and identity more broadly) as an ideology is exposed in the following logic:

1. I recognise you as black.
2. I recognise you as the 'wrong' kind of black.
3. But by being able to recognise you as the wrong kind of black (2), I am tacitly recognising that there are multiple ways of being black (1).

This means that there is multiplicity inherent in statement one. The critique levelled at those falling short of authentic blackness exposes the fact that the person doing the critiquing recognises multiplicity (*personal communication*, Bradbury, 2015).

Equally frustrating to her is the language question that flows from her description of herself as a coconut. Chipo takes exception to the fact that "just because I'm black" she should be expected to speak Zulu.

> ***South Africans are not polite about the fact that I'm black and I want to speak English****, not polite about it, even when you're in a shopping mall, and I think that's what annoys me… the teller… she speaks to you in Zulu and you're like sorry, I don't understand what you're saying, and then they give you a smug look, I'm like, 'but for what? I've done nothing to you, I just can't speak your language', you know so, it's ja, so sometimes it's very disheartening, like* ***it hurts, you're just like, I'm human too***".

Chipo's narrative is further complicated by the fact that she is Motswana from Botswana. This is why she places emphasis on the fact that, "I can't speak *your* language" in reference to South Africans. Nevertheless, from her account, it would seem that it is her black body that carries with it certain expectations, regardless of nationality. She experiences the same incredulity from other South Africans that Dakalo expressed, because Chipo speaks English instead of an African language. This is what she describes as the "smug look". In her interview she was fairly defensive about her position as a "coconut", but the last line of this excerpt reveals the pain of not living up to the script of her body. "Sometimes it's very disheartening…it hurts…I'm human too". Chipo's deviation from normative blackness, even in her eyes, is difficult to articulate. She is not allowed to position herself as another kind of black, rather she has to see herself as part of whiteness to find a vocabulary for her identity narrative.

In Faye's narrative, a similar tension between varieties of black experience and the compulsion of black/white racialised description emerges. Mid-way through her first interview I asked her what she prefers being called, and she said that people from high school call her Faye and people from "here" (what here is, is uncertain, maybe university) call me Khamvelihle, so either, "I really have no issues with that". I then asked her how she would introduce herself to a group and she said it depended on race: "If you black, I won't say Faye, 'cos you going to ask me why my mom named me Faye [laughs]".

Faye's description of the different contexts in which she chooses which name to foreground is interesting because it highlights the policing of identities that takes place in terms of 'authentic' racialised identities. She won't introduce herself as Faye to a black person because she assumed "Faye" to be outside of the normative expectation of a black identity; "you going to ask me why" I am named in such a way. In this context she would use Khamvelihle. She explains this naming convention, saying that it stems from childhood, "it started off when I was a kid playing with the white kids [laughs]". Here she is referring to the historical use of 'white' names by black learners in white schools (Chigumadzi, 2015). It not surprising then that in an interview with a white researcher she introduced herself as "Faye".

She continues this narrative including an experience she had with a lecturer. She observed a lecturer say to another student who had given an abbreviated version of her name, *"*no… I need to call you by your real name*"*. She said after this experience she reflected for the first time on her own naming practices and came to the conclusion that:

> *The **white kid**s called me Faye as a nickname, so it was **kinda made by them**, so that's the only time I've ever thought about it. That* **they** ***changed my identity for me, and I accepted*** *(smiles)".*

Faye acknowledges the intimate relationship between naming and identity. Through the white kids calling her a "white" name, she retrospectively recognises this as changing her identity. Importantly, she adds that she "accepted", thus not denying her agency in this process (indeed one can see her as responding to the Althusserian 'hail' in the double act of subjection). Her identity became bifurcated; she has a white name and a black name. Even though she is still black when using the white name, the label materializes race, and she is only 'really' black when using the black name. She explains this as follows: *'cos Khamvelihle **I need to be that Xhosa girl**, and when I'm Faye I'm myself*.

The different names assume different identities. Despite her white name being something she acknowledges as coming from "outside", from her white friends, in this excerpt she expresses this name as "myself". The gap between her social black self, and who she really feels herself to be, is split because of the social script of what is considered appropriately black or white.

Faye also offered an anecdote about a particular support staff member on campus, who is apparently known to many students. In this account she expresses irritation at the script of authentic blackness this person tries to enforce through his language practices.

> ***He just speaks to you in Tswana**, **black people, obviously**, he speaks to you in Tswana and then you will reply maybe in English and then he'll keep speaking to you in Tswana, I don't know if he's trying to, implement, know-your-language, to um, to people, or what's going on in his head, but he does that, and it annoys a lot of people*.

She is frustrated because this staff member speaks to her in Tswana, she qualifies this statement by saying "black people", implying that he would not do this to white people. This is followed after a momentary pause by the irritable, "obviously". Much is carried in this "obviously". Obviously she is black, obviously she will be expected to perform her identity in a particular manner, obviously white people are not subjected to this requirement. She notes that even if she resists this by speaking English, he will continue in Tswana. Her remark that perhaps he is trying to "implement, know-your-language", is indicative of the irritation these identity strictures cause for her. But there is another side to this narrative, one we can only speculate about, the narrative of the staff member.

From the context of the story, this staff member is clearly not senior, in an academic position, or someone for whom many students might have respect. In this subordinate position, his identity as a Tswana speaker takes on greater significance. Through insisting on speaking Tswana he is asserting his value qua-black person. Appiah (1994) indicates that this is necessary when one is not recognised as human, or rather recognised as human *in spite of* one's blackness, maintaining blackness as something malignant. This is an untenable position, and so one's identity must be asserted on group category grounds. The staff member asserts this singularity because of the implications for his subject position (Ndlovu, 2012). Between the staff member and Faye, a contestation over the singularity of blackness is taking place. The importance of the singular identity category, Ndlovu (2012) notes, becomes an issue when it is in crisis. I argue that blackness has become salient in these accounts, because what blackness *should* mean is currently being opened up and debated. As Smith explains, blackness becomes…

> … a quality each individual black person [is] constantly in danger of losing. And almost anything could trigger the loss of one's Blackness: attending certain universities, an impressive variety of jobs, a fondness for opera, a white girlfriend, an interest in golf. And of course, any change in the voice… [but] The reality of race has diversified. Black reality has diversified. It's black people who talk like me, and black people who talk like Lil Wayne (Smith, 2009, p. 142).

It is precisely because Dakalo, Chipo, and Faye have such different ideas about what blackness does, and should, represent, that it is necessary to remark on it at all. In their accounts we see how blackness is implicated and articulated in and through language. The

script that is attached to blackness has implications for their subject positioning in their various contexts. The differing expectations attached to these racial and linguistic signifiers places one at risk of being too much or not enough (Blommaert &Varis, 2015), compromising the possibility for recognition from the other.

7.3.2 Whiteness, ignorance and intimate separateness

The final set of narratives to be considered comprises those to do with whiteness in relation to language. Are white South Africans, African? This was a question some participants asked explicitly, while for other participants, white people were peripheral to the goings-on of everyday life. White participants narratives demonstrate that they are still very much at the centre of their social worlds, with minimal consideration for how their language practices position them in relation to other South Africans. Secure access to valuable cultural and social capital protects white participants from their lives changing materially (Bourdieu, 1997, 1991). For example, none of them ever had to learn to speak an African language. They could attain the necessary forms of institutional capital, such as school and degree qualifications, with minimal effort, drawing on their forms of cultural and class capital, and accompanying linguistic repertoires. The ideological nature of cultural capital is that it is presented as a natural fact of the world concealing the fact that it is underpinned by (but never reducible to) economic capital (Bourdieu, 1997). Concealment or ignorance is key to people believing in the subject positions in which they find themselves, and act in accordance with societal expectations of someone in that subject position.

White insularity, I argue, is a product of both intimacy and ignorance in relation to fellow South Africans. Both white participants and black participants noted the contiguity of white and black life, but even in this intimacy there was a separateness that was maintained through forms of ignorance. South African relationships of racial difference seem to be characterised by "intimate separateness" (Peterson, 2014), which Ndebele (2013) has called a "fatal intimacy" (p. ix). When this close but separate living is coupled with wilful ignorance, the power and conceit of whiteness is reproduced, as we will see in the participants' narratives below. This does not mean that no knowledge of their position in South African society was demonstrated by the white participants, but that simply reflecting on these ideological and material constraints is not "enough to dissolve [them]" (Parker, 2002, p. 17). In analysing these excerpts in relation to the notions of intimacy, separateness and ignorance, we are in

part able to piece together how a white South African "sense of selfhood" might be produced "in relation to others" (Parker, 2002, p. 135).

Steyn (2012. p. 8) speaks of an ignorance contract between subjects in particular social locations as a "tacit agreement to entertain ignorance…understood as a social achievement with strategic value". The strategic value in this case is maintaining one's subject position as a privileged white subject. Thus, to maintain our subject position, we need to become "appropriate performers of ignorance" (Steyn, 2012. p. 8). Ignorance and domination are interrelated because ignorance is "actively constituted or reproduced as an aspect of power" (Feenan, 2007). In white participants' narratives, a "systematic ignorance" (Steyn, 2012) is constructed from positions of power. The ignorance displayed by white South Africans in the excerpts that follow with regard to other South African languages is constitutive of a deeper form of the ignorance contract, which maintains their position of privilege. The added peculiarity of the South African situation is that this active ignorance is not at a distance. It is maintained in intimate spaces: the home, classrooms, university campus, and the workplace.

The identity label "African" in relation to whiteness, and more specifically Afrikaner identity, emerged in Annika's narrative. She appeared to have to do quite a lot of work at explaining and claiming her "African identity" while having limited experiences to show what this might mean in practice. This is demonstrated most clearly in her repeated reference to "African" languages and an "African" identity, which are not very specific while nevertheless being passionately claimed. For instance she cannot actually speak any African language, except Afrikaans, which is her mother tongue.

> *Um, I see myself more as an African, and I think that has to do with my dad,* ***I can understand some African languages, it's sort of unfortunate that I can't actually speak one,*** *(ja), but I try (laughs) (that's cool), so ah, ja, I'm pretty much English based in terms of language but ah, there's a whole lot of other influences that I think, that make up, (breaths in), (ja), who I am, ja*.

Here Annika starts by saying she sees herself as an African. She attributes this to her father who she sees as having liberal politics and having "transcended" his Dutch heritage. She says that she can "understand some African languages", but does not detail what they are, or her level of understanding and then immediately admits that she cannot speak any. It is important for her to claim an African identity, because this creates a sense of intimacy and belonging,

but at the same time her inability to speak any African language betrays this belonging. She then goes on to explain why she sees Afrikaans as an African language.

> *I've always had this debate with people, **Afrikaans is an African language because it was made here**, (okay), made here, ja, um, (So you agree that it's an African language?) ja, it is, it is, um we still separate it, **and I think it's important to separate it because, we think that way**, ja, (mm), and, **it might fall away**, ja (Sorry just explain the separation again, why is it important?) well, because people get confused, like there's a lot of people who still think that Afrikaans people are Afrikaans people, (okay) and Africans are Africans, that's kind of frustrating, because **Afrikaans people, sort of, were born here, really** (mmm), um, that's where the whole culture started, um, and I don't think we've been given enough history in school to be able to appreciate that, so separating it, I think helps people, to think about, what an African is, and what an Afrikaans person is, not necessarily good, I guess, I don't like it, ja, just **because of my name and people think, 'oh she's not an African, she's an Afrikaans person**', which is very frustrating*.

To Annika, she is African because she considers Afrikaans to be an African language. The separation of Afrikaans and African languages is to her a misunderstanding of history. Her birth in South Africa, and her speaking Afrikaans, constitutes her as an African in her eyes. Paradoxically, she sees her Afrikaans name as both a form of betrayal, *and* authentication of, her Africanness. She sees Afrikaans as the grounds on which someone might disqualify her African identity and yet, for her, Afrikaans is what makes her African. This existential conundrum, however, seems set at a distance from the practices of everyday life. She speaks mainly English, and cannot really differentiate between other African languages as we see in this excerpt below.

> *Well, Zulu I learnt at school, in primary school and then stopped, so it wasn't very long, um, but **I, have a lot of friends who all speak Sotho or Zulu or Xhosa, and my housekeeper as well, Helen**, um, I mean **she's been with us for 20 years**, and um, I've always sort of (what does she speak?), **she speaks quite a lot, haha, and I always forget what she actually** (p) **we** always conflict about this**, is she Ndebele, is she, I don't know**, I know she can speak Zulu (mm) and Xhosa and Sotho, and Tswana and, (breathes in), pretty much like 5 different languages, so, I can never remember what she actually speaks, because she's got so many different friends as well, that she speaks differently all the time, so (ja). Um, **but she's always around she's always speaking something or other** and I guess I'm always exposed to something like that, which is nice (ja)*.

In the excerpt above I try and get a better sense of to which languages she is exposed. The intimate separateness, and difference in subject position, between her family and her black domestic worker, "Helen", is immediately obvious. She begins speaking about her friends that speak different languages, and then moves to Helen. I interrupt to ask what Helen speaks and she makes a glib joke about her speaking "quite a lot", and then says she actually forgets

what language she speaks. While I have no doubt that Helen is multilingual, the following phrase, "we always conflict about this" is not in reference to Helen. Rather she is saying, we, my family and I, always debate what language she speaks. Why, in a relationship that spans 20 years of working in someone's home, is this up for debate? Why can this not simply be asked of the person concerned? To ask would reveal the family's wilful ignorance. Annika does not see her ignorance of Helen's language(s) as compromising her subject position in the slightest. This is demonstrated by the confidence of her comment that Helen is "always around, she's always speaking something or other". The fact that that she does not know this information does not impact on her life at all demonstrates her position of power in relation to Helen. The intersection here of intimate but separate lives, in which she and her family are ignorant of the biography of someone who works in their home, is all too commonly known in South Africa (Cock, 1980; Ally, 2011).

While Annika might demonstrate some remorse about her ignorance of African languages, this was not the case for all the white participants. Franco, a white participant, explaining his portrait, said that Afrikaans and all African languages are of no use to him:

> *So there's yellow here and brown here and yellow's Afrikaans* ***and brown here*** *is this, so I mean you could associate this with many things, but one thing I* ***put it on my shoes knowing*** *that it might be that* ***I'm also kicking them to the curb*** *or, (Afrikaans, what did you say the brown is?) and* ***the African languages in this country*** *[a small giggle] um… (so all of them are the brown?) ja [laughing], and I knew that that would be controversial but I was like that's how I think about it 'cos ….um, so, the main reason I put them there is because, well I use like,* ***I've walked away from them****. I used to learn them in school, now I don't learn them… I learnt Zulu when I was in primary school, with Afrikaans, and then I just learnt Afrikaans and English….well, I literally went to high school* ***and then never got exposed to it again****.*

The active stance of moving away, placing those languages on his shoes, "kicking them to the curb", is indicative of his perceived subject position in relation to others, expressed through his attitude towards language. He speaks about never being exposed to Zulu again, however, most people on campus speak Zulu and it is present in almost all public spaces in South Africa. Reading this interview one would draw a different picture of the university, where no-one speaks any other language but English. Here again the nexus of intimacy, separateness and ignorance play themselves out. The negation of African languages in his narrative serves a specific purpose in the construction of his position as a white subject. He is used to embodying power, enjoying ease of communication, having people adjust to his abilities. Instead of engaging with the reality that the university is quite different, he constructs the

university in his mind as a space that does not include Zulu. In doing so, he does not need to engage with this space or the people in it in a different way, his subject position is affirmed. By carving out a version of the world and inhabiting it, he is choosing *not* to know another version of the world that persists around him. Derrida refers to this form of monolingualism as an "absolute habitat" (1998, p. 1); there is nothing outside of the language one speaks.

The absolute habitat of his English whiteness is further substantiated through a vignette about interacting with shop attendants. Franco speaks about going into a shop and not understanding what is being said around him:

> *Ja, ja, ja, um, just you go to a store, you buy cigarettes or like a chocolate or coke or whatever,* ***and the people at the counter will be making little comments right in front of you!*** *And* ***you don't know whether it's about you or about their everyday life, but it just bothers me*** *because it's like, it's the same as, like I know, I know. It just bothers me that I don't know what's going on*.

In a very quotidian setting with his fellow citizens, Franco is put out because he does not understand what is going on. The tone of this lament however is not one of self-effacement, we see this through his phrase, they will be "making little comments right in front of you!" He finds it rude that they are talking in front of him in a language he does not understand. This is again evidence of the "intimate separateness" (Peterson, 2014) and the wilful ignorance (Steyn, 2012) that characterises whiteness in these examples. He is in these situations all the time, why does he make no effort to learn what is being said? Again, because it would compromise his powerful subject position, it would make him vulnerable; it would require him to change. His comments represent standard slips of white insecurity through the assumption that they should be, or are, at the centre of the social world.

Not all white participants displayed this lack of reflexivity. Indeed Duncan and Orli engaged with these issues meaningfully, but even so, as Parker (2002) notes, reflecting on these types of issues is not enough to dissolve the constraints they reproduce. Duncan, at the outset of his first interview, says:

> *Speaking about language, it's one of the,* ***it's one of the things I'm most embarrassed about as a South African, white South African, is that so few white South Africans speak, uh, Zulu, or Xhosa, or Venda*** *or whatever, uh and it's something I'm very embarrassed about, you know I mean,* ***my family's been living here since 1820*** *and* ***no one along the way took the time*** *to actually learn, a, indigenous language….*

Later in the interview he remarks that, "I'm also a bit embarrassed to say I can't even tell the difference between most South African languages". The fact of the matter though is their subject positions as white South Africans within the symbolic economy have protected them from the necessity of learning to speak any other language. As Orli notes, "I don't *need* any other language, it's just, it isn't there". Orli does not need any other language, because her cultural capital matches the requirements of the market (Bourdieu, 1991). Her linguistic capital is transferable. They have remained ignorant even as they acknowledge their intimate separateness. Orli explains:

> *I feel like* ***I live in this world where, um, all the, all these people all around me speak, all these languages all the time****, and I feel like,* ***they kind of attach but they don't penetrate****, you know, I don't feel like it gets in, and as a result I feel like* ***there's this barrier between me and a whole lot of um, my compatriots*** *where, I just don't connect. So we have this very, like on one hand, it's a barrier, and on the other, it's kind of a* ***superficial touch*** *and of course then, the vast majority of South Africans speak very good English, well certainly more than adequate and communication is fine, but* ***it feels like it's on my terms****. And I get quite uncomfortable with that*.

The languages that surround Orli confirm the "intimate separateness" of monolingual whiteness in this country. Indeed, her awareness of this constructs not just the barrier of ignorance, but of social awkwardness, she is uncomfortable in her position, but her position persists. In her account we see Derrida's words come to life, "the Other as nearest neighbour…. Very near and infinitely far away, such was the distance that experience instilled in us" (Derrida, 1998, p. 37).

As we can see from the excerpts above, especially in relation to language and relational citizenship, "whites have the most to gain from remaining ignorant and are more likely to display a 'passion for ignorance'" (Cohen, 2001, p. 297). The participants maintain their intimate separateness through ignorance "rather than engage with the 'difficult knowledge' of complicity in systemic injustice" (Cohen 2001, p 297). Using Yuval-Davis' (2006b) categories of belonging we might say that white South Africans acknowledge their social location, but deny any affective identification with the category of whiteness[26]. The denial of this affective dimension means that the tacit ways in which they reproduce their access to power is left in their blind spot. Moreover, they are not able to view themselves as being emotionally damaged by being the beneficiaries of a structurally racist society. In denying

[26] I say they deny it, not that there is *no* affective dimension to their belonging to the category.

this form of belonging, they are able to display wilful ignorance about their ethical and political responsibilities as South Africans.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to show that ideological interests about who belongs, and who does not, underpin the belief in an "authentic" identity. The narratives of the participants "reflect emotional investments and desire for attachments" (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 202) with others, which articulate both a sense of "belonging and a longing to belong". It is worth noting that "belonging" does not only connote the warmth and closeness of being at home, it can also work in reverse. For example, the anxiety around being inauthentic is related to concerns about belonging "too much" to a world where one might be reifying the symbolic economy through one's pragmatic participation in or assimilation into a system of value that might have previously excluded one. On the other hand, those in a position of privilege might be anxious about questions of belonging, not because of a sense of affective displacement, but because of a fear of potential economic displacement from a social location of privilege. Both of these types of anxiety emerge because of the paradox of subjection; where I play a role in my own subjection (Althusser, 1970) and because of the discontinuous nature of power; the power that initiates the subject is not continuous through the reproduction of social forms, it can shift and incrementally change with every utterance (Butler, 1997a).

We see that changes in ideological identity categories might be possible where there is a productive tension between a secure sense of belonging and the feeling that this belonging is not stable. In the participants' narratives, we have observed this shifting tension through "the emotional components of people's constructions of themselves and their identities becom[ing] more central the more threatened and less secure they feel" (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 202). Our racialised history (and present) has meant that people are interpellated into groups with high political stakes in the meanings of such categories.

For instance, in the excerpts above it is evident that collective race and culture identity categories become contested when they are in crisis (Ndlovu, 2012). Language is a primary site of these nano-politics (Blommaert & Varis, 2015). When the content of the collective label is contested, it provokes comment, as we saw with Annika wanting to be seen as

African; Chipo's narrative about what is appropriately black; and in Dakalo's policing of the boundaries of blackness.

These contestations are not just about what the content of these social identity categories should be, but are also always constituted in relationship to the Other. There is always an Other against or through which these contestations of identity and authenticity occur. Derrida (1998) notes that it can be the Same-Other (within a category), or the Other-Other (between categories) because, for him, any expression necessarily contains "both itself and its other" (Sampson, 1989, p. 8). This is precisely why even monolingualism is a product of the relationship with the Other (1998). It becomes necessary for the idea of authenticity to be *invented* when identity categories are unfavourably or unjustly positioned in relation to each Other.

My argument in this chapter has been that the varied and intersecting modes of identification articulated through the language practices and politics of the participants points to the fact that an 'authentic' self is not lost when one is changed by interactions with new fields and people, because it never was 'authentic' to begin with. The flows of power between fields position people differently and it is access to power that contributes to the sense of belonging, loss, inclusion and exclusion that is felt on the part of the subject. We see then, that identity, far from being something fixed and stable, is the *effect* of struggles waged over the categories, ideologies and scripts into which we are born. What we experience as "identity" is an effect of a particular subject position.

One might draw the conclusion that questions of linguistic authenticity are a distraction from the very real, material inequalities that make identity politics necessary (Appiah, 1994). However, the case of the "coconut", who may be materially secure, but feels a sense of anxiety about reproducing the structural power of whiteness (readily noticeable in their language practices), or experiences racism in society, indicates that the material and symbolic are not neatly aligned. Debates about authentic identity politics are important, precisely because prejudice is reproduced symbolically, sometimes, but not always, aligning with the reproduction of unequal material conditions. What is considered valuable in the symbolic economy is the result of the relationship between fields, and is not solely determined by the material economy or political power. Meanings attached to identity categories become the site of affective attachment *and* economic value, and therefore investments in felt-identities

play a role in re-inscribing or shifting these categories and relations between them. I argue that what is considered valuable in the symbolic economy is subject to the shifting contextual demands of the relationships between fields. It is this argument that I take up in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 8: Language, Power and the Symbolic economy

No revolt against any discipline, no critique of the academic institution could have silenced what in me will always resemble some last will, the last language of the last word of the last will: speak in good French, in pure French, even at the moment of challenging in a million ways everything that is allied to it, and sometimes everything that inhabits it.

"The Monolingualism of the Other",
Derrida, 1998, p. 48-49.

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I detailed the findings of the thematic analysis regarding race and culture in relation to the overarching theme "authentic identity as ideology". In this chapter, issues of identity and authenticity are still apparent, but the emphasis here is on the effects of power as mobilised through language, with a specific focus on how forms of social capital are related to the habitus in different fields. As noted in chapter 2, the symbolic economy is related to the material economy, but not reducible to it. This is because of the citational nature of the symbolic realm in producing shifting forms of meaning. However, the structural power dynamics of race and class are still at work in the symbolic economy even though the value and meaning of symbolic assets and cultural capital, such as speaking "good" English, may vary across fields. This means that the hegemony of English is still apparent in the participants' accounts, even though the value and meaning of English varies between fields.

In this chapter I focus on the three remaining themes emerging from the thematic analysis, namely: (1) English mind/African body; (2) Accent and the Habitus; and (3) English as a Variable Symbolic Asset. Each of these themes relates to the overarching issue of how power is distributed between various symbolic assets in the symbolic economy. First, in section 8.2, I discuss how English and African languages are represented in the participants' portraits. I examine how these representations produce an asymmetrical dualism in the subject positioning of the participants in relation to their languages, leaving the hegemony of English intact. Second, in section 8.3, I examine accent as an aspect of the habitus and how this produces particular expectations and readings of the body that position subjects differently. Finally, in section 8.4, I examine English as a variable symbolic asset across fields, noting how people occupying differing subject positions value the language differently.

These themes point to the fact that the symbolic economy has the power to position subjects in particular ways in relation to each other and in relation to broader structural forms of

power. The individual's capacity for creative meaning-making in his / her personal biography does not take place in isolation, intersecting in complex ways with the materiality of both the body, and the economy. I will show that specific bodies are read (and valued) in varying ways, and that language is used as marker of these bodies. In this sense, as Bourdieu (1991) has already shown us, the habitus has cultural, linguistic and social components, which we read as having access to (or not, as the case may be) multiple forms of capital.

English, often associated with the habitus of whiteness, is privileged as the supposed language of rationality and upward mobility. However, because subjects necessarily move between different fields in the symbolic economy, the value of English oscillates. The relationship between the material and symbolic economies is not determined, rather, it is *the relationship between the fields* that frames how a symbolic asset is received or valued, varying with the shifting subject positions of individuals in different fields. The embodiment of a particular type of cultural capital within a particular context is constantly interpreted by others in relation to their own subject positions. The power of the material economy lies in the fact that even though meanings and values shift between fields in the symbolic economy, the ideological power dynamics of (raced) class remain largely stable. The epigraph to this chapter is illustrative of this tension. Our habitus is the result of our social location, which bears the imprint of broader material power structures. Even in challenging all that is dominant, there is always that "last will", where we see the paradox of subjection at play, and we become participants in our own subjection.

8.2 English mind/African body

In this first subsection I deal with the theme, English mind/African body. Cartesian mind/body dualism has, in post-modern and post-structural theory, been replaced by a notion of the subject as embodied and located (Hall, 2000; Weedon, 2004). However, the histories of Cartesian dualism, racial ideologies and colonial politics still have impulses in our present (Weedon, 2004), where whiteness is associated with mind, rationality and a disembodied universal humanity (Dyer, 1997). As Dyer and others have noted, white bodies are privileged "as an unmarked norm against which difference is measured and defined" (Weedon, 2004, p. 15). On the other hand, blackness, or sometimes Africanness, is associated with the fixedness of an exotic body, located in a dark and irrational place (Billington, Hockey, & Strawbridge, 1998a&b).

Everyday talk, stories and ways of articulating our identities are rooted in, and draw on, epistemological assumptions of which we might not be aware. This is what Freeman (2002) describes as our "narrative unconscious". West writes that, "the very structure of modern discourse at its inception produced forms of rationality, scientificity, and objectivity, as well as aesthetic and cultural ideals which require the constitution of white supremacy" (West, 2002, p. 47). This means that the Cartesian schema of the enlightenment "prohibited the intelligibility and legitimacy of the idea of black equality in beauty, culture and intellectual capacity" (West, 1982, p. 48). This bifurcation between representations of the white (or "raceless") mind and the black body is constitutive of subject experience. These differently represented bodies occupy different subject positions on the axes of power and have different possibilities open to them in society.

In the portraits and narratives of the participants it became clear that this binary was replicated in their talk and representations of African languages and English. In their accounts, English became a place holder, or means of achieving a universal subject position, which could be construed as whiteness. As Weedon (2004, p. 17) points out, "liberal humanist subjectivity often corresponds to white subjectivity". (See also Steyn (2001) on this.) English represented the language of education, thought and upward mobility, while African languages were referred to as languages of the heart, or something that marked their bodies. In other words, English took up the apparent neutral—and often invisible—position of whiteness, often couched in terms of opportunity. On the whole (9 of 15 portraits) placed English *in the head*, and in another three cases, it was put on the legs or feet, representing it as a language that would take you places[27]. Corroborating the visual representation of their portraits, the same tropes were apparent in their ways of speaking about their languages. Their mother-tongues (when not English, which was the majority of participants) were positioned favourably in their narratives, as something precious and intimate. However, when these depictions were cast within broader considerations of power and subject position, the effects of the English mind/African body trope started to emerge.

[27] There were three cases where English was left out, Annika, Franco and Sibusiso. Please see portrait chapter for more detailed comments on each drawing. In all three of these narratives the ubiquitous nature of English was acknowledged. Annika and Franco used black lines on the body which they said represented some kind of true self, but that this could also be understood to be English. Sbu did not include English at all in his portrait, and only referred to English in his narrative.

Often whiteness was conflated with English, constructing it as the norm, while the African language was seen as occupying the intimate language of body and home. The trouble with this kind of stereotyping is that it denies "representational range" (Dyer, 1997, p. 12) to African languages and African language speakers. As a result the "narrative structural positions, rhetorical tropes ad habits of perception" (Dyer, 1997, p. 12), in the final analysis, lead to the asymmetrical positioning of subjects of particular languages. This is not a voluntaristic or volitional act on the part of the participants, but is a trope about English and African languages, a feature of the talk and portraits more generally.

This theme draws attention to the fact that the discursive positioning of African languages as representing emotional closeness, or authentication of one's blackness, but being of little utility in the modern world, re-inscribes the dominance of whiteness through English. While the particularity of this historical moment is producing new identity formations that jettison old ideological constraints, it is important to remain aware of the discursive continuities that position subjects asymmetrically.

What I found notable about Ntombi's narrative, which was also echoed among other participants in different ways, was the implicit binary set up between English and the "mother-tongue", in this case, Swati. English is represented as the language of rationality, in the head, offering an upward trajectory, while Swati is represented in terms of emotional attachment, cultural identity, a sense of belonging, and something that is felt in the body (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). Through setting up the languages in this way, we see the old mind/body dualism emerging, as well as the colonial racist tropes of whiteness being associated with the head, and blackness with the body (McClintock, 1995). This binary took the form of the abstraction of English from context, presented as a universal commonality and a necessity of modern life, and the visceral depiction of one's relationship with the black African language of heritage and cultural identity (Rudwick, 2008b).

When describing her mother-tongue, Ntombi placed Swati in her heart area in yellow, and English was placed in the skull of the head in orange (Figure 11: *Ntombi's Linguistic Portrait*, p. 165). I asked her what this meant or signified and she said that the yellow represented:

> *Brightness, the you know, the feeling of* ***warmth,*** *ja (okay, that's nice), ja. And then I have English in the head because I mean****, I'm expected to think in English*** *(okay), to*

> *you know**, rationalize my every being in English**, my academics are expected of me, to be deliberating in English so, I guess, English pretty much, assumes, most of my head (okay, mm), ja….*

Here Ntombi references the feeling of warmth she associates with her mother-tongue, which is not something unexpected. But when contrasted with the explanation of English, where she has to "rationalize [her] every being in English", we see that the warmth of Swati is not an aspect of her intellectual identity, a language she uses academically, rather it is English that assumes most of her head. Faye also placed English in the head and feet in her portrait and made it green in colour (Figure 8: *Faye's Linguistic Portrait*, p. 160). She describes English as "the language of knowledge". While:

> *The brown represents my Xhosa, (okay), that's why it's here by the **stomach** because that's what makes me, and all the activity happens in the stomach like, you [are] fed there, everything, so that's where I **get nurtured**.*

Again, English is intellectualized while Xhosa, the African language, is confined to a bodily association. However, this does not necessarily imply that English is more highly valued. The emotional purpose of Xhosa as the language (where Faye gets "nurtured") is of utmost importance, it is what "makes" her. It provides a foundational affective sense of belonging and identification (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). Nonetheless the subject positioning of Faye-the-English-speaker, the language of knowledge, and the subject positioning of Faye-the-Xhosa-speaker, the language of her stomach, is dualist. English appears to take up all the space available for intellectual expression, and there is no space left for Xhosa to be thought of differently. Xhosa is denied representational range (Dyer, 1997).

Ruth also chose the colour green to represent English, which she placed in her head, left hand and feet (Figure 13: *Ruth's Linguistic Portrait*, p. 169). In her head she drew cogs, which represented her thoughts and capacity in English. It is English that: "*Allows me to, to, move around the world and make a living and to communicate and **to think and to reason**"*. For Ruth, engagement with the world happens through English. Like the other participants, English represents her constitution as a "thinking and reasoning" subject. This is no small claim; her identity as a modern person is found in English. She put green notes in her hand to illustrate the power of English for making money, representing opportunity and financial security. In essence, this is a direct link to the power of linguistic capital that can be translated into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). It is English, and not Swahili, through which she is constituted as an economically viable subject. Her depiction supports

Alexander's (2011) argument, that until indigenous languages are demanded by the market, they will not increase in economic value. Then finally, she also drew green shoes on her feet, because English is a language that allows her to travel, interact with the world.

Ruth's representations of Kikuyu (her mother-tongue) and Swahili (the *lingua franca* of day-to-day life in Kenya) are also interesting in how she relates them to one another, and to English. Kikuyu, as we saw in the previous chapter, she placed on her neck as a necklace (Figure 13: *Ruth's Linguistic Portrait*, p. 169). She describes it as a "cultural language", something that will, "always be with me". The description of Kikuyu as cultural is redundant, because all languages are cultural, but the fact that she chooses to describe it as such reinforces the normativity of English (as culturally marked):

> *Like those traditional necklaces that people wear, they don't,* ***some have meaning, some don't****, but I just um, ja,* ***I see it as something that you carry whether or not it has meaning to you***.

In some sense, her relationship to Kikuyu is passive, something that marks her, will always be with her, but not something that is overpopulated with meaning. It is a paradoxical language of belonging, but not necessarily identity. In Yuval-Davis' (2006b) categories of belonging, it would be a category of social location, not of identification or of political importance. It is not in her stomach as in Faye's account, nurturing her. Rather, it is non-essential, decorative, a piece of jewellery that she can put on and take off. Importantly, it is still at the level of the body. However, Swahili she placed in her heart, in pink, occupying a different place to both Kikuyu and English:

> *It's not a tribal language, which means only some people understand and others don't. It's uh, it's widespread and I feel like it's a language that, I, I would say I love in that sense because* ***Kikuyu is traditional and it's very tribe****.* ***English*** *is sort of, it's handed down to you through the* ***education system****, but* ***Swahili****, we're taught Swahili in school, but, it's a language that* ***everyone speaks in the streets****… people have twisted it, generationally, so people speak their own cool version of Swahili, but everyone can still communicate in Swahili*.

Ruth loves Swahili because it represents a "third space" (Bhabha, 1990), a space not allowed in the mind/body dualism between English and mother-tongue. The mother-tongue marks the subject, constituting the subject as an embodied cultural carrier. English constitutes the subject as an economic subject, initiated through the education system. English presents opportunities, but it also alienates the subject from the mother-tongue. Swahili, in her narrative, simultaneously represents idiosyncratic expression, identity, and affective

belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). Indeed she notes that, "it inspires more pride, as patriotic pride". As Paxton and Tyam (2010) demonstrated, this "third space" creates a space in "which they [she] can define and express themselves on their own terms rather than being positioned by discourses such as a the dominant one, English, or the home discourse and its culture" (p. 251).

For Chipo, blue represents English and was placed in the head (Figure 5: *Chipo's Linguistic Portrait*, p. 154). English is one of Chipo's first languages (with Tswana also being a first language). For her it is "most clear, it's most automatic". Again, as with other participants, her functional language, English, is placed in her head, while her "identity" language is placed in the body, mirroring the racialised mind/body trope. Tswana was represented in red, in the chest and heart area. It is the language she uses with many of her family, and her grandparents. As such she describes it as "part of her identity", which she sees as important, explaining that being able to speak more than one language shows that you are a dynamic person, open to others:

> *Red, for me, has always been a colour **of passion**, (okay) it's always been a colour of passion. Um, and then blue would obviously be English its most clear, it's most **automatic**, I don't have to think about it you know, it's just (snaps her fingers), it's right there.*

I find the reference to Tswana as a language of passion particularly fascinating because of the existing exotic and sexualized tropes of the black body (Dyer, 1997), especially when contrasted with English as "clear". All feelings, emotions are introjected onto the mother-tongue, while English is left as the unmarked norm, just as with whiteness, English is invisible in its ubiquity.

The representation of English as the language of the mind and African languages as of the body is fascinating in and of itself, but is of concern because of its unacknowledged, and paradoxical, effects. The mind/body trope results in African languages being devalued or being seen as necessary only for communicative, not intellectual, functions. In an interview with Dakalo we were speaking about whether any other language (other than English) could be used in higher education. Her response below unwittingly highlighted many of the difficulties other scholars have noted about the perception of African language as functional, not intellectual (Alexander, 2004; Madiba 2010). I found her response particularly fascinating because she was one of the few participants to place Venda in her head (Figure 6: *Dakalo's*

Linguistic Portrait, p. 156). Nevertheless, even though the signifying of English was different (not in the head, but on the feet), the accompanying narratives portrayed the same tropes as those who put English in the head:

> *It's fine. I don't think there's a Venda professor that's going to go and start writing a book of psychology 'cos* ***some of the words that just don't exist*** *(ja) so it's, it's cool, I'm fine. (You don't think there should be any kind of change to?) I mean* ***they can change it after I've left****, (oh right)* ***so it doesn't impact on me*** *or anything, this system it's working just fine, I mean, they did that language survey thingie, I didn't do it, because I mean, there's just too many languages and now, we're going to want to have psychology in Zulu, we're going to want to have psychology in Venda, we're going to want to have psychology in Pedi, okay fine.* ***Are we each going to have a lecture venue?*** *So that we can now go, so I mean, the way it is now, it's fine. (And if one language was chosen, like say Sotho) it's going to now be a big problem because now why should I be taught in Sotho, I'm not Sotho, I'm Venda, I want to be taught in Venda, so it's still going to now, cause conflicts (ja, and would mother tongue education benefit anyone at varsity? Like in your opinion?) eh at varsity I don't think so, 'cos I mean you've been taught , like even though English in rural schools isn't that good, but you've been it's that system that you've been taught in English, so when you come now and you want to be taught Maths in Venda, mind you have to go really, really understand perpendicular in Venda? And you don't know what, so it's fine. They should just leave it as it is (are there other ways in which languages could be used at varsity?) I mean they could add it as a course, (ja) if you want to learn, then you can learn it,* ***you can put up signs there, like STOP****, you can write it in Venda (ja), in Zulu, something like that, but not the, the teaching, no, it would be too messy (okay)*.

Dakalo notes the potentially divisive politics that surround questions of language and ethnicity as an effect of colonial philology (Ashcroft, 2001) and apartheid language policy (Alexander, 2000), and espouses a view that positions English as unifying (Kamwangamalu, 2007). As noted in the literature review, Alexander (2004) has pointed out that the black middle class value English because of the opportunities it offers for upward mobility as a form of cultural capital in the South African symbolic economy. Dakalo evidences this claim when she says, "they can change it [the language policy] after I've left, so it doesn't impact on me or anything". She is aware of her position of privilege, but she couches her understanding of her privileged position within a pragmatic logic and apparent beliefs about African languages. She says that textbooks could not be written in other languages because, "the words just don't exist", but then she abandons this argument for pragmatism ("there [are] just too many languages"; "are we each going to have a lecture venue?"). Dakalo's narrative is in line with Alexander's (2004, p.121) argument that, "the vast majority of black people simply do not believe that their languages can or should be used for higher-order

functions even though they cherish them and are completely committed to maintaining them in the primary spheres of the family, the community and the church".

The effect of these beliefs is to exacerbate the asymmetrical relationship not only between English and African languages, but the *speakers* of these languages themselves. The ideology of a dualism between English and African languages prevents African languages from ever being thought of as realistic alternatives to English. Furthermore, the ideological underpinnings of this English mind/African body structure means that, in an Althusserian (1970) sense, this logic seems to work "all by itself". The division between these languages seems to be a fact of the social world to the participants, not a difference that has been actively constructed, and for this reason they become active in their own subjection. The speakers of these languages are interpellated into different power locations, and believe in the "imaginary" conditions of their existence. The universal intellectual quality of English is seen as self-evident, and African languages, while cherished, appear to constrain their speakers in the symbolic economy more broadly.

As Madiba (2010) and Hlongwa (2011) have pointed out, African languages are often thought of as requiring a process of intellectualization. But, because this is a burdensome task, a functional divide is set up between English as the formal language of learning and African languages as tools of communication in informal spaces. This is borne out in Dakalo's remarks, "if you want to learn, then you can learn it", she quickly changes tack though and reverts to keeping African languages as purely functional, "you can put up signs there, like STOP, you can write it in Venda, in Zulu, something like that, but not the, the teaching, no, it would be too messy". Here Dakalo builds into the mind/body trope where African languages are utilitarian (they can be used on sign posts), while English is intellectual (used at university). Similarly, Derrida (1998) points to the colonial language representing a form of cosmopolitanism, while local languages are not used in any formal capacity.

The question of how students can have "access to English without entrenching its hegemonic position" (Madiba, 2010, p. 330), and how a counter-hegemonic struggle might be engaged, is complex. While there is no lack of intimate treasuring of African languages in the narratives of the participants, this cannot be read as a counter-hegemonic moment of subversion, precisely because this intimacy leaves the binary of English mind/African body intact, positioning speakers asymmetrically. Bourdieu (1991) makes this exact point about

those who have access to dominant forms of cultural capital being able to use subordinate forms of language and not be penalised for it. This is because their use of a local language in certain contexts does not compromise their subject position; they are able to symbolically negate a hierarchy "without disrupting it" (Thompson, 1991, p. 19). Rather, the emotional attachment to African languages is about a sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006b), but does not necessarily translate into a political commitment or structural changes. The power of the material economy lies in the fact that even though meanings and values shift between fields in the symbolic economy, the ideological power dynamics of race and class remain largely stable.

8.3 Accent and the habitus

In this second theme I am looking specifically at how accent is spoken about in the narratives of the participants. This intersects with the themes of identity and authenticity covered in the previous chapter, but the relative emphasis in this chapter is specifically on how accent is spoken about in a variety of ways and how we can read this phenomenon through Bourdieu's theory of habitus and the circulation of power in the symbolic economy. I aim to show that specific bodies are read and valued in particular ways, and that language is used as marker of these bodies. In this sense, the habitus has cultural, linguistic and social components, which we read as having access to multiple forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Individuals embody a particular type of cultural capital through which others interpret their habitus in relation to their own subject positions and the broader symbolic economy. The power of the material economy lies in the fact that even though meanings and values shift between fields in the symbolic economy, the ideological power dynamics of race and class remain largely stable determinants of the type of habitus that can be converted from symbolic to material wealth.

When I speak of linguistic habitus, I mean a focus on the social conditions of linguistic production (Bourdieu, 1991). I am concerned with the historical production, and the legibility, of forms of linguistic habitus. Apartheid (and, prior to this, colonialism) as the major ideological formation of the last century, has meant we have come to expect that subjects of particular social location do, *or should*, speak in particular ways. Bourdieu (1991, p. 39) describes this as subjects being "stylistically marked…both in their production… and in their reception". He is concerned with how linguistic styles are produced, and how others read them. This does not occur in a political vacuum, but contributes to the reproduction of hierarchically organised subject positions. Durable marks, such as accent, "make and unmake

groups" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 221) and we see that subject positioning is negotiated through the nano-politics (Blommaert & Varis, 2015, p. 24) of markers, such as accent, as we will see in the narrative excerpts below.

In the participants' narratives, accents functioned in three interrelated ways. First, accents were considered to be authentic or inauthentic. This was not necessarily tied to racial or linguistic categories but, rather, the emphasis here was placed on how much *effort* was apparent in a subject's performance of an identity category. This brings to mind Blommaert and Varis' (2015) analytical category of enoughness. One was considered as authentic *enough* only to the extent that one effortlessly embodied a particular accent, and thus, subject position.

Second, (and related to the first function), accent functioned as a social marker of linguistic capital or lack thereof. The "materiality of the voice" (Painter, 2008, p. 175) was seen as being able to 'betray' one's personal history. Betrayal could be read in two ways. As we saw in the previous chapter, the participants invoked the notion of an authentic identity. This meant that how one's voice *sounded* could be used to call into question one's legitimate occupation of a particular subject position. For example, was one from a rural background but had a Model C accent? Any nano-slip in accent would be read as betraying (revealing what one might want to keep concealed) one's true subject position. Or in the words of Blommaert and Varis (2015) accent was "metonymically inflated so as to stand for something far bigger and more profound" (p. 23). Betrayal could also be read in terms of a political judgment of those that may have shifted subject positions, seen as a betrayal of black solidarity for example. This is akin to the policing of blackness that was noted in the Chapter 7. In short, one could betray (through revealing what one might want to keep concealed or being disloyal) one's subject position by not inhabiting the supposedly correct accent. The university is supposed to offer "neutralizing potential" to the varied prior positionings of subjects because institutionalized capital (such as a degree) is the only form of cultural capital that can "confer original properties" (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 50). However, because the university has historically been a place catering to dominant forms of whiteness, many students do not have the cultural capital that matches the institutional culture. It was clear to all participants who had the appropriate linguistic and cultural capital and who did not. One's linguistic habitus was seen as inescapable, and marked the body as a subject of a particular cultural, economic, political and historical location.

Finally, and not surprisingly, accents were racialised, and the issue of "sounding white while looking black" (Ratele, 2013) was something frequently remarked upon. Here, the participants display strong critiques of what could be considered assimilation into whiteness, but also a defensiveness, asserting their identities as being beyond the racial labels that constrained them.

I examine these various functions of accent in two contexts that were emphasised in the participants' narratives: "inside the university" and "outside of the university". The distinctions between these spaces in their narratives highlight the fact that different social spaces or fields, function according to different organising principles that "mediate and reproduce systems of social classification" (Botsis, Dominguez-Whitehead & Liccardo, 2013, p. 134, see also Bourdieu, 1993).

8.3.1 Habitus as betrayal

Inside the university

If habitus is the embodied, "durable, transposable dispositions" of subjects constituted in practice (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52-53), then the context in which these dispositions are constituted, mark our bodies in explicit ways. The physical body becomes ideologically imbued by virtue of its social location (Yuval-Davis, 2006b). It is through the body, through one's accent, that one's history is involuntarily offered up. It is in this sense that I speak of habitus being a "betrayal" of one's subject position in the symbolic economy. It is not that there is some 'true' or authentic position that can be revealed, but that it betrays or reveals our historical and sociological location and prior positioning. Our physical bodies, our material voices, function as texts off which people read our biographies and locate us in ideological hierarchies.

Tseki produced an interesting vignette on the habitus of people who speak "good" English. Here she drew on issues of speech and dress as audible and visible markers of one's subject position within the symbolic economy of the university. Those from rural areas or poorer, less "sophisticated" backgrounds were noticeable by the formal dress code they adopt and attempts at speaking formal English. These students were read as trying too hard, confirming Bourdieu's (1984) findings that to be class secure, one's habitus must fit effortlessly with the cultural goods one consumes. This also speaks to Blommaert and Varis (2015, p. 24) concept of enoughness and the nano-politics involved in assessing the appropriateness of a subject's

habitus. Despite dress and accent being attempts at fitting into the university environment, Tseki notes how these markers actually functioned to reinforce these students' lower class status. Tseki's narrative infers that in order to appear "class secure" it is important not to try too hard.

> *Let's say that **my English is not, Model C**, accent kind of English, but also **not, … Bantu education** kind of thing, so **I'm like on the fence**, and I can be heard and **I can't be discriminated against**, but I've seen how when other students will speak in… [pausing], that Bantu education kind of English [resigned tone], that the reception is not the same. So you either have people who get impatient with them trying to express themselves, or, they get lost in translation, or they are not**, the reception is not as warm** to them, as like to a Model C type of English*.

Tseki starts by describing in her own terms what she considers her accent to sound like, "not, model C" but, "also not, Bantu education". These are powerful descriptors, locating people in history, space, and class location. She does this locating work reluctantly, aware of the implicit judgment and positioning of other students, and her, this description implies. She strategically places herself "on the fence". She recognises the balancing act required around acceptable forms of accent. She does not want to be seen as claiming a higher class position than others for fear of seeing herself as better or too much (Blommaert & Varis, 2015), but she also notes that her accent is "clear" enough that she can be "heard", so she isn't "discriminated against". Why would someone with a "Bantu education" accent be discriminated against? Because the accent supposedly denotes a lack of the appropriate cultural capital. The implicit assumption of her narrative is that one will be discriminated against in some way if one's accent is not deemed appropriate.

She goes on to point out that the reception in these cases is different for an acceptable accent such as hers. Speaking about these students who are unfavourably marked, she says:

> *I think in residences there's a lot of them, and I see them, you**, the way that they dress, the way that they interact, I can notice!***

She departs from just aural markers and includes students' embodied social markings, such as dress and disposition, as an indication of social position. She continues:

> *[They] arrive with like **formal looking shoes**, and I know they are from a **township or a village**. Because when you leave your parents or your grandmother are going to **make sure that you look presentable and the first thing that they are going to buy you from the little money that I have**, I'm going to buy you this particular type of clothes. So they get here and they stand out!*

According to Tseki, the effort these students and their families go to, to fit into this new privileged space, is ultimately what makes them stand out. Tseki describes the awkwardness (perhaps that she feels?) when she notices them trying "to speak English but you can hear, the difference". For their comfort, or to save face she wishes for them to:

> ***Just speak vernac**, you know, don't, **don't feel the need to try** and, 'cos it's going to make **people act differently towards you. It's unfair**, but… (drifts off).*

In her description, Tseki notes that it is 'worse' that these students try to find acceptance in a field that positions them as outsiders, than to embrace their position as 'outsiders'. In her narrative she is anticipating how their "linguistic products", their material voice, will be received (Alexander, 2003; Bourdieu, 1991) in a new field, the field of the university, which differs from how their habitus is valued at home:

> *I can pick them out from **how awkward, sometimes, they are** around conversations or just being around, you can see, that this person doesn't, truly belong. So they belong but **they not quite sure of themselves**.*

What Tseki is commenting on here alerts us to how the habitus of a subject positions them within a particular field, both her and the students she is speaking about. Their stylistic expression and accent is tied up with other modes of legibility, the shoes, or clothes, a way of carrying themselves in the university space that marks them as not truly belonging. These students do not have the cultural capital, the linguistic habitus that allows them to be at ease in the environment of the university. On the other hand, her remarking on these traits, positions her as someone who *does* have access to the very type of cultural and linguistic capital they lack. Or, at least, Tseki is attuned enough to the nano-politics of the university space to not compromise her subject position as someone with an acceptable accent.

Faye also remarks on these so-called outsider students:

> *And then you just see **the ones** that come from Limpopo, from the poor schools in inverted commas 'cos, they not always poor, or the ones that come from Mpumalanga… the African schools, you just see them, **and they [are] hard workers, shame,** but, they just don't integrate, they stick to their own.*

These accounts offer us evidence for Blackledge and Pavlenko's (2002) argument that, like in the economic sphere, not all producers or speakers, just by virtue of participating economically, start out on equal footing. So too, these students while they have gained access to university, because of the power disparities and lack of embodiment of the appropriate form of capital or the 'wrong' kind of habitus, they do not "start out equal" (Blackledge &

Pavlenko, 2002, p. 123). In the extract above, we see that there is a mismatch between the habitus of the individual and the field they are entering. Faye conflates racialised descriptions with descriptions of class location. She notes certain students who come from "poor" schools, but then says they are "not always poor", they are just "African schools", meaning a majority of black students. Through the (patronizing?) characterisation, "they [are] hard workers, shame" we can see that class is a stratifying factor on campus. Her position as a middle class student, in relation to those she describes as "the ones that come from Limpopo", is secured because she is able to comment on their failure to "integrate".

Faye also comments on the issue of accent and starts by describing her own mode of speaking:

> *I myself don't have a, a very **English accent**… but then, there are **those accents which you cannot, you cannot forgive** [laughs] …you cannot forgive the 'tree' instead of 'three' [laughs], you know things like that, you just no, you need to act up, so the person can learn*.

After noting that she does not consider herself to have a "very English accent", and quite negatively describing (policing?) a version of what Tseki described as Bantu education English, I asked her what she meant by an English accent. Her response was, "your accent would be normal". Here she is speaking about my accent. I assume she means that white South African English would be considered normal. She draws me into the narrative she is constructing, making my race salient to the discussion. She continues and says that:

> *Usually sports guys speak like that… sports, **rugby, not soccer, the Xhosa, the, the rugby black guys, they speak like that**… the thing is that **accent goes with your actions**…you, have to **fit the criteria and the look** and have it and go with it, ja, it just, I don't know how to explain it, it, just has to go together, it has to gel… Awu, **the soccer guys, shame, they speak the poor English, and it's because they get recruited from rural area schools**, so they don't really have good English, um, the, teaching I guess*.

Faye's description of "normal" is constructed in reference to "good English", and importantly the embodied confidence of the appropriate habitus. Language, accent and disposition need to work together to present a subject at one with their context, embodying the correct cultural capital. This is what she means when she says, "accent goes with your actions", and you have "fit the criteria and the look". In Bourdieu's theory this would be called a "feel for the game" (McEwan, 2005, p. 16). (The irony of Bourdieu's field metaphor is not lost in this context, considering Faye's sporting examples.) It is when there is a disjuncture between the habitus

of the individual and the field that they inhabit that the language ideologies and value attached to particular subjects becomes apparent. This is particularly apparent in South Africa where the institutional culture of the university values the cultural capital of whiteness through privileging an English habitus, while many students who attend the university do not have this form of cultural capital (Madiba, 2010).

Faye's narrative is reminiscent of Matlwa's (2007) novel *Coconut*, where she notes that, "it is because I am smart and speak perfect English. That is why people treat me differently. I knew from a very young age that Sepedi would not take me far" (p. 54). Faye's claim that errors of accent and pronunciation are "unforgivable" points to the nano-acts of evaluation that are constantly being made by subjects as they move through different fields, markets, and economies. The subject position of the "soccer guys" in relation to the "rugby guys" is determined by the "enoughness" and the "normality" of one's accent. The "rugby guys" speak with a "normal" accent, as Faye says, an accent like my white South African one. Thus, class habitus becomes conflated with race and speech style.

Echoing this, Tseki speaks about how accents appear to index wealth, class, and origin. In both Tseki's and Faye's accounts we see that coming from a rural area places you in a "lower" subject position compared to those subjects who have a Model C command of English. Tseki aptly identifies the ideological effect of discursively constrained bodies:

> *So even though people might not be intending to make them feel, distinct or lesser than, because of* ***all these unspoken things*** *it already* ***puts you in a particular place***.

These "unspoken things" could be read as systemic issues of inequality and a particular understanding of class constituted through race as power (Gqola, 2015). These systemic, "unspoken things" constitute your subject position, they put "you in a particular place". Tseki's narrative also leads to her comment on the transformation of her own relationship to her accent. She went from being quite self-critical, "I wanted to sound like the Model C kids" to a space of self-acceptance. I would argue that this cannot be seen as a journey of pure self-acceptance but is also related to her class position and ownership of various of forms of cultural capital. Her competence in English with a particular accent secures a subject position for her that is not compromised in the same way as a "Bantu education kid".

The ideological power of certain ways of speaking being valued over others is reproduced, because the value of the accent is not disrupted, even though she sees this hierarchy to be unfair. Bourdieu explains this as symbolically negating the hierarchy "without disrupting it" (Thompson, 1991, p. 19). Tseki's vignette on her accent makes this clear:

> ***I don't sound* bad**, *but I also don't sound like a hoity-toity person. It's fine... I think it was being at Wits and* ***realizing I know enough*** *to not struggle so it's not affecting my intellectual abilities, people can understand me and* ***I'm not looked down on 'cos I don't sound like a Bantu education kid, which is bad, but sometimes it helps*** *because then you know that the minute I open my mouth people are sitting in class thinking, ah, you know, so, it was all of those things put together which* ***made me secure*** *in terms of, I might not sound like a Model C, child, but I'm okay*.

While the idea of symbolic negation might apply more obviously to something like parody of an accent, what Tseki's narrative draws our attention to is that it is the fact that she does not "sound like a Bantu education kid" which protects her from having her subject position compromised. Inasmuch as she is empathetic to the situation of these "Bantu education kid[s]", through her talk it is evident that she is still engaged in a shared belief about the nature of the symbolic system (Thompson, 1991, p. 23) that privileges her way of speaking over others. She is "not looked down on" and this has made her "secure". By tacitly sharing in the belief of how power is brokered through the system of symbolic exchange, she protects her "profits of distinction" as a competent speaker within the field of the university.

Tseki and Faye's narratives support the research findings of Madiba (2010) that showed that students did not want to ask questions in class for fear of being ostracised because of their accent, this was "not by white students, but by their fellow black students" (p. 334). However, we know that it is not only black students that engage in this form of policing. At Wits, in 2015, there was an incident of white students criticizing a lecturer's accent, which led to a racist altercation with a black student who tried to defend the lecturer (Tuswa, 2015). It is clear that the variety of English that is valued is an "ethnolinguistic repertoire of White South African English" (McKinney, 2007, p. 11).

Akani, a student originally from a rural area, was also alert to the symbolic power that is brokered through the use of different accents. He explains that he used to be self-conscious about his accent, but has also grown into a place of self-acceptance. Nevertheless, in a small vignette on issues of accent in his life, he tended to use the word "improve" to describe people's relationship to accent, if it were to change:

> *Ah, um eh, for me, accent, okay, there was a point where it was, it was um, it was the, something that I was concerned about, that maybe I should* ***improve*** *my accent and and and that. But, now it's not much of a problem to me, 'cos as long as I'm speaking to you now, you can hear what I'm saying to you, it's fine (ja). I'm, I've realized that for some people on campus, it's a really important thing,* ***that they try very hard to, improve their accent****, I used to be that as well, to do that as well. But I realized that ah, you know what, as long as people can hear what I'm trying to say, (ja) um, it's okay. It's not much of a problem to me, accent. Yes ja.*

There was a clear idea of what the "ideal" accent should be, although this is never named. In his narrative we see that there is an invisibilised norm against which language is measured (see Blommaert, 2009), even though his overall narrative is one of self-acceptance. Indeed, Makoe and McKinney (2014) also found that accent was often spoken about in terms of "improvement" by teachers, who were reportedly unaware of the race, class and language ideologies invoked when using this descriptor.

In contradistinction to the focus on "rural" habitus in Tseki, Faye and Akani's narratives, Dakalo brought up the politics surrounding the "Model C" habitus of some university students. This excerpt was used in the previous chapter to examine questions around "authentic" blackness, but here I am more concerned with how the habitus is pieced together and read off the body.

> *There are those who went to the* ***Model C schools*** *[you can] tell that they always group together (okay), and I mean, you find those that say they* ***don't know any South African language*** *(oh wow) and they['re] black and you look at them and you're like, are you serious? What did your parents do to you? And then, so you do find, and they tend to group together, and you find that they're* ***of the same class*** *even, so that there are those who can go to the PIG [post-graduate pub] and just have lunch every day at the PIG (mm) I'm not going to spend, R50 at the PIG every single day (mm) so it also goes with that,* ***I think it also goes with class as well****.*

Here, as with the other participants' narratives, accent comes together with other social markers to produce a certain habitus. In Dakalo's case it is the fact that the Model C students "don't know any South African language" and that they can afford to eat out for lunch every day. In her account there is also an expectation of black linguistic habitus that they don't fulfil, "they don't know any South African language and they black". The fact that habitus is inculcated is tacitly acknowledged by her exclamation, "What did your parents do to you?". She appears to be aware that there are many permutations of blackness, and as will be demonstrated in the following section, she does not always live up to the ideals of blackness imposed upon her by herself and others, but she nevertheless polices this boundary herself:

> *Okay **the twanging accent just gets me upset**, I don't like it (why does it get you upset?) ugh, I feel like it's just too much (too much in what?) [laughs], I mean, to be talking to a person, and then like "oh my god I talk in this accent but why? **Why are [you] talking like that? Talk properly**, so that we can all hear you".*

The accent, which she calls "twanging", is colloquially considered a forced form of the "ethnolinguistic repertoire of White South African English" (McKinney, 2007, p. 11) or Model C English. For Dakalo, this way of speaking is too far removed from what she considers appropriate to both the body and the field of these students. However, in her narrative, there also appears to be some internal struggle over the legitimacy and recognition of a black speaker that straddles shifting linguistic, class and racial boundaries of a South African subject. To her mind, one can be educated but avoid "twanging"; one does not have to laud one's subject position over others. In a moment of playful frustration she says: ***"Nigger** please, **we can also speak English**, kind of thing"*.

This dressing down of the fictional "twanging" black subject, by use of the word "Nigger", is interesting in relation to the rest of her narrative. At another point in the interview she characterises *herself* as using "twang" and speaking what she considers to be English with some sort of affected accent. The polycentric indexing of subject positions and power, saving face, trying to maintain 'street cred' or political authenticity, while reaping the benefits of her linguistic subject position reveal that it is not *one* type of economy that determines linguistic performances of a subject, but a nexus of social fields. Indeed she hesitantly concedes:

> *And then you look at us, okay, let me not, like **other people who will be like struggling to put a sentence together**, then you like eh ja, so it it it, it kind of um, you know, **you compare because of the accents** and like, okay **you went to a good school**.*

She acknowledges that even though the politics of accent irritates her, the fact that she "went to a good school" and does not struggle "to put a sentence together" is an awkward truth about the context of the university, where a particular linguistic habitus is valued and rewarded.

Outside of the university

The continuum of subject positioning for students moving between campus and the "outside world" clearly demonstrates the requirements of shifting one's habitus between economies, so as not to be sanctioned. Outside of the university, the same rules apply to the betrayal of one's habitus through accent, although we will see that *what* is valued shifts because of the

change in field. For instance, Dakalo tells a story of asking for a taxi to Fairlands, a middle class suburb in northern Johannesburg, and the taxi driver mocking *her* accent (as opposed to her sanction of others we saw above). She explains her surprise at the taxi driver's reaction:

> *And I'm thinking**, I said "by Fairlands" properly**! You know I even, I even know **where I should press onto so that the accent** [her accent] **kinda goes away**, but then I turn around and he's like, "Fairlands" [puts on nasal, mocking accent] like okay*.

Dakalo made use of a rhetorical technique in her narrative where she would parody the accents of the subject positions she was trying to explain. In doing so, she also positioned herself in relation to the "type" she was referring to. Through the tone of her parody it was possible to note when she felt derision towards someone, or whether she felt unfairly put upon, as in the case of the taxi driver above. In this regard, she noted that:

> ***I change it** [her accent] when I'm stopped a robot [traffic light], okay the taxi and then you want to say "after robot", and then you say "after robot" [uses rural black South African English accent] so that he doesn't now speed along with you for saying "after robot" [White South African English/"Twang"] (okay), ja, 'cos you see a lot of people doing that, and then everyone just turns around in the taxi and they look at you, like, hmm,* you think you're better *you? So, ja I do, somewhat change it*.

Dakalo is explaining the situation in a South African minibus taxi, where one has to indicate to the driver where you want to alight, "after robot" (meaning, traffic light). In these two excerpts we see that Dakalo's English accent betrays her life experience and her subject position. In a space where she wishes to keep in line with the expected linguistic habitus of the taxi commuter she actively tries to change how she sounds. She remarks that she changes her pronunciation, "so the accent kinda goes away". Interestingly she speaks about "the" accent not "my" accent even though in the context of the conversation this is what she is referring to. This interchange is reminiscent of Ratele's account of a "'black-looking child' whose mother-tongue is not 'black'" (2013, p. 119), or "speaking white while looking black" (p. 124). The taxi driver responds sarcastically to Dakalo because her linguistic habitus does not fit his expectations of her as a black South African commuter.

Indeed, in the second excerpt, she notes that the taxi driver might engage in a form of gatekeeping by ignoring her request entirely, if given in the incorrect accent. I ask her why she thinks this happens and she responds with the following vignette:

> *I don't know, I mean it's something I also experience when I went back home, that I actually stopped speaking English to a certain extent because people would be like, I mean **there was one teacher who called me 'English Girl'**, and then I think it, ah, I*

> *don't know,* ***people would say that you're twanging****, and for me, it's just normal,* ***this is how I talk*** (ll 559- 563).

The split between what others expect of her, what she expects of herself, and who she considers her*self* to be ("this is how I talk"), demonstrates the role of the habitus in constituting one's subject position in relation to others. It also demonstrates how one's habitus, as a "durable disposition" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 58), can betray one's subject position. For instance, the taxi vignette indicates that even when Dakalo tries to manipulate her accent, her habitus is apparent to others. This durable disposition is not easily "disguised". She dislikes being the "English Girl", and she tried to stop speaking English in spaces where English was seen as a betrayal of authenticity or a form of arrogance. She was accused of having an accent that broke with the expectation of how English should sound in the mouth of a black person. Despite these frustrations and attempts at mutation, she accepts that "this is how I talk". Derrida's point about the appropriation of languages and forms of speech is relevant here (1998, p. 24). Things cannot be 'put back in their places', because the nature of language is to always find new life in new bodies. Her accent should not compromise her blackness, but in her account we see that it does. What we see in her account is the rupture of historical legibility, not a betrayal.

In South Africa today, people "look different from how they are 'supposed to' speak, and because they speak differently from how those who look like them speak, [this] also alert us to historical breaks and continuities, to possibilities and inherited constraints which shape how we speak" (Ratele, 2013, p. 125). The discontinuity of power (Butler, 1997a) in the reproduction of social and symbolic forms means that the ideological categories we are interpellated into, and come to recognise (Althusser, 1970), are not always repeated in the same way. This is what Derrida (1986) explains through his concept of "citationality", that with every utterance or performance, incremental change takes place in the identities of individuals. However, we know that people form affective attachments to their social location (Yuval-Davis, 2006b), and they become emotionally invested in what are essentially ideological categories. This means that when there is a slippage between "the actual" and "supposed-to" of identities, it reveals a society caught in the midst of the challenge to "reimagine itself" (Ratele, 2013, p. 125).

Echoing Ratele (2013) and Dakalo's narratives, Chipo also experiences the betrayal of one's linguistic habitus, she explains:

> [her friends say to her] "***Dude, you're just a coconut"**, just accept it because even when we speak Setswana, it's fluent, the Setswana is fluent, but you know, you can kinda tell **it's not because you grew up in the village that you know Setswana***.

Chipo is a called a "coconut", meaning she looks black, but speaks white (Matlwa, 2007; Ratele 2013). In her friends' description of her Tswana she says, she can speak it fluently, but her accent gives her away; she did not grow up in a village, learning it "authentically". Chipo's Tswana could be described in the way Adichie (2006) describes the accent of her protagonist in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. It is "coloured by the sliding sounds of English, the Igbo [Tswana] of one who spoke English too often" (p. 4). But what is inauthentic here? As her habitus is an enduring disposition that cannot be learnt (Bourdieu, 1990), what else could her accent be other than her own?

The policing of identity boundaries ultimately points to their fluidity, and indicates that the symbolic economy is not a static system of positions, but represents negotiations over the meaning and value of ideologically imposed identity categories. It would appear that the policing of identity boundaries are intensified in moments of change (Ndlovu, 2012), because it is then that the incremental changes that are always in motion in identity performances (Butler, 1990) are more visible than might ordinarily be the case.

8.4 English as a variable symbolic asset

The final subsection of this chapter examines the theme of English as a variable symbolic asset. As I pointed out in chapter 2, the power differentials between groups are structured through "an economy of symbolic exchanges" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 37), but power is also not continuous with the conditions of its emergence (Butler, 1997a). English is seen as a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997) because it is valued and demanded by the material economy. But the multiple meanings of English in the symbolic economy are just as significant. It is the language of privileged educational spaces in South Africa (and elsewhere), the language of commerce and also used in most official state communications (SouthAfrica.info). English represents an upwardly mobile, globalised trajectory, a desirable symbolic asset that contributes to securing one's future success. It is also the language associated with whiteness, middle class identity, and urban life. In short, it is an ideologically

imbued necessity of modern subjectivity. This is why Bourdieu's description of language as "a symbolic asset which can receive different values depending on the market in which it is offered" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 651), is an appropriate way of reading English in the South African symbolic economy. In other words English as a symbolic asset has both material and symbolic implications in the lives of the participants.

Evidence of the variability of this asset can be seen by the fact that English by no means occupies an uncomplicated space in the South African imagination. It is often contested, spoken about with ambivalence; is an obvious social dividing mechanism between those who speak it (well) and those who do not. It could be argued that English functions as a form of "disjunctive inclusion" (Mbembe, 2008, p. 48). This means that English represents a possible field of desegregation or inclusion (the argument that it can be used as a unifier) that ultimately re-segregates (because only those occupying a relative site of privilege have access to it). This is because English (as a form of cultural capital) in the context of capitalism operates to secure, what Bourdieu has called "profits of distinction" for speakers of English (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 66).

In this theme, I want to tease out some of the complexities and ambivalences that emerged in the participants' narratives about English as an "asset". As stated above, in some fields English was experienced as a thing of prestige. This was not the case in all fields, however. Indeed, in some, English was negatively sanctioned. I argue that the relationship between English-as-asset and sanctioned-English are not mutually exclusive, but are related to each other, because of the broader relationship *between* fields. English was negatively sanctioned in some contexts precisely because of its asset-like qualities in others.

English thus functions as a variable symbolic asset, because its value was not the same across fields. This is most likely the case because political power and economic power are not neatly aligned in South Africa. As noted in chapter two, the political elite[28] and privatised, largely white, capital are not one and the same. This has implications for an institution such as the university, because the economic power of white capital militates against the possibility of the decolonising agenda. The university is tasked with providing an education that is

[28] One could also debate the political elite's commitment to the democratization of institutions such as the university, as has been demonstrated by the recent wave of #FeesMustFall protests that swept the country.

commensurate with the constitutional requirements for broad access, but also for creating students who are desirable to (white) capital, who will be the middle class of the future.

Linguistic repertoires are not static, and change, depending on the field in which they are being used, as does the value attached to particular repertoires. This has an impact on the process of identification of the speaker (Orman, 2012). The level of valuation, devaluation, and stigmatisation of a particular mode of speaking may only be at the level of perception, but this still "index[es] a meaningful otherness" (Orman, 2012, p. 11) in the narratives of the participants. Thus, while in "westernized" spaces or spaces with a history of white dominance, English is necessary to "prove" one's status of belonging, and indeed to gain access to current educational and employment opportunities, in other urban spaces, or spaces of the "home" and family, English represents something that could call your authenticity of identity into question. English also represents what was perceived as betrayal, lack of respect, and abandoning one's roots. The key point I wish to make is that, English was negatively sanctioned, while still being desirable. This produced a complicated habitus, of having to be "fully" English in some contexts, and "fully" vernacular in others.

English as a symbolic asset is a product of the historical racialisation of capitalism (Alexander, 2004; Mbembe, 2008) and it has become difficult to separate English from whiteness and class privilege. But Derrida's (1998) argument for understanding language as a form of originary alienation shows us, language is not inherently the property of one group. And thus, this conflation of race and language should be highlighted and questioned. "Winning" at the capitalist game in South Africa is bound up with a white English habitus. Thus, whiteness is not appropriated only as a racial form, but as representing a path to power and recognition. This was Fanon's point when he wrote, "the Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter – that is, he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language" (1967, p. 18).

Blommaert (2009), writing on the markets of accents, points out the contorted logic of online corporate service providers offering courses to rid professionals of their "accents" so that they can become recognised for who they *really* are (a successful business person, for example). In other words, these courses trade on people's desire for recognition *qua* human (Appiah, 1994; Fanon, 1967). However, in the South African case, habitual racial hierarchies that index language, class, locale and so forth, trap the desire for recognition within racialised

terms, making it an ideological misrecognition (Althusser, 1970). I argue that, shifts in the material voice are often read in terms of racial betrayal as a way of "containing" the power or dominance of English *qua* whiteness. For example the term "coconut" is not a neutral descriptor but is a supposed label of disloyalty, it is directed at individuals but also used to push back against the dominance of English (as the terrain of whiteness). In the symbolic economy English serves to "codify the appropriate capital required to enter the university field, [and becomes] a crucial locus of struggle because it serve[s] to legitimize or delegitimize principles underlying the recognition of existing capital in the field" (Naidoo, 2004, p. 465).

Bourdieu (1990, p. 55-560) argues that the habitus produces "the 'reasonable', 'common-sense' behaviours (and only these) which are possible within the limits of these regularities, and which are likely to be positively sanctioned because they are objectively adjusted to the logic characteristic of a particular field". English, as a form of behaviour/mode of speaking, is only possible within the particularities of certain fields. It is positively sanctioned, allowed, reasonably expected, that one would speak English say, at the university. However, in the field of public transport, in the taxi, English is negatively sanctioned and thus produces a different expectation of the habitus of commuters. The example of the speaker who moves between these two fields shows how field and habitus are mutually constituted, because a habitus is produced through according to the expectation of a field. Thus, the "relative value of semiotic resources" (Orman, 2012, p. 11) is constantly shifting, being negotiated and performatively realised in the habitus of speakers. Through examining English as a shifting symbolic asset we can "come to a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between speakers' linguistic habitus and their relation to a range of social arenas, or fields" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2002, p. 125).

I will examine English as a variable symbolic asset through three subthemes that emerged from the analysis of the participants' narratives. First, I look at narratives that emphasise the constraints of particular fields in relation to English. Second, I detail how it is that English can be experienced as both a positive and negative asset in the same field, creating an ambivalent subject. And finally, I turn my attention to spaces in which English represents the possibility for being penalised for, "trying to be better".

8.4.1 Constraints of the field

Each field produces its own logic, sets of values (which is a product of more macro relationships between fields) and also constraints on one's habitus. The home of some black middle class families (De Klerk, 2000) could be considered a field because it functions according to its own organising principles that mediate and reproduce systems of social classification (Bourdieu, 1993). Ruth, speaking about such a context, notes the rules that govern this field:

> *At home, then you could speak Swahili,* ***we never speak English at home****, it would be weird (laughs),* ***trying to be posh,*** *you know, so only the rich people speak English*.

What are the rules or constraints we see here? First, that one does not speak English at home. Second, that it is seen as negative to be "trying to be posh", the trouble is not with being "posh", but rather the "trying to be" which is seen in a pejorative light. While Ruth is speaking about her family back in Kenya, the sentiment that "trying" was disparaged was consistent across the narratives of the participants. Finally, if you are not rich, do not play at being rich or posh. How would one "play" at this? By speaking English, the language of the rich, posh people. But these constraints are not that straightforward and, the more Ruth speaks about the politics of language and accent, the more it becomes clear that a nuanced "sense of the game" is necessary not to transgress the boundaries set up as appropriate for her as a subject of this field.

> *If you speak* ***English, but with a Swahili accent*** *or a Kikuyu accent, then again* ***it's embarrassing*** *and everyone's like ooh, you need to learn how to speak English properly so* ***we almost have to be perfect at both ends of the line***.

While it is inappropriate to speak English at home, one is still expected to speak English and, importantly, an "unmarked", proper English, otherwise it is "embarrassing". One must not flaunt one's linguistic capital in the home; it is clear that it is an asset that is desirable, but that constraints are set up to protect the dignity of that space (the home). The desirability of English in another field does not outweigh the constraint of the "home" field.

> *But at the same time if someone speaks perfect English and then you try to speak mother-tongue, like our current president who is, is a very eloquent English speaker, but* ***when he speaks Kikuyu then you can hear*** *he has, then again it's a problem, oooh what's wrong with him,* ***he's become too posh***.

The accent of one who speaks English "too often" (Adichie, 2006, p. 4) is negatively sanctioned here, the balancing act is maintained, and has marked himself as assimilated by one field. Ruth's narrative is reminiscent of Derrida's claim that: "1. We only ever speak one

language. 2. We never speak only one language" (Derrida, 1998, p. 7). It is clear that there is a requirement to speak English like an English first language speaker. But also, that one must speak the vernacular as an 'authentic' speaker, untouched by English. This impossibility marks the ideological quality of language as accented, and the habitus it might betray:

> *When you're speaking English you have to* ***drop all evidence of ever having known any other language****, and at the same time if you're speaking Kikuyu you have to drop links to any other,* ***it's a tedious job***.

The subject that must move between fields is not blind to the imperatives of the field. While the habitus may be involuntary, the politics surrounding the embodied, accented subject are clear. There is a compulsion or a set of normative constraints that require 'authenticity' depending on one's subject position. Morison and Macleod (2013) describe this as a form of performativity where one is compelled to "recite" the norm in order to maintain one's viability as a subject, in other words, to remain intelligible within the ideological framework to which a society subscribes (Butler, 1990). The appearance of a zero sum game between a metropolitan language and cultural language (Stroud, 2001) means that it becomes very difficult to reimagine languages as malleable shifting forms that may attach to different bodies and constitute change. Language remains a marker of a category such as race or ethnicity, and is not treated as Derrida (1998) compels us to treat it; as never one's own. Of course, even though the participants talk about language in a fixed way, they are using language in highly fluid ways. The fact that their own language practices might not "match" their social location highlights the discontinuous nature of power (Butler, 1997a) in the reproduction of the habitus across fields (Bourdieu, 1991).

What are the historical determinants that distort the "prosthetic" origin of language and transform it into something that functions as an asset or something that must be negatively sanctioned? In answer to this question, I refer to Sbu's narrative. Sbu did not include English in his portrait. When I asked why, he said:

> *I think, 'cos we we sometimes have this debate that um, during the apartheid times, the English people,* ***the Boers and the English, they actually achieved what they wanted to achieve****, you know 'cos, if, if you walk around now, English you,* ***if you don't know English, you you, you're in trouble*** *you know, 'cos even now, when we talk, if we walk around campus, and you see, see African people, they speaking English, they know their language,* ***you find that, we are all Zulu, but you are speaking English, why?*** *You know?*

The effects Sbu speaks of are indeed noticeable and borne out in the literature (Madiba, 2010; McKinney, 2007; De Klerk, 2000). The ubiquitous nature of English is indisputable, "if you don't know English… you're in trouble". Sbu sees the current dominance of English as the ultimate success of systems of racialised oppression. His frustration is that, given the constraints of the field of the university, people speak English, even where "we are all Zulu". Despite his astute comments about the dominance of English in "post"-apartheid South Africa, in his narrative he appeared to see no way around this. Indeed, he came to describe English as a mediator, with it sometimes being, "the only common language". This belief echoes Alexander's concern about South Africans' beliefs in the unassailable position of English (2000).

The final comment I wish to about the constraints of various fields, is that the power differentials between groups are structured through an economy of symbolic exchanges (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 39). Power, as we know, is not continuous with the conditions of its emergence (Butler, 1997a) and does not always operate in straightforward ways. For example, being a competent English speaker does not guarantee the same response in every field or at all times in history. In Dakalo's narrative she works quite hard at maintaining her own "street cred", despite her acknowledging her privileged position as a fluent English speaker. Rhetorically, she displays this "street cred" through her awareness of language politics, which she demonstrates in her narrative by parodying particular accents. In the excerpt below we see her do just that, while explaining the difference between the fields of the university and the taxi rank.

> *Okay here, it's like **it's school.** And then out there, it's **the real world**. (okay) so you need to , you need to be {.hhh} not, what's that word, eh**, English is [rrr]running away** [black rural accent parody], um, you need be, not compassionate, but you need to think about other people as well, that some people, **their domestic workers**, they don't really know English that well, and um, some of them are like gardeners like that kind of thing, so you don't want to feel as if, **now you're being better**, you're not going to rock up at **B[rrr]ree to** a taxi driver and say, 'Hi, I need a taxi to Cresta' [Model C twang parody].*

She starts by setting up a distinction between "here", the "school" or university, and the "real world". These are seen as separate fields. She performs the difference between these spaces through the use of accent. Whenever she mentions a predominantly "black" environment, she tends to roll her 'r's and adopt a black South African accent. This demonstratively makes the point that English is thought of differently here. In the domain of the domestic worker, the

gardener and the taxi rank, as a young black South African, you cannot say, "Hi, I need a taxi to Cresta" in one's best Model C accent.

I have pointed out the constraints of the fields to show (a) that there are different values attached to English in different spaces, but also (b) that the subjects in these spaces are not immune to the politics of their and others spoken and aural selves. Their habitus is evaluated differently depending on context. For instance, when at university, one should speak good English, when with your grandmother, one better not display what is taken to be a sense of superiority by speaking English. Paradoxically, "the grandmother" would want you to be able to speak good English because of the cultural capital to which this would give you access. But, in the intimate relationship context, the flaunting of this capital is unacceptable. I now want to look at a few more examples from these differing fields to provide evidence for the argument that the broader symbolic economy is constitutive of the relationship between varying fields.

8.4.2 English as a symbolic asset

English is established as a symbolic asset in terms of what is considered valuable cultural capital, which is convertible to financial capital. This process happens through Althusser's ideological state apparatuses: the school, the family etc. For instance, Derrida speaks of the interdict against Arabic in Algeria and the power of the school in creating "circles of sociolinguistic enclosure" (1998, p. 41). In this instance, French was positioned as an asset, providing access to the metropole, while Arabic was relegated to being a cultural curiosity. Tseki's relationship to language through the school was characterised in similar terms. She speaks of those seen as intelligent learners taking English as a first language, including her:

> *I enjoyed it to a point where in grade 10 I chose English as my first language, instead of Tswana, I enjoyed it that much. And* ***there was a bit of, look, a classy thing, people who did first language English, they were considered clever ones****, I don't know how they decided that English meant you were clever, and Tswanas, and those who did Tswana or Pedi or Zulu, so there was like* ***a hierarchy*** *of sorts*.

Tseki notes that she enjoyed English and switched to English as a second language to a first language for her matriculation examinations (the final year of schooling in South Africa). She admits, though, that English positioned those who took it as a first language as the "clever" ones. English is seen as an asset, something that elevated one's position in the school. She says she is not sure why this was the case, but she was certain, even then, that there was a hierarchy at work. English would provide access to higher education and class mobility.

English was valorised and had prestige, when compared to the African languages on offer. She notes that there is: "***Something elite about speaking English****… it* ***really set me apart****, coming back home, and being able to speak English with my cousins"*.

The desirability of English was clear to Tseki, it set her apart, and her cousins thought highly of her because of it. Thus, the world is represented to Tseki in a way such that English is equated with cleverness, being one of the elite, and if she speaks English, then these qualities are associated with her. She is interpellated into this "elite" place in the social structure (Althusser, 1970). But this is not only at the level of representation, the role that English plays as symbolic asset has material effects, in that she *is* actually privileged because of her English abilities, and thus the circle of interpellation, materialization and reproduction of social structures closes in on itself – "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material" (Butler, 1997a, p. 121). The ritualization of English-as-asset secures subjects in their, possibly new, social positions when compared to older generations.

In Tseki's narrative, however, a "double consciousness" (Du Bois, 2007) or what she refers to as "two personas" emerge—the product of a double bind. These English dynamics were operating at two levels. First, personally: there was a need to demonstrate that one was not losing touch with one's roots and was able to demonstrate the appropriate cultural respect to one's elders: "*I spoke Tswana to my mom and to my grandparents and like to the older family…* ***when you spoke English it was seen as if you were trying to be better"***.

But secondly, she repeatedly referred to the hierarchy associated with English and the type of English one speaks. Here she drew a distinction between "Bantu education", referring to township and rural schools, and "Model C" English, which I examined in section 8.3. In every environment, English functioned on a continuum of value. For instance, on campus and at school it was important to speak "good" English to garner intellectual respect, but if one went too far or was "too much" (Blommaert & Varis, 2015) and started flaunting one's English abilities, this was seen as "trying to be better". This repeated refrain was used by a number of participants, and brings a form of morality to bear on questions of identity and authenticity. This is the ethical quality of belonging that Yuval-Davis (2006b) referred to, where political solidarity and a form of moral responsibility become intertwined with one's social location.

Akani's narrative, when it turned to the topic of English, displays an interesting mix of reactions to English as a symbolic asset. Akani's story is much more individually focused than the explanations many of the other participants offered up in relation to the place of English in his life. Akani noted the ubiquitous nature of English in South African education:

> *If you check the way people grow up, um, more especially in South Africa, um kids* ***are taught to speak English from*** *the age they are still young, although some parents, um, teach their children to speak, their home language*".

Again, the ideological state apparatuses are mentioned, the school and the family, inculcating a set of values around what languages matter in which contexts. Akani was also one of only two participants that grew up and was schooled entirely in a rural community, where the language of instruction and everyday life was not English but Tsonga. When Akani's narrative is contrasted with participants such as Tseki, Dakalo, and others, we see that he represents the "other" side of the adjustment-to-university narrative. Where the other participants pointed out visible and audible differences in rural students, and distanced themselves from this "Other", Akani was this student. From this perspective, issues of self-esteem and self-improvement were foregrounded in his narrative, as opposed to the others who readily acknowledged their privileged habitus. He tells a story of stalling in a class presentation, where he had to sit down midway because he could no longer speak. He was mortified, and this "particular incident narrative" became a turning point (Wengraf & Chamberlayne, 2006) for him.

> *I used to* ***struggle very much speaking in English****, although, I was eh, taught a bit at home how to speak English, (mm), but um, when I came here I realised that* ***maybe I didn't learn enough*** *when I was at home [self-conscious laugh], 'cos I would really struggle to to, communicate in, English, um, more especially in a class setting, and sometimes when I had to do presentations in front of people,* so I remember this one time, *[clears throat] um****, I didn't even finish my presentation, not even a paragraph*** *(really), of my, exactly, ja (what happened), my presentation,* ***I just stood there*** *and, everything just, (p) eh, um, I don't know what happened, but* ***I couldn't express the things that I wanted to say*** *in English (mm)*.

He went on to explain that he realised he had to do something about his English ability if he was to succeed at university; he needed to invest in English as an asset. This started out from a place of anger and he says he blamed his schooling for not providing him with an adequate footing in English.

> *I went to sit down* ***feeling very ashamed of myself*** *and thinking, ugh, "how am I gonna do things, how am I gonna, um, live my life in this profession if this is what's*

> *always going to happen to me?"* ***and I felt very bad about myself, and obviously at that moment I was looking for, for for things to, for people to blame*** *and ah, some of the people that I started to think about ah, were my, [wets lips] high school and primary school teachers (mm) that eh,* ***why didn't you force us, to learn this language?***

However, with help from mentors and lecturers and a lot of hard work, his English improved and he is now confident speaking in English. The interview itself seemed to serve as some kind of testament to his language journey.

What I found interesting in Akani's account is that it is centred on *his* effort and to what he had been exposed. This is problematic because it reduces his struggle to one of personal travail and triumph. His personal effort should be commended. However, the fact that he saw himself as needing to adjust, as opposed to the system accommodating his needs, that we see the structural power dynamics at play in relation to language and education. English is positioned as an asset that must be acquired, while other languages are left as a "nice" to have', and the hierarchical relationship between English and other languages is left intact.

Finally, in Fhulu's portrait, English was represented using blank space (Figure 9: *Fhulu's Linguistic Portrait*, p. 161). He kept the majority of the body, including space in the head, torso, arms, and legs blank. He describes English as: "*English is, just a language that we need, so it's just, I don't know every day, this,* ***this body needs English****, everywhere!*". Fhulu's exclamation that this (his) body "needs" English elevates it from an asset to a matter of survival, in his opinion. The matter of English being represented as white through the use of blank space piqued my interest and I asked if it meant anything in particular:

> ***Clearly it does… clearly it does, I think, this one, I don't [know] if it was, I think it was conscious, or unconscious*** *yesterday but not I'm really, thinking about, you know about when I took the colour, if was more of* ***English – white****, you know? Um, that's when I related the English, that at the end of the day that* ***English has been described as a white person****, if um, somebody speaks English, it's still associated to, what? To the whiteness, so that's why you still colour white.*

Here Fhulu clearly articulates what was generally circulating about English in the interviews. Not only is it a symbolic asset, a form of cultural capital, but importantly it is associated with whiteness. As much as English is spoken about as a common language, representing a possibility for working across lines of difference, "at the end of the day… English has been described as a white person". Fhulu notes that this assumption is ubiquitous, and thus his

choosing the colour white to represent English was not something he really put his mind to, rather it was an automatic association for him. Fhulu stated that he does not have a problematic relationship with English, and how it is "every day, everywhere!" However, he does feel the dominance of English to be a problem when:

> *I'm expected to, fully,* ***write in an English manner, or maybe compete with, English people,*** *'cos obviously it's their home language, you know, which might come into writing, writing might be a problem because obviously I will have to, get in Venda first and then process it and say, okay how would I put the sentence*.

His frustration is with being evaluated on the basis of his English competency as if it were his mother-tongue. Continuing this explanation he says: "*I'm just writing there the* ***Venda-English****, so some of the things wouldn't even make sense"*. The academic challenges that he faces in not being sufficiently skilled in English should not, he cautions, be taken as a negative attitude to English, but he should not be placed in a less powerful subject position, or be seen as intellectually inferior, just because he does not have the linguistic capital of a mother-tongue English speaker. He rejects the conflation of language and "cleverness" that circulates in many students' and academics' minds. He speaks from a position of relative (possibly subversive) power, even though he is struggling with English. This is demonstrated later in the interview when he uses a delightful phrase that marks him as someone in control, even of the challenges he is faced with. This is not a position of victimhood, but a subversive relationship to English as a symbolic asset. He says:

> *When I'm studying or writing an assignment, it will come through English, once I struggle that's when I'll be like, how should I put it, and* ***then I'll Vendalise it****, and then change it to English and then… [he starts laughing, I start laughing]*.

His delight with his own unexpected phrase is infectious, and we both laugh at the appropriateness of his subversive play with "vandalise" and "Vendalise". This moment of subversion is hopeful, because it reveals the contingent (Berman, 2004) nature of the field in which English is constructed as asset, and that this is open to change.

8.4.3 Negatively sanctioned English

The use of English (or any colonial language) as opposed to the mother-tongue has often been read as, and critiqued for being, a mark of assimilation into whiteness (Ashcroft et al., 1994; Fanon, 1967). A similar trope emerged in the talk of the participants, where a critique of the use of English was couched in reactionary terms, seen as capitulating to whiteness, and

not as the emergence of a new form of linguistic identity. However, I argue this could also be read as a way of containing the power or dominance of English *qua* whiteness. This critique was most often articulated by the phrase that someone was "trying to be better". As with the sections above, the interpretation of English as an asset was dependent on the field in which the English occurred. However in the excerpts that follow we see that English was negatively sanctioned, setting English up as a compromised form of cultural capital. A complicated move, in relation to English as a symbolic asset, is seen in Dakalo's narrative below. She says:

> ***I don't speak to cleaners*** [her mother was a domestic worker] ***in English****… I like it's, {.hhh} okay, it is, even from a young age you wouldn't really speak to my mom's friends in English. It would've been like ooh,* ***you think you're better now,*** *now you* ***greeting people in English*** *kind of thing, so even if it's someone older, I'd rather speak in vernac*.

The social interaction of which Dakalo speaks, indexes a multiplicity of social phenomena, not just cultural respect, as might at first seem the case. The value attached to English in this instance is differentially valued, or even stigmatised because of the context in which it is used. To use English with an older person, who may not be able to attain the cultural capital attached to English, would be to insult them, and redouble their marginalisation. It would also then be a knowing act of subjugation on the part of Dakalo, positioning herself as different or "better" than those she should respect. In this account we see different sets of her habitus colliding; the "real world" habitus and the university habitus (Bradbury & Kiguwa, 2012).

The politics surrounding the choice of language is complex. For Dakalo to use English in this context and show that she's "better" would be read as a negative effect of the power of whiteness. It would demonstrate her supposed acquiescence to a racialised system of power, where the black subject becomes "closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of [English]" (Fanon, 1967, p.18). This is a politically undesirable position. However, the effects of these politics do not end here. This is a double movement because, while this seems like the choice not to use English is a moment of pride and respect, the reification of languages as authenticating identity categories is reproduced.

Dakalo's narrative in relation to English was, one of the most compelling in illustrating the ambiguity of English as a symbolic asset, representing both prestige and supposed risks of assimilation. Dakalo was schooled in an urban ex-Model C school, and spoke very good

English from a young age. When she would return to her maternal home in rural Limpopo, she recounts that:

> *Everyone would want me to teach them in English, like, teach them English… and then my mom would be, like, "**don't you dare speak in English, they'll bewitch you**.*

So people "back home" (a) desired that she share her asset with them through teaching them English, yet (b) she was also at risk of being bewitched because of their jealousy at her ability to speak English. Her symbolic asset contributed to both admiration and admonishment. She says that when she went home: "*They'd be like {.hhh}, 'oh no **it's that one that goes to white kid's schools**'".* The phrase "the one attending white schools" she says while parodying a rural black South African accent. It seems as if she is expressing frustration with being accused of assimilating a white identity. The way in which her community perceives English means that it can never be seen as tool used in an act of "refusal" (Chigumadzi, 2015). Rather, she is positioned as a compromised subject in the eyes of her community, paradoxically being the object of desire and derision.

Tseki similarly speaks about English being (negatively) seen as "better". She notes how it operates as an asset while being sanctioned against:

> *I think the minute you come and **speak English to them [elders**], and they know that **they've taught you Tswana**, they look at you and they're like, are you trying to show us you're intelligent**, are you trying to show us that you've gone to school**? It's not spoken, **it's like an assumed thing** behind the scenes we all know.*

It is clear that English is connected to ideas of intelligence, that you are educated ("you've gone to school"), that it is an asset for you, but at the same time it is negatively perceived. Speaking English in these spaces, to the people who raised you, contains both the seeds of upward mobility and the possibility of cultural 'loss'; it is an impossible position. Yet this is only the case if English is treated as a static signifier of assimilation into whiteness. The reification of languages, in which they are seen as the possession of a particular group, precludes the emergence of new identity formations. Change and variety are penalised for moving away from historically stable (often ideologically imbued) signifiers (Ratele, 2013).

It is not only in the home and in family spaces where English is penalised. Taxis were repeatedly mentioned by participants as spaces in which language practices were subjected to modes of gatekeeping. Fhulu recounts a story of being on the outskirts of Johannesburg and being lost. He wanted to ask a taxi driver for directions, and he said on that particular day, his

Sotho/Pedi just "went away". He was too scared to speak English, but then when the "coloured" taxi driver started speaking English, Fhulu was relieved that he could now speak English, as it was a "safe zone". It was a "safe zone" because the taxi driver had initiated the conversation in English. If this was not the case and Fhulu had spoken in English he would have been at risk of being called a "coconut", "mlungu", or "trying to be better". The idea of being at risk for speaking English and the idea of a "safe zone" articulates how deeply this sanction against English goes, how cutting it is to be accused of "trying to be better".

In both Fhulu and Dakalo's (presented in section 8.3) taxi stories there is something at risk in revealing the English parts of their identities. In both cases, as soon as they enter the taxi they disown their English competency and, in Dakalo's case, she even mocks those who do choose to speak English. This reveals the ambivalence that demonstrates the variability of English as a symbolic asset. As Ruth noted, one must be able to speak English well, but must also know when to drop that English competency so as not to offend or betray one's authenticity as an African language speaker. English can be described as a variable symbolic asset because it can be negatively sanctioned while still being desirable. I have argued that it is sanctioned as a way of containing the power or dominance of English *qua* whiteness. But because English is a necessity of elite economic and educational spaces it functions, paradoxically, as an object of derision and desire. We see that English does represent a site of disjunctive inclusion, because while it might represent an upward trajectory for some, it still maintains the hierarchical relationship between English and African languages.

8.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, through attending to issues of subject positioning within and across different contexts, the effects of power as mobilised through language have been demonstrated. I began by examining the English mind/African body trope that emerged in the participants' narratives. This trope was read as reproducing the asymmetrical relationship between English and African languages through the Cartesian split and, by implication, positioning the speakers of these languages asymmetrically. I then moved on to use Bourdieu's concepts "field" and "habitus" as tools for analysing the narratives of the participants, demonstrating that a) accent as an articulation of the habitus is used as means of evaluating a subject's "enoughness" in relation to a particular field, and b) that, despite its dominance in the racialised material economy, English is a variable symbolic asset across fields.

The themes explored in this chapter are thus related in that they demonstrate the power of the symbolic economy to position subjects in relation to each other through the circulation of value that is attached to forms of cultural capital. Value is the product of the relationship between fields, but only certain forms of cultural capital or symbolic assets are translatable into (material) wealth. The body is an important carrier of these symbolic assets, the meanings and values that reproduce social structures and, in this sense, forms a critical aspect of the habitus through which subjects are positioned and position themselves in relation to their contexts and others. The meaning of their bodies, languages, accents and dispositions, shifts between fields, accruing more or less value. These meanings are open to interpretation and, hence, value is fluid and shifting.

The history of South Africa means that class is racialised, although in post-apartheid South Africa we see that these dimensions of power are no longer neatly aligned. These shifting alignments produce bodies that are read as being "out of place" but these supposed anomalies reveal the very ideological nature of the categories to which many South Africans continue to ascribe and in relation to which, assert their identities and feelings of belonging. The affective dimension of belonging to a category infuses the meanings and values that are used in policing identity boundaries, a process which is only necessary because of the shifting alignments of fields and associated value. However, it is very evident that value primarily continues to be allocated in ways that perpetuate the hierarchical power of the (racialised) material economy.

Claims to authenticity, as well as accusations of betrayal, are pivotal in the subject positioning of the participants in relation to their experiences of language across different fields. These shifts in subject position come about as a result of negotiating the discontinuity of power structures into which the participants have been interpellated and the need to maintain their viability as intelligible, recognisable subjects across different fields. It is the varied logics of these fields that impose requirements on the subject that illustrate what Derrida (1998) calls, "the prosthesis of origin".

CHAPTER 9: Concluding Discussion

We are both symbolic and somatic animals, potentially universal but pathetically limited, we have a built-in capacity for hubris. Our symbolic existence, abstracting us from the sensory constraints of our bodies can lead us to overreach and undo ourselves. Only a linguistic animal could fashion nuclear weapons and only a material animal could be vulnerable to them. We are not so much a splendid syntheses of nature and culture, materiality and meaning, as amphibious animals caught on the hop between angel and beast.

(Eagleton, 2000, p. 98)

9.1. Introduction

Symbolic constructs, as I have argued throughout this thesis, have material origins and effects, but are not reducible to them, circulating in their own economy of power. As Eagleton (2000) notes above, the symbolic realm abstracts us from the materiality of life, and allows us to create meaning at a remove from material lived experience. However, these meanings in turn become the site of affective attachment and economic value and position us along axes of power in society. As such, the symbolic is "materialised through time" (Hall, 2000, p. 27) and has concrete effects. We need to make sense of these concrete effects and so we enter into a cycle of meaning-making, affective-attachment and subject positioning. We are continuously interpellated (Althusser, 1970) as subjects of the symbolic economy.

By way of conclusion, I will provide a summary of the findings of the study, and show how these findings answer the research questions as set out in chapter 5. The stated aim of this study was to draw together an understanding of the relationship between language, subjectivity, and the symbolic economy. I have done this through examining students' interpretive accounts of their language experiences as represented in their narrative portraits. By attending to subject positioning in participants' linguistic portraits and narrative accounts, I was able to demonstrate empirically how the paradox of subjection takes effect in their accounts. The analysis of participants' accounts illustrated *how* experiences of language constitute subjectivities through the ideological and discursive capacity of linguistic repertoires in such a way as to simultaneously regulate social relations and open up possibilities for change.

Three phases of analysis were conducted, moving from the particular visual portraits of the participants, to their interpretive narratives of identity and belonging, to more abstract claims

about the nature of the subject, language, and power in the symbolic economy. I will briefly note the key contributions of each of phase of analysis.

9.1.1 Narrative Portraiture

In **chapter 6,** I presented the portraits as constructed and analysed by the participants. We saw how the participants chose to represent the languages that they speak and with which they have come into contact and what affective and bodily dimensions are associated with each language. My first research question asked *how the participants positioned themselves and others in relation to the languages they speak and with which they come into contact in their visual-narrative accounts.* In answer to this, I showed that the metaphorical use of colour and the body outline (Busch, 2012) was a productive means for participants to reflect on the typically invisible medium of language and to engage in a discussion with the researcher about their experiences of language. The portrait exercise provided a language of description for the participants for the interviews going forward and helped the participants articulate how they positioned themselves in relation to the languages they speak and came into contact with.

This first phase of analysis showed that while there were unique aspects to these portraits, some common metaphors were shared across the portraits, illustrating how meaning in language and representation draws on common cultural resources. Some of the common metaphorical representations included the mother-tongue as the language of the heart or stomach, emphasising closeness and origin; and English as the language of the head or feet, emphasising rationality and mobility. Another common trope was the placement of secondary languages on the arms, indicating communication and social contact with others. In contrast, more peripheral languages were placed in uncomfortable or difficult to reach parts of the body, or at a distance, outside of the body altogether. The body outline was also often used to represent the relationship between a language and a sense of depth, authenticity, and "selfhood". This vocabulary made it possible for participants to indicate how a language was part of what they considered to be their "core" selves or at a distance from them.

The use of colour varied widely across cases and was less representative of shared meanings. In this sense, the meaning of particular colours was quite individual and personal, in contrast to placement on the body, which, as described above, was more often than not related to the

social location or position of a language in the life of the participant. However, colour was illustrative of the affective dimension of language to the participants and represented emotional content. A colour-as-language would be associated with something warm or cool, or favourite or least favourite, for example, and also to represent the relationship between languages using the colour spectrum as metaphor.

The use of the visual narrative portrait method developed by Busch et al., (2006) produced an original set of narratives, using a metaphorical vocabulary that made it easier for the participants to articulate how language functions both as an affective dimension of identity, and as something that is valued in a particular set of ways in the social world. It therefore allowed for the narratives to move between personal meaning and social locations, and the relation between the two, which is always mediated by the flows of power in society. Narrative methods, but particularly this multi-modal narrative method, are a useful means of constructing data and enabled me to address the content of what people said (what languages they spoke, to whom etc.), in relation to how this content was spoken about (the position and power of both the languages listed, and the speakers of these languages), that is, participants' meaning-making. This descriptive form of analysis laid the foundation for more abstract inferences about the relationship between language and identity, subjectivity, and how power circulates in the symbolic economy.

9.1.2 Authentic Identity as Ideology

In **chapter 7,** I presented the results of the thematic analysis and argued that the notion of an authentic identity is an ideological claim, mobilised in relation to language. This chapter spoke to the first and second research questions: *How did the participants position themselves and others in relation to the languages they spoke, and the languages they came into contact with? How did the participants interpret the position of the languages they speak and with which they come into contact?* Four themes emerged in response to these questions, namely, (1) Traces of Culture, (2) Race and Change, (3) "Real" Blackness, and (4) Whiteness and Ignorance. I briefly recap each of these.

The participants positioned themselves in relation to their mother-tongues in such a way that language not only functioned as a marker of culture, but also highlighted that language-as-culture was at risk of being 'lost'. The participants referred to a desire for authentic cultural

roots, most notable through their descriptions of pure forms of African languages and articulated a sense that these might be lost by virtue of modern life and the ubiquitous nature of English. However, through the layered nature of their narratives in reference to who they felt they really were, I drew on the metaphor of a palimpsest to describe how historical aspects of our identity are not replaced, but rather written over, layered on top of one another. These layers of identity are constituted in relation to each other, working against any form of loss being absolute, precisely because of the specular structure of identity (Hall, 2000) as an effect of ideology.

In the second theme language was positioned as a vector for articulating changing notions of race. We saw that there was a slippage between racial and linguistic descriptors that were used to refer to quality of schooling (with "English", or white, schooling being seen as the best form of education), but this did not equate with a form of racialisation that denigrated blackness. The South African racial idiom was used to denote value, but was not always used to claim an affective sense of belonging in terms of identity categories.

Where race did intersect with identity concerns was around what was considered so-called authentic blackness. This was related to Yuval-Davis's (2006b) category of a feeling of belonging being related to one's social location. There were a range of perspectives offered on this by the participants, but the underlying logic of the narratives illustrates that indeed, blackness, as with any identity category, is characterised by multiples modes of being. The fact that participants could identify someone as black in a narrative, but then note that that person was not 'the right kind of black', implicitly pointed to black heterogeneity. Thus, the critique of those falling short of authentic blackness entails within it a critique of the ideology of authenticity itself.

Where whiteness was flagged in the participants' narratives, white subjects were positioned (and even positioned themselves) as ignorant subjects that adopted an "intimate separateness" (Peterson, 2014) in relation to their environments. Their access to a valuable form of cultural capital in the form of English protected them from having to learn any other language, and relatedly, kept the (intimate) distance between themselves and fellow citizens intact.

Through these themes I argued that participants positioned themselves and others as either belonging or not belonging, depending how "authentic" a member of an identity category one

was assessed to be. Yuval-Davis's (2006b) theorisation of belonging helped to make sense of when and why participants reflected "emotional investments and desire for attachments" (p. 202) in relation to a language and when they did not. Belonging to an identity category (linguistic, racial or otherwise) did not always produce a simple feeling of 'being at home' and was often embedded in complex moments of positioning in relation to privilege, social location, and societal expectations of particular categories. The anxiety around being inauthentic appeared to be related to concerns about belonging "too much" (Blommaert & Varis, 2015) to a world where one might be reproducing the hierarchies of the symbolic economy through one's pragmatic participation in or assimilation to a system of value that is asymmetrically allocated. The narratives reproduced in chapter 7 corroborated Ndlovu's (2012) finding that racial identity categories, in particular, become contested when they are in crisis. It is here that nuances of language and voice become the site for the nano-politics of identity and authenticity (Blommaert & Varis, 2015).

9.1.3 Language, Power and the Symbolic Economy

In **chapter 8,** I examined three themes that spoke to the overarching topic of the relations between language, power and the symbolic economy: English mind/African body; Accent and the Habitus; and English as a Variable Symbolic Asset. Here I was concerned with understanding how the participants positioned themselves (and others) differently within shifting 'fields'. This chapter addresses the following research questions: *How did the participants interpret the position of the languages they speak and with which they come into contact? To what effect were linguistic markers that are not reified languages, such as accent, mobilised in their accounts?*

Representations of English and African languages were positioned in line with existing colonial and racial tropes of the 'unmarked white body' and the 'marked African body'. English was represented as the language of the mind, while African languages, even when positively described, were construed as languages of the body or emotion. This bifurcation between representations of the white (or raceless) mind and the black body could be read as the effect of ideological mis/recognition. The speakers of these languages were interpellated into different power locations. The universal intellectual quality of English was seen as self-evident, in contrast to African languages that, while cherished, were seen as constraining speakers within the symbolic economy.

The second theme from this chapter focused on accent and the habitus, and directly engaged with the third research question on the role of accent in the participants' narratives. Here the spoken voice functioned as an example of materialised ideology. Accent functioned as a paradoxical marker of authenticity, where one's habitus contained within it the possibility of 'betrayal'. I contrasted the narratives about "inside the university" and "outside the university" by drawing attention to the nano-politics of accent in these different fields. We saw that "outside of the university" the same rules applied to the betrayal of one's habitus through accent, although *what* was valued shifted between fields. It was important that through one's accent one was seen as competent in one's subject position at university, while being aware of the dangers of trying too hard, being too much, or not enough (Blommaert & Varis, 2015).

The final theme explored the use of English as a variable symbolic asset across different fields. This theme also addresses the second research question about how the position of the languages in the symbolic economy was interpreted by the participants. English was deemed a necessary asset, desirable, but if incorrectly used, potentially compromising one's 'authentic' subject position as a member of a particular social category. For black participants, while it was appropriate and desirable to speak English at university, in other fields, such as the field of public transport or the home, this could be sanctioned. I argue that it is because the field of public transport, for example, and its links to a particular classed identity, is ideologically constructed as subordinate to the university, results in English being treated pejoratively in the field of public transport.

It is the relation of power between these fields in the symbolic economy that influences the reception of a linguistic asset, and of the speakers of this language. In this sense, English was negatively sanctioned (while still being desirable) as a way of containing the power or dominance of the language as a manifestation of whiteness. Accordingly, I argued that English is an instance of "disjunctive inclusion" (Mbembe, 2008), because it represents an upward trajectory for some, while maintaining the hierarchical relationship between this language and African languages. As such, English has to be policed so as to contain the spread of its symbolic power, even while it remains economically powerful, and thus necessary for success in the academy and the workplace.

It is owing to the link between desirability and derision that English represents, that claims to authenticity, as well as accusations of betrayal, become pivotal in the subject positioning of (particularly, black) participants in relation to their experiences of language across different fields. These shifts in subject positioning come about as a result of negotiating the power structures into which participants are interpellated, and the need to maintain their viability as intelligible, recognisable subjects within particular fields.

The value of a particular symbolic asset is the product of the relationship between fields, but only certain forms of cultural capital or symbolic assets are translatable into (material) wealth. The fluid nature of meaning and value remind us that the symbolic and the material economies are not reducible to each other. The habitus, as the embodied site of ideology, is the carrier of the meanings and values that reproduce social structures, and becomes a key locus through which subjects are positioned and position themselves in relation to their contexts and others. The meaning of their bodies, languages, accents, and dispositions, shifts between fields, and accrue more or less value. The fact that meanings are open to interpretation, but that value is still being allocated in the context of shifting meaning, highlights the continued power of the material economy.

Collectively, the themes demonstrate the power of the symbolic economy to position subjects in relation to each other through, firstly, the circulation of value that is attached to forms of cultural capital and, secondly, the affective dimension of belonging or identification with a particular social category. The symbolic economy has a unique role in the distribution of power, because of how the symbolic detaches from material concerns. That is why we see that even where material relations are beginning to shift, racism (and maybe a form of destructive identity politics) continues to reproduce asymmetrical social structures. The meaning that is attached to particular linguistic repertoires is the product of power relations and, thus, the differential value placed on these repertoires, positions subjects asymmetrically on the social axes of power.

9.2 Discussion: Subject Positioning in the South African Symbolic Economy

The research findings of this thesis illustrate the paradox of subjection empirically within the particular context of an historically White South African university. Through participants' accounts of their experiences of language and voice, we can see how these material markers

take on particular values in different fields. The relationship between fields is constitutive of a larger economy of symbolic value that is constantly shifting. The shifts in subject positioning constitute a negotiation over the value of symbolic assets between fields, either preserving one's position as privileged or trying to contain the power of symbolic assets that negatively impact on one's social location. I will briefly give an overview of the theoretical moves I have made to reach this conclusion.

The paradox of subjection

The paradox of subjection (that is universal in logic) states that it is constraint that makes agency possible. This is Althusser's (1970) contribution: that we are ideologically hailed into subject positions, and we recognise ourselves and respond to this hailing, thereby playing a role in our own subjection. Derrida (1998) describes the content of this universal process as "prosthetic" because it is not real, but takes on the appearance of a natural reality. The very fact that we respond means that we also embody some of the flow of power that hailed us into position. Through our participation in our own subjection, the flow of power is interrupted. Indeed, Butler (1997) argues that the power that initiates the subject fails to remain continuous with the power that is the subject's agency. So, power is dispersed and discontinuous.

The discontinuity of power is not a radical form of subversion but nonetheless draws our attention to the fact that actions and ideas are not repeated or reproduced in the same way. This means that the shift between every performance or utterance of the habitus opens up the possibility for (incremental) change. Bourdieu (1990) calls this the limited but generative capacity of the habitus, what Butler (1990) would term "constraint", that makes possible new articulations of identity and difference in the world.

Language and symbolic power

The value accrued to symbolic assets (or forms of cultural capital, of which linguistic habitus is a subset) is a product of the relationship between fields. The relationship between fields is shaped by symbolic and material power dynamics, that are ideologically encoded, at a

particular historical moment. At this particular historical moment the hegemony of whiteness, which takes form in economic power, is still apparent even while political power has supposedly detached from whiteness. In an effort to succeed materially, but contain the power of whiteness, English can be both valued and negatively sanctioned, particularly by young people who straddle the past and the future. This is because what is valuable or sanctioned is constituted through a struggle *between* fields for symbolic power. English is sanctioned in one field precisely because it is valuable in another field.

However, the fact that symbolic assets are variable at all is a result of:
(1) the way in which the symbolic realm "opens up the operative distance between ourselves and our material surroundings which allows us to transform them into history" (Eagleton, 2000, p. 97). This is the essential iterability of language and meaning, and
(2) the paradox of subjection, outlined above, where we use received language to articulate our sense of ourselves in this world, opening up the possibility of change.

Authenticity and identity

The idea of an authentic identity is an ideological construct that functions to either: (1) achieve the necessary political goal of the recognition of denigrated identity categories, or (2) to preserve one's position of privilege or legitimacy in relation to an identity category. Claims to authenticity are most often made through appealing to a sense of belonging, which functions to include or exclude individuals for the aforementioned goals.

In the narratives of the black participants, anxieties about being inauthentic are related to concerns about belonging "too much" or "not enough" to a world where one's participation reifies the symbolic economy and the structural power of white capital (an issue of recognition). White participants, on the other hand, appear to assert or long for recognition as "authentically South African" out of their concern for being economically displaced or not "really" belonging (an issue of privilege and legitimacy).

The conundrum of authenticity is that it can function to include *and* to exclude, be invoked for the purposes of social justice *and* for reproducing inequality. The paradoxical nature of these identity claims points to the universal logic of subjection, that both Althusser and Derrida articulated: We are all prosthetically interpellated and that which we may feel to be

"real" or natural, is not in actual fact real, but is a political game, albeit with very real (material) effects. Having used language as a site to study the universal logic of subjection does indeed support Derrida's argument that the "originary alienation" we experience through language is a universal phenomenon, and it is the particularities of the struggles over the flow of power that makes language either a tool of liberation or oppression.

What is key to understanding the relationship between the material and the symbolic economy is that "ideology happens wherever power impacts upon signification, bending it out of shape or hooking it up to a cluster of interests" (Eagleton, 2000, p. 108). It is worth studying the symbolic economy precisely because it is not just about metaphorical relations between languages and voice. It is worth understanding the mechanisms of this economy since it is about power *and* meaning-making in the constitution of subjectivities. While the symbolic is, in theory, infinitely open to interpretation, we make meaning *within* the material constraints (and struggles) of our context.

9.3 Conclusion

The story of *Pygmalion* from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* provides a powerful allegory that captures the main argument I have wished to make in this thesis. Pygmalion was a sculptor who fell in love with one of his sculptures which then, in answer to his prayers, was brought to life. It is this tale from which the play by George Bernard Shaw takes its name, and central theme. A study in class, manners, and language, the play is about a working-class Cockney flower-seller, Eliza Doolittle, who is "sculpted" by Professor Higgins into a well-spoken and genteel lady of London, out of place in a world that is not really hers. The Pygmalion story is an allegory for the way that symbolic ideals are realised in the materiality of the body and have ideological and affective dimensions.

What we have seen in the participants' narratives is the materialised effect of ideologically encoded notions of language and the spoken voice to position subjects differently across different fields. The meanings we give to symbolic phenomena position us socially because of the circulation of value in society but also provoke affective responses. We develop attachments to the categories into which we are interpellated, because they materially (but not only) affect our experience of life. The narratives of these young South African university

students about their experiences of language capture a particular moment in time and space, and historicise what is a universal process of becoming a subject.

Perhaps, retrospectively, this thesis appears not really to be about language at all, but about choosing a prosthetic category to understand the nano-politics of subjectification. Nevertheless, as I have argued, while abstract language *is* that which founds the subject, it finds life in the fleshy reality of people's mouths, bodies, conversations, and communities. This dual nature of language is what makes it such a rich site for studying the process of subjectification and understanding how the abstract symbolic realm forms us as material beings.

Appendices

Appendix A: Transcription conventions

Adapted from Riessman (2008, p. 31) and Jefferson (2004)

- I number every line of talk. In the excerpts the line numbers are referenced as (ll e.g. 123- 456). The line numbers are provided to create greater transparency in the transcription and quote selection process. The reader is able to see the broader context of the quotation if necessary, by referring back to the full transcript.
- Included **my interactions in the conversation (in parenthesis)** if the participant was giving an extended account. If I was asking a question, I started it on a new line.
- When there was a significant **pause** in conversation it was labelled **(p)**
- **Break-offs** were marked as **" – "**
- **[**My impressions/descriptions/sounds/remarks were included in square brackets**]** I Marked tone or accent where I could, or found it to be significant; accent markers.**]**
- **//indicated that we were speaking at the same time as each other//**
- If I was unable to hear the participant in the recording it was marked in brackets as *(inaudible 34.38 – time elapsed in interview)*
- If the participant laughed it was marked in [square brackets – laughter]
- **<word** – indicates a hurried start to a sentence
- **>** indicates brief pause or cadence in a phrase
- **WORD –** indicates it was spoken loud in capitals
- **.hhh -** indicates in-breath
- **hhh -** indicates out-breath
- ***ugh*** *– gutteral exhale sigh*
- **[rrr]** - rolled 'r'

All excerpts in this thesis are in *italics.* Otherwise they are "quoted".

Appendix B: Participant information letter for a language portrait and narrative interview

Project Title: Liminal possibilities for subjectivity, language and subversion: university students' narratives from South Africa

Affiliation: University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Ethics committee: 011 717 1108

Prof. Jill Bradbury (supervisor): jill.bradbury@wits.ac.za

Researcher: Hannah Botsis

Phone: 011 447 5059

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Hannah.botsis@gmail.com

Good day,

I am a student at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and I am currently registered for my PhD in the psychology department. My research focuses on language experiences of students, both at university, at home and in social spaces. I am interested in understanding the different ways we express ourselves in different contexts, and why this might be the case.

I would very much like to interview students at Wits, to learn more about these issues and would like to invite you to participate.

The way in which these interviews would work is a bit unconventional and will require you to participate in two sessions.

In the first session I will ask you to draw a "language portrait". This is a very simple exercise which would show me, visually, the different languages you speak, and different ways in which you speak these languages.

The second session would be a "narrative interview". This means a largely unstructured interview, where our conversation draws on what you drew in the portrait. This interview is a chance for me to hear your stories about language in your life. If you have thought a lot about language and how it has affected your life, I would so appreciate talking to you. However, perhaps you've never thought about this? If so, that's also okay as the interview will provide an opportunity for us to think about this together.

The interviews will all be conducted by myself, and I anticipate each session taking about an hour to an hour and a half. The interviews can be conducted at any time that is convenient to you, and any place of your choosing, on campus would be preferable.

Participating in this research is entirely voluntary, and you are not compelled to participate at all. If you decide to participate, and during the process you wish to discontinue, this is also perfectly allowed.

I will request that we audio-record both of the sessions, and that I keep the original copy of your portrait. I will return this portrait to you on completion of the research, if you so wish. But I would want to make a high resolution copy first.

Your identity will be kept confidential in the research process through the use of pseudonyms, and I will also try and obscure revealing aspects of your story in my research. You will have access to the transcripts from the audio-recording, to check if I have accurately captured what you said.

If you are interested, but not certain you want to participate, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. If you are interested, please contact me and let me know, and I can share more information with you about the process.

The form attached to this letter needs to be signed in order for us to embark on this process. Please will you sign it and return it to me at our first meeting.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Kind regards,

Hannah

Appendix C: consent forms

Consent form for participating in a language portrait, and narrative interview

If you agree to participant in this research, please complete the following consent form granting me (Hannah Botsis) permission to interview you, and to audio record this interview. Please sign at the bottom of the page.

I understand that:

- My participation in this interview is voluntary;
- I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to and I may withdraw from the interview at any time.
- The interviews should be no more than an hour and a half in length.
- I should feel free to speak candidly about my experiences. There are no right or wrong answers and I will not be judged for the opinions I hold.
- The researcher will give me a copy of my interview transcript so that I may flag information that could identify me.

I _____ (name and surname) consent to being interviewed by Hannah Botsis (the researcher) and approve the use of the audiotape recorder during the interview discussion and use of my portrait. I also consent to the use of my responses in an anonymous manner in this research study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Consent for the audio recording of the narrative interview

If you agree to participant in this research, please complete the following consent form granting me (Hannah Botsis) permission to **audio record** this interview. Please sign at the bottom of the page.

I understand that:

- My participation in this interview is voluntary;
- I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to and I may withdraw from the interview at any time.
- The interviews should be no more than an hour and a half in length.
- I should feel free to speak candidly about my experiences. There are no right or wrong answers and I will not be judged for the opinions I hold.
- The researcher will give me a copy of my interview transcript so that I may flag information that could identify me.

I _____ (name and surname) consent to being interviewed by Hannah Botsis (the researcher) and approve the use of the audiotape recorder during the interview discussion and use of my portrait. I also consent to the use of my responses in an anonymous manner in this research study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Language Portrait

Here is a blank silhouette of a body, and some crayons.

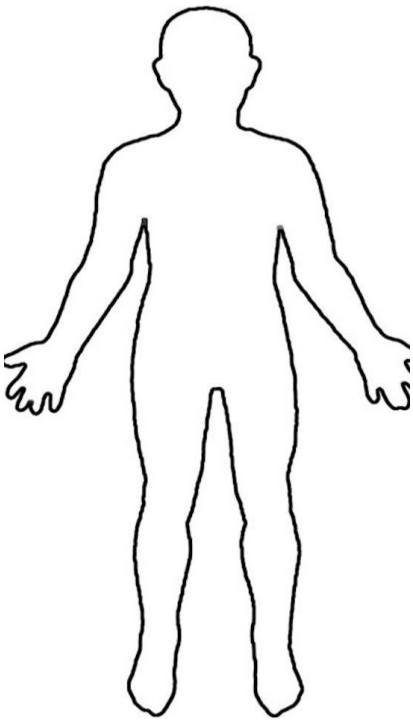
I want you to take a minute and think of all the languages you speak.

Now, please will you colour in the body choosing one colour for every language. Colour in any part of the body, and any proportion of the body you wish. Later I will ask you why you chose a specific colour, and part of the body, so please bear that in mind.

Now think about all the ways in which you might speak these languages. Do you have a name for these ways of talking? Whether you do, or do not, if you can think of different types of expression, that are not captured simply by the category "language", please will you also fill them in on your body, using any colour and size you wish (for example, do you speak differently to your parents than the way you speak to your lecturers?).

Do you have any questions?

Please don't rush, and think this through as carefully as you can.



Example of silhouette

Appendix E: Narrative interview schedule

These are just examples of conversation prompts that could be used in conjunction with the portraits. I will not ask all these questions. The focus in this interview is their life narrative,

using the portrait as a point of departure. Thus, I will start by asking them to tell me the story of their life, in terms of their language experiences, by referring to their portrait.

1. What is your level of proficiency in each of the languages you drew?
2. Why did you choose the colours you did for each of the languages?
3. Why did you put particular languages in particular parts of the body?
4. Can you comment of the proportionality of the languages?
5. How were your languages acquired? When, where?
6. Why did you learn languages that were not your home language?
7. What role have your different languages played in your life in the past, and now?
8. Has a language, accent, dialect or ability to switch between codes opened doors, for you or others you know? (I will ask about these separately.)
9. Where do you speak each of the languages you mentioned?
10. Do you mix different languages when you speak? Do you have different accents in different contexts? Have you noticed others doing this?
11. Who do you talk to in these languages/modes/codes?
12. Have these abilities been used only for communication or have they also been languages of learning?
13. Which way of speaking do you most frequently use in each of these contexts (e.g. university, friends, work, family)? Has this changed over time?
14. Do you have a favourite language or way of speaking? Why? What do you enjoy about it?
15. What language do you think in? What language do you dream in?
16. Are there any languages you would like to learn? Why?
17. Are there contexts where you feel isolated or different because of your linguistic ability? Does this bother you?
18. Are there contexts where you feel more part of a group, or more empowered because of your linguistic ability?
19. Are there contexts where you manipulate language to suit your needs? How does this work?
20. Do you ever intentionally exclude others from conversation, through language?
21. When you are feeling emotional (loving, angry, frustrated) do you tend to change the way you speak, or the language you use?

22. Is the way people talk important to you? For example, does someone's accent matter to you?
23. Can you tell anything about a person from their accent, or the languages they speak?
24. What languages are used in the media you consume? E.g. music, magazines, newspapers, radio, TV.
25. Do you feel there is a hierarchy of languages in South Africa? Can you explain this to me?

Appendix F: Ethical clearance certificate

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON MEDICAL)
H120907 Botsis

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H120907**
PROJECT TITLE	Liminal possibilities for subjectivity, language and subversion: University students' narratives from South Africa
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Ms H Botsis
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Human and Community Development
DATE CONSIDERED	21 September 2012
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	30 September 2014

DATE 23 October 2012 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor T Milani)

cc: Prof. J Bradbury

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature **Date** 25,10,2012

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

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