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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

TSOTSITAAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY: A sociolinguistic study of young black South African women who speak tsotsitaal.

By

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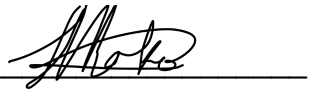
Research report submitted to the WITS School of Literature, Language and Media in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of African Languages

Supervised by
Dr Kgomotso Theledi

March 2024

DECLARATION

I, Maipato Caroline Mmako, do hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my investigation and research and that this has not been submitted in part or full for any degree to any other University.



M.C Mmako

___15/03/2024_____

Date

DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to the people that played a vital role in ensuring that I am able to complete and submit my dissertation. I dedicate it to my late parents, Joseph and Tshepiso Mmako who believed in me all throughout my life and encouraged me to always push forward no matter how challenging life can get. My late sister Keketso Mmako who passed away in January 2024 and was my best friend and planned to attend my graduation with me, but life had other plans. Thank you nneso, for your love and support. To my son Kagoentle and life partner Bongani, thank you for your support and literally holding my hand as I was navigating grief and completing my Dissertation. I am beyond blessed to have you in my life and dedicate this Dissertation to you. I would also like to thank my siblings and nieces and nephews for their support and love, Hloni for going on the streets with me while working on my paper, I am forever grateful. Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to myself, for doing my best when life gave me lemons.

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I would like to thank my family for their unwavering love, encouragement, and support throughout my academic journey. Their belief in my abilities and their sacrifices have been my constant source of motivation.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to all the participants who generously shared their time and insights for this research. Their willingness to participate has been crucial to the completion of this thesis.

To everyone who has contributed to this endeavour, whether directly or indirectly, thank you for being part of this journey.

God, thank you for seeing me through this journey and granting me strength to continue.

SUMMARY

This study aimed to explore whether young black women identify with tsotsitaal as an integral aspect of their culture and personal identity. It covered background information, rationale, research questions, and objectives. Additionally, it delved into the origins of tsotsitaal and its significance in the lives of young people in township settings. A review of relevant literature highlighted a gap in understanding the role of women who speak tsotsitaal, prompting further investigation. Using a qualitative research approach, the study employed a questionnaire for data collection. The sample consisted of 20 young women aged 18 to 30 from Diepkloof (Soweto) and Katlehong (Vosloorus), with equal representation from both areas. Findings indicated that young black women indeed identify with tsotsitaal as part of their cultural identity, and some speak it independently of male influence. Moreover, the study revealed that speaking tsotsitaal is not necessarily associated with lack of education; rather, it is seen as a mode of expression and cultural belonging. Based on these findings, suggestions were made for future research to broaden its scope and conduct in-depth interviews with focus groups to better understand the role of tsotsitaal in shaping the identity of young women in townships. Despite its small sample size, the study provides valuable insights for researchers interested in further exploring this topic.

KEY WORDS

Keywords: Tsotsitaal; Culture; Identity

Tsotsitaal: Tsotsitaal or Flaaitaal is a basilect language (a language that is spoken through another language) usually Afrikaans with a lexical borrowing from English, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, and Xitsonga (Mesthrie, 2008; Ntshangase, 2009; Hurst, 2009).

Culture: The characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts

Identity: The distinguishing character or personality of an individual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page No.
Title page	(i)
Declaration	(ii)
Dedication	(iii)
Acknowledgement	(iv)
Summary	(v)
Keywords	(vi)
Table of Contents	(vii)
List of tables	(viii)
List of figures	(ix)

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2. Aims of the study 2
1.3. Background to the study 2
1.4. Rationale 3
1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT 4
1.6. Objectives of the study. 4
1.7. Research Questions 5
1.7.1. Main research question 5
1.7.2. Sub-questions 5
1.8 Conclusion 5
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 6
2.1 Introduction 6
2.2 Tsotsitaal: a township colloquialised argot 6
2.3 Urban Youth Languages in South Africa: A Case Study of Tsotsitaal in a South African Township 8
2.4 A Linguistic Study of Kwaito 9
2.5 An Introduction to Flaaitaal (or Tsotsitaal) 9

2.6 Language as a mechanism of constructing social meanings. 10
2.7 Group identification and roles within the group structure 12
2.8 Language and identity 12
2.9 Toward making a distinction between the general culture and subculture. 14
2.11 Tsotsitaal as a style and identity 17
2.12 Social identity theory 20
2.13 Conclusion 22
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY 23
3.1 Introduction 23
3.2. Research design. 23
3.2.1 Advantages of Qualitative Research Design: 24
3.2.2 Theoretical framework 26
3.2.3 Population and Sampling 27
3.2.4 Data collection method 27
3.2.4.1 The research process 27
3.2.4.2 Questionnaire construction 28
3.2.4.3 The questionnaire items 28
3.2.4.4 Research questions 29
3.2.5 Data analysis 30
3.2.6 Data validation and Trustworthiness 31
3.2.7 Limitations of the Methodology 32
3.2.8 Ethical Considerations 34
3.2.9 Summary and Conclusion 36
CHAPTER 4: Findings and Recommendations 37
4.1. Introduction 37
4.2 Sociolinguistic profile 39
4.3. Language information 44
4.4. Perceptions and attitudes towards culture and Tsotsitaal. 46
4.5 Recommendations 62
4.6 Conclusion 63
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION 65
5.1. Introduction 65
5.2. Chapter 1. Introduction. 66
5.3 Chapter 2: literature review 67

5.4. Chapter 3: Methodology 67
5.5 Chapter 4: Findings and Recommendations 68
REFERENCE LIST 70
APPENDICES 78
APPENDIX A: CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE 78
APPENDIX B: LETTER OF CONSENT 78
APPENDIX C: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE 80
APPENDIX D: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE 97

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 52
Table 2 54
Table 3 56
Table 4 58
Table 5 59
Table 6 65

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 44
Figure 2 45
Figure 3 46
Figure 4 46
Figure 5 47
Figure 6 48
Figure 7 48
Figure 8 49
Figure 9 50
Figure 10 51
Figure 11 51
Figure 12 54
Figure 13 55
Figure 14 57

Figure 15 60
Figure 16 61
Figure 17 63
Figure 18 63
Figure 19 64
Figure 20 65
Figure 21 66
Figure 22 67

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for personal, professional, and financial empowerment, as well as for defining one's identity and values. Throughout history, individuals have utilized language as a marker of identity within society, often adapting it to suit their needs and circumstances (Schmidt, 2008). This adaptability and creativity are evident in the continual expansion of language, as seen through the addition of new words to dictionaries annually, and the development of unique linguistic styles when people interact in various settings, such as workplaces or communities. Culture is closely intertwined with language, with specific cultural practices often being associated exclusively with particular language speakers. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary (2019), culture encompasses the shared characteristics and knowledge of a specific group, including language, religion, cuisine, social customs, music, and arts. Language, therefore, plays a central role in shaping both culture and individual identity.

One intriguing example of a language deeply intertwined with culture and identity is Tsotsitaal, a language long spoken in South African townships, with roots dating back to the apartheid era. Initially viewed as a predominantly masculine language, Tsotsitaal was used by individuals, regardless of gender, to express rebellion and defy societal norms regarding gender roles and behavior. In contrast, another language receiving attention in South Africa, Isihlonipho or Hlonipha language, is associated with respect but is also considered patriarchal, potentially reinforcing women's inferior social status.Despite these patriarchal associations, women have strategically employed both Tsotsitaal and Isihlonipho to assert their agency and challenge traditional gender norms. Rudwick and Shange (2009) suggest that men often perceive women who speak Tsotsitaal as challenging their authority and may label them as lesbians due to their independent and assertive behavior. However, the use of Tsotsitaal by women represents a conscious choice to adopt an identity associated with strength and empowerment traditionally attributed to males (Rudwick & Shange, 2009). This choice demonstrates the agency of

South African women who use Tsotsitaal as a means of empowerment and self-expression in defiance of societal expectations.

1.2. Aims of the study

This study aimed to explore and investigate whether young black South African women in the 21st century, residing in the townships, identified with Tsotsitaal as a part of their culture and identity, and whether Tsotsitaal was utilized as a language of advancement and strength, as it had been previously by women in these communities. The study focused on young black South African females from Soweto (specifically Diepkloof zone 1) and Vosloorus. These townships were selected because (1) Soweto has a long-standing and diverse culture of Tsotsitaal, with various dialects present within its boundaries, and (2) A previous study conducted by Brookes (2014) examined the culture of Tsotsitaal in Vosloorus, specifically focusing on black males and not females, thereby presenting an opportunity for comparison between the two studies. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were any connections or divergent perspectives in relation to existing research on Tsotsitaal, which predominantly focused on men, and to address the gap in the literature concerning Tsotsitaal and its cultural significance for women speakers of the language.

1.3. Background to the study

In the 1950s, Tsotsitaal emerged as a language of empowerment, particularly for women in the South African music industry. These women aligned themselves with male figures who were revered for their use of slang and Tsotsitaal in their music, often referred to as "top dogs." By associating with these influential men, women found a platform to launch their own music careers. This association brought them recognition and they capitalized on it, leveraging their strength and creativity to their advantage.

During the Marabi era (1920s-1930s), trailblazing artists like Miriam Makeba and the Mahotella Queens challenged societal norms and achieved success in music while incorporating elements of Tsotsitaal culture. Similarly, in the subsequent decades (1940s-1950s), figures such as Letta Mbulu, Dolly Rathebe, and Miriam Makeba rose to

prominence in the kwela-kwela scene, initially aligning with male counterparts but later establishing themselves as independent artists while remaining true to their township roots.

The 1980s marked a period of rebellion, with jazz vocalists like Miriam Makeba and Dorothy Masuka using their music to address issues facing the black community both locally and internationally. Their use of impeccable English vernacular was surprising to many given the limited educational opportunities and job prospects available to black women under apartheid. Additionally, the late 1980s saw the emergence of Yvonne Chaka Chaka, whose 1984 hit "I am in Love With a DJ" became a significant success in the bubblegum music genre. Subsequently, Brenda Fassie became a prominent figure in the bubblegum era, embracing her township upbringing and incorporating Tsotsitaal into her music, thereby crafting an empowered identity. Brenda's hit song "I-straight lendaba" holds significance as it not only features Tsotsitaal but also explores the empowering role of the language variety for township women, enabling them to live life on their own terms by expressing themselves freely (Rudwick & Shange, 2009).

1.4. Rationale

In their study, Rudwick and Shange (2009) discovered that in Gauteng, the use of Tsotsitaal serves as a clear indicator of a woman's township background, signaling her connection to the township spirit. Women across various townships embraced the Tsotsitaal culture, although this aspect has received limited research attention. Even individuals holding formal positions may choose to use Tsotsitaal in specific contexts (Rudwick & Shange, 2009), underscoring its significance as an identity marker. Women employ Tsotsitaal as a tool for empowerment and self-expression, echoing Rudwick et al.'s (2009) assertion that its usage reflects the choice of emancipated and streetwise women. While there exists a substantial body of literature examining the origins, lexicographic, and grammatical aspects of Tsotsitaal, more research is needed to explore its usage among female speakers. Rudwick, Nkomo, and Shange (2009) investigated how women utilize language to empower themselves, challenging the perception that Tsotsitaal-speaking women are exclusively lesbians. They argue that Tsotsitaal serves

as a linguistic vehicle for African women to assert themselves in a patriarchal society. For instance, Shebeen queens in the townships who own successful businesses exemplify women who speak Tsotsitaal as a means of self-empowerment.

Contrary to the common belief that Tsotsitaal is spoken only by young black men in South Africa (Brookes, 2014), it has played a crucial role in shaping the cultural identity of young black South Africans. Tsotsitaal emerged as a recognized language in the late 1950s and 1960s (Brookes, 2014), becoming an integral part of daily life for young black individuals. Originally referred to as "Flaaitaal" and later as "iscamtho," Tsotsitaal has evolved over time, although its usage has declined as education levels rise and societal norms change (Brookes, 2014). Mesthrie (2002) describes Tsotsitaal as a phenomenon, recognizing its various names and varieties. He notes its association with both gang and prison culture, as well as youth culture, emphasizing its dynamic nature and cultural significance.

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Tsotsitaal has predominantly been researched from a male perspective, focusing on men who speak the language, along with the culture and identity of young men who associate Tsotsitaal with their sense of self. However, the female perspective, voice, and narrative within this context have been overlooked or insufficiently researched. This study aims to address this gap by shedding light on the experiences of females who speak Tsotsitaal and introducing their perspective, provided that the research findings allow for such insights to emerge. Through this study, the researcher aimed to highlight and elevate the narrative of women who use Tsotsitaal, thereby contributing to a more inclusive understanding of the language and its cultural significance.

1.6. Objectives of the study.

The objectives of this study are;

- To discover why the female' voice' or perspective is somewhat lost when the tsotsitaal phenomenon is mentioned.

- To investigate whether the negative connotations associated with Tsotsitaal apply when females speak it.
- To find out whether the 'taal' loses its 'muscular' status when spoken by females since it is mainly known to be spoken by black males.

1.7. Research Questions

1.7.1. Main research question

- How do young black females who speak Tsotsitaal identify with it as part of their cultural identity?

1.7.2. Sub-questions

- What social markers are associated with females who speak Tsotsitaal?
- How do young black females empower themselves with the use of Tsotsitaal?

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research topic by briefly describing Tsotsitaal, its origin, and its role in shaping township culture and identity. The background information, rationale, research questions, and the aims and objectives of the present study were identified and presented. The dissertation was organized into five chapters. Chapter one, as highlighted, served as the introductory chapter, and chapter two focused on and annotated the findings of the relevant literature related to Tsotsitaal, culture, identity, and women who spoke Tsotsitaal. Chapter three discussed the study setting and methodology employed in the present research, covering ethical considerations. Chapter four focused on presenting results, interpreting, and discussing findings. Finally, chapter 5 concluded the present study and proposed recommendations and interventions to be implemented.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this review was to consult existing literature on Tsotsitaal and cultural identity. The literature outlined what past researchers had discussed about Tsotsitaal and how language was sometimes used as a tool to construct social meaning and identity in a society.

2.2 Tsotsitaal: a township colloquialised argot

In South African urban, peri-urban, and township settings, African and Coloured youth predominantly communicate in Tsotsitaal or Flaaitaal during informal interactions. Tsotsitaal or Flaaitaal is a basilect language, typically rooted in Afrikaans but incorporating lexical elements from English, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, and xiTsonga (Mesthrie, 2008; Ntshangase, 2009; Hurst, 2009). Sociolinguists have also identified various varieties of Tsotsitaal, such as Isicamtho and IsiTsotsi, which utilize one of the official Southern Bantu African languages as their foundation (Ntshangase, 2009; Rudwick, 2009). The multilingual nature of South African society facilitates the development of these colloquialized argots among black and coloured urban and peri-urban communities.

Although distinctions exist between Flaaitaal/Tsotsitaal and Isicamtho, with Flaaitaal/Tsotsitaal rooted in Afrikaans and Isicamtho in isiZulu or Sesotho (Ntshangase, 2009; Aycard, 2014), speakers often conflate their colloquialized argot with Tsotsitaal due to its broader recognition. Despite these distinctions, there are similarities in the morphosyntactic structure of these spoken colloquialized argots. Slabbert and Myers-Scotton (1996:339) noted similarities in code-switching patterns between communities where Tsotsitaal and Isicamtho are spoken (e.g., isiZulu/English or Sesotho/English), and patterns observed elsewhere globally.

Tsotsitaal is widely acknowledged for influencing urban youth culture in areas such as Western Native Township, Sophiatown, and Newclare during the Group Areas Act

(Molamu, 1995). However, it's important not to misconstrue the political consciousness of these areas, which arose due to their exploitation as cheap labour sites for the mines around Witwatersrand and the Reef, as implying that Tsotsitaal served as a language of political consciousness or protest. Rather, Tsotsitaal emerged as part of a subculture created by urban youth from oppressed ethnic groups to resist acculturation and challenge the prevailing power structures in society.

The association of Tsotsitaal with masculinity stems from its historical ties to prison gangs and hostels. Scholars like Mesthrie (2008) and Ntshangase (2009) argue that women are aware of Tsotsitaal due to their relationships with brothers or boyfriends who speak the language. However, they assert that women are not active agents of the language but rather passive subjects and objects. Yet, Makhudu (2009) contends that Tsotsitaal usage surged during the Defiance Campaign in the 1950s, suggesting that both male and female protestors likely communicated through Tsotsitaal. Furthermore, Makhudu (2009) cautions against deterministic views of Tsotsitaal solely as a language formed by relexicalizing Afrikaans, English, and other Bantu languages, asserting that Tsotsitaal also influences the languages it incorporates, hinting at creole and pidgin characteristics.

Calteaux's (1996) research on township high schools reveals that due to the diglossia situation, vernacular languages sometimes become non-standardized in classrooms to accommodate the multilingualism of learners. Consequently, colloquialized argot like Tsotsitaal and Isicamtho is frequently used by learners within school premises. Female learners often become familiar with Tsotsitaal and Isicamtho through frequent exposure and interaction with their peers. Brookes (2014: 361) notes that females living with males who speak Tsotsitaal have opportunities to learn the language and may choose to become proficient if they perceive it as beneficial.

Although sociolinguistic scholars often discuss the evolving lexical nature of Tsotsitaal across generations, there is a dearth of research focusing on the female role in its preservation. Hurst's (2008) study revealed how delinquents during apartheid utilized their criminal repertoire to aid insurgent groups against the oppressive government, blurring the lines between general culture and subculture. Hurst-Harosh (2019: 122)

emphasizes that Tsotsitaal language practices are deeply embedded in society, suggesting that it's increasingly challenging to assert that young females exposed to Tsotsitaal are incapable of speaking it. Tsotsitaal lyrics in Kwaito music further underscore its entrenched presence in township culture.

2.3 Urban Youth Languages in South Africa: A Case Study of Tsotsitaal in a South African Township

Brookes (2014) notes that Tsotsitaal primarily finds usage among young black males in South African townships like Vosloorus, where it's known as a criminal language. Various studies offer differing perspectives on its origins. According to Ntshangase (1993) cited in Brookes (2014), Tsotsitaal is a language variety with roots in Zulu and Sotho. Originally termed iscamtho, it spread among isiZulu and Sesotho speakers in townships, serving as a lingua franca for communication across different communities. Despite variations, speakers could understand each other. Brookes (2014: 363) highlights the term's evolution over time, from "scamtha" in the 1960s-70s to "isiTsotsi" and "seTsotsi" in the 1980s, eventually becoming "Iscamtho" or "Tsotsitaal" in the 1990s-2000s. In township settings, social hierarchy among young men contributes to the formation of distinct social groups or "schemes." Brookes (2014: 346) identifies four main social levels: those who pursue tertiary education, those who complete secondary school without further education, those engaged in small businesses, and the unemployed. Unemployed youth, spending more time in the township, tend to use Tsotsitaal more frequently.

However, Brookes fails to address how females fit into these social groups and their relationship with Tsotsitaal, thereby overlooking the female perspective and narrative. Additionally, young men in townships assign labels to each other based on social status. "Cheese boys" come from privileged backgrounds, "softies" are perceived as gentle, "bhutjwas" flaunt their wealth, and "typical kasi" guys spend time relaxing on street corners (Brookes, 2014: 347). These labels reflect young men's perceptions of each other. It would be intriguing to explore if females also use such labels and if they align with those identified by Brookes (2014) or differ.

2.4 A Linguistic Study of Kwaito

Kwaito, a music genre, is predominantly listened to by young black South Africans and has emerged as a subculture shaping their identity. Originally referred to as Tsotsitaal music, it was associated with negative connotations due to the term "tsotsi," meaning thief or criminal (Satyo, 2008: 91). The term "Kwaito" has Afrikaans roots and originated from a gangster group in Sophia Town named "Amakwaito." Satyo (2008) prefers the term "kwaito-speak" over Tsotsitaal, viewing it as more current. Unlike Brookes (2014), Satyo (2008) focuses on the Xhosa variety of Tsotsitaal due to his research location in the Western Cape, where isiXhosa is predominantly spoken. This suggests regional variations in Tsotsitaal.

Satyo (2008: 93) describes kwaito-speak as an antilanguage, characterized by lexical innovation and vibrancy, distancing young speakers from rural life. It serves as an identity marker, with users avoiding classification as "rural" or "backwards." Kwaito-speak often involves creating new vocabulary through onomatopoeic or imitative words and using pet names, demonstrating communal solidarity with conversation topics (Satyo, 2008: 94-95). However, these terms are specific to the isiXhosa-speaking community in the Western Cape and may differ in other regions.

Moreover, Satyo (2008) notes that kwaito-speak is gendered, predominantly used by young men to discuss women. Some terms used to refer to women reflect discriminatory attitudes and draw on colonialist traditions, portraying women as inferior to men (Satyo, 2008: 96). This highlights the complex social dynamics embedded within kwaito-speak and its implications for gender relations.

2.5 An Introduction to Flaaitaal (or Tsotsitaal)

Makhudu's (1980) study delves into the history and origins of Tsotsitaal or Flaaitaal, as he refers to it, attributing its emergence to language contact within the multilingual context of nineteenth-century South Africa and the development of urban and township communities (Mesthrie, 2002: 398). He suggests that Flaaitaal or Tsotsitaal is predominantly spoken by African males aged 15 to 54, aligning with findings from

Brookes' (2014) study. Makhudu (1980) underscores the urban male-centric nature of Flaaitaal, shedding light on the absence of female representation. He attributes this gender disparity to "the establishment of male-only hostels and compounds in the mining towns," which led to a social environment largely excluding women and revolving around work and prison life (Mesthrie, 2002: 399). While Makhudu (1980) provides insights into why female narratives and experiences are lacking in Tsotsitaal studies, further research is needed to fully understand this aspect.

2.6 Language as a mechanism of constructing social meanings.

Speech communities or networks influence the social behaviours of their speakers. Speech networks differ from other speech networks (Fishman, 1969). This means that there are in-group members (those who are members of the speech community) and out-groups (those excluded from the speech community). Some speech communities are more toward the non-standardisation of language with their deletion and contraction rules, and other speech communities resemble dialects (Labov, 1969). The importance of gestures in different speech communities in face-to-face communication reveal the social behaviours encouraged in that speech community (Goffman, 1964). Both standard and nonstandard speech communities make use of constitutive rules (rules which creates or defines social actions whenever they occur) and regulative rules (rules which regulate a social activity that is expected from a participant); an in-group member is expected to know the constitutive and regulative rules of their speech community (Searle, 1965). Berstein (1970:163) refers to the universalistic meanings and particularistic meanings in the structure of a language and defines the former as consisting of principles and operations which are "linguistically explicit" and the latter as consisting of principles and operations which are "relatively linguistically implicit" and maintains that linguistic explicit forms are context independent because they are available to the public.

In contrast, linguistic implicit forms are restricted and context-bound and deal with local speech codes. This suggests that formal speech makes use of universalistic linguistic principles and operations because the public knows its rules, and informal speech uses particularistic principles and operations because it is restricted to a particular group/s. As

a colloquialised argot, Tsotsitaal uses particularistic principles and operations because it is restricted to peri-urban, urban and township youth.

There is also the phenomenon of monolingual cultures and multilingual cultures to be considered. Gumperz (1968:220) argues that linguistically monolingual societies are concerned with the use of phonology, syntax, and lexicon as verbal markers of the class the speaker is from but in multilingual societies the speaker may be required to use two or more grammars" to cover the entire scope of linguistically acceptable expressions that serve to convey social meanings"(Gumperz, 1968). This indicates that a speaker familiar with Tsotsitaal in an informal setting may use Tsotsitaal to relate with those who prefer to use Tsotsitaal in the informal settings. Monolingual cultures resist colloquiality because they want to be associated with literacy, and multilingual cultures tend to allow informal language elements consisting of diverse local speech codes. This confirms the diglossia characteristic of Tsotsitaal as Tsotsitaal is a language that borrow words from all the standard languages of country. There may be dialects, colloquial languages, and the standard languages in multilingual cultures. In the monolingual cultures, there may be colloquial languages along the standard languages but not dialects. Dialects may have classical vocabulary and this classical vocabulary can be standardised in the standard language (Ferguson, 1959). Colloquial languages are context dependent, while dialects or standard languages are context independent. However, the distinction that characterises colloquial languages as context-dependent and standard languages as context-independent does not apply to all colloquial argots, e.g., in our case, Hurst-Harosh (2019: 122) argues that "tsotsitaal language practices are thoroughly embedded in society". This means that Tsotsitaal has developed and is widespread in the black urban areas or townships.

The norms of speech communities are not only based on grammatical, syntactical and vocabulary differences; they are also based on language applicability in a social situation. Habermas (1987) describes this situation as a phenomenon whereby communicative speech creates normative contexts which are derived from subjective, social, and objective worlds. These normative contexts are necessary for effective communication between the speaker and the listener. Using Habermas (1987) concepts of objective,

social and subjective worlds, although Tsotsitaal is a nonstandard language, it creates these objective, social and subjective worlds. Sign Language scholars have argued that Deaf culture is multilingual (diglossia) because from this community there is code-switching from oral to manual codes and due to language-contact with the speaking culture Sign Language borrows language material from the spoken languages (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert & Leap, 2000). This language-contact and code-switching takes place between Tsotsitaal and its base languages. Tsotsitaal remains an oral language even though Molamu has published a Sophiatown-specific Tsotsitaal dictionary.

2.7 Group identification and roles within the group structure

In a given society, various subgroups may emerge to fulfill specific tasks or decision-making roles. These subgroups often aim to shape the behaviors of their members by fostering interpersonal sensitivity, human relation skills, mutual trust, and the expression of personal feelings (Fisher, 1974:7). Viewed as counter-groups to the prevailing socio-cultural norms, these subgroups may develop verbal patterns, typically oral, that oppose the established oral traditions of their society. Tsotsitaal, as a colloquialized argot, embodies such a verbal pattern, standing in opposition to the linguistic norms of the existing eleven official languages. Group identification and roles within these groups are closely intertwined. Individuals achieve identification with the group by aligning themselves with its goals. While roles within the group are influenced by personal traits, they are primarily determined by fellow group members who either encourage or discourage certain behaviours. Individuals are more likely to adopt behaviours encouraged by their peers and to forfeit those discouraged (Bormann, 1969). The socialization of female children typically differs from that of male children, and the association of Tsotsitaal with masculinity may deter females from learning and using it. This occurs because individuals tend to conform to their group's values and aims. In the context of Tsotsitaal, which is associated with male groups and delinquent tendencies, females may prioritize loyalty to their female networks, which discourage the use of Tsotsitaal.

2.8 Language and identity

Ismail Rashid (2020) presents an intriguing perspective on language and identity, framing it within the context of globalization. In his article "African Youth and Globalization," Rashid (2020) contends that "African urban youth have long been active interlocutors in global popular culture, utilizing images, fashion, music, and language to fashion their identities" (Rashid, 2020). This suggests that the engagement of African youth in global popular culture has influenced or shaped their self-identities and the languages they adopt to become part of these identities. Drawing from studies by Fridah Kanana Erastus and Ellen Hurst-Harosh, Rashid (2020) explores the concept of hybridity, as discussed in their study on "Global and Local Hybridity in African Youth Language Practices." According to Kraidy (2005:148), hybridity involves the coexistence of traces of other cultures within a culture, indicating a cross-cultural exchange between two or more cultures. In the realm of African youth language practices, hybridity demonstrates how engagement with global culture shapes urban youth language practices, such as Sheng in Kenya, Tsotsitaal in South Africa, and Nouchi in Côte d'Ivoire (Erastus & Hurst-Harosh, 2020). Importantly, the influence of global culture does not diminish local culture; rather, African youth utilize global culture to mold their identities in ways that resonate with their urban context, emerging as active agents of linguistic and cultural change in Africa's globalization (Rashid, 2020). The term "African youth language" (AYL) was coined in the study conducted by Erastus and Hurst-Harosh (2020) to describe the phenomenon of language mixing and styling in rapidly urbanizing African cities. According to Erastus and Hurst-Harosh (2020), AYL refers to the blending of languages within youth registers in these urban contexts. While these registers may share similar syntax, their status and variations can be influenced by the specific area where they are spoken. For instance, Tsotsitaal and its various forms exemplify this concept. Makhudu (1980) notes that the different varieties of Tsotsitaal are shaped by the dominant language spoken in a particular community, resulting in variations with vernacular bases. Therefore, Tsotsitaal spoken in a community predominantly inhabited by Sesotho speakers will be influenced by Sesotho, while in other contexts, it may be influenced by isiZulu. The study by Kessling and Mous (2004) explores the concept of "project identities" within African youth

languages, suggesting that these urban codes represent new identities detached from traditional rural, ethnic, and linguistic associations. Instead, these identities draw from the diverse cultural features present in the urban environments of large African cities. According to Kessling and Mous (2004), African youth use language as a tool to create identities that reflect urban modernity and cosmopolitanism, rejecting the notion of traditional ways of life associated with their mother tongue.

Erastus and Hurst-Harosh (2020) expand on this perspective, emphasizing that AYL serves as a communicative and inter-ethnic bridge among African youth, fulfilling a role that ethnically marked languages cannot. They argue that AYL not only serves as a marker of identity but also plays a unifying function, bringing together diverse youth populations within urban settings. This highlights the evolving nature of language in shaping contemporary African youth culture and identity, reflecting the aspirations and realities of urban life in Africa.

2.9 Toward making a distinction between the general culture and subculture.

Gans (1985) three levels of culture: the *Ostensive level*, the *Imperative level* and the *Declarative levels* will be used to make a distinction between the general culture and the subculture. The *Ostensive level* is a primitive phase of the culture and is associated with the worship of a sacred symbol or object, and this sacred symbol is regarded as central to the society. The individual is not important; the community is because the community at large is connected to the sacred symbol. The language is primitive and simple as it expresses immediate experiences or emotions. At the *Imperative level*, the individual is important; the community is no longer that central for personal experience. At this stage, the sacred symbol or object is no longer available; what is available is its representation, its image. Language at the *Imperative level* is concerned with recording the immediate experiences but also the experiences that have happened. This means that memory use in culture begins at the *Imperative level*. The *Declarative level* exists when there is already the absence of sacred objects, or the images that are used to replace the sacred objects when the sacred objects can no longer be accessible. This means that the *Declarative level* has to do with creating from the imagination the idea of the sacred object or the

image that represents the sacred object. At this level, language becomes complex as it includes the aesthetic aspects which find its expression in poetry, and it is at this level, language is used to achieve objective truths. Since the *Ostensive level* is limited to orality and leads to the creation of animal cults or a polytheistic world, the modern society we occupy today cannot be characterised by this level of culture. This means that from the *Imperative level* comes the characteristics that are useful for the creation of subcultures, and from the *Declarative level* (this is a literacy level), which makes the formation of general cultures possible. Since Tsotsitaal is not a literacy language but is a language that is aware of time and space, it belongs to the *Imperative level*.

Social institutions are found at the *Declarative level*. Simmel (1910) has argued that a society must have a human participation aspect and communal associations. The human participation aspect results in the likeness of the in-group members, which is an important quality in creating a subculture. The communal associations' aspect goes beyond likeness or unlikeness to achieve inclusiveness, which is a quality that makes a general culture possible. MacIver (1931) argues that society is based on translating likeness or shared personal interests into common interests. Common interests make people experience a society as something organic or regard society as a natural need. Firth (1964) distinguishes between the 'social structure' and 'social organisation'. A 'social structure' is an order of the society (general culture), and the 'social organisation' is a series of choices the individuals make when performing their specific actions to show their social affiliations (a quality required in a subculture). 'Social structures' always lead to integration (general culture with its inclusiveness), and 'social organisations' always lead to different means of achieving a chosen order (subcultures with their fragmentariness and their exclusivities).

Simmel (1997) makes mention of different ways in which space is used to achieve social actions. These are:

1. space in a territory which is undivided (a state),
2. the territory is divided into different units (cities),
3. a territory serving as a source of fixing immovable property (social institutions), and

4. Territory as temporally transcendental (religious worshipers as a diaspora since they are in different spaces).

The study conducted by Kessling and Mous (2004) delves into the notion of "project identities" within African youth languages, proposing that these urban linguistic codes represent novel identities that break away from conventional rural, ethnic, and linguistic affiliations. Instead, these identities are constructed from the rich array of cultural elements found in the bustling urban landscapes of major African cities. According to Kessling and Mous (2004), African youth leverage language as a means to craft identities that mirror urban modernity and cosmopolitanism, rejecting the traditional lifestyles associated with their native tongues.

Expanding on this viewpoint, Erastus and Hurst-Harosh (2020) underscore the role of AYL as a means of communication and inter-ethnic connection among African youth, fulfilling a function that ethnically distinct languages cannot achieve. They argue that AYL serves not only as a marker of individual identity but also as a unifying force, bringing together diverse youth populations within urban environments. This underscores the dynamic role of language in shaping the contemporary culture and identity of African youth, reflecting their aspirations and experiences in urban African settings.

2.10 The manufacturing of gender behaviour to continue the androcentric society.

Sociologists have long debated the origins of gender, whether it's primarily biological, psychological, or shaped by social and cultural factors (Giddens, 1989). Biologically, a person's sex is determined by the pairing of chromosomes from sperm (contributing the male XY pairing) and eggs (contributing the female XX pairing) (Giddens, 1989). However, gendered social behaviors are believed to be learned rather than inherited biologically, with no clear physiological explanation for gendered behavior (Giddens, 1989).

Freudian theories have historically shaped our understanding of gender. According to Freud, gender identity is shaped by the awareness of genital differences, with boys desiring their mother and identifying with their father during the oedipal phase, while girls

identify with their mother during the Electra phase (Giddens, 1989). Nancy Chodorow (1978) extends this, suggesting that girls develop interpersonal skills by identifying with their nurturing mothers, valuing personal relationships in adulthood, while boys, lacking this connection, may struggle to express emotions, prioritizing personal achievement over friendships.

Carol Gilligan (1982) further builds upon Chodorow's ideas, emphasizing the impact of social changes on gender roles. Women today have greater freedom to choose their occupations and pursue ambition, challenging traditional gender norms. However, some men may feel uncomfortable or threatened by ambitious women who defy traditional gender roles, highlighting ongoing tensions surrounding gender expectations in society.

Androcentric values, which prioritize male perspectives and experiences, persist in modern societies despite women's increasing freedom to participate in all aspects of society (Acker, 1989). While gender-neutral terms like "human" or "humanity" may be used, the social organization of relations remains gendered, obscuring the embodied nature of social experiences (Acker, 1989). These values are entrenched from the familial level, where husbands often hold power, to the state level, where male-dominated elites control socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-political resources, perpetuating patriarchy and the subordination of women (Chafetz, 1989).

Gendered behavior is perpetuated to maintain androcentric societies, legitimizing male power from the household to the state. Tsotsitaal serves as one mechanism through which androcentric values are reproduced and preserved in townships. Recognizing the household as an economic space reveals how national economic structures often benefit men at the expense of women, relegating them to a subordinate position (Blumberg, 1989). In most societies, women do not have equal access to economic resources, highlighting the pervasive masculinity of national economies (Coser, 1989).To truly empower women, socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political androcentric values must be challenged and revised to allow women to freely participate in cultural, economic, and political spheres of society.

2.11 Tsotsitaal as a style and identity

Coupland (2007:7) defines sociolinguistic style as the "variation within an individual's speech" It elucidates how speech unfolds during specific interactions when a speaker selects from their available language resources (Coupland, 2007: 3) in (Hurst, 2008: 195). In their study on Tsotsitaal, Hurst and Mesthrie (2013) delve into the concepts of 'performance' and 'styling', arguing that Tsotsitaal is not only performed but also styled in context, playing a significant role in identity construction for its speakers. The construction of identities through Tsotsitaal is utilized in social settings to imbue social exchanges with meaning. Coupland (2007: 3) asserts that "we need to understand how people use or enact or perform social styles for various symbolic purposes". Tsotsitaal usage, in this context, serves either to assimilate into a group (Brookes, 2004) or to craft individual or group identities, thereby imbuing social interactions with meaning, as articulated by Coupland (2007:18), as social meaning. Coupland (2007) delineates social meaning as "how we ascribe meaning to, and derive meaning from, our cultures, communities, personal histories, social institutions, and social relationships. Cultural values and norms, social power and status, intimacy and distance—all encompass social meanings. Moreover, there are meanings we attribute to our own and others' social positions and attributes—selfhood, personal and social identities, social stereotypes, prejudices, conflicts, and boundaries" (Coupland, 2007: 18). This underscores that meaning is a dynamic process of construction, unfolding at individual, group, or community levels. Hurst (2008: 198) terms this process as a 'joint construction in communities', wherein meaning, or its formation, transpires within the 'broader patterns of social organization' (Hurst, 2008: 198).

Style can also be perceived as complementary to lifestyle, such as one's 'dressing style', reflecting behavioral tendencies, beliefs, and preferences. Hurst (2008) posits that the convergence of sociolinguistic style and identity-linked style defines the domain of 'performance'. In essence, speakers mould personas and context through speech (Hurst and Mesthrie, 2013:4). Crafting these personas may also entail utilizing static identity markers like clothing style or employing body language, described by Butler (1990) in Hurst and Mesthrie (2013: 4) as a 'symbolic social sign', which can vary based on the context or objective of the performance.

Tsotsitaal, a language embodying both sociolinguistic and identity-linked styles, can be understood as a means for speakers to enact and shape social meanings and ideologies, whether at an individual, group, or community level. Originating in the diverse townships of Johannesburg in the 1940s, it became associated not only with a particular 'style of clothing' but also with members of criminal gangs (Glasser, 2004) in (Hurst and Mesthrie 2013: 5). Brookes (2004:188) notes that tsotsitaal's primary users are males, asserting that "language and gestures are key elements in the expression of male urban township identity and play a central role in the negotiation of social identity and group membership" (Brookes, 2004: 188), thus corroborating the assertions made by Hurst and Mesthrie (2013), who argue that speakers perform to construct social meaning and social identities.

Calteaux (1994: 153) in Hurst and Mesthrie (2013) observes that tsotsitaal varies across different townships and even within those townships where it is spoken, there are variations from one section to another. This diversity implies that while tsotsitaal may have different varieties, its role remains consistent: it serves to create social meanings and identities within townships. In their study of the Tsotsitaal phenomenon in Cape Town, Hurst and Mesthrie (2013) noted that most of the participants they encountered during data collection were males. They struggled to find females who spoke tsotsitaal and did so for similar reasons as males - to belong to a group, to fit in, or to be seen as 'cool' (Brookes, 2004). The few females they did find and interview mentioned speaking tsotsitaal to stay 'in style' and keep up with township culture. Hurst and Mesthrie (2013) found that these females who spoke tsotsitaal identified as fashionable and open-minded compared to those who did not. They perceived non-speakers as outdated and out of touch with the 'trend'. Style, in this context, is viewed as a trend - something everyone should be doing, especially in the township, according to the interviewed females. The concept of style, whether sociolinguistic or identity-linked, remains significant in how tsotsitaal speakers perform or employ the language. Hurst and Mesthrie's (2013) study revealed that some females spoke tsotsitaal, but there were no follow-up questions to ascertain whether they used it among themselves or only when conversing with male counterparts.

2.12 Social identity theory

Tsotsitaal, the language embraced by youth in townships as a component of their social identity, can be understood through the lens of social identity theory. McNamara (1997) examined various frameworks and discourses surrounding this theory, focusing primarily on Tajfel's social identity theory. According to Tajfel (1978), social identity theory refers to "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel,1978). This definition underscores the impact of group membership on shaping an individual's self-concept and the emotional significance associated with it. The theory posits that social identity influences attitudes, behaviours, and interactions by guiding the process of categorising oneself and others into social groups based on shared characteristics, thereby fostering social identification, comparison, and the pursuit of distinctiveness.

Social categorisation, the first process in Tajfel's theory, involves classifying oneself and others into social groups based on shared traits (Tajfel, 1978). Brookes (2004) asserts that "language and gesture are key elements in the expression of male urban township identity and play a central role in the negotiation of social identity and group membership" (Brookes, 2004), aligning with Tajfel's notion of social categorisation. In the context of tsotsitaal, these shared traits could include the language and gestures integral to its usage, contributing to the negotiation of social identity.

The second process, social identification, pertains to "the process of forming awareness of one's social identity and identifying with a particular social group" (Tajfel, 1978). This aligns with Coupland's (2007) assertion regarding social meaning, suggesting that individuals must be aware of their group membership, whether based on language, culture, or style, for social identification to occur.

The third process, social comparison, involves "comparing one's social group with other social groups, often resulting in a preference for one's group" (Tajfel, 1978). In Hurst's (2013) study on tsotsitaal in Cape Town, women who spoke the language mentioned using it to stay "in style" and criticised others who did not, labelling them as "close-

minded" and "out of touch" (Hurst, 2013). This illustrates the process of social comparison, where individuals favour their own group based on shared language practices and associated identities. The example provided aligns with Tajfel's (1978) third process, wherein the group of women who spoke tsotsitaal compared themselves with those who did not and preferred to associate with their own social group—the one speaking tsotsitaal, perceived as stylish and trendy in that particular Cape Town township. Tajfel's fourth and final process, psychological distinctiveness, involves seeking to establish a positive distinctiveness for one's own social group, often at the expense of other groups (Tajfel, 1978). Tsotsitaal exemplifies this aspect of Tajfel's theory, serving as a language predominantly used by young men in townships to assert their style and identity, thereby maintaining positive distinctiveness for their social group and aiming to be perceived as "cool" and fashionable within their community.

Tajfel's social identity theory underscores the importance of social interactions within groups for the establishment of identity. Lui, Shuai, and Gong (2013) suggest viewing identity not as a fixed concept but as a discursive construct that emerges through interactions, with sociocultural interaction being the primary means of identity construction and socialisation (Ochs, 1993, as cited in Lui et al., 2013). Language plays a crucial role in identity formation, reflecting cultural beliefs and ideologies that provide insights into the speaker's background and language preferences. Blot (2003) posits that identity can be understood as the linguistic construction of membership in social groups, while Mass and Arcuri (1996) argue that language functions to express identity, whether through dialect, accent, pronunciation, or language choice.

The variety of Tsotsitaal spoken in townships can offer clues about the speaker's origins, educational background, and social status. Some scholars contend that Tsotsitaal usage reflects not only regional differences but also educational attainment and social standing. Lakoff (1973) further suggests that language use can be gendered, with women often expected to conform to certain speech patterns associated with marginality and powerlessness. This gendered aspect of language use underscores societal expectations and stereotypes regarding language and gender, influencing how individuals express themselves linguistically.

Lakoff (1973) posits that women face language discrimination in two significant ways: firstly, through the manner in which they are instructed to utilise language, and secondly, in the treatment they receive within general language usage. Lakoff (1973: 45) outlines that in appropriate women's speech, there is a tendency to avoid strong expression of feelings, favour uncertainty in expression, and elaborate means of expression concerning subject matter perceived as "trivial" to the "real" world. This observation aligns with Acker's (1989) contention that despite the increasing use of gender-neutral terms like "human" or "humanity" to obscure the embodied nature of social experiences, discriminatory language practices persist.

The categorisation of Tsotsitaal as a masculine language results in discrimination against women, with female speakers often stigmatised as lesbians (Rudwick and Shange, 2009). Lakoff (1973: 47) further notes that if a young girl adopts speech patterns perceived as "rough" like a boy's, she typically faces ostracism, rebuke, and ridicule. Similarly, male children who employ terms considered "feminine" may also encounter ostracism or ridicule, although this phenomenon is predominantly directed at females. Society imposes expectations on young girls to utilise specific linguistic expressions that do not come across as "rough". Lakoff (1973) argues that this socialisation process can lead to long-term difficulties for girls as they transition into womanhood, hindering their ability to fully articulate themselves due to the linguistic constraints imposed during their upbringing.

2.13 Conclusion

The chapter reviewed the literature consulted under the current study, serving as the foundation upon which the study is constructed. It provides a basis for discussing the arguments posited by scholars who have explored the phenomenon, while also shedding light on the gap in the literature concerning women who speak tsotsitaal. Additionally, the chapter focused on elements that exert influence on identity, culture, and language.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as the blueprint for how the research was conducted, providing a comprehensive framework that guides the collection and analysis of data. This chapter is instrumental in explaining the research approach, methods, and techniques employed to explore the research questions or objectives. This chapter articulates the researcher's strategy for understanding and interpreting the intricate complexities of human behaviour, experiences, and social phenomena. In essence, the methodology chapter explains the "how" of the research process and highlights its credibility and reliability.

In this chapter, the researcher delved into the fundamental components of the methodology, including research design, data collection methods, participant selection, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. Each element plays a pivotal role in shaping the qualitative research endeavour and contributing to the richness of its findings. By providing a detailed account of the methodological approach undertaken, this chapter aimed to offer transparency, coherence, and a clear roadmap for readers to navigate the complexities of the research journey. Ultimately, the methodology chapter is the basis for the validity and rigor of the qualitative study, ensuring that the research contributes meaningfully to the broader body of knowledge in its respective field.

3.2. Research design.

This research employed a qualitative research method. According to Bryman (2016: 32), qualitative research methodology can be defined as a research method that emphasises words in contrast to the quantification of research data. In this regard, researchers focus on the participants' lived experiences (Bless, Higson and Sithole, 2013: 337). Thus, the researcher grappled with the perceptions of black women who speak tsotsitaal. As such, qualitative research design enabled the researcher to capture the experiences of the participants through words and images (Bless et al., 2013: 337). Implementing qualitative research methodology enabled the researcher to investigate phenomena in the research. Therefore, qualitative research entailed the researcher asking the research subjects

questions about themselves and how they construct their own realities (Bless et al., 2013; Babbie and Mouton, 2010). This ensures that the data analysed was interpreted to reflect the uniqueness in the experiences of township women who speak tsotsitaal as opposed to creating generalised data as in quantitative research. In short, qualitative researchers seek to amplify the voices of the research participants, emphasising the importance of understanding phenomena within its applicable context (Bless et al., 2013: 339).

This research is exploratory as it attempted to explore whether young black women in the township identify with Tsotsitaal as part of their culture and identity. The core data from the study was formed based on their subjective perceptions. The study followed a qualitative research paradigm where open-ended questionnaires were used. According to Leedy (1993), qualitative research is based on the belief that first-hand experience provides the most meaningful data. Walker (1985) mentions that “qualitative research is aimed at understanding the world of participants from their frame of reference and gives large volumes of quality data from a limited number of people. It would have been impossible to make a quantitative evaluation on this study because it is based on the perception of people and cannot be scientifically measured” (Walker, 1985).

Primary data was obtained by administering written questionnaires to the young women in Diepkloof (Soweto) and Vosloorus (Katlehong). After the questionnaires were handed out to the participants by the researcher, the participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions they might have. The researcher was on stand-by for any questions the participants might have and to clarify some parts of the questionnaire that the participants did not understand.

Qualitative research design offers a rich and nuanced approach to understanding complex social phenomena, but it also comes with its own set of advantages and limitations. Below are some of the key advantages and limitations of qualitative research design.

3.2.1 Advantages of Qualitative Research Design:

1. **In-Depth Understanding:** Qualitative research allows for a deep and comprehensive exploration of research questions, enabling researchers to gain a nuanced understanding of the studied phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study focused on the use of Tsotsitaal by young black women in the townships. The questions were formulated so that the data collected gives an in-depth understanding of the phenomena, allowing participants to give detailed perceptions.
2. **Contextual Insight:** Qualitative methods excel at capturing the contextual factors surrounding a research topic, providing insights into how social and cultural contexts shape behaviour and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The research question administered in this study asked if women who speak tsotsitaal identify with it being part of their cultural identity. The participants were women from the townships where the Taal is spoken, giving contextual insight and showing how social and cultural contexts shape the behaviours and experiences of the participants.
3. **Flexibility:** Qualitative research is flexible and adaptive, allowing researchers to modify research questions and methods as they uncover new insights during the research process (Merriam, 2009). Flexibility in the current study factored in where the researcher administered the questionnaire and was on stand-by to answer questions that the participants might have had.
4. **Participant Perspectives:** According to Charmaz & Belgrave (2019), Qualitative research values the voices and perspectives of participants, making it suitable for exploring subjective experiences and meanings. The use of open-ended questions ensured that participants were able to voice their perspectives on tsotsitaal.
5. **Theory Generation:** Qualitative research can contribute to theory development by generating new concepts and theories based on empirical data (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Literature reviewed in this study indicated a gap in knowledge regarding young black women in the township who speak tsotsitaal and whether or not they identify with it as part of their culture and identity compared to their counterparts.

It's important to note that this study's choice between qualitative and quantitative research designs is based on the research questions and objectives.

3.2.2 Theoretical framework

This study employed a feminist theory approach. According to Wilkinson (1996) “feminist research aims to attend women marginalised and often silenced voices not just in the social world but also in the production of knowledge” (Wilkinson, 1996). The study aimed to highlight or give women's perspective to tsotsitaal and identity and somewhat bridge the gap in knowledge and research output in this type of study. Kiguwa (2019) states that emphasis on women's knowledge is important because most quantitative research methods and approaches in constructing knowledge about the world focused on mainly the "dominant" group, which is men thus, "as a response, early feminist research sought to address this significant gap not only by revisiting and including women's voices and their narratives of experiences but also by challenging the dominance of one method ingathering and making sense of knowledge" (Kiguwa, 2019: 225). Women's narratives and experiences with the Taal need to be researched enough so that there is knowledge on it and how tsotsitaal is used by these women to empower themselves and, in some cases, even advance their careers. In her study, Kiguwa (2019) highlights core principles of feminist theory approaches in order to highlight why feminist research is important. The first principle she highlights is prioritising women’s experiences and voices. She gives an example of the Photovoice research method. “Photovoice research methodologies have recently emerged as critical political tools for bringing fore the marginalised voices and experiences of gender and sexuality” (Kiguwa, 2019: 225). This research method focuses on bringing highlighting worldviews of the participants.

The second principle highlighted by Kiguwa (2019) is based on the Standpoint theory which focused on the political importance of understanding and engaging differences between and amongst women. “Standpoint theories argue that women’s experiences of being and becoming gendered subjects must take centre stage in how we theorise and make sense of the social world. Differences between and amongst women are here understood not only to present multiple ways that we can understand the world, but also to provide insight into the different axes of power that women the world over experience and are faced with” (Kiguwa, 2019: 226). The current study aims at highlighting lived experiences of women who speak tsotsitaal and how they use it as a language of

advancement. The standpoint theories stand argue that women should tell their own stories and become narrators of their own experiences thus, contributing to the knowledge production process of the subject or matter in question or research. In the current study, women are asked about speaking tsotsitaal and whether or not they identify with is as being part of their culture and identity. In doing so, the knowledge production process on women who speak tsotsitaal gives an opportunity for women to participate in the process and have their worldviews highlighted.

3.2.3 Population and Sampling

The research population comprised young black women between the ages of 18 to 30 from the townships of Diepkloof (Soweto) and Katlehong (Vosloorus) respectively. These two areas were preferred as Soweto is considered the "birthplace of Tsotsitaal," according to Makhudu (1980), and Vosloorus was focused on by Mesthrie in her study of Tsotsitaal, only focusing on males. This study aimed to explore the female perspective. Consequently, the population of this study spoke Tsotsitaal. The study sample was identified through snowballing, a non-probability sampling method whereby the sample selection was collected through networks. This sampling method is crucial when the researcher has limited knowledge about individuals or groups to study. Thus, contact with a few individuals would direct the researcher to other potential participants (Etikan and Bala, 2017: 2). In this instance, the researcher assumed that young black women who spoke Tsotsitaal may be abundant, but the two areas were too large to implement a random sampling technique. Therefore, access through referrals from other participants facilitated the process of finding suitable participants. The sample group contained an evenly distributed population from each area, 10 participants from Diepkloof and 10 from Vosloorus, which ensured that the data collected could be analysed and interpreted as fairly as possible.

3.2.4 Data collection method

For this research, data was collected by administering a questionnaire where research participants responded to open-ended questions. The questionnaire was administered at

the mall in Katlehong and taxi rank in Soweto where participants were stopped and asked to participate in the study. The researcher approached participants that fit into the scope of the sampling, that is, females who look like they are between the ages the study focused on. The researcher also requested that the participants refer them to people that they know and who would be interested in the study, and they did.

3.2.4.1 The research process

The researcher administered research questionnaires with clear instructions on how to respond to the questions. Once the questionnaires were distributed, the researcher was available to address any questions the participants might have had as they completed the questionnaire. The participants would raise their hand if they needed clarity on some questions and the researcher was there to do so.

3.2.4.2 Questionnaire construction

The questions in the current study were designed to align with the research objectives, aims, and problem statement. The decision to use the research questionnaire as the data collection tool was driven by the need to obtain qualitative data. Additionally, the use of open-ended questions enabled participants to respond in their own words, fostering diversity in their responses. This approach contrasts with quantitative methods that necessitate fixed responses (Bodgan and Taylor, 1975).

3.2.4.3 The questionnaire items

To fulfil the objectives of the current study, qualitative surveys in the form of questionnaires were employed to address research questions. This method was deemed suitable as it facilitated a thorough exploration of the researcher's objectives. To maintain the reliability and validity of the collected data, the researcher meticulously constructed the questions within the questionnaire. The questionnaire encompassed biographical information about the research respondents, their language usage, and an exploration of their perspectives on tsotsitaal and its impact on their identity. To ensure the integrity and reliability of the study, participants were required to complete a consent form before the

interview (refer to Appendix). During this process, the researcher provided each participant with a detailed explanation of the study's aims and purpose.

3.2.4.4 Research questions

The questionnaire consisted of 38 questions, and the first section focused on the participants' biographical information. An example of the some of the open-ended questions asked in the questionnaire administered to the participants were:

Do you think there are women who speak Tsotsitaal?

Yes

No

Maybe

Please give a reason for your answer

Tsotsitaal is a male language.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Neutral

Strongly agree

Please give a reason for your answer

Semi-structured interviews offer a balance between structure and flexibility. Researchers can follow a predetermined set of open-ended questions while also adapting the interview based on participants' responses, allowing for unexpected insights (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In the case of the current study, participants had the opportunity to elaborate further on their answer, thus allowing for unexpected insight. Researchers can probe for details and context-specific information to uncover the complexities of the research topic, and in the study at hand, the questions asked for specific information about the young women's perspectives on tsotsitaal.

The qualitative method fosters a participatory atmosphere where participants feel heard and valued. It can lead to more candid and insightful responses, as participants are more likely to share their perspectives and stories (Smith, 2015). Furthermore, the method was employed because it allowed for qualitative data generation. The instrument used to collect the data in the study was in the form of a questionnaire.

3.2.5 Data analysis

The data collected from respondents was vigorously analysed and interpreted through thematic analysis. This method encompasses 6 stages. Firstly, the data was transcribed to allow the researcher to immerse themselves in the data (Bless, Higson and Sithole, 2013). Secondly, the data was coded preliminarily to disseminate and identify patterns and themes within the data. Thirdly, the respective codes were defined as to explain the coding system to others (Bless, Higson and Sithole, 2013).

In addition, the researcher implemented a final coding of the data, thereby recoding the entire data according to patterns and themes in the transcripts (Bless, Higson and Sithole, 2013). After the final collection of the data on the present study, data was organised into separate sections, and each category is presented below. Furthermore, the researcher carefully interpreted the results to answer the study's research question. Lastly, the

research applied self-reflexivity during the data analysis process as to reduce researcher bias and misrepresentation of data (Van Stapele, 2013). Data was coded as follows:

Category Code

Soweto participants SWP

Katlehong participants KP

In order for the researcher reduce replies to a few categories containing critical information needed for analysis, coding involved assigning numbers or symbols so that answers to the responses could be grouped into a limited number of categories.

The numbers were assigned to the different categories according to the focus of the study. There were 10 participants from Soweto and 10 participants from Katlehong. Numbers were assigned to the code as follows:

Code: SWP1 (Soweto Participant 1)

KP1 (Katlehong Participant 1)

3.2.6 Data validation and Trustworthiness

To enhance the credibility, dependability, and transferability of findings in the study, the following aspects were taken into consideration to help establish the rigor and validity of the study.

1. **Thick Descriptions:** Findings were presented with rich and detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and data. This helps readers understand the study's context and increases the transferability of findings to other similar settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).
2. **Audit Trail:** A detailed and well-documented audit trail of the research process, including data collection, coding, and analysis decisions was maintained. According to Morse (2015), this trail should be transparent and easily accessible to external reviewers, enhancing the dependability of the study.

3. **Negative Case Analysis:** Actively sought out and included information that challenges or contradicts emerging themes or patterns. This demonstrates openness to diverse perspectives and strengthens the credibility of the findings (Yin, 2017).
4. **Prolonged Engagement:** Spend an extended period of time in the field or with participants to gain a deep understanding of their experiences and context. Prolonged engagement can enhance the researcher's credibility and improve the richness of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).
5. **Peer Review:** Research submitted for peer review to receive feedback and validation from experts in the field. This external evaluation can help identify potential biases and enhance the credibility and transferability of findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).
6. **Reflexivity:** Maintained self-awareness throughout the research process and acknowledged own biases, preconceptions, and potential impact on data collection and analysis. Reflexivity can improve the credibility of findings by demonstrating transparency in the research process (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019).

3.2.7 Limitations of the Methodology

Qualitative research is a valuable approach for understanding complex social phenomena, but it does have limitations that can impact the interpretation of research results. Here are some common limitations and how they might affect the interpretation of findings in this study:

1. Limited Generalizability: Qualitative research often involves a small sample size and a focus on specific contexts. Findings may need to be more easily generalised to broader populations (Miles et al., 2014). This limitation can affect the interpretation of results by emphasising the uniqueness of the studied context rather than making universal claims. In the case of the current study, there were only 20 participants, 10 from Diepkloof (Soweto) and 10 from Vosloorus (Katlehong), which constitute a small sample size compared to the population of women who reside in these areas.

2. Subjectivity and Bias: Qualitative research is inherently interpretive and involves the researcher's subjectivity. Researchers' personal biases and perspectives can influence data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Silverman, 2015). This subjectivity may lead to different researchers' interpretations of the same data. The researcher, being a young black woman who grew up in the township and, to a degree, speaks tsotsitaal might or might not influence the interpretation of data and looks at the study from a subjective perspective.

3. Sampling Challenges: Qualitative research often uses purposeful or convenience sampling, which may only sometimes represent the diversity of a population (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The choice of participants could limit the breadth of perspectives and influence the interpretation of findings. In the case of the current study, the snowballing technique was used to select and identify participants, which was convenient for the researcher as they believed that using networks would work best rather than randomly selecting people on the streets.

5. Limited Quantification: The study being qualitative in nature means statistical data is not collected and data cannot be quantified. An example of quantifiable data that would be collected if the qualitative method was used would be the number of women speaking tsotsitaal in the focus areas. Qualitative research primarily produces rich textual data. As a result, quantifying findings and establishing statistical relationships can be challenging, which might hinder the ability to draw quantitative conclusions or make statistical comparisons (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

6. Interpretive Complexity: Qualitative data analysis involves interpreting nuanced and context-dependent information. This complexity can lead to multiple valid interpretations of the same data, which may require careful consideration during analysis and reporting (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2019).

7. Ethical Constraints: Ethical considerations in qualitative research can constrain the researcher's ability to investigate certain topics or access specific populations. Ethical limitations may affect the research design, data collection, and interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

8. Resource Intensive: Qualitative research can be resource-intensive in terms of time, personnel, and technology. Limited resources impact the depth of the study and the ability to access diverse participants or settings (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Due to the sampling technique used in the study, there is no guarantee that referrals and networks would be willing to participate in the study or if one the participants who agreed to take part in the study knows of anyone else to who they can refer thus, making it challenging for the researcher to get the number of participants required for the study.

3.2.8 Ethical Considerations

“Ethical considerations involve norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationship with others and enable us to distinguish right from wrong” (Cooper and Schindler, 1998). Basic principles relevant to research ethics involving human subjects are respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence or justice and fidelity. "Basic ethical principles refer to those general judgements that serve as a primary justification for the many ethical prescriptions and evaluations of human actions” (Peralman and Maclan, 1995). This means that researchers need to consider the ethical principles and consideration when conducting their research.

The following ethical considerations were adhered to:

• Written consent from the participants

Informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that participants understand what it means to participate in a particular research study and can decide whether they want to participate in the research. Weijer, Goldsand and Emanuel (1999) mention that to protect people from exploitation of their vulnerability, there has to be a commitment to ensuring the autonomy of research participants.

• Approval by Wits Humanities Ethics Committee

Research that involves human subjects as participants needs to be reviewed by the REC's and sharing the approval with the participants ensures that they understand that

the study has been reviewed and approved by the committee the researcher mentioned they are from. In the case of this study, the Wits Humanities Ethics Committee.

• Be open about the study (let participants know what it is about)

Participants received a participation sheet that explained the purpose of the study and why the study is being conducted. This can be referred to as Fidelity. “The Fidelity principle involves honesty, reliability, and good faith. It includes loyalty, personal commitment, and integrity in one's actions” (Warner and Roberts, 2004).

• Participants have a right to know the outcomes or benefits of the study

The consideration is rooted in the principle of non-maleficence. According to Beauchamp and Childress (2001), the non-maleficence principle is known as the "justice principle", which refers to a group of norms used to distribute benefits, risks, and costs fairly. Participants were made aware that should they want to know the outcomes of the study, they could contact the researcher, and the researcher would share the information with them.

• The questions formulated not to reflect biases and aims

• Treat information given confidential

Participants remain anonymous during their study, and their names will not be used. Information or data collected in the study will be used for the purpose of the study and kept in a password-protected computer.

• No harm comes to participants

No harm was caused to participants during the study, following the principle of non-maleficence, which means “to do unjustified harm and requires a commitment to ensuring a fair distribution of the risks and benefits resulting from research” (Jackson and Cook, 1999).

The fundamental ethical considerations mentioned above guided the present study and ensured that no one was harmed or suffered adverse consequences from participating in the study. The participants were made aware of the purpose of the study and were given the participant information sheet (as attached in Appendix B) to complete. Additionally, the participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point and are not forced to continue with the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and the participants were asked to sign the consent form (see Appendix B) after they understood what had been explained to them.

3.2.9 Summary and Conclusion

The chapter delved into the processes and methodologies employed for data collection and analysis. Extensive discussions on ethical considerations and data validation provided an overview of the study's conduct. The chosen methodology aligns with the study's objectives, which aim to explore participants' perspectives, experiences, and beliefs. Opting for a qualitative research design was deemed more appropriate to investigate how young black females who speak tsotsitaal identify with it as part of their cultural identity. This approach facilitated in-depth understanding, contextual insight, flexibility, participant perspective, and theory generation.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter depicts the findings of the data collected. The process of data analysis revealed several dominant themes and sub-themes that will be presented in this chapter. Data was collected using a questionnaire which was administered to the participants. The questionnaire consisted of 5 sections where sections 3 to 5 will be the ones presented in this chapter.

Additionally, the following chapter discusses the main findings of the study, which include the results and submits conclusions drawn from the analysis of data. The research findings are then analyzed and linked to the aim of the research and the literature review. The findings and the literature review will assist in attempting to respond to the research question mentioned in chapter as follows**: How do young black females who speak tsotsitaal identify with it being part of their cultural identity?**

The study was designed to answer the following sub-questions:

- What social markers are associated with females that speak tsotsitaal?
- How do young black females empower themselves with the use tsotsitaal?

Throughout the textual analysis, three broad thematic areas were the focal points. These themes will serve as the basis for presenting the dominant themes and sub-themes. The broad and specific themes identified, which informed the questionnaire structure, are outlined in the table below.**Table: Broad and specific themes which were identified.**

BROAD THEMES	**SPECIFIC THEMES**
Tsotsitaal and culture	• **Perceptions and attitudes towards culture and Tsotsitaal.**

	• **Representation of response on culture change** • **Perceptions on Tsotsitaal; what participants think Tsotsitaal is.** • **Representation of Tsotsitaal and culture.**
Women who speak tsotsitaal	• **Representation of the speaking of Tsotsitaal** • **Representation of the place where Tsotsitaal is spoken the most.** • **Representation of how well participants can speak Tsotsitaal on a scale of 1-5. 1 being not good and 5 very good.** • **Communication using Tsotsitaal.** • **Representation of how often participants speak Tsotsitaal.** • **Women who speak Tsotsitaal.** • **Perceptions on women who speak Tsotsitaal.**

	• **Communication using Tsotsitaal.** • **Type of conversations using Tsotsitaal**
Perceptions and attitude towards Tsotsitaal	• **Representation of attitudes towards Tsotsitaal** • **Language of the criminal**

4.2 Sociolinguistic profile

Figure 1: Gender composition of participants

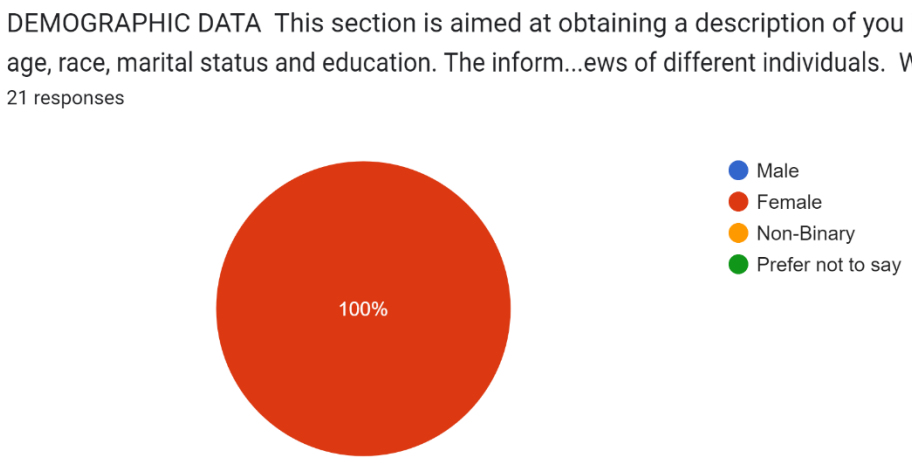


Figure 1 indicates that most respondents were females. This is because the study mainly focused on female respondents. One of the aims of this study was to find out if there were females who speak tsotsitaal and most females who participated in the study do.

Figure 2: Age of participants

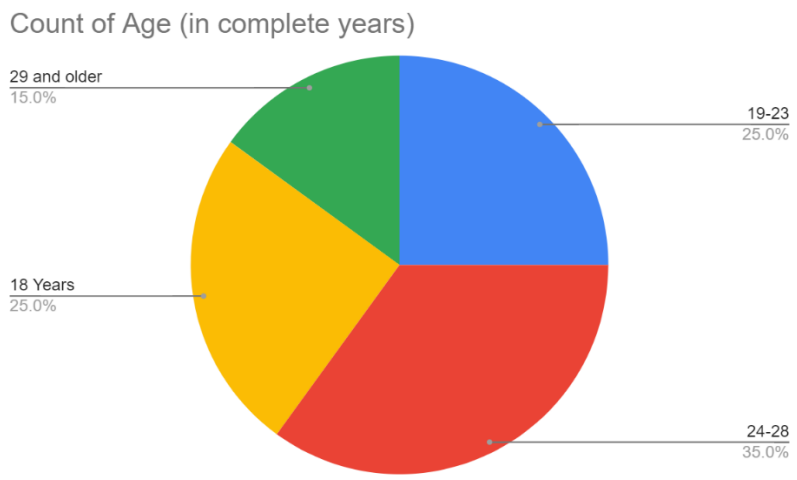


Figure 2 indicates that majority of the participants were between the ages of 24-28 years old (35%), having the 19-23 and 18 years spread evenly among the participants.

Figure 3: Representation of race

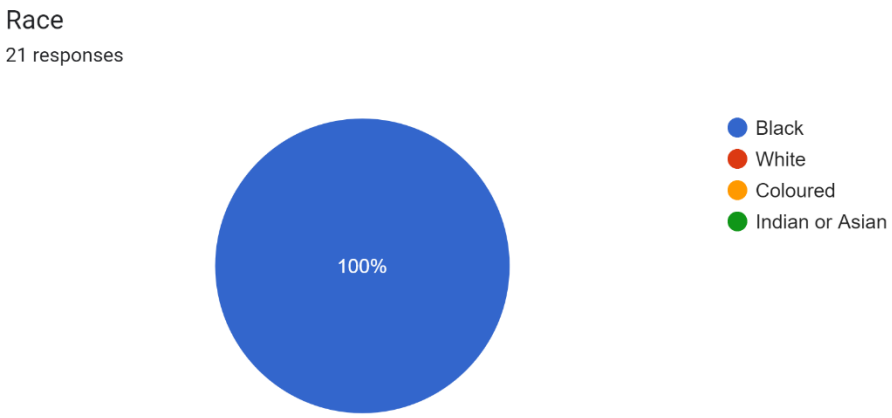


Figure 3 illustrates that 100% of the participants were black. This was the main groups that the research focused on.

Figure 4: Highest level of education

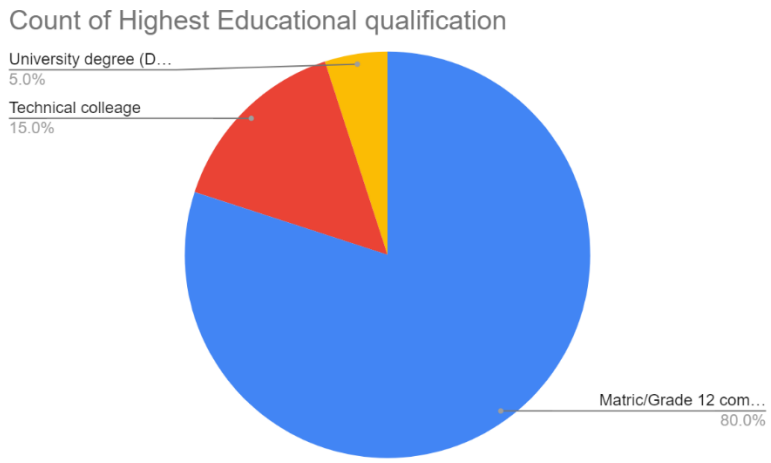


Figure 4 is a representation of the participants' level of education with a view to determining whether there was some link with the use of Tsotsitaal. 80% of the participants completed their matric. The remaining 20% indicate that participants went to a technical college (15%) or have a university degree (5%). The percentages or statistics indicate that the participants who took part in the study are educated. The significance of level of education or educational background will be discussed further in the study.

Figure 5: Current area of residence

Figure 5 is an indication of the current area of residence of the participants. The distribution is 50/50. Meaning that 50% of the participants are from Soweto and 50% are from Katlehong. The study was aimed at collecting data evenly across the two townships and that is translated in the figure below.

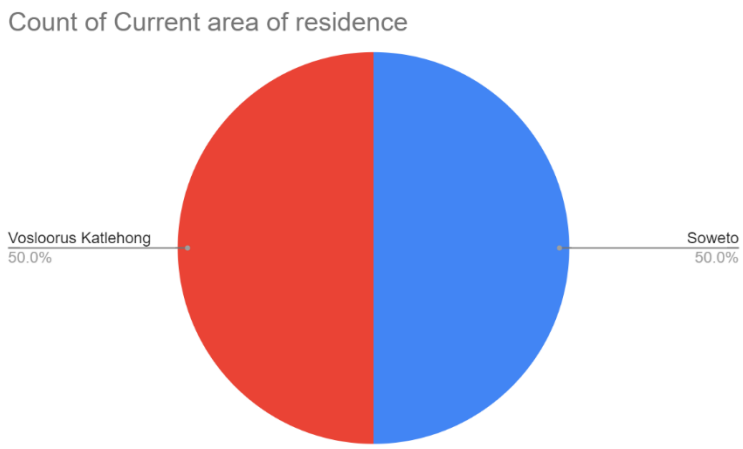


Figure 6: Place of birth

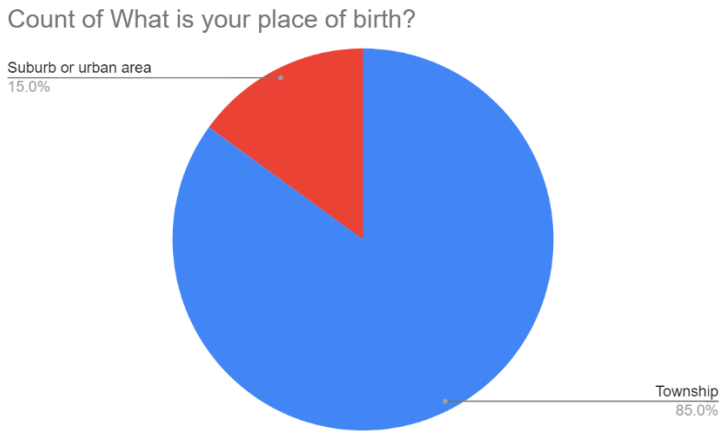


Figure 6 is a representation of the place of birth of the participants. Most of the participants indicated that they are from the township (85%) while the remaining 15% indicated that they are from the suburb or urban area. This question was asked to participants to determine whether the place of birth of participants influences the version of Tsotsitaal they speak.

Figure 7: number of years at the area of residence

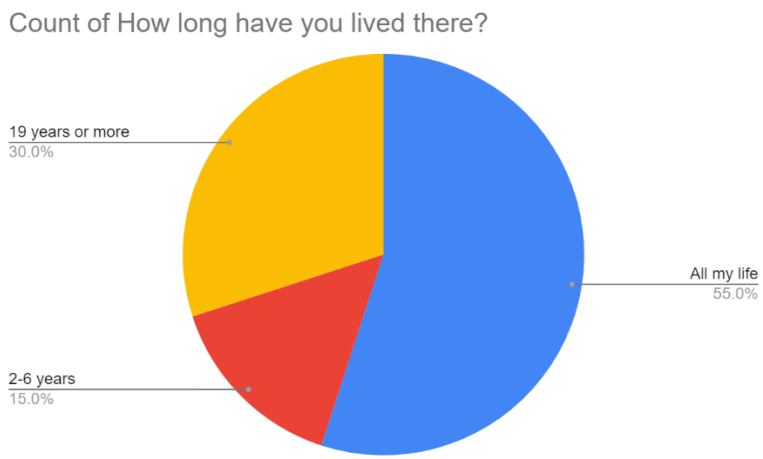
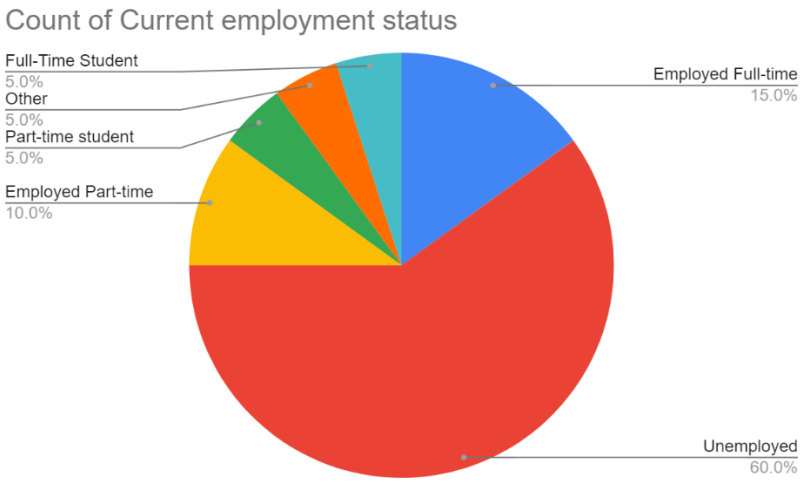


Figure 7 illustrates that 55% of the participants have resided in their current area for their entire lives, while 30% have lived there for 19 years or more. The remaining 15% have been in their current area for 2-6 years. This distribution suggests that participants' length of residence may impact their behaviour, speech, and adherence to societal norms. As Fishman (1969) notes, speech networks vary, with in-group and out-group members influencing social behaviours within the group.

Figure 8: Employment status

Figure 8 is a representation of the employment status of the participants. A huge portion of the participants are unemployed while the remaining participants are either employed part-time, are part-time and full-time students or are employed full-time. This sees 60% of the participants being unemployed and 15% employed full-time. The section on the employment status of the participants was asked to determine whether the argument that Brookes (2009) made that stated that most of the young people who speak Tsotsitaal are either unemployed or self-employed will remain true in this study and data from the study indicates that she was correct in her argument.



4.3. Language information

Figure 9: Home language

Figure 9 below illustrates the distribution of languages among the participants. IsiZulu and Sesotho emerge as the dominant languages in terms of home language. However, when asked about the language they use daily (see Figure 10), the responses varied slightly. While 45% of the participants identified isiZulu as their home language, 30% reported Sesotho as their home language. Sepedi, Setswana, xiTsonga, English, and isiSwati were evenly distributed at 5%. This question aimed to determine if participants used languages other than their home languages, which might influence the variety of Tsotsitaal they speak. Notably, Setswana and xiTsonga speakers mentioned that they switch between Sesotho and isiZulu as their daily languages, as these are the predominant languages in their respective areas of residence. Slabbert and Myers-Scotton (1996:339) observed conformity in code-switching patterns in communities where Tsotsitaal and Isicamtho are spoken, such as isiZulu/English or Sesotho/English, mirroring patterns found elsewhere in the world. This sheds light on why participants

switch between their home language and the language they use daily.

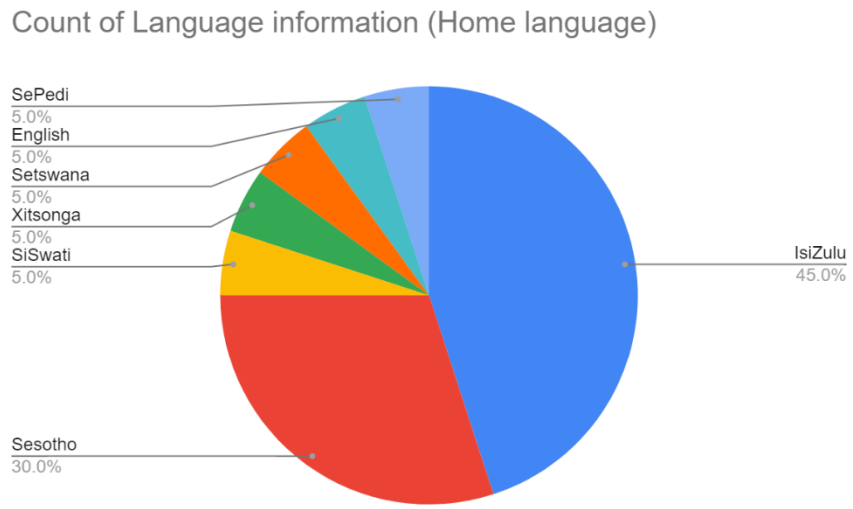
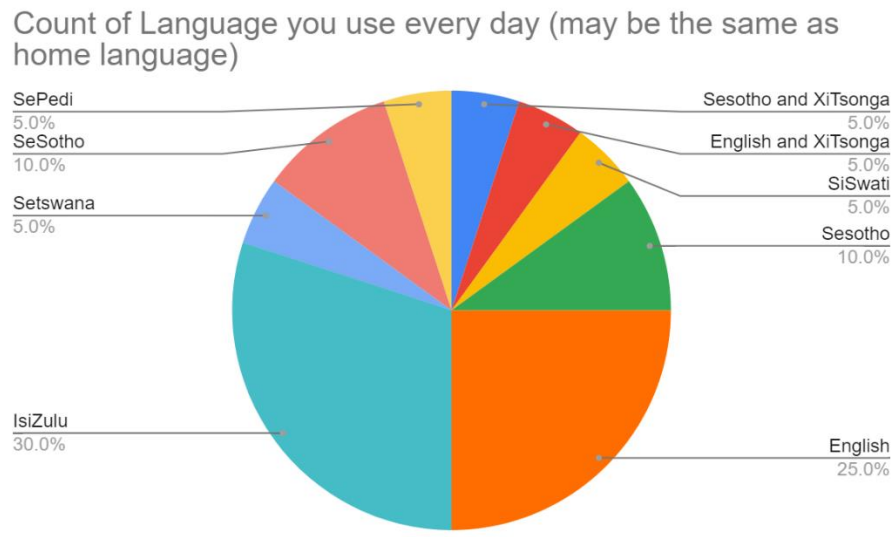


Figure 10: Language used every day.



The language spoken by participants daily slightly differs from their home language. However, as shown in Figure 10, certain percentages remained consistent. IsiXhosa remains at 19% both in terms of participants' home language (Figure 9) and the language they use every day. Meanwhile, 42.9% of participants indicated they use isiZulu as their everyday language, while English, Tshivenda, and Sesotho are each used by 9.5% of participants.

4.4. Perceptions and attitudes towards culture and Tsotsitaal.

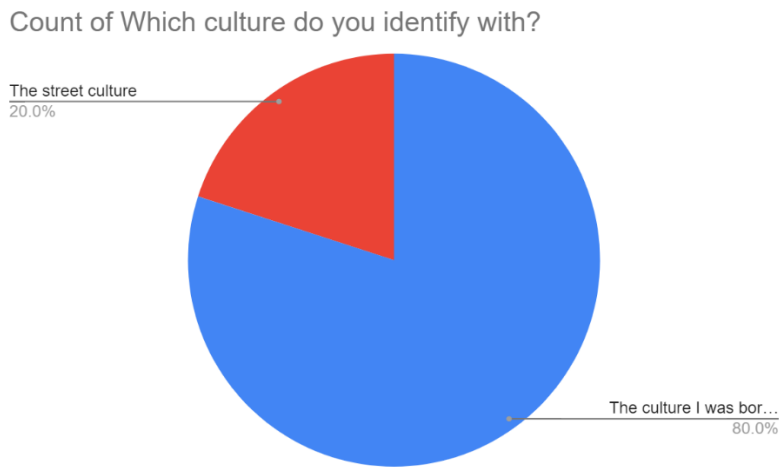


Figure 11 is an illustration of the culture that the participants identify with the most. Looking at the data presented, 80% of the participants identify with the culture they were born in and 20% identify with the street culture. None of the participants indicated to identify with the Tsotsitaal culture.

Table 1: Reasons why participants identify with the culture mentioned in figure 11.

Statement	Number of Participants	Percentage %
I understand it better	**12**	**60%**
I want to be part of a group	**0**	**0%**
Makes me feel like I belong	**4**	**20%**

I have not thought about any reason	**0**	**0%%**
It describes me better	**4**	**20%**

Table 1 shows the responses or reasons why the participants identified with the culture they picked in figure 11. The participants had to answer and elaborate on the question and were given the opportunity to pick more than one answer. The participants who mentioned that they understand that culture better, that is (n=12) 60%. When asked to elaborate on why they identify with that culture, most participants responded saying that *"because that is the culture I was born in*" (KP8). Brookes (2014) mentioned that young people in the township adopt the culture of their peers because they want to belong in a group. Data indicates that 20% of the participants chose a culture that makes them feel like they belong. Looking at the table, 0% (n=0) of the participants did not indicate that they want to be a part of a group but rather 20% mention that it describes them better. Socialization and a sense of belonging is important for the young people in the township.

Group settings are one of the things that has always been a factor in the growth and shaping of the young people in the township. This indicates that the participants link who they are (identity) with the culture they are comfortable with. Kiessling and Mous (2004) study on African Youth Languages argues that young people detach from cultural or ethnic associations in order to identify as urban or modern individuals. The 20% of the participants who mentioned that it describes them better support Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory which states that in order for the process of social identification to happen, people need to be aware of the group that they belong to. Whether it is identifying with a group through language, culture or style, the process of identifying has to happen in order for social meaning to occur.

Figure 12: Representation of response on culture change

Figure 12 below is a representation of the participants' response on the question regarding culture change in the questionnaire (see Annexure). Many participants mention that it is possible for a person or individual to change or switch culture as they grow up. 60% mentioned that yes, it is possible, and the reasons given among others was that humans live in an ever-changing society, and everything is flexible, and that people are allowed to express themselves in whatever way they desire, meaning they can choose to change their culture. "*It is possible. I believe when you grow up you choose if you want to change or continue with the culture you grew up in. Cultures are made by people therefore you have a right to do whatever you believe in*" (KP2). 20% of the participants said that maybe it is possible to switch cultures and mentioned that it is possible that as people grow, they could have a different view on life and that may be the lead to the change in culture. The remaining 20% of the participants believe that a person cannot change their culture as they grow up. One of the reasons highlighted by the participants was that "*your culture defines who you are and where you are coming from so it's important to not change your culture*" (SWP6). The response of SWP6 supports Gans (1985) three levels of culture. The first level, the Ostensive level argues that the individual is not important, the community is. In this case, culture is associated with being part of the community and defining who the individual is.

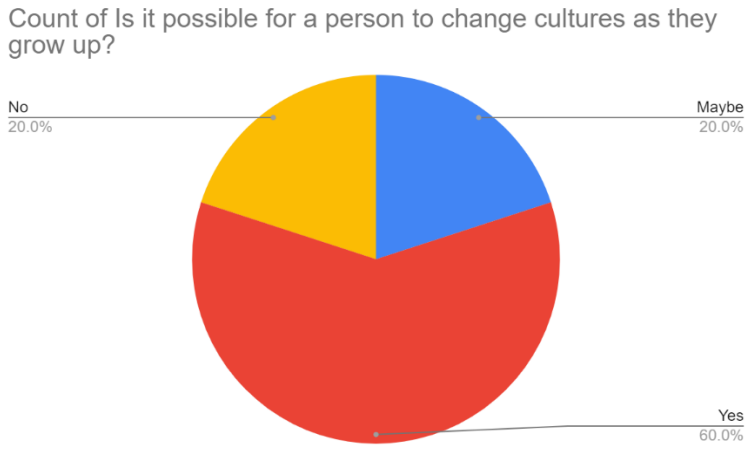


Table 2: Perceptions on Tsotsitaal and what participants think Tsotsitaal is.

Statement	Number of participants	Percentage %
A language	**12**	**60%**
A culture	**4**	**20%**
Both	**4**	**20%**
I do not know	**0**	**0%**

Table 2 is representation of what the participants thought Tsotsitaal was. 20% (n=4) of the participants mention that they think that it is both a language and a culture while 20% (n=4) believe that it is a culture and 60% (n=12) believe it's a language. This question was asked to the participants to find out what their thoughts were in terms of Tsotsitaal and to determine whether or not they view Tsotsitaal as a language on its own or a culture on its own or both language and culture. With the response that the participants gave, it is evident that they think it is both a culture and a language. Studies on language and culture have indicated that it is sometimes impossible to separate the two, that is, language and culture go hand in hand. One cannot learn a language without learning the culture and vice versa as language can be used as a mechanism to construct social meanings or norms that in turn are viewed as or form part of the culture of a particular community. Satyo (2008) study on the use of tsotsitaal in the Western Cape indicates that language and culture go hand in hand. The young people in the Xhosa speaking community where Satyo conducted his study spoke tsotsitaal in order to view as "cool" by their peers.

Figure 13: Representation of the speaking of Tsotsitaal

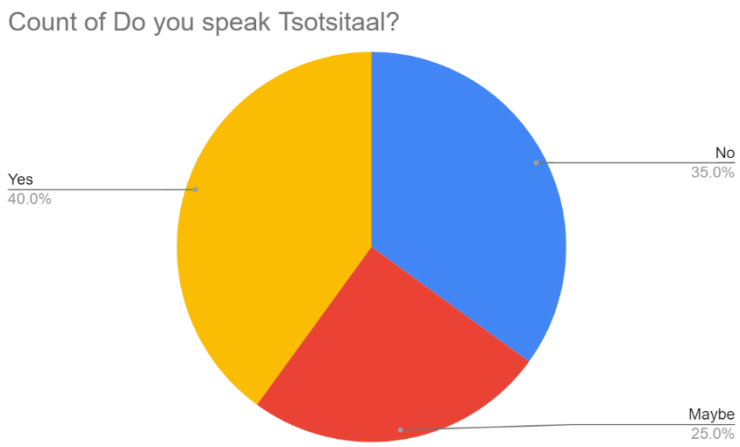


Figure 13 represents the number of participants who can speak Tsotsitaal. 40% of the participants stated that they can speak Tsotsitaal, while 25% said that maybe they do. This uncertainty may stem from the fact that they may not consider themselves fluent or may not recognize that they are speaking Tsotsitaal. Mesthrie (2008:95-109) discussed in a paper titled “I’ve been speaking Tsotsitaal all my life without knowing it” that individuals who grow up in townships may speak Tsotsitaal without realizing it, as they are accustomed to hearing it spoken around them and may mistake it for Zulu or Sotho. This could explain the uncertainty among the 25% of participants who mentioned that maybe they do speak Tsotsitaal. The remaining 35% of participants stated that they do not speak Tsotsitaal.**Table 3: Representation of the place where Tsotsitaal is spoken the most.**

Statement	**Number of Participants**	**Percentage %**
At home	**2**	**5%**
At work	**0**	**0%**
With friends or colleagues	**0**	**0%**

In the township	**15**	**75%**
Anywhere	**3**	**15%**

Table 3 is a representation of where the participants speak Tsotsitaal the most. 75% (n=15) of the participants speak Tsotsitaal in the township and the other 15% (n=3) speak it anywhere. Brookes (2014) argues that Tsotsitaal is a language spoken in the township and is mostly spoken by young people, and data presented in the table above indicates that most of the participants to speak Tsotsitaal in the township. Additionally, the data indicates that women who participated in the study are aware of their usage of tsotsitaal and are comfortable speaking it in the township. With 5% (n=2) of the participants stating that they speak it at home, it would bring up the question as to whether the family members understand Tsotsitaal and the answer might even be yes, given that they speak it at home.

The argument would then be made as to whether they speak it at home to their mothers or to their fathers and brothers given that Tsotsitaal is regarded as a masculine language. Brookes (2014: 361) argues that “male siblings may sometimes use a few words of the slang lexicon in the home with one another. Around the township, young men speak the urban Zulu and South Sotho varieties with adults and women. Township residents (both men and women) may in some situations insert a word considered to be part of male youth talk when speaking. None of the participants mentioned that they speak it at work. Given that tsotsitaal is regarded as a colloquialized argot, it would justify why participants would not use it at work, where the setting is more formal and “professional”.

Figure 14: Representation of how well participants can speak Tsotsitaal on a scale of 1-5. 1 being not good and 5 very good.

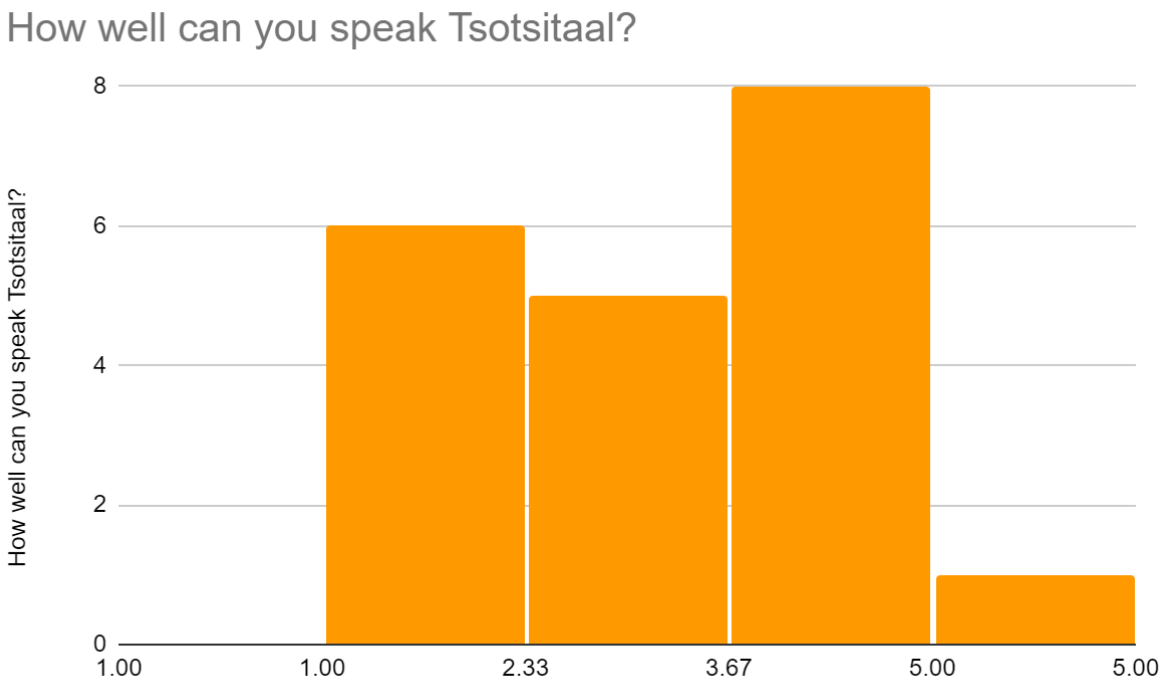


Figure 14 is a representation of how well the participants can speak Tsotsitaal on a scale from 1 to 5 and 8.5% (n=5) of the participants indicated that they cannot speak Tsotsitaal very well. 3.4% (n=1) of the participants are at a scale of 2, meaning that they can speak Tsotsitaal however, their command might not be that good. Mesthrie (2008) and Ntshangase (2009) argued that women are not active agents of the language, that is, tsotsitaal and are only conscious of it because they have boyfriends or brothers that speak it. Data, however, indicates otherwise as 25.5% (n=5) of the participants at 3 on the scale, indicating that their command is fairly good and 8.5% (n=1) can speak Tsotsitaal very well. 54.4% of the participants indicated that they are on the scale of 4 (n=8), that they speak tsotsitaal well. This means that more than half of the participants can speak Tsotsitaal and have used it to speak to their friends or in the township even though they indicated that it might not be too good they are however, active agents of the language.

Table 4: Communication using Tsotsitaal.

Statement	**Number of participants**	**Percentage %**

Males	**14**	**73.7%**
Females		**0%**
Friends	**3**	**15.8%**
Colleagues		**0%**
Anyone	**2**	**10.5%**

Table 4 illustrates the responses that the participants gave when asked who they are likely to speak Tsotsitaal to and 73.7% (n=14) of the participants state that they speak it to other males. The literature that was discussed in the study indicate that this is true due to Tsotsitaal is regarded as being spoken by males more than females. Makhudu (1980) went as far as to say this was because living arrangements in the hostels excluded women and eve the women that came to visit the hostels would use tsotsitaal to communicate not with other females but males. About 15.8% (n=3) of the participants mentioned that they use it to speak to their friends, and by friends, it is not determined whether they are males or females. 10.5% (n=2) indicated that they speak to anyone using Tsotsitaal. None of the participants indicated that they communicate using Tsotsitaal with other females or colleagues. There was one participant that did not indicate who they are likely to communicate with using tsotsitaal, hence 19 responses on the table instead of 20.

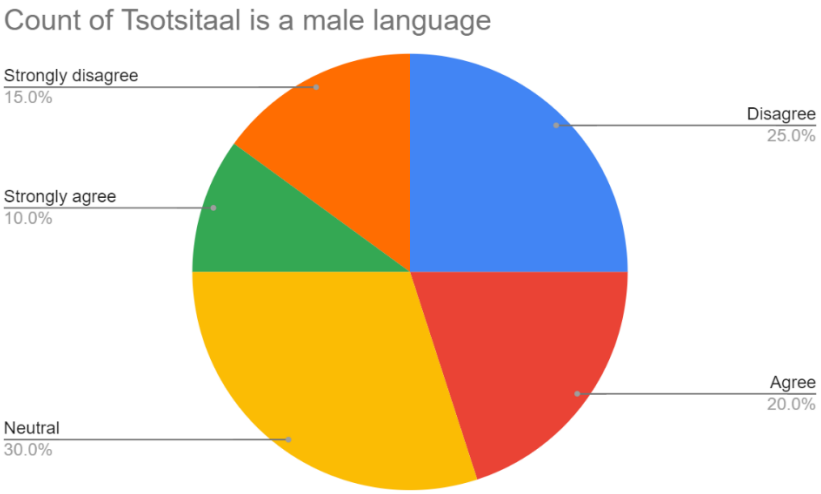
Table 5: Representation of how often participants speak Tsotsitaal.

Statement	**Number of participants**	**Percentage %**

All the time	**1**	**5.3%**
Occasionally	**5**	**26.3%**
Sometimes	**5**	**26.3%**
Depends on who I am speaking to	**7**	**36.8%**
Close to never	**1**	**5.3%**

Table 5 is a representation of how often participants speak Tsotsitaal. This question was asked to determine the usage of Tsotsitaal. The more the language is used the more the people using it will identify with its culture. 36.8% (n=7) of the participants state that it depends on who they are speaking to. Meaning that they choose when to speak Tsotsitaal (context). This is almost the same idea that the study showed in table 3. The place and how often Tsotsitaal is spoken go hand in hand. 5.3% (n=1) of the participants mention that they are close to never speaking Tsotsitaal while 5.3% (n=1) of the participants mentioned that they speak Tsotsitaal all the time. 10 participants, each sitting at 26.3% respectively, that is, 52.6%, indicated that they sometimes and occasionally speak tsotsitaal. Erastus and Hurst-Harosh (2004) argue that young people want to project and identity of an urban cosmopolitan identity and would use a language not only an identity marker but a unifying factor. This might possibly be the case with how often participants speak tsotsitaal. They speak it sometimes and occasionally depending on who they are speaking to (see table 4) and the identity they are adopting at that particular point in time.

Figure 15: Representation of attitudes towards Tsotsitaal



Scholars and authors who have studied Tsotsitaal have argued that it is a language that is mostly spoken by males. When participants were asked whether Tsotsitaal is a male language 25% of the participants said they disagree with this statement while 15% indicated that they strongly disagree with this statement. "*Everyone can speak it"* (SWP4) was the reason of participant 4 from Soweto. "*Tsotsitaal is a language used by both males and females. It is a township lingo and both genders can understand it*" (KP4). Data indicates that majority of the participants disagree that tsotsitaal is a male language as indicated in literature and their argument is that tsotsitaal is a language spoken in the township and both males and females can speak and understand the language. 20% of the participants strongly agree with this statement with Soweto participant 6 (SWP6) arguing that *"Because we all know that most males are the ones speaking it"* while 20% agree with the statement. This means that there are females who believe that tsotsitaal is a male language. 30% of the participants indicated that they are neutral, meaning they neither agree nor disagree with the statement one of them indicating that *"It's because some women are friends with males, and they end up speaking tsotsitaal"* (KP7) when asked to elaborate on why they ticked neutral.

Figure 16: Language of the criminal

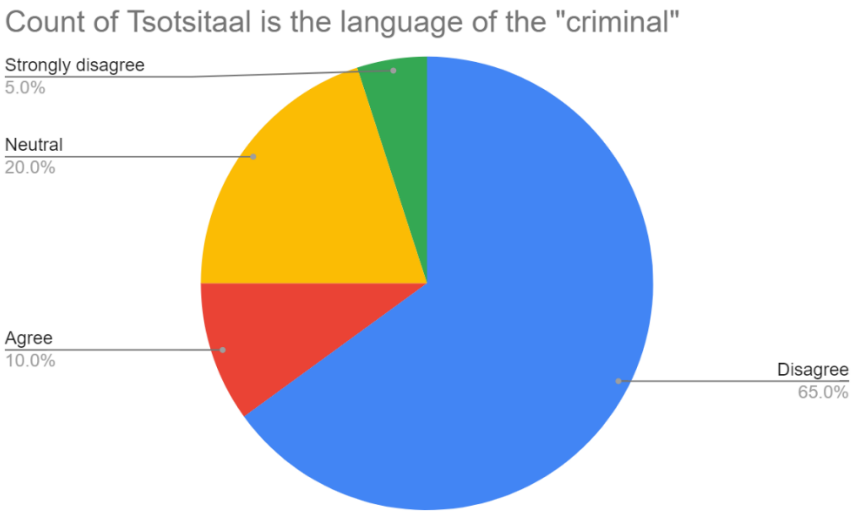


Figure 16 is a representation of what the participants think about the statement about Tsotsitaal being the language of the 'criminal'. 65% of the participants disagree with the statement and stated that "*it does not mean when you speak the language then you are a criminal*" (KP8). This is a label given to the language because of the name of the language. 'Tsotsi' means criminal and because it was a language that was mostly spoken in prison and associated with gangs, it has always been seen as the language of the 'criminal'. Hurst (2008) study showed Tsotsis (delinquents) during apartheid used their criminal repertoire to help the course of the insurgent groups they were in solidarity with against the oppressive government, hence the term tsotsitaal. "*Tsotsitaal may be influenced mostly by criminals but people in the township do speak the language even if they are not criminals*" (KP2). The findings from the study show a different side of the notion, that is, young women do not see or regard Tsotsitaal as the language of the criminal. 5% of the participants strongly agree, indicating the attitude they have towards the taal (language).10% of the participants agree with the statement and mention that it was a language spoken in prison by criminals and when they got out of prison, they spoke it in the township. "*Tsotsitaal is the language of the criminal because it is mostly spoken by criminals especially if they are in prison or want to commit a crime while people are not aware"* (KP10). Throughout history, Tsotsitaal has always been associated with criminal activity and gangs and that might be the reason behind the 10% of participants agree with this statement. 20% of the participants remain neutral to the statement.

Figure 17: Women who speak Tsotsitaal.

Participants were asked whether they thought there are women who speak Tsotsitaal, and the data below aims at indicating their responses. Figure 17 below, indicates that 95% of the participants believe that there are women who speak Tsotsitaal while 5% stated that maybe there are women who speak Tsotsitaal. In figure 15, 35% of the participants disagreed with the statement that Tsotsitaal is a male language and data in figure 17 confirms that participants believe that there are women who can speak tsotsitaal and it is not a male language as most literature argues. When asked to elaborate on the answers participant 7 from Katlehong stated *"I say so because I am one of those women who speak tsotsitaal"* (KP7). "*Women also speak tsotsitaal and also when they drink in the tavern"* (SWP8) was one the reasons participant 8 from Soweto stated. Hurst-Harosh (2019: 122) argues that "tsotsitaal language practices are thoroughly embedded in society". Meaning that in a society that consist of both males and females, one cannot say that there no females that can speak tsotsitaal.

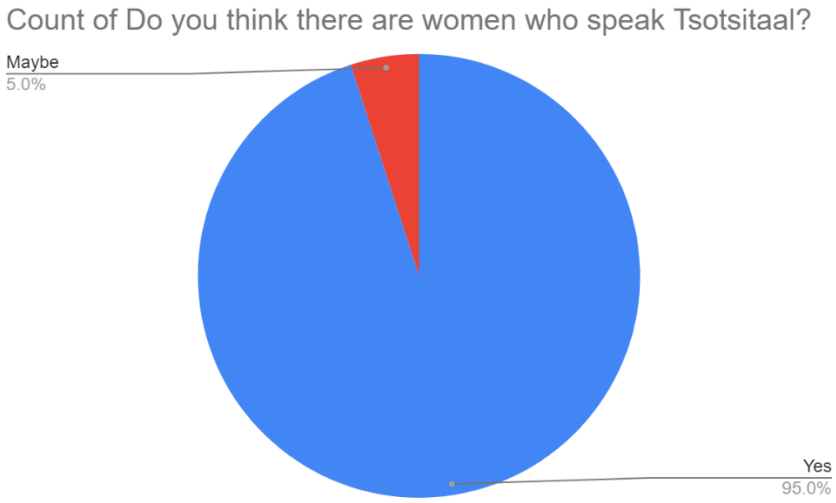


Figure 18: Perceptions on women who speak Tsotsitaal.

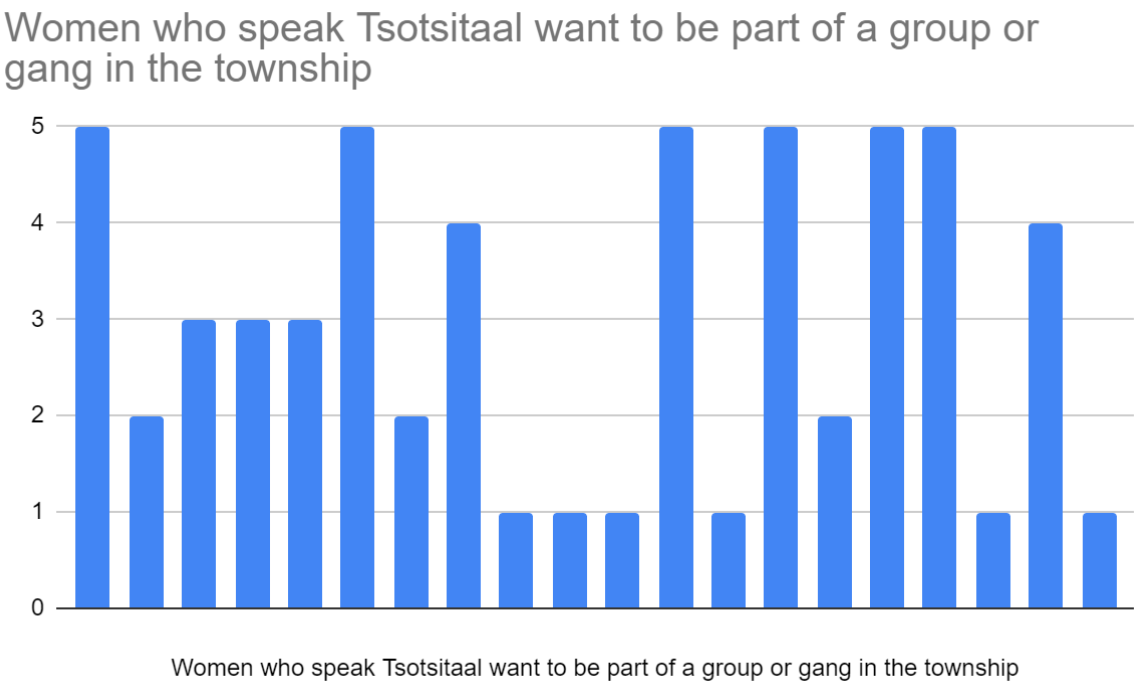


Figure 18 is a representation of the response's participants had when asked to pick from a scale of 1 to 5 if they thought women who spoke tsotsitaal want to be part of a group or gang. 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree. Data indicates that participants strongly disagree with the abovementioned statement. When asked to elaborate, one of the participants stated that *"some women just love speaking the language and not wanting to be part of a gang"*. Nine participants agree that women who speak tsotsitaal want to be part of a group or gang and when asked to elaborate, one of the participants stated that "*They are more comfortable when they are with gangs and others feel safe when they are part of gangs*".

Figure 19: Representation of Tsotsitaal and culture.

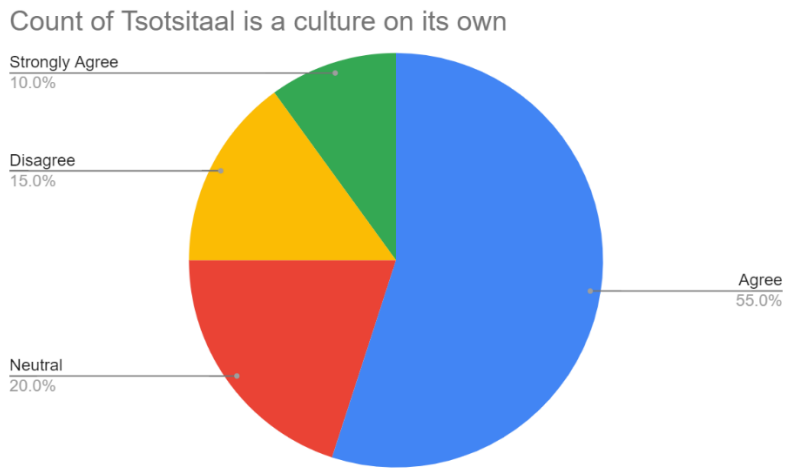


Figure 19 is a representation of the distribution of data and responses from the participants in terms of the statement “Tsotsitaal is a culture on its own’. Satyo (2008) mentions that males in the township regards Tsotsitaal or ‘Kwaito-speak’ as he calls it, as not only a language by a way of living. There is a certain type of music that Tsotsitaal speakers listen to, the type of clothes worn, the way one walks or even talks, a culture that goes beyond just the Taal (language). The 55% of the participants agree that Tsotsitaal is a culture on its own while 20% remain neutral to the statement. 10% of the participants strongly agree with the statement while 15% disagree with the statement.

Figure 20: Representation of Tsotsitaal and level of education

Figure 20 below, indicates the perceptions and attitudes people have with regards to Tsotsitaal and the association it has with the level of education that the speakers have. Earlier in this chapter (figure 4), the findings indicate that around 80% of the participants completed their matric and have higher education qualification. 40% of the participants mentioned that they speak Tsotsitaal (see figure 13). With data presented and from the findings, it makes sense that 50% of the participants would strongly disagree that Tsotsitaal is associated with being uneducated and with 30% of the participants disagreeing with this statement. Brooks (2014) mentioned that Tsotsitaal is associated with being uneducated and the findings from the study prove otherwise. 10% of the participants do however agree with Brooks in terms of the association of Tsotsitaal and being uneducated and 10% of the participants are neutral. The reasons that participants

gave with regards to their response on disagreeing that Tsotsitaal is associated with being uneducated was that even educated people speak Tsotsitaal. *"Educated or not, tsotsitaal is a kasi language known by anyone"* was one of the responses given by a participant.

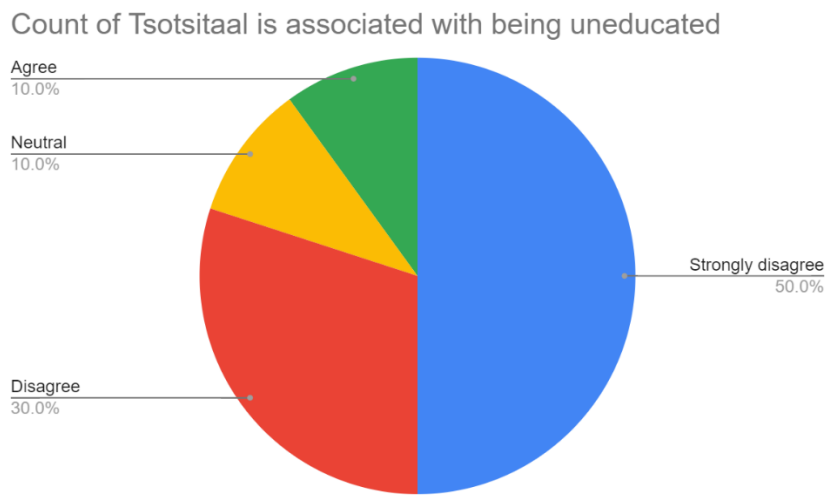


Table 6: Mother tongue and Tsotsitaal representation

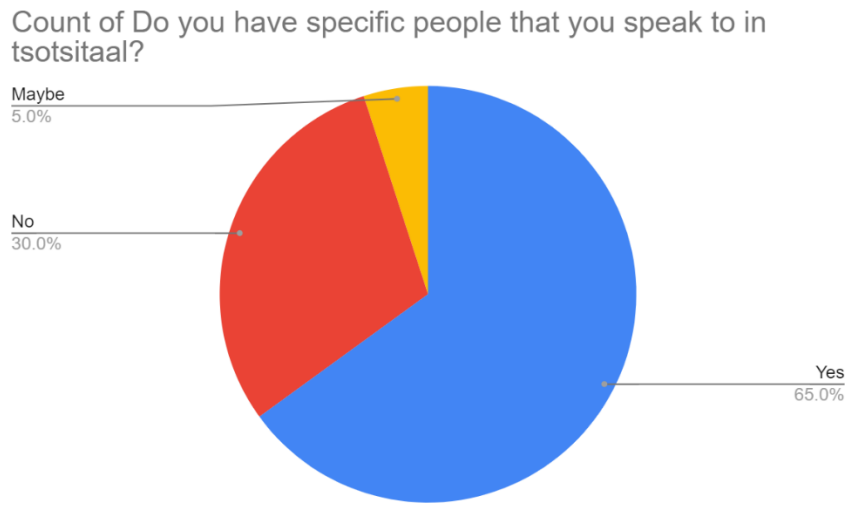
Statement: Do you think the mother tongue influences the version of Tsotsitaal a person speaks?

Yes	**30%**
No	**55%**
Maybe	**15%**

Table 7 is a representation of the response that the participants regarding the views on the influence mother tongue has on the version of tsotsitaal one speaks. 30% mention that yes it does influence the version the person speaks and said that is easier to learn or speak the Zulu version of Tsotsitaal if your mother tongue is Zulu and the same goes

for the Sotho version. 55% of the participants said no and that people can speak any version, depending on the one they want to speak and can switch between the versions. "*It's the township, you can do whatever you like*" is one of the comments a participant stated. 15% of the participants indicated that maybe one's mother tongue influences the version that one speaks.

Figure 21: Communication using Tsotsitaal.



When participants were asked if they have specific people, they speak to in Tsotsitaal, 65% answered Yes while 30% answered No. The remaining 5% indicated that maybe they do have specific people that they speak to using Tsotsitaal. Table 5 (see above) indicated that 36.8% of the participants use Tsotsitaal in conversation however, it depends on who they are conversing with which speaks to the data in figure 21.

Figure 22: Type of conversations using Tsotsitaal

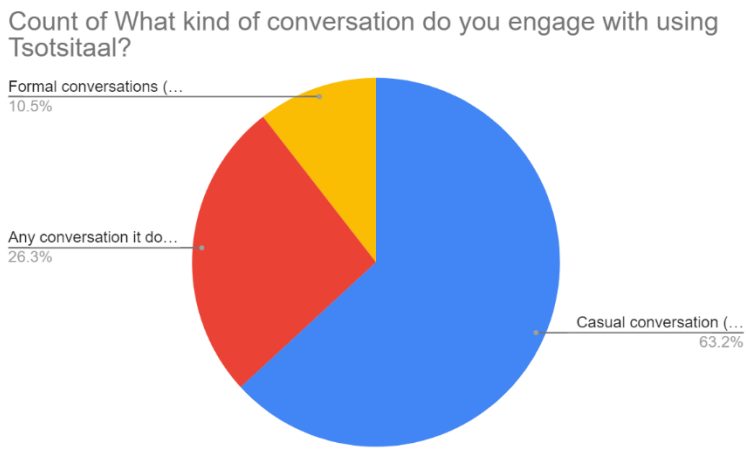


Figure 22 is a representation of the type of conversation participants would have when using Tsotsitaal and 63.2% of the participants mentioned that they use Tsotsitaal in casual conversations while 26.3% indicated that they use tsotsitaal in any conversation. The remaining 10.5% of the participants mentioned that they use it in formal conversations. When participants were asked why they use tsotsitaal in a certain conversation, SWP 3 mentioned "*I think you cannot just use tsotsitaal with anyone depending with who you speaking, and you can never use it mostly in formal conversations".* Katlehong participant 7 mentioned that they use tsotsitaal in any conversation because *"Because I'm from kasi and lots of people understand tsotsitaal"* (KP 7).

4.5 Recommendations

The study was able to answer the research question at hand, which stated: **How do young black females who speak tsotsitaal identify with it being part of their cultural identity?** For future reference, a larger scale can be applied and instead of administering the questionnaire, interviews with the participants can be used to collect data that is more in-depth and allowing for participants to fully express their views and opinions on the phenomenon. Studies on tsotsitaal as highlighted in the literature focused on young men who spoke tsotsitaal indicate that men often speak about women rather than to women when speaking tsotsitaal which has proven to be rather problematic in the society that we live in where women are objectified and not seen as active participants in society and the current study can be a stepping stone in changing how the society views tsotsitaal, how

it is used and that it is a language that is spoken by both men and women in the township. Furthermore, more research and papers should be published on the female's perspective on tsotsitaal to hopefully find out if females use of tsotsitaal is the same as males, that is, do they use the same terms as males when speaking. Rudwick and Shange (2009) argued that women used tsotsitaal as a language of emancipation and to show that they are "streetwise". Future research on tsotsitaal, emancipation and its association with being streetwise can be under-taken to expand on what the current study focused on, further highlighting, and brining in the female voice when it comes to tsotsitaal.

4.6 Conclusion

The findings of the current study suggest that young women in the township identify with Tsotsitaal as a component of their identity. Additionally, the results reveal that some women utilize the language for their advancement, as affiliating with gangs may offer a sense of safety in their communities. Despite the prevailing perception of Tsotsitaal as a predominantly male language, the data indicates that there are women who both speak and understand it, considering it integral to their sense of self. The current study employed a feminist theory approach and based on the data and discussions, the female voice was able to be highlighted by the study and hopefully be the starting point of bridging the gap in knowledge when it comes to Tsotsitaal and women that speak it. While this study is confined to a limited research site, it is anticipated to furnish valuable insights for future researchers interested in investigating Tsotsitaal and cultural identity, particularly through a sociolinguistic lens focusing on women who use Tsotsitaal.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

The conclusions drawn from this study are based on a comprehensive review of existing literature and empirical findings obtained from the research. The primary aim was to investigate whether young black South African women in 21st-century township settings still identify with Tsotsitaal as a fundamental aspect of their culture and identity. Additionally, the study sought to explore whether Tsotsitaal serves as a language of empowerment, resilience, and advancement for women in these communities, as it has historically for men.

The study specifically focused on young black South African females from Soweto (Diepkloof) and Katlehong. Soweto was chosen due to its rich and longstanding culture of Tsotsitaal, encompassing various dialects within its boundaries. Additionally, the study addressed a gap highlighted by Brookes (2014), who exclusively examined Tsotsitaal culture among black males in Vosloorus, neglecting the female perspective.

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding that Tsotsitaal holds significant cultural and identity value for women in township communities. Despite the limited prior research on the topic, Rudwick and Shange (2009) observed that Tsotsitaal serves as a vital identity marker for women in Gauteng townships, symbolizing their connection to township culture and spirit. Moreover, the study challenges stereotypes and misconceptions, demonstrating that women who speak Tsotsitaal do so confidently and without conforming to outdated gender norms associating the language solely with masculinity.

Overall, this study underscores the importance of further research into Tsotsitaal and its cultural significance, particularly from a gender perspective. By shedding light on the experiences of young black South African women, this study aims to enrich the existing literature and provide a more inclusive understanding of Tsotsitaal as a dynamic and multifaceted linguistic and cultural phenomenon.

Rudwick, Nkomo, and Shange (2009) did not dismiss the fact that lesbians often use Tsotsitaal to communicate, but they also observed that heterosexual women use the language, as evidenced by their study. An example of such women are the shebeen queens in township communities who own very successful businesses. This suggests that women utilize Tsotsitaal in their own unique way, distinct from their male counterparts.

Despite the common perception that Tsotsitaal is exclusively spoken by young black men in South Africa (Brookes, 2014), this study has revealed that women also actively use the language, challenging traditional gender associations and contributing to the cultural identity of young black South Africans.

5.2. Chapter 1. Introduction.

The problem statement of this study underscores the gendered nature of research on Tsotsitaal, which has predominantly focused on male perspectives. Specifically, existing studies have explored the language, culture, and identity of young men who associate Tsotsitaal with their sense of self. However, there is a noticeable gap in research regarding the female perspective or voice concerning Tsotsitaal. This study aims to address this gap by shedding light on the experiences and perspectives of females who speak Tsotsitaal. Through its findings, the study seeks to introduce and highlight the narrative of these women, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of Tsotsitaal and its cultural significance. The objectives of this study were:

-To find out why the female 'voice' or perspective is somewhat lost when the tsotsitaal phenomenon is mentioned.

The study was able to find the female perspective through data collected were females in the two areas of focus mentioned that they speak tsotsitaal and it forms part of their identity.

-To investigate whether the negative connotations associated with tsotsitaal apply when females speak it

The study determined that there are still negative connotations associated with tsotsitaal, whether spoken by males or females because it is viewed partially as the language of 'the criminal'.

-To find out whether the 'taal' loses its 'muscular' status when spoken by females since it is mainly known to be spoken by black males.

The study indicates that tsotsitaal, although regarded as a male language, is seen as just a language by the participants. They view tsotsitaal as a language spoken in the township by anyone who can hear and speak it.

5.3 Chapter 2: literature review

Chapter 2 served as an exploration of existing literature on Tsotsitaal and its connection to cultural identity. The literature review delved into the discussions and findings of past researchers regarding Tsotsitaal's emergence, its classification as a colloquialized argot, and its significance within township communities. Studies by Brookes (2014) were referenced to illustrate Tsotsitaal's association with urban youth culture, particularly among young men in the township. Moreover, the literature review incorporated insights from Rashid and Hurst-Harosh (2020), which underscored the active participation of African urban youth in global popular culture. This participation, encompassing various elements such as fashion, music, and language, was seen as instrumental in shaping the identities of African youth, including their linguistic choices. Theoretical frameworks like social identity theory and concepts such as general culture and subculture were discussed within the context of Tsotsitaal, style, and identity. By synthesizing existing knowledge, the literature review aimed to delineate what is known about the topic while also identifying gaps in understanding, thus setting the stage for the current research study.

5.4. Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter served as a blueprint for the research methodology, outlining the framework guiding data collection and analysis. It provided a detailed explanation of the approach, methods, and techniques employed to address the research questions or objectives. By elucidating the researcher's strategy for comprehending human behavior, experiences, and social phenomena, the chapter contributed to understanding the intricate complexities inherent in the study.

Key components discussed in the methodology chapter included the research design, data collection methods, participant selection criteria, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. Each of these elements played a crucial role in shaping the qualitative research process and ensuring the credibility and reliability of the study's outcomes. Data was collected through the administration of a questionnaire to 20 participants, evenly distributed between Soweto and Katlehong. Thematic analysis was then employed to capture and analyse the data, facilitating a deeper understanding of its relevance to the research aims, objectives, and questions.

5.5 Chapter 4: Findings and Recommendations

This chapter aimed to depict the findings of the data collected. The data analysis process revealed several dominant themes and sub-themes presented in the chapter. Data was collected using a questionnaire, which was administered to the participants. The questionnaire consisted of 5 sections, and sections 3 to 5 were presented in this chapter.

Additionally, the chapter discussed the study's main findings, including the results, and submitted conclusions drawn from the data analysis. The research findings were analysed and linked to the aim of the research and the literature review. The findings and the literature review assisted in responding to the research question that stated**: How do young black females who speak tsotsitaal identify with it being part of their cultural identity?**

Data indicated that young women in the two townships that the study focused on do identify with tsotsitaal being part of their identity and acknowledge that although tsotsitaal is a language that is depicted to be predominately spoken by males, they too speak

tsotsitaal as they grew up in the township. Data from the study also indicated that these young women speak tsotsitaal and mostly use it to communicate with males rather than females.

The study has, to some extent, highlighted the 'female' perspective that is missing when it comes to the study of tsotsitaal, and there is more room for further research when moving forward; the female voice or perspective is not lost when we talk about tsotsitaal. Research on words that females mostly use in tsotsitaal would be another direction that research can focus on to compare whether males and females use the same term/words when speaking tsotsitaal and whether they use them in the same context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Ethical clearance certificate.pdf

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF CONSENT

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

CONSENT FORM

Research title: **TSOTSITAAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY: a sociolinguistic study of young black South African women who speak tsotsitaal**

Researcher: Maipato Caroline Mmako

I, ……, agree to participate in this project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

[Please circle the relevant option below]

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous YES NO

I agree that my the researcher may use anonymous quotes in her research report YES NO

I agree that my information will be kept in a password-protected folder for 5 years. YES NO

Participant signature ……..

Date …….

APPENDIX C: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE



QUESTIONNAIRE

Tsotsitaal and Cultural identity

Please answer the question by crossing (X) the answer that is relevant to you are write your answer in the space provided. If the answer does not apply to you, please move on to the next question.

Example:

Female	X
Male	

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

This section is aimed at obtaining a description of you in terms of gender, age, race, marital status and education. The information gathered in this section will enable the researcher to compare perceptions and views of different individuals

- **Gender**

Female	
Prefer not to say	

2. **Age (in complete years)**

18 Years	
19-23	
24-28	
29 or older	

3. **Race**

Black African	
White	

Coloured	
Indian or Asian	

4. **Highest Educational Qualification**

Completed primary school	
Some high school completed	
Matric/Grade 12 completed	
Technical college Diploma	
University of technology/university diploma	
University degree (Degree or Honours)	
Postgraduate degree (Masters or Doctorate)	

LANGUAGE INFORMATION

5. **Home language (language you grew up with)**

Afrikaans	
English	
IsiZulu	
IsiXhosa	
TshiVhenda	
SeTswana	
SeSotho	
IsiNdebele	
XiTsonga	
SiSwati	
SePedi	

6.**Language you use every day (may be the same as home language)**

Afrikaans	

English	
IsiZulu	
IsiXhosa	
TshiVhenda	
SeTswana	
SeSotho	
IsiNdebele	
XiTsonga	
SiSwati	
SePedi	

7. **Parents (Mother and/or Father) Home language**

Mother	
Father	

8.**Current Employment Status**

Unemployed	
Self-Employed	
Employed Full-Time	
Employed Part-Time	
Full-Time Student	
Part-Time Student	
Housewife or Househusband	
Other	

9.**Occupation**

Please fill in: ----------

15. **Current Area of Residence**

Soweto (Diepkloof)	
Vosloorus	

10.**What is your place of birth?**

Suburb or urban area	
Township	
Village	

11. **How long have you lived there?**

All my life	
2-6 years	
7-10 years	
11-14 years	
15-19 year	
19 years and more	

THE MEANING OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge/beliefs of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.

Identity refers to the factors determining who or what a person is.

The aim of this section is to find out what your understanding of culture and identity is and how it relates to you.

In this section will you be asked to tick the box that you feel is best for your response. There are questions that will require you to choose in a scale where 1 means you strong disagree and 5 means you strong agree or you are good or not good and 3 being neutral.

EXAMPLE: How good can you speak TshiVenda

Not so good	**1**	**2**	**3** **x**	**4**	**5**	**Very good**

12. **Which culture do you identify with?**

The culture I was born in	
The street culture	
Tsotsitaal culture	

13. **Why do you identify yourself with that culture?**

I understand it better	
I want to be part of a group	
Makes me feel like I belong	
I haven't thought about any reason	
It describes me better	

14. **Why do you think so?**

---

15. **Is it possible for a person to change cultures as they grow up?**

Yes	
No	
Maybe	

16. **Please elaborate on your answer**

TSOTSITAAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

This section focuses on tsotsitaal as a language spoken in the township and looks at if it still plays a role in young people's lives or not. You will be asked to answer the following questions either by ticking the box that best suits your response or to explain why you chose a particular box in your response.

17. **What do you think Tsotsitaal is?**

A language	
A culture	
Both	
I do not know	

18. **Do you speak Tsotsitaal?**

Yes	
No	
Maybe	

19. **Where do you mostly speak Tsotsitaal?**

At home	
At work	
With my friends or colleagues	
In the township	
Anywhere	

20. **How well can you speak Tsotsitaal?**

Not so good	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Very good**

21. **Who are you most likely to communicate in Tsotsitaal with?**

Males	
Females	
Friends	
Colleagues	
Anyone	

22. **How often do you speak Tsotsitaal?**

All the time	
Occasionally	
Sometimes	
Depends on who I am speaking to	
Close to never	

23. **Tsotsitaal is a male language**

Strongly disagree	
Disagree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Strongly agree	

24. **Please give a reason for your answer**

---

25. **Tsotsitaal is the language of the "criminal"**

Strongly disagree	
Disagree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Strongly agree	

26. **Please give a reason for your answer**

---

27. **Do you think there are women who speak Tsotsitaal?**

Yes	
No	
Maybe	

28. **Please give a reason for your answer**

---

29. **Women who speak Tsotsitaal want to be part of a group or gang in the township**

How much do you agree or disagree with this statement, 1 being fully agree and 5 being strongly disagree?

Strongly agree	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Strongly disagree**

30. **Please elaborate on your answer**

---

31. **Tsotsitaal is a culture on its own**

Strongly disagree	
Disagree	
Agree	
Neutral	
Strongly agree	

32. **Tsotsitaal is associated with being uneducated**

Strongly disagree	
Disagree	
Agree	
Neutral	

Strongly agree	

33. **Please give reasons for your answer**

---

34. **Do you think the mother tongue influences the version of tsotsitaal a person speaks?**

Yes	
No	
Maybe	

35. **Why do you say so?**

---

36. **Do you have specific people that you speak to in tsotsitaal?**

Yes	

No	
Maybe	

37. **What kind of conversation do you engage with using Tsotsitaal?**

Casual conversation (with friends)	
Formal conversation (at work meetings or interview)	
Any conversation it does not matter	

38. **Why do you use Tsotsitaal in that conversation?**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX D: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



Maipato Caroline
Mmako Language edi