

‘Coconuts ’: Self-identifications and Experiences of Black people Proficient in
English Only

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Declaration of Originality

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this is my own original work and that all fieldwork was undertaken by me. Any part of this study that does not reflect my own ideas has been fully acknowledged in the form of citations. No part of this thesis has been submitted in the past, or is being submitted, or is to be submitted for a degree at any other university.

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Chapter One

Background, Rationale and Scope of Study

1.1 Introduction

Ratele (2013) paints an interesting narrative in which he recalls an incident whereby a woman at a supermarket asked a seemingly innocent question about his son; "Does he speak Xhosa?" His interpretation of her question is quite fascinating. Ratele (2013) explains that the real inquiry had very little to do with cultural identity but was a question posed about Blackness and what it means to be a Black person in our current context in this day and age. This was not merely an issue of language but at the very foundation, it is an interrogation of the kind of Black his son is and inadvertently, the kind of Black he is to allow his son to speak in the manner he does; it was an attack on their blackness. This encounter speaks to some of the major themes of my social psychology research study as I grapple with and explore the complexities and intersectional ties between language, race and identity and what it means to be Black and only speak English within a post-apartheid context.

The participants in this study are diverse and come from different walks of life but each of them share similar experiences in that they are complex and characterised by contradictions and contention about their racial identities. The participants contest the label 'coconut' in interesting and conflicted ways.

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

My primary objective is to unpack the racialised lived experiences of Black African individual's categorised as "coconuts" in order to further contribute to an academic understanding of these individuals.

My secondary objective is to explore the racial self-identifications of Black people proficient in English only.

1.3 Research Rationale

"To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all [emphasis added] to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilisation" (Fanon, 1967 p. 17-18). The issue of the importance of language and its implications for Black identity is explored by Fanon (1967) in his compelling book *Black skin, white masks*. What is made abundantly clear in Fanon's (1967) argument is that the ability of a Black man to master a White dominant language, affords him a substantial amount of power and prestige among both his fellow compatriots and the dominant white culture. This idea is corroborated by Bourdieu's (1984) concept of embodied cultural capital which refers to non-monetary social assets that enable upward social mobility such as linguistic acquisition within a dominant culture.

Theories of Black identity have some commonalities in that they recognise and acknowledge that there is no single construct of such an identity but rather that it is

multidimensional, complex and is not salient but it changes and evolves across time (Mtose & Bayaga, 2011). According to Ritcher, Norris, Pettifor, Yach & Cameron (2007), Black identity is linked to a sense of selfhood that exists within a particular group culture among Black people. An instrumental aspect of this group culture lies in the use of language that is considered by Phinney (1990, p. 505) "to be the single most important component of ethnic identity."

Should Phinney's (1990) definition be considered in extremity, it would imply that it is likely that Black people who are only able to speak English experience some discrepancies between their individual identity (selfhood) and their collective identity when confronted with their own racial or ethnic group members. However, this view may be an imposed one which assumes that all Black people experience this inner turmoil when in fact, being proficient in a dominant language can be a valuable commodity (Painter, 2009) and may positively impact on one's perception of self and one's identity.

Hermans (2003) explains that post-apartheid, there has been a dynamic and complex process in which collective and individual identity has been constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed. This indicates that it is imperative to continually interrogate and investigate the issue of identity and to do so keeping in mind that identities are complex and do not fit into neatly packaged and prescribed boxes.

Discrimination is characterised as the unfair treatment of people based on their race, marital status, occupation, gender, religion, language spoken, sexual orientation or body weight (Baron & Branscombe, 2012). Sachdev (2007) is of the opinion that the

relationship between language and discrimination is one that has not been a major focus of social psychology and deserves much-needed attention.

Language is not politically neutral and as Blackledge (2002 b) indicates, it is used in modern states as criteria necessary for immigrants and citizenship. Fortier (2000) adds to this notion of language as powerful by explaining that migration, national belonging, identity and racism are central when discussing language in relation to the state and state policies. In constructing English as universal and ethnically neutral, this conceals the fact that as a dominant language it serves particular economic interests of people belonging to certain class dimensions. (Painter, 2004)

1.4 Chapter Outline

Chapter two will outline critical theoretical understandings of racialising practices and their affective impact on the Black subject. It engages with literature that offers insight on racial subjectivity and explores how language and accent serve as a form of social cultural capital in some contexts and serves to disempower in other contexts. Du Bois's theoretical framework is explored in great detail and provides a foundational reference when analysing the daily lived experiences of the Black subject particularly in a democratic context.

Chapter three presents the methodological framework used to analyse and interpret the accounts of the participants' experiences and identity formation. This study is qualitative in nature and therefore adopts the principles of a qualitative research design. The analytical approaches used in this study are thematic content analysis and

interpretative phenomenological analysis that have proven useful in processing the data but has also presented some limitations.

Chapter four is the discussion and analysis of the accounts of the participants in a thematised manner and identifies the key findings and major themes that emerged from the narratives of the participants. The final section of this thesis, chapter five, provides a conclusion regarding the major concepts and themes in this thesis, as well as a section on reflexivity in which reflection is made about the entire research process and speaks to limitations of the study itself.

Chapter Two

2.1 Conceptualisation of Definitions

This chapter offers conceptualisations for particular terms that will be used throughout this thesis and also provides a theoretical understanding of racialising practices. This chapter also offers a broad scope of literature from different theorists on the issues of race, language, performativity and other pertinent issues relevant to this research.

2.1.1 Blackness

In the context of this study, the term Black is defined as an individual of African descent and who is racially classified as such or one who is of mixed descent (in which one biological parent is Black) and who self identifies as a Black. However, this is a narrow definition of what it means to be Black because the term has been used politically to position black people as an inferior race under white rule and supremacy (Zegeye, 2008). According to Biko (1978) a Black person is one who is (or was) by law, oppressed, discriminated and economically deprived and who realizes the necessity to unite against this kind of oppression. This definition is all encompassing and makes provision for other races such as coloured people and other race groups who are “non-white”. This definition disrupts the essentialist idea of what it means to be a “real” Black person.

2.1.1.1 Coconut

The term "coconut" deserves much-needed attention to unpack the complex and interwoven meanings of this term. It is specific to the African context and is of a derogatory and offensive nature used to describe an individual who is black on the outside- this refers to race and ethnicity- and white on the inside- this refers to behavioural attributes that are perceived as being of white culture (Rudick, 2008). This definition is also often associated with Black people who have a preference for speaking English over an indigenous or African language.

This is a rather simplistic definition of the term coconut. Language, as is the case with this particular research, is only a singular component of being a coconut. Anything that resembles White culture and is perceived as inauthentic to Black culture such as choice in attire, adopting to westernised ways, choice in hairstyles (weave as opposed to natural hair), perceived lack of Ubuntu, preference for (or proficiency in only) English, class position, friendship circles (Fataar, 2009) and taste preference (Dolby, 2000) constitutes as being a "coconut".

In an article written by Kumbalonah (2013), he tells a story of a Black female instructed to stop "acting black" by white people. Kumbalonah (2013) explains that this was met by bewilderment and utter surprise by the Black subject primarily because her understanding of race was rooted in racial categorisations employed during apartheid which classified people as White, Coloured, Indian or Black. Kumbalonah (2013) clarifies that 'acting' a particular race has little to do with your appearance or phenotype but indicates a relationship between political and/or

economic power that exists within a framework of superiority and how specific racialised subjects act this out. He so eloquently states that certain kinds of behaviours exhibited by Black people permit them to advance to 'white status' but in acquiring this 'privileged' position; one is expected to remove him/herself from behaviours that represent his/her inferiority that is regarded as a by-product of blackness.

Phiri (2010) makes an assertion that the term 'Coconut' reveals the performative nature of race. Matlwa's (2007) debut novel 'Coconut' has been critiqued for its essentialist ideas on race and Black identity. The perception of being a coconut is having betrayed "black culture" and fundamentally disavowed blackness altogether (Phiri, 2010). Phiri (2010) insists that this term reveals the discrepancies and slippages between race, class and ideology.

In exploring this further, it is advised to keep an open mind because although the provocation to label one as a 'coconut' is to unveil a crisis of Black identity, ironically, it appears to magnify the issues that arise from essentialising any kind of racialised identity (Phiri, 2010). It highlights the absurdity of racial purity, of a fixed and innate Black or White identity but extends our comprehension of identities which Hall (2000) describes as multiple, complex, shifting and which cannot be pre-determined by the social construction of race. In studying these so-called 'Coconuts', we problematise the rigid categories of race and unsettle racial identity in our contemporary South African context.

2.1.1.2 The Self and Language

According to Ashmore & Jussin (1997), the concept of self is defined as core beliefs, affects and cognitions that an individual uses to define who they are and represent themselves in private and public spheres. The self is dynamic and should not be viewed as stable and static. In social psychology language has been used as an indicator of social class, ethnicity, and race and more importantly, it functions to conceptualise the world and position subjects within it (Painter, 2009). Language has influences on globalisation, community, and identity and is political in nature. The individual is perceived not only as a speaking subject but is also an accented subject within linguistic ideology.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

I intend to employ a psychosocial approach in the analysis of this study utilising Du Bois's (1997) theories of double consciousness, the veil and second-sight in the understanding of the racialised subjectivity of Black people. A psychosocial approach accounts for both the social environment and psychological development and how these interact and enable our understanding of the individual in society (Frost, 2003). Psychosocial analysis is particularly interested in understanding the emergence of subjectivity within a social domain and the human subject as a social and active entity (Frost, 2003).

Du Bois (1997) explains the concept of double consciousness as a state of being that is experienced by Black people in which they are constructed and construed as a

problem. Social discourse, political structures, economic systems and socio-historical contexts paint the black subject as a problem and prove to be the source of misery and despair for the racialised subject (Kiguwa, 2014). Du Bois (1997) is interested in how one negates and engages in a world where not only is being Black seen as a problem but this problem is not acknowledged or explicitly addressed. A consciousness arises from this known as "the veil" through which the black subject engages and relates to a world of white domination.

Sardar (2008) explains that for Fanon (1963), when the Black subject enters the world of the White man, he loses his confidence, his ego is affected and his self-esteem is significantly diminished. It is from this place that the Black man begins to alter his behaviour and entire being to emulate White people so as to be accepted by and find belonging among the White man. Du Bois (1997) is interested in how the Black subjects relate to and find their place in the world under these circumstances.

The concept of a veil is metaphoric in nature and is Du Bois's (1997) way of explaining this state of double consciousness. His theory asserts that the black subject is not born with the veil and it is not innately specific to Black people but rather that it emerges later in life particularly in a moment when one becomes aware of or discovers his/her race (Kiguwa, 2014). The black subject lives life through this veil and relates to a racialised world through it. One is only conscious of this veil when actively thinking about oneself and one's subject position in relation to whiteness or during encounters with White people (Kiguwa, 2014). The veil is internal and external and therefore takes a life of its own. This implies that we always live beneath or above the veil but we are never fully rid of it and cannot dispose of it.

Second sight is described as a gift and a curse and is advantageous in some ways but also disempowering. Du Bois (1997) regards it as a gift because the Black subject can see, with clarity, the racialised system and politics of the world and he/she exists within and, is able to see the world for what it truly is and what it represents (Kiguwa, 2014). The downfall of such a "gift" is that it is experienced in a constant state of double consciousness and is accompanied with feelings of alienation. Not everyone possesses second sight and only some are able to perceive the world through this lens.

Both Fanon (1963) and Du Bois (1997) perceive blackness as problematic particularly because of the way the world is structured and built on Whiteness and White subjectivity. Fanon (1963) expresses the prevailing feelings of inferiority experienced by the Black subject and how through this perception causes the Black subject to see him/herself as an 'other' in the world. Fanon (1963) explains how his blackness haunts him; he describes the turmoil experienced because of his black skin.

Du Bois (1997) explains the concept of the veil as being cognisant to the Black subject when relating to White people, while Fanon (1963), explains that it is in the presence of the White man that the Black man is made to feel like a slave or prisoner in his own black body. Although Fanon (1963) does not speak of "the veil" in precisely the same manner, his writings allude to a similar concept. In Fanon's (1963) essay *Algeria Unveiled*, he too speaks about the veil of a woman in symbolic ways; where the veil represents resistance, surveillance and is cause for suspicion (Bhabha, 1983).

Although I will be employing Du Bois' (1997) theoretical framework in analysing the data, Fanon's (1963) work enriches our understanding about the subjectivities of

Black people on three levels of racialisation. At the first level, the racialised subject encounters difficulties with his blackness in space and the relationship his body has with the world around him. This is referred to as the bodily schema. This is used to describe a temporal and spatial world where one's body exists. Fanon (1963) illustrates the way his body moves in space and how this occurs from implicit knowledge and unconsciously. This maps our relationship with the self and with the world. Fanon also uses psychoanalysis and existential phenomenology to illustrate the complex ways that the Black body experiences space and how this reveals the lived bodily experiences of Black people in a highly racialised and racist society.

The historico-racial schema refers to history's imprint on the black body. The discourses about Black people as being inferior, ugly, dirty, sub-human and associated with racial defects are but some of the examples of how historical discourses have come to be inscribed to blackness. The history of Black people, the fights of their ancestors and all narratives of Black people are instantaneously part of the Black subject because of this historicity of racial schema. Fanon (1963) argues that this schema consists of colonial understandings and depictions of the Black man.

The concepts of double consciousness by Du Bois and of a dual self by Fanon are quite similar. Fanon (1963) describes a dual self as a sense of experiencing his body in the third person or being, as he calls, a triple person. Fanon expands on this by referring to a state of non-existence where he is no longer a man or human but he is merely an object. For Du Bois (1997) this double consciousness arises because of this constant compulsion to find approval in the eyes of the White man and to be accepted into a world that does not offer much recognition to the Black subject. "All I wanted

to be was a man among other men. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help to build it together" Fanon (1963 p. 85)

The negative images of Black people and the stereotypical associations with being Black interfere with the bodily schema of the Black subject and is subsequently replaced by a racial epidermal scheme. What this means is that the Black man enters the white world as a racialised subject and is recognised by White people because of this racialisation. In a sense, this embodiment of black skin causes hyper vigilance and awareness of one's blackness and thus one's otherness. The phrase "Look, a negro" depicts how one is primarily racialised at the level of the body and how this is interpolated.

Sardar (2008) cautions that in reading the works of Fanon (1963) that we keep in mind the context in which it was written to address the urgency and immediacy of the time where liberation was not only necessary but was a matter of life and death. This is pivotal because the contextual conditions assist us in the present about how to think through these interesting analogues offered by Fanon and how to apply them to how we think of race, racism and racialisation in our society in a meaningful ways.

Fanon (1963) and Du Bois' (1997) work is similar in a number of ways. These two theorists are interested in locating the Black subject in space and time by taking into account the socio-historical context that has shaped and moulded the subjectivities of Black people. They both acknowledge that there is a state of double consciousness that is experienced by the Black subject and attempt to theorise the lived experience of Black people in relation to their environment and a racialised society. There is

emphasis on the individual in relation to self and others. This comprehensive and holistic approach to Black subjectivity makes Du Bois's (1997) theory useful for exploring the Black subject and his/her lived experiences.

2. 3 Literature Review

2.3.1 Race and Racialisation

Racialisation is described as a process where race is used as a marker to differentiate and make distinctions between particular groups of people. Race is therefore a category associated with certain ideologies and power relations (Stevens, 2014). It also refers to a process by which an individual becomes a racialised subject. This process occurs over space and time as racialisation is re-enacted and performed in different contexts and spaces. In recognising this process, one should consider the intersectionality of race, gender and class in order to understand the emergence of subjectivities.

Dolby (2000, p. 10) addresses the idea of reconstructing identities in terms of race by indicating "race post-apartheid is not simply a matter of discarding or embracing already formed racial positions, but of renegotiating it in a new context." What is being communicated is that we need to continuously re-examine the fluidity of identity, the complexity of race and the individual meanings attached to being born of a particular race. Dolby elucidates globalisation and the influence of global popular culture as integral in the construction of youth identities post-apartheid.

Knowles (2003) tackles the issue of space and race performance. She explains that certain spaces illicit a unique kind of performance in which people express their race and ethnicity. We are aware of the ways in which we are expected to behave across a variance of social contexts and these performances are unconsciousness in the same way that these expectations are implicit. Race and ethnicity are performed differently in the private and public spaces and as Knowles (2003, p. 100) highlights, public space is produced and "becomes the site of constant negotiation".

Ogbu's (2004) study of African Americans post-slavery indicates that although they adapted to the dominant white culture, this was done consciously and deliberately and occurred in spaces where interaction with White people was imminent but, this performance eases in the presence of fellow Black people. Fanon (1967) explains this as the two dimensional aspects of the Black man who is one way in the presence of White people and another way In the presence of his fellow compatriots.

2.3.1.1 Normalisation of ~~whiteness~~ Blackness

It is understood that whiteness is the taken for granted status quo and as a result, it never has to name itself or acknowledge the privileges entitled to it. White power has a way of assuming this position of power and securing it is such a way that it appears to be nothing in particular (Lipsitz, 1995). Bobo (2001) explains that although successful enculturation is an expectation of 'non-White people', the extent to which this is accomplished cannot threaten or disrupt the existing power relations embedded in white supremacy. Put differently, integration into white culture is a non-negotiable

but there is also a subtle and unspoken requirement that the manner in which this is achieved should not pose as a threat to the system or racial hierarchy.

Herein lies the problem; a contestation between being "White" but not too "White" as a Black subject. In other contexts, there is the issue of having to prove or validate one's blackness, as is the case with 'coconuts'. We find ourselves facing a conundrum when it comes to the issue of identity in our country; what kind of Black is Black enough? This appears to be the underlying question that circulates most public discussion in our contemporary post-apartheid context.

A history of othering and making distinctions based on difference is a narrative that predates our current context (Miles, 1989). Differentiating between groups of people and labeling such as 'us' and 'them' have been some of the strategies employed over the centuries. This also occurs with in-group members across races but in this case, specifically within the Black community.

Literature has almost solely focused on the discourses around the normalisation of whiteness in our society and what Mbembe (2015) refers to as a concentration of our libido on whiteness. What has not been interrogated thoroughly is the normalisation of blackness within black culture and among the Black community. We need not look far to find examples of how this is unfolding in our country. What it means to be Black and who is authentically Black, and who is not, is an area that is being highly contested, reexamined and questioned.

It is very own people are policing blackness, in a similar way to whiteness. Those who are found to not be 'Black enough' are labeled as 'coconuts' and accused of denying their roots, culture and heritage. This has even transcended to the issue of the pigment of one's skin. Research indicates that those who are light-skinned (particularly women), though celebrated for their perceived proximity to the standards of beauty which are measured by whiteness, are perceived by intra-group members as lacking in racial purity and authenticity (Celious & Oysterman, 2001). With that said, it is crucial to mention that colourism is a complex structural, political and psychosocial dilemma for Black people (but also for Mexicans, Latinos and Indians to name a few) and has deeply cemented roots in colonialism and slavery (Hunter, 2002) but even so; it is yet another form of division and exclusion that occurs within the Black community and most importantly is perpetuated by Black people themselves. The view that light-skinned Black people lack in their blackness indicates one of the ways that blackness is being measured, scrutinised and policed. In this case the preoccupation is about how dark must one be to be an African or considered as Black?

The issue of appearances in the form of clothes and even the decision about whether to keep one's hair natural or add extensions (weave) is also a space of contention among Black people. However, one cannot deny that discourses around what is considered aesthetically beautiful are located in a history of colonial-racist ideas and representations of beauty (Erasmus, 1997). During the monumental Soweto uprising, some of the ways Black people exercised their agency and displayed resistance against the ruling government at the time was to wear their hair naturally, not use any chemical products to straighten their hair and left it uncombed (Marco, 2012). According to Tate (2007) the only authentic hairstyles for Black people include Afros,

braids, dreadlocks and cornrows; any other hairstyles are considered as inauthentic and possibly even disingenuous. The problem with such absolute statements and rigid views is that they serve to delineate who qualifies as a real African/Black (and if this is the case then most Black people fall short of authenticity because using relaxers and other hair straightening methods are common practice). This also takes away from the idea that hair and how one chooses to style it, is a form of expression and a symbolism of different identities and is not merely just a physical feature that holds no social meaning or significance (Marco, 2012).

The issue of language and accent pertinent to this study is another aspect that reveals intraracial discrimination that is perpetuated through social practices of surveillance. According to Creese (2010) accent determines the social value of the speaker and influences how a particular audience will receive him/her. Accent is used as a racialised marker that indicates prestige, class and upbringing. Although studies indicate the importance of having an un-accented accent when speaking English and the social benefits therefore, this is limited to specific contexts and specific audiences. For instance, in South African politics, to speak with an accent that represents a middle-class background where one most likely attended model-C schools and enjoyed a life that is relatively comfortable, is not easily considered a comrade-which is not only used to refer to a colleague or member of the political party but is also a term of endearment and is a display of togetherness- and is typically ostracised from this space. This links with the struggle politics birthed as a result of oppression against the apartheid regime that have strongly come to define Black identity. There is a clear divide between those who lived and fought in the struggle and those born after the struggle (Erasmus, 2004).

There appears to be a hyper-visibility and vigilance about race as a whole but blackness in particular. In this sense, the Black body is a site of turmoil and uncertainty. Partially this discontentment within is premised on the constant attempts to assert one's Black identity in an attempt to belong and not be labeled as pretentious or inauthentic. In some ways, this mirrors the absurd and absurd tests that people had to undergo in order to be classified and determine racial status under the laws of apartheid. When it comes to blackness, these practices are usually not vocalised and critiqued in the same way as the normalisation of whiteness is. In re-theorising and re-imagining race, it is imperative to make note of and be cognisant of society has become gatekeepers of rigid and inflexible views about what it means to be Black. This gatekeeping occurs between White people and Black people alike albeit, each race group expresses it in different ways.

The recent Fees must fall campaign spearheaded by students consisted primarily of Black working class students but with the inclusion of the Black middle class. This protest seemingly bridged the gap between the working and middle class within the Black community but what it also brought to the surface were discourses about what being a 'true' Black is perceived to be in our democracy. Middle class Black people are being accused of being out of touch and detached from the everyday realities of the working class. On the other hand, the middle class are defending their own position and articulating to the working class that they too face similar struggles and oppression from different angles in the spaces they occupy (Molefe, 2015). Specific to the South African context, struggle is used as a measure of determining one's Black authenticity. The struggle politics characterized by our history as a nation has come to be a strong defining trait of blackness. This represents a form of gatekeeping and of

monitoring blackness. Blackness (race) like gender is socially constructed and for the most part is done in binary and rigid ways. Blackness is being contested and this is forcing us to consider the many other identifications that are possible and that people can take on.

2.2 The politics of Language

The "coconut phenomenon" is explored by Rudick (2008) in which her study focused on a community in a township in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province. Residents in the specific community in which her research was conducted aired their grievances and frustrations about the way in which Black people prefer English over Zulu and complaints were centered on how these "coconuts" behave and act as though they are white.

What is also striking is that the participants in Rudick's (2008) study complained about the manner in which Black people speak English referring to a "twang" or accent. Painter (2009) describes this as implicitly indicating the social position or status of the speaker. The focus is then displaced from what an individual is saying but rather the way he/she sounds when speaking (Cavanaugh, 2004).

Therefore, the relationship between language and subjectivity is twofold. It is not only determined by one's ability to speak the language but it also dependant on the accent of the speaker which subjects the individual to a particular social position. This idea is echoed in Bergin & Cooks' (2002) research in which reasons Black people were accused of acting white was based on the usage of language; enunciating of words, the

use of "proper" vocabulary, exclusion of slang in speech and speaking in a "white accent".

Wa thiong'o (1986) in his book 'Decolonisation of the mind' gives an insightful perspective on the threat of African languages due to the colonial imposition of European languages on African countries. Wa thiong'o (1986) argues that language does not only serve as a medium of communication but also serves as a carrier of culture. This is in accordance with the work of Fanon (1967) who clearly states that to master a language is also to adopt the culture of that language and the culture of it is people.

The discontent around English as a universal and hegemonic language is that it is valued above indigenous and African languages. Wa thiong'o (1986) makes the point that Black people come to define themselves in relation to the language of the oppressor (White colonialists). Black people are taught to have contempt for their own language and by association their culture, traditions, customs and beliefs (Steyn, 2001) and fundamentally who they are. English has become so naturalized as the mode of communication that even most African countries resort to defining themselves according to the languages of the Europeans such as English, French and Portuguese (Wa thiong'o, 1986). The use of the African languages in literature, politics and on a social level has been substituted for English.

According to Bagwasi (2003), language conveys one's identity, culture, social and socio-economic status. Wa thiong'o (1986) explains that the history of a people, their values that comprise one's identity, their knowledge acquired over time and their

evolving culture are all intricate interconnected aspects that are carried by language. The argument here is that the extinction of a language or preference of European languages over an indigenous one not only threatens the established culture itself but it distorts the unique relationship a specific community has to the universe and their purpose within it.

Bourdieu (1997) argues that language and the ability to dominate others by the use of it, is an indication of immense power language possesses to subdue and control. Symbolic capital differs from economic or financial capital in various ways. It is regarded as resources or potential that is valued and which serves as an asset to the individual especially with regards to upward mobility, prestige and recognition within a specific culture. Language serves as such an asset and holds symbolic value (Bourdieu, 1997). The amount of value is dependent on the historical and cultural context. The ability to articulate oneself in English may prove an essential asset in most social contexts but may also be limiting in other contexts where French (or an African language) is highly valued or is a requirement.

Creese (2010) states that English holds a privileged position and how through colonisation and systems of governance, economics and civil society managed to exert its power on colonized nations in such a way as to control and have authority over knowledge and knowledge production. Colonisation achieved its universal domination by degrading the culture of Africans and deliberately eliminating African languages by imposing the English language (Wathiong'o, 1986).

The colonisation of the mind, which is far more difficult to repair, occurs because an individual is conditioned to see the world through the culture of the language imposed on him/her (Wa thiong'o, 1986). By being forced to learn and speak in English, you are expected to denounce your mother-tongue and agree to undergo a process of "civilisation" (Creese, 2010). From a tender age children are bombarded with images that associate native languages with barbarism, low status, lack of civility and intelligence (Wa thiong'o, 1986). A child who is impressionable is taught to detest that which has to do with his/her cultural beliefs and traditions to embrace the "gift" of salvation and purity that can only be granted by the White missionaries who are self-proclaimed as God's chosen.

There is a large body of work on the generational consequences of the agenda of linguistic domination over native languages. A common concern is the threat posed to the longevity of particular cultures. With reference to this specific study, what does the future hold for the continuation of the Zulu, Xhosa, Setswana, Shona and other cultures' practices and customs with the increase in Black monolinguals? The question is what does it mean for this concept of a Black identity that we hold onto so dearly and with such ferocious sentimentality?

According to Portes & Schaufier (1994), there is a greater preference for the use of English among children of immigrants (second generation immigrants) in America and the same can be used for the born-frees of our nation post-apartheid (Klerk, 2002). These facts are causing us to rethink the future of languages in South Africa. Alexander (1999) states that an aggressive and purposeful approach to bilingualism is needed to ensure that the future generations are proficient in an African language.

This will require thoughtful consideration about the language policies within the schooling system and a concerted effort from educationalists and policymakers alike.

2.2.1 Standardization of English

Lippi-Green (1997) argues against the notion of there being one universal and standardized English. She claims that there are those in power who has authority to determine this use; a social ordering of groups that allows some groups to determine how best the language. One need only observe the educational institutions to realise that language ideology exists and continues to persist at the core of these institutions. This is interesting considering that, according to the constitutional principle of language equity, all official South African languages are supposed to enjoy parity of esteem (Kamwangamalu, 2000) when the reality is that African languages remain at the bottom of the hierarchy. Despite the inclusion of African languages on television programs, radio broadcasts and in other media, this is not in proportion to the use of English and Afrikaans in our nation especially in political forums (Kamwangamalu, 2000) English functions as the lingua franca in government, business, commerce and within the educational sector.

Even in the speaking of English, it is few who can state what is appropriate, correct and incorrect (Milroy & Milroy, 2012). There is a way of speaking that is deemed acceptable. The ability to articulate oneself in English is rewarded with the potential for upward mobility and the opposite is true for those who speak "sub-standard" English (Milroy & Milroy, 2012). Grammatical error and poor pronunciation of words is categorised as an indication of a character flaw such as carelessness or lack of self-

respect (Milroy & Milroy, 2010). To this Creese (2010) would add that the ability to speak English does not suffice unless accompanied by a "normal unaccented English" (Creese, 2010, p. 297).

Because proficiency in English is associated with the elite, those who do not fall into this category are usually discriminated against on the basis of language but in actuality, they are being discriminated against for their low social class status (Lippi-Green, 1997). This is subtle because on the surface this unfair treatment appears to be about language but the underpinning issue is also that of class position. This discrimination occurs because of how people pronounce their words and how "correct" they are in the use of the language. As Wa thiong'o (1986) states, society rewards, applauds and bestows praise on the achievement of mastering the spoken and written English specifically by Africans and the same society discriminates against those who lack in this department.

In some cases, it is ironic that proficiency in English opens certain doors of opportunity but the very same language can shut other doors in certain contexts. Bourdieu (1997) explains that in the social field, what may serve as social capital in one context may not necessarily be beneficial in a different context. It is a myth to insinuate that English is widely used because of its neutrality (Lippi-Green, 1997) when in fact; it has everything to do with power, status and authority.

2.2.1.1 Accent Discrimination

Every person has an accent. The accent that we carry reveals details of our lives without us being aware. Our accent lets others know about where we were brought up, one's childhood and languages you may know (Matsuda, 1991). Creese (2010) also adds that an accent provides clues about the racialised body without visual confirmation or proof.

Matsuda (1991) argues that even though we all have an accent by default, it is decided by those in positions of power what counts as "accented" English and non-accented English. This idea that there is an unaccented way of speaking highlights linguistic ideology (Lippi-Green, 1997). Creese (2010) refers to Bourdieu's understanding of accents as representing authority. This means that the words spoken to a particular audience carries weight because of the authority of the speaker.

Accent discrimination has real economic and social consequences. Creese (2010) indicates that participants in her study were undermined based on their strong African accents while seeking employment and others services. Lippi-Green (1997) points out that having a foreign accent does in no way interfere or impede communication but rather that negative attitudes and pre-conceived ideas about foreigners is what leads to these miscommunications (Creese, 2010).

Creese's (2010) research reveals that British and Australian accents are perceived and labeled as 'non-accented' (even though they are) but this is mainly because the accent is embodied in White skin. On the other hand, an African accent, embodied in Black

skin is said to be undesirable. This indicates how accent is used as a marker of difference that distinguishes social class and is used as a means of racialisation. In Bourdieu's (1997) terms, accent is a powerful form of embodied cultural capital and can either unlock doors of social upward mobility or hinder this progression to some degree.

To some extent, the issue of accents although quite problematic in and of itself, is not as troublesome as the extinction of African languages and by virtue, African cultures. To eradicate the use of vernacular languages poses the risk of smaller languages becoming extinct (Painter, 2009) and threatens the longevity of cultural practices typically upheld by Black people. The consequences of a country like South Africa, which boasts diversity in several national languages, adopting English as the dominant language means that the effects of linguistic marginalisation on class and race is inevitable and unavoidable (Painter, 2004).

2.3 Emergent Black Middle Class

To be eloquent and articulate in a dominant language, to have availability to resources that were historically denied to and restricted from the Black community is an indication of upward mobility and alludes to the status of one's class position. The statement above may be true to some degree but as Khunou (2010) cautions, being Black and middle class is not, in the true sense of the word, an emerging class, as it was not uncommon during the apartheid era. In fact, Khunou (2010) corrects this assumption and explains that not only did a Black middle class exist but that during the time of racial segregation; this position was experienced in complex and multi-

layered ways. Being Black and middle class is not a "new" phenomenon but was, and in some ways continues to be, enmeshed with constant negotiations of boundaries in particular spaces (Khunou, 2010).

Mabandla (2013) argues that in order to have a holistic understanding of the Black middle class, a historical perspective is necessary along with knowledge about the way in which land was appropriated and how land ownership assisted in the formation of this social class. Due to the apartheid policies that delineated specific locations where Black people were allowed to reside, the middle and working class were confined to the same area (Khunou, 2010). This is typically not the same post-apartheid with many moving from townships into historically White suburbs. However, Krige (2012) notes that those who had previously relocated to suburban areas are now opting to purchase property in the townships instead.

Mabandla (2013) explains that the distinction between middle and working class was made based on occupation, lifestyle, the kinds of material goods one possessed such as a car or living in a section that was considered as "nice", level of education and in part one's fluency in (and preference for) the English language. These differences, according to Khunou (2010) although evident within the Black community were not as pronounced (as what they are now) and instead, emphasis was placed on racial unity and togetherness as opposed to these perceived miniscule differences between the middle and working class. Krige (2012) considers this as a strategic move by African scholars and academics, whose main agenda at the time was Black empowerment, as well as economic and political freedom.

The intersection of race and class was experienced with much contention and ambivalence as revealed by the participants of Khunou's (2010) research. This research indicates that being Black and middle class, amidst the abject poverty and overall suffering, was a precarious and somewhat uncomfortable status with which her participants said they could not self-identify. The resources, access to privileged spaces and advantages afforded to the Black middle class were not tantamount to that of the White middle class; therefore, the Black middle class was regarded more similar to the working class than what they were to White people (Khunou, 2010).

2.3.1 Conspicuous Consumption Among the Black Middle Class

Conspicuous consumption is a term commonly used to describe the spending habits of this "emergent" Black middle class specifically in the post-apartheid context. According Khunou (2010) the political and socio-economic transmutations that have occurred since the abolishment of the old oppressive regime has resulted in an exponential growth in the middle class Black people. However, Khunou's (2010) critique and objection against the notion of conspicuous consumption is that the insidious underlying tone suggests that members of the Black middle class community consume, use and spend simply for the sake of consumption. These kinds of explanations and assumptions are not only narrow-minded but are also highly racialised in nature. Khunou (2015) advocates for a critical analysis and engagement with the history of the Black middle class; one that is not homogenising and simplistic in order to fully understand the lived experiences of the Black subject and the complex relationship between race and class.

In discussing race, it is imperative to consider the parallel relationship to class. Frosh, Pattman & Phoenix (2003) explain how the intersection between race, class and gender impact the subject in intricate and complicated ways and how this often includes unconscious processes. According Frosh (2003), the subject is not a fixed or pre-given entity but should rather be understood as a site in which particular experiences give rise to the emergence of subjectivity.

Krige (2012) notes that in focusing on the lavish displays of wealth by the middle class and Black elites, there is less consideration for the pervasive inequalities that continue to persist in our South African context. In analysing the consumption of the Black middle class, Krige (2012) introduces the idea of power and agency. The spending habits and chose of lifestyle exhibited by this group holds meaning and has significance to those who spend primarily because, historically this privilege was for the White minority of the country.

The Black middle class have access to better quality of education, are better educated and as a result are exposed to more career opportunities (Krige, 2012). Research conducted (De Klerk, 2002) found that parents of Black learners insisted that their children speak English even in private spaces (such as their homes) in order to become proficient at it and subsequently open new avenues of opportunities in terms of employment and personal growth. This in itself speaks to a distinction in class position within the Black community. Only those who can afford expensive multi-racial schools where English is the main vehicle of communication have the luxury and resources to make those kinds of decisions about their children's future and education.

2.3.1.1 Precarious State of Black Middle Class

To be Black and middle class in our contemporary post-apartheid context, continues to be experienced in precarious ways and reveals a different kind of struggle and oppression experienced by this group. Molefe (2015) states that those who can be classified as Black and middle class have not been able to liberate or free themselves from the shackles of institutionalised and structural inequalities that are also faced by working class Black people. The anguish and resentment expressed by this class in the recent student movements and in public debates are reveals the harsh realities of the Black middle class. To be Black and middle class is categorised by insurmountable debt and having an obligation to provide for their families members who are financially dependent on them (Molefe, 2015).

In other words, the Black middle class are experiencing structural inequalities and subtle racism because of their proximity to whiteness which allows them a different lens and perspective into the current state of our nation (Chigumadzi, 2015). Molefe (2015) rejects the notion proposed by Mbembe (2015) that states that the main source of contention for Black people is our libidinal investment to whiteness. This assumes that Black people are envious towards White people, not because they want the material resources they have historically accumulated (which is a plausible explanation), but because they are so deeply enmeshed in whiteness and as a result desire whiteness over their own blackness. Molefe (2015) exposes the compounded issues in some of Mbembe's argument. He asserts that it is ludicrous to attribute the suffering of the Black middle class to simply being an expression of vanity, the need for conspicuous consumption and a preoccupation with emulating whiteness. Molefe

(2015) argues that in a quest to survive, to remain sane and to keep abreast with the economic climate and difficulties of maneuvering different kinds of oppression as a Black (albeit middle class) subject, results in insularity and individualism.

What the prominent class divisions within the Black community has forced us to do is to re-imagine race and to think about what this could mean for the future. Mbembe (2015) says that in order for this reimagining to occur, we should actively, deliberately and purposefully seek to dismantle the symbolic capital of whiteness, of all that is associated with it and find an entire new way or system of ascribing value, worth and importance that is devoid of discourses around whiteness. What Mbembe (2015) is advocating for is for Black people to have an entirely new discourse about blackness that is not dependent or preoccupied with whiteness.

2.4 Performances of Race and Social Mobility

Ogbu (2004) describes the transformation that occurred in America after slavery that illustrates how African Americans assimilated their lives and culture to suit a white cultural frame of reference in an attempt to break through the walls toward upward social mobility to improve their economic, educational and social conditions. Social upward mobility is defined as the movement between social strata from one class to another in which more resources and economic benefits are available the higher up one falls in the social strata (Matthys, 2012). Psychological upward mobility has to do with increased feelings of self-esteem, confidence and generally positive feeling about self linked to moving upward in social class strata.

Being labeled a coconut and being accused of "acting white" are two concepts that are

similar in their implication and in nature. "Acting white" is a term typically used in America and according to research conducted by Bergin & Cooks (2002) black school learners in both public and private schools who behave in ways deemed as "white" are rejected by their fellow peers of the same race and in majority of incidences they are accused of acting white.

Bergin & Cook (2002) cite Fordham & Ogbu's theoretical framework of group identity as being pertinent and strong among the black culture. An essential criterion of collective identity is standing in unison against white people who are viewed as the historical oppressors and in some sense are perceived as the enemy. Individuals accused of acting white or being coconuts are usually rejected by their social and cultural group because being a "good" member of the group requires that one avoid and resist white culture and influence. This has profound effects on one's daily-lived experiences as a racialised subject within social contexts.

2.4.1 Space, Performativity and Embodiment

In thinking about the way space is occupied and experienced, it is paramount that one not ignore how race shapes and to some extent determines how that space will be utilised (Ahmed, 2007). Fanon (1967) would corroborate this view by inserting that the Black body and the associations made with blackness become more apparent and is experientially intensified in a White man's world (Ahmed, 2007).

Because, according to Fanon (1967) the Black man is construed as a problem, he experiences his blackness in a conflicted manner. Ahmed (2007) explains that the

Black body becomes convoluted with a sense of restriction, uncertainty and blockages in opportunities. In a world where whiteness has become normative, those who are 'non-white' are simply constructed as the 'other' (Fanon, 1967). Even the term 'non-white' assumes whiteness to be the normative standard by which blackness is compared (Steyn, 2001).

The level of comfort and freedom the Black subject experiences in certain spaces are dependent on the way his/her blackness is perceived by others (Sullivan, 2004).

Dehumanising discourses about blackness such as that of cannibalism, inferiority and lack of intelligence (Fanon, 1967) are embodied and inscribed on the Black body.

These stereotypes are carried on the body into different social spaces that shape the subjectivity of the raced being (Sullivan, 2004).

To borrow from the work of Butler (1990), in the same way we perform our gender, we perform our race. Each of us is born into discourse that pre-dates our existence. According to Salith (2002), the body is constructed as a result of this discourse. In essence, our raced identities manifest through language accompanied by performative acts about these pre-existing discourses of race. In other words, the identity we assume is one that precedes us therefore; it is argued that we do not choose an identity but rather that one is imposed onto us.

What is particularly interesting about this theory of performativity is that in the same way we perform prescribed gender-normative behaviours, we enact our racial identity through these pre-existing performatives (Salith, 2002). Hegemonic and pervasive discourses about blackness are interpellated and subsequently produce a raced subject

who embodies, acts and re-enacts these performatives (Salith, 2002). This does not suggest that people do not have agency or the ability to act against and disrupt these historical discourses and, as Butler (1990) argues, individuals have agency even if it is restricted and constrained by social structures and society. This means that we are not bound by these racial identities but that we are constrained by them because they hold historical weight.

2.5 Self-Identification and Black Identity

The issue with Black people idolising the possessions historically privileged to White people, according to Manganyi (1973), is that Black people internalise White culture to such an extent that it becomes a part of their own identity. This results in a loss of "true identity" and social exclusion from one's own Black community. Manganyi (1973) describes this as sense of "false consciousness" where in the quest towards liberation, one actually becomes more psychologically enslaved. The major issue with this kind of logic about a "true self" or identity is that it problematises and discriminates those who do not fit into the image of an authentic Black identity. It also feeds into the idea that there is a predetermined idea or notion of blackness and poses serious questions about who gets to decide what is 'truly' Black and what isn't.

Manyanyi (1873) proposed a theory of Black identity, which, at the time, was useful in the quest for liberating Black people from mental enslavement, self-discovery and self-loathing. However, this view is essentialist and to some extent not useful in our contemporary context where being 'Black' has taken on new forms. Dolby (2001) cautions against binary and fixed categorisations made about the identifications

people take on. Fataar (2009) suggests that there is a complex interplay of factors such as race, class, taste, friendship and status that construct these identifications.

Manganyi's (1973) theory claims that while assimilating to "white culture" Black people abandon their "true" identity and become preoccupied in adopting "white" characteristics and essentially undergo a process of lactification that Fanon (1967) explains as a process of trying to whiten oneself as if to become like milk. This means to deny and denounce your blackness in order to be embraced and gain the approval of White people.

However, even if this is true for some Black people, what Manganyi (1973) fails to take into account are the ways in which the hegemonic cultural orientations are imposed on the Black subject particularly within schools (Fataar, 2009). Schools that are historically White and have predominantly White teachers implicitly facilitate this process of enculturation and assimilation into White culture. Fataar (2009) states that teachers perceive it as their rightful duty to educate for middle-class civility and continue to be blind and ignorant towards racial and cultural differences of learners that is paramount to the way they relate to the world and others.

The work of Bulhan (1979) is similar to that of Manganyi (1973) and outlines a trajectory of identity development. This theory argues that minority groups start at a stage of capitulation, which is being assimilated into the dominant culture, and it is at this point of one's identity that they experience the highest level of alienation from their racial and cultural identity. This stage is followed by a period of revitalization where one actively seeks his/her own racial or cultural identity and rejects the

dominant culture. Bulhan (1979) argues that both these stages do not lead to social change and social justice but that it is necessary that we each arrive at the final stage of radicalization where we are willing to fight against social ills and commit to bringing about real change. This is referred to as cultural in-betweenity and is characterized by the emergence of autonomy and agency from minority groups.

2.5.1 Schools as Sites for Identity Formation

Fataar (2009) argues that there is a pre-existing cultural White ethos within schools that is enforced and is interwoven into the fabric of school culture. Wa thiong'o (1986) supports this statement by indicating that in schools, learners caught speaking African language are punished, publicly humiliated and ridiculed. Derogatory labels are put around the culprit's neck; they are treated as though they had participated in a criminal act, an offensive and unsolicited one at that. Eventually over time learners become their own gatekeepers against those who defile the code of conduct that insists on English as the only acceptable language spoken on school premises (Wa thiong'o, 1986)

Schools act as sites of contestation and contradictory formations of Black identities. Fataar (2009) explains that friendships are forged across the colour line. This is mainly attributed to similarity in taste and common interests between the youth across the boundaries of race (Dolby, 2001). Bourdieu's (1984) concept of taste is used by Dolby (2000) to discuss how both taste and global popular culture help construct youth identities. Taste functions to reflect individual preference but this taste exists within a broader social, economic and political structure and in essence produces

distinctions in social and economic class structures. Her research study conducted with high school learners as the participants illustrates how invested students are in assimilating their lifestyles to global international markers such as musicians or famous celebrities and how this impacts their self-identities.

The point Dolby (2000) is communicating is that taste in music and clothes and other interests are factors the youth use in constructing the collective identities but these commodities are not indicative of an intrinsic or fixed identity of what it means to be black, white or coloured. Dolby (2000) makes it clear that the ways used by her participants to categorise what it means to be black has no clear and straightforward correlation to South African history or politics but is produced in terms of taste influenced by popular culture. What should be taken into consideration is that although learners engage in racialised associations or construct some situations in racialised ways, this does not necessarily last for long periods of time and is not salient throughout these interactions with one another (Fataar, 2009).

Research conducted by Gillborn, Rollock, Vincent & Ball (2012) reveals that Black middle class pupils are met with hostility and in some cases blatant racial discrimination in educational sectors because they are perceived to be intellectually inferior because of their race. Because of these pre-existing and pre-conceived negative stereotypes, Black students constantly have to prove themselves, persistently seeking approval and affirmation (Bobo, 2001) from their teachers. Black students, according to Gilborn et al's (2012) research are not encouraged to reach their full potential and the minimum pass rate is what is expected of them even though they show potential to excel. This research further reveals that despite middle-class status,

this did not shield these learners from discriminatory treatment in school settings.

Fataar (2009) notes the ways in which schools reproduce and perpetuate race-determined subjectivities that are influenced by space; in other words what is accessible, when and by whom. It is in these spaces that our sense of self is developed and the kind of relations learners' experience in educational spaces determines how they self-identify, how to interact with other race groups and their perception of self in relation to White people. The experiences they encounter during this phase of self-discovery shape and mould their subjectivities and the expression therefore.

Erasmus (2005) critiques the idea of race as a fixed entity that prescribes the kinds of behaviour or decisions that ought to be made by Black people in order to prove their blackness and their "true" allegiance with their own people. Erasmus (2005) makes reference to an incident in the media regarding the voting choices of Black South Africans. Those who vote for the DA and not the ANC are accused of being psychologically enslaved and their proximity to whiteness is heavily scrutinised.

The argument is that such discourses and rationalisations are essentialist and do not take into account the agency of Black people to vote and make decisions in their own interests and in ways which will be advantageous to them. Black people who do not conform to what is expected are labeled as coconuts or they are thought of as disempowered in their thinking because they perceive White people as being better leaders or more capable than their fellow compatriots. Erasmus (2004) advocates for the theory of multiple identities that rejects the idea of a fixed understanding about racial and ethnic identities.

2.5.1.2 Incongruent Sense of Identity

Abhikari (2004) writes about the coloured community and the complexity of expressing their identities in post-apartheid South Africa. The catch phrase "first we weren't White enough and now we aren't Black enough" (Abhikari, 2004 p. 168) has been the cry of the coloured community for more than a decade. Even with a move towards re-inscribing and re-inventing new identifications of being coloured, there is a strong sense from coloureds that they feel they have no real place in a world of Black people and White people: a feeling of inbetweenness.

Abhikari (2004) explains that even with a new democratic dispensation, most working class coloureds feel they have not benefited from Black Economic Empowerment or affirmative action and find themselves in financial difficulty and abject poverty. The middle class coloureds have more opportunities at their feet, but they continue to struggle socially due to their position on the racial hierarchy because they are not on the same level as Black people.

The purpose for including the experiences of coloureds is because it can be argued that some of the experiences of Black monolinguals proficient in English only may echo those experienced by the coloured community. Individuals who are Black and yet unable to communicate in an African language, may experience feelings of not fitting in with their own people and also not being fully accepted by the White community either. This may be despite attending multi-racial schools and being proficient in a hegemonic language and despite middle class status; they too could

perceive their somewhat precarious position as a feeling of being in the middle and not really belonging anywhere much in the same way as coloured people.

In part, this conflicted and contested area of self-identification is attributed to the existing narrow perspectives about one's race, gender or class (Somer, 1994). The inability to move passed these rigid categories is often what hinders our understanding of a fluid and ever evolving identity (Hermans, 2003). Few (2007) argues that by taking into account the dynamic and shifting ways of identity formation will serve to better understand Black subjectivity. Somer's (1994) narrative approach to identity acknowledges that who we are and essentially who we choose to become is a result of historical stories in which different social actors locate themselves. We are the product of multiple narratives that construct our raced and/or gendered subjectivities.

This shows that the dialogical self is constantly changing, fluid, complex and contextualised (Hermans, 2003). To echo the sentiment of Ratele (2013), blackness is not about fitting into a mould of what others decide is Black enough but rather it is about being unapologetic and unafraid of being whatever kind or type of Black one sees fit after much self-introspection.

2.6 Affective Dimensions of Racialisation

When describing and theorizing the experiences of racism on the raced subject, the significance of affect and emotion cannot be undermined. Aichhorn & Kronberger (2012) describe emotions as feelings that allow us to understand the experiences we have in relation to the world around us. Affect can be understood in a number of

ways. Affect can be conceptualised as feelings or emotions that occur as a result of public or societal opinion of an individual (Fivush, 2009). This supports Lacan's view that people become subjects according to the thoughts others have about him/her (Frie, 1997).

The idea is that people do not exist in a vacuum or separate from the social world and therefore; their experiences, emotions and affect are influenced by this intertwined relationship with the social (Frie, 1997). This relationship does not just interact with the social sphere but implicates those embedded within it. Bulhan (1985) impresses that one cannot be separated from their environment nor their political and historical narratives that make up the way we affectively experience the social world.

Du bois (1998) describes the experience of the racialised Black body as one that endures conflicted and a somewhat problematic existence in their Black skin in a White world (Ahmed, 2007). Fanon (1967) continues by explaining that at the point when a Black child meets with the White world, an abnormal child is born. This abnormality is an unchangeable consequence of his inescapable Blackness.

Ahmed (2004) gives an intriguing explanation of the collective nature of emotions and affect. Emotions do not simply reside in the individual waiting for a moment of extension from the individual to others; but emotions function to collectively bind particular bodies together in what Ahmed (2004) describes as an affective economic web. Emotions are performative and they do particular things. The attachments we have are circulated between the individual to the larger community; from one subject to the next and in so doing, aligns different bodies between space and time. The

intense emotions experienced by subjects in the social world 'stick' to particular bodies and are then enacted in various ways. In exploring the lived-experiences of the Black subject, affect and emotions cannot be removed from our understanding of how these bodies relate to others and themselves in the world.

2.6.1 The Politics of Shame

Straker (2011) has written extensively on the subject of shame from a position that interrogates Whiteness and its complicity in perpetuating racist ideology. These views are worthy of acknowledgement and echo some truth about the emotions and affect experienced by some South Africans since the declaration of democracy.

Straker (2011) unpacks the manipulative and coercive ways that shame has been used to control and intimidate people to force them to conform (Scheff, 1988). Foucault (1998) concept of disciplinary power is described as an effective yet subtle means of power because it ensures that through systems of constant surveillance, people eventually learn to regulate and self-surveil their own behaviour without exercising force or violence on these subjects. Shame is used as a strategic form of disciplinary power. It is used to humiliate and ostracize particular individuals who fail to conform. Because of the alienation and pain of loneliness, individuals soon fall into a pattern of self-surveiling, monitoring and disciplining themselves so as to avoid being punished or being labeled as deviant. As straker (2011 p. 640) puts it "shame and shaming were alive and used as disciplinary mechanisms···'

An imperative point Straker (2011) makes is that shame is situational and contextual. What we are ashamed of today will not necessarily be what we are ashamed of

tomorrow. This can be linked to the identities we assume and those we disavow. In critically thinking about what it means to be Black (if anything at all), it is crucial to acknowledge that shame is constantly shifting and is dependent on context. The kind of Black one chooses to be is limited, constrained and partially determined by the social world. As Scheff (1988) states, social influences can be constraining especially when it comes to person freedom. The way shame is attributed when it comes to Black identity has changed over history time and time again.

At this point it would be necessary to mention that guilt and shame, though closely related, are mutually exclusive and distinct emotions. Shame is an affective reaction that requires endorsement of public disapproval and scorn whereas guilt is an internalized response based on one's own personal convictions and is usually experienced in silence (Flicker, Barlow, Tangney & Miller, 1996). Lewis (1971) proposes that the ability to distinguish between the two terms lie in realizing the role of the self in these experiences. When having feelings of shame, the self is the focal point of scrutiny whereas where guilt is concerned, the self is negatively viewed in relation to that which was done or not done; the main focal point is therefore on the action and not on the self per se. The way we internalise shame and guilt has a profound impact on our subjectivity and our raced bodies.

2.6.1.2 The Power of Silence

A lot is said in our silence. Pinder & Harlos (2001) define silence as a means of communication, one that ostensibly expresses our deepest fears, hidden questions, love, anger and other passions. Silence is considered as an active process and yet in some instances it connotes passivity (Hook, 2011) and indifference.

During apartheid, communal silence about segregation and racism shaped the social and political landscape. The customary silence around inequality and discrimination is described by Sheriff (2000) as a form of cultural censorship endorsed by the dominant group. Straker (2011) uses dissociation as an explanation of what may have occurred among the White community during this period. By distancing oneself from the atrocities occurring on a daily basis, or simply choosing to believe they do not exist, one could maintain a certain level of sanity and shut out any feelings of guilt. In remaining silent and psychologically dissociated from these events was also a requirement, a way of conformity.

There is a considerable amount of power in silence. Hook (2011) elaborates on this by adding that the privilege to not contribute, to remain silent does not highlight absence of an exchange of words but paradoxically magnifies the presence of something that has not been said. What Hook (2011) is implying is that in choosing to remain silent, you display a greater position of power. This argument is expanded and points to the fact that to distance oneself through silence is indeed a signifier of superiority. Fivush (2010) corroborates this idea and states that by not speaking, one declares that they need not explain or justify him/herself and this can only come from a position of power and authority. It is better to say little or speak with a small voice than it is to appear insouciant.

Silence, though well intentioned at times, can be perceived as viewing one's own interests more valuable than those of others (Hook, 2011). Of course with most things, things are not always set in black and white; and so it is with the issue of silence.

While on one hand silence is associated with power, it is also linked to a sense of powerlessness. Pinder & Harlos (2001) have found that silence can also signify an absence of opportunities to voice concern, fear or the perception of danger or the belief that expressing your concerns may be futile. Those who do not speak out against injustice may also do so out of fear of being labeled intransigent.

Worth noting in this discussion about silence is Fivush (2010) who makes a necessary distinction between being silenced- which signifies a loss of power and being silent- which is a form of agency. The former occurs at a cultural and conversational; sanctioned by the dominant group and dominant discourses. The latter, being silent, is understood as a powerful tool that can also signify agency.

2.7 Research question

What are the reported lived experiences of racialisation of Black people categorized as “coconuts”?

What are the reported self-identifications of Black people proficient in English only?

Chapter Three

3.1 Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, data procedure, data analysis and offers detailed information of the participants and their backgrounds.

3.1.1 Research Design

I conducted a qualitative study and employed Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) in my research study. IPA is particularly concerned with phenomena as one engages with the world. The way phenomena are experienced is dependant on a number of factors that are subject to the perceiver (Willig, 2013). These factors include-but are not limited to- the context and location of the perceiver, their emotions, mental orientation, judgments and wishes. This method explores, in great detail, the way participants make sense of their world, perceptions and experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

This is essential because it highlights that people can experience the same phenomena in a particular environment in diverse and unique ways (Willig, 2013). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a method that derives from phenomenology and is well suited to meet the objectives and aims of my study. IPA is also useful because it allows for critical questions to be asked about the stories and experiences being shared by the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

IPA recognises and is aware that in order to capture the experiences of participants, the researcher is implicated in this process and therefore acknowledges that his/her viewpoints and subjectivity towards the research (Willig, 2013). What this means is

that the researcher can only interpret the data as expressed by participants and can never truly claim to fully access the experience of the participants. According Smith & Osborn (2007), IPA involves a double hermeneutics. The first stage consists of the participant making sense of their own world and their position within it and the second stage is the researcher simultaneously trying to make sense of the participant's world and their experiences.

IPA is dedicated to understanding the lived-experiences of participants (Smith & Osborn, 2003) and focuses on the "here-and-now-moments" which further justifies its purpose in my research. The individual cases of participants are explored in great detail before general claims are deduced from the narrative accounts of the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2003). IPA acknowledges that one's thoughts and emotions are interconnected and that part of interpreting data is being cognisant of this chain of connection (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Dynamic topics that are interested in areas of identity, the self and subjectivity are best investigated using Interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003). This method of analysis speaks to the heart of my study which is to capture the quality and texture of the ways in which Black people experience their monolingualism in various contexts and spaces. Smith & Osborn (2007) note that there is no singular or definitive way of doing IPA.

Qualitative research is especially significant in this kind of study because, unlike quantitative research, it offers richer quality of data into the experiences of the participants that cannot be quantified using numbers. Qualitative research is

concerned with understanding and uncovering meaning from people's experiences and their perceptions. According to Atieno (2009), this kind of research is important because it takes into account the whole situation and analyses the complexities of the experiences of people.

With regards to qualitative research, IPA has made some significant contributions to mainstream psychology in terms of epistemology, methodology and corpus of studies (Smith, 2004). IPA employs qualitative analysis in order to analyse its findings and make interpretations therefore. One of the characteristics of IPA is that it is interrogative in nature that means that it shares constructs and concepts with mainstream psychology and attempts to shed light on existing research.

Atieno (2009) explains that qualitative researchers are concerned with process more than what they are about outcomes. The researcher plays a pivotal role in collecting the data and the quality of information retrieved from the respondent is largely dependent on the rapport established between researcher and the researched (Silverman, 2006). Qualitative research acknowledges the researcher's biases and invites the researcher to evaluate their own position in relation to the context of the research (Willig, 2009). Using qualitative research has allowed for collecting data through semi-structured interviews that invited for further probing about interesting comments made by the participant in the process.

3.1.1.2 Cohort

The Cohort of participants consisted of 3 males and 2 females all from diverse

contexts and backgrounds between the ages of 18-25 years. The age group of the participants in this study plays an essential role in the type of data and the quality of feedback and information I will be able to gather. Firstly, participants are young adults who interact with a number of individuals on a daily basis either on campuses or within a work environment and other contexts. Secondly, this range in age groups includes people born post-apartheid who may have a different account of how they construct their concept of self how they view race compared to people born during the apartheid era.

I used the snowballing method to recruit participants and I received an overwhelming response from respondents but the 5 participants whose narratives are used in this study consists of individuals who were available for interviews and who were contactable. My sample included participants from diverse cultures within the black community. The participants in this study include 3 varsity students, 1 participant who has completed his high school but is not currently studying and 1 participant who is currently working. The different contexts and social environments that these participants are exposed in their individual lives offer interesting insights to the main research questions of this particular research.

4 of the 5 participants reported having started learning an indigenous/African language at an early age but this acquisition of the language was interrupted by either a geographical move away from the township areas or a move from grandparents with whom they conversed in vernacular with. All 5 participants cannot hold a conversation in vernacular but have some understanding of the basic terminology such as greetings and some expressions in these languages. All of the five participants self-

identify as monolinguals that are proficient in English only.

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity/Nationality	Sex
Ursula	25	Malawian and Tswana parents	Female
Lindi	19	Zambian parents bom in South Africa	Female
Lungelo	19	Zulu	Male
Thabo	19	Pedi	Male
Mohale	18	Tswana	Male

3.1.1.3 Data Procedure

Once I had identified potential participants by method of snowballing I contacted them telephonically and by other social networking mediums to plan a meeting time at a convenient location for the participants. Each potential participant was informed that my study is one that has to do with language and identity and I expressed my own personal vested interest in this topic. These individuals were given an opportunity to ask questions and only willing participants formed part of the cohort.

The method of collecting data was done through in-depth semi-structured interviews with each of the participants. This sample size is normative for IPA because great detail is dedicated to each case (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Interviews took place in a controlled environment where participants were made to feel comfortable and were less prone to distractions. 3 of these interviews took place on campus in the post-

graduate office. 1 of the interviews took place at The Glen mall in Johannesburg at a quiet corner coffee shop. 1 of the interviews took place in Pretoria East at the participant's residential address, as was the most convenient meeting place for the participant.

Interviews were approximately sixty to ninety minutes per session per participant. One-on-one interviews can provide rich information about the ideas, feelings and thoughts of participants in ways which may be restricted if individuals are in the company of others such as focus groups (Smith, 2004).

The decision to use semi-structured interviews stems from the premise that this will allow room for free expression and follow-up questions about ambiguous or unclear comments or statements made during the interview by the participant (Willig, 2013). A high level of reflectivity is required throughout the interview process because the comments from both the researcher and participant are to be analysed in the transcript.

In this study audio recording devices were used. After the interviews transcription took place. In order to aid the time-consuming and laborious process of transcription once all the data has been collected, it was crucial that recording devices be of excellent quality because behaviours such as pausing, correction of speech, change in tone of voice, emphasis on certain words or points and any interruptions must be indicated on the transcript.

The manner in which data are transcribed has implications not only for the meaning of the text but also the manner in which the findings are interpreted affecting credibility and transferability of results (Willig, 2013).

3.2 Data Analysis

3.2.1 Thematic Content Analysis

I employed two different methods of analysis. Firstly, thematic content analysis was used to thematise the data. What this process allowed for was exploration of themes without a referral to theoretical concepts. This meant that I was able to approach the data from a different perspective and focus primarily on the emergence of themes and not necessarily their link to any pre-existing literature or theoretical content. Thematic analysis differs from IPA in that it is not grounded or restricted by theoretical frameworks and can therefore be used to compliment or alongside different methods of analyses. I employed the steps outlined by Braun and Clark (2006) in thematising the data and working through the qualitative research. This made it useful to include this mode of analysis before delving into analysing the data using IPA.

Thematic content analysis is a useful method of analysing data that requires the researcher to examine and identify pertinent themes that emerge in the findings. It is a process that involves thoroughly exploring possible themes by continuously referring back to the data and does therefore not occur in a linear and neat way.

There are six steps outline by Braun & Clark (2006). The first step entails familiarising yourself with the data. This process involves active reading and engagement with the data. It is imperative to immerse oneself with the data. It is in this process that the researcher begins to make meaning of the transcripts and where

both verbal and non-verbal cues are noted and later used as part of interpreting the data. According to Braun & Clark (2006), there is no specific or prescribed way to do thematic analysis. In other words there is no ideal way of going about thematising and analysing the data in order to generate and code themes.

In the second stage, coding of the data occurs. This entails exploration of relevant information that is linked to or answers the research question at hand. In coding the data, I employed a theoretical driven analysis in which data was coded due to the specificity of my research question that focuses on issues of identity related to language. I worked around a theoretical framework that guided how I coded my data. Analysing this data occurred at a semantic level which means that I attempted to make meaning and interpret the data generated and not just merely describe the participants experiences (Braun & Clark, 2006).

In the third stage I searched for themes that ran across the participants' accounts of their experiences. Using the initial codes from stage 2, overarching themes are combined where applicable to form main themes and sub-themes. Braun & Clark (2006) suggest the use of mind-maps to try and organise these themes to determine how the initial codes can be useful in formulating themes that are vital to the research question. In the next step of this process, themes are revised and reviewed in order to ensure they are coherent and to decipher if all the themes identified are indeed themes.

In the final stages of this process, steps five or six, the themes are named and defined along with sub-themes. This process requires refining the themes and how they are labeled. In the final stage, producing the report entails the analysis of the themes,

selecting what is important, compelling and relating this information to literature and to the research question at hand.

Once the initial thematising was complete, I analysed the data using IPA and the four-stage process by Smith & Osborn (2007) were followed in order to interpret data as accurately as possible.

3.2.1.2 Phenomenological Interpretative Analysis

In the initial stage, audio-recording devices were listened to repeatedly and data was transcribed. The reading and re-reading of individual cases was done at this stage. Smith & Osborn (2007) suggest that during this process notes should be made based on language use, context of participant and any descriptive comments based on the researcher's initial thoughts and observations during interview process. These notes were then recorded in the left or right margin of the text. Each individual case was analysed and significant themes were extracted from what these participants experienced and how they self-identified. This is what Smith (2004) refers to as an idiographic commitment to each individual case.

The second stage of analysis entailed identifying and labeling emergent themes from each section of the text. These themes were recorded in another margin next to the initial margin where comments were noted. The themes need to primarily capture the experiential quality of the participants' accounts and Osborn and Smith (2007) suggest that psychological terminology be used to differentiate each theme. This was the case in my analysis of the findings.

The third stage involves looking for connections between themes identified in stage 2 and constructing meaningful clusters from these themes. In the final stage of analysis a summary table was produced in which super-ordinate themes were tabulated and subordinate themes are listed beneath these. Quotations from the interview transcript are included as these help to capture the quality of experiences of the participants.

IPA recognises that there are different levels of interpretation that can be employed. This, according to Smith (2004), is what makes qualitative distinct from quantitative research because it creates room for complexities of psychological processes. Smith (2004) does not give prescribed outlines for analysis but gives suggests about how to go about analysing the data. One the first level of analysis the social and individual are located within space and time. This is followed by analysing the metaphors or kinds of ways participants describe their experiences and in all this, a critical engagement is deemed critical in interpreting the data. This allows the researcher to explore certain elements that may not be obvious to the participant or that they may not be aware of.

3.2.1.3 Trustworthiness of Analysis

Within qualitative research, the idea of reliability is irrelevant and does not serve the same purpose as in quantitative research (Bashir, Afzal & Azeem, 2008). According to Stenbacka (2001), the concept of reliability is misleading in qualitative research

and that the inclusion of reliability should not be a criterion as this affects the intention of qualitative research. Therefore instead of using the term reliability, scholars have substituted this concept with credibility.

Credibility refers to the manner in which research was conducted in light of integrity, validity and the accuracy of which the data was interpreted or conveyed. Aspects such as the experience brought forward by the research to the study are important when deciding on credibility of the content of the study.

Dependability is the equivalent to reliability used in quantitative research and states that the dependability of a qualitative study is based on whether there is a level of consistency in data examination; collection and the way notes are processed for evaluation or interpretation. (Bashir, Afzal & Azeem, 2008).

The issue of trustworthiness is crucial to reliability and is at the core of qualitative research and is achieved by ensuring that the research is of high quality because in increasing the quality of one's study this also increases the likelihood that the results can be generalised. There are various strategies and techniques that can be used to increase trustworthiness some of which include using tactics to ensure honesty among participants, peer scrutiny of research and the use of reflecting on the researcher's own opinions and any personal biases he/she may possess about the subject matters in the research (Shenton, 2004).

The issue of transferability in qualitative research is deemed to be subjective and impossible because situations or phenomena that occurs and is studied are specific and

unique to the participants directly involved in the study. This makes it difficult to conclude that the findings are applicable or relevant to other contexts and people.

Chapter Four

4.1 Analysis and Discussion

This chapter analyses the major themes that emerged from the participants and explores the experiences of participants in different contexts.

4.1.1 Politics of Accents

4.1.1.1 Accent Discrimination and Intolerance

Teasing is a social practice that has specific functions. In most situations, teasing by others occurs as a method of social control. It is usually a way of shaming and ridiculing others (Schiefflin, 1986). It is a social practice deployed as a means of surveillance and policing of others' actions, behaviours and even identities. Those who do the teasing find this to 'fun' and may even consider this harmless but the receivers of these verbal attacks usually interpret this behaviour as hostile and demeaning. We see this behaviour enacted in schools and it has become a normalised practice (Schiefflin, 1986). Teasing can also be racialising in nature and inadvertently perpetuate and reproduce stereotypical perceptions about race. This in turn delineates what is considered humorous and what is not.

I remember when we were in class and they would ah like I don't know I can't explain it but like they will tell the guy with the accent to read a section of the book and I don't know at that time I was quite immature, you couldn't hold yourself back I guess. It was the funniest thing ever... [Thabo]

When asked about the perceptions of people who have this strong, thick African language, participants explained that the accent is associated with lack of education, lack of intelligence and as a result, these individuals are not afforded equal respect as Black people who speak with an un-accented accent. This is largely determined by social perceptions people tend to hold of others (Molden & Dweck, 2006). These perceptions influence how we interpret and make sense of the actions and behaviours of others. We make judgments based on these perceptions and in some cases these

negative views are enduring and remain salient.

Ah most people don't take them seriously... I remember in English class we were talking about how people are interpreted differently because of their accents and ah that girl starts speaking in class and says ah a lot of people with accents are uneducated or living in the townships... [Tshepo]

My point of view; okay this is also from seeing it live they will think that they are very uneducated and ya they don't deserve the greatest of jobs or opportunities they are below average [Ursula]

Uhm it is fine when a Black person speaks in his native tongue but the minute he speaks English in that accent ah then there's a there's a intelligence problem [Thabo]

The media plays a role in portraying particular accents to sound uncivilised, ignorant and threatening (Matsuda, 1991). These stereotypes about African accents perpetuate the ideology that is rooted in accents. The recognition by participants of "an accent" assumes, to some degree, that there is such a thing as no accent. Linguistic domination has been detrimental in that it has ensured that there is a 'standard', singular and universal way of speaking (accent) and writing in English (Lippi-Green, 1997). Any deviations to the hidden norm is not only frowned upon but also met with prejudice and harsh judgment. This accent discrimination is racialised and typically occurs to the black body (Creese, 2010).

I guess wherever you go people will always judge you on it cause if you speak broken English, people won't take you seriously and if you speak proper English people will be like okay this is probably an educated Black person. A lot of people till today whenever we speak English, my cousins and I, will be like you speak such good English and they will be so shocked that Black people can speak good English cause they are so stuck that Black people can only speak broken English [Ursula]

Matsuda (1991) explains that there isn't an inherently pleasant or unpleasant accent but that our understanding of what sounds normal is socially constructed and established through means of historical linguistic power. Black people who speak in

an unaccented manner are typically regarded as well spoken, learned and belonging to a particular social class. Accent does not only denote race but intersects with class status that is not always overtly referred to which makes it an invisible or silent signifier of difference and distinction within racial groups especially in our post-apartheid context.

This is what Bourdieu (1997) refers to as embodied cultural capital. Accent becomes incorporated into the Black subject's body and acts as a form of currency that allows for maneuvering in various White spaces. Research conducted by Matsuda (1991) reveals that the likelihood of White people being successful and accomplished was rated higher than that of Black people based on their accents and proficiency in English.

Society today assumes that because of my accent or someone like me they just assume that he is just a bit more educated than other people...I always like asking people like what do you think of me before I've even spoken, before I continue speaking to them and they say (changes accent)ah I think you are this smart educated guy and you probably do physics and you are just extremely smart (resumes natural accent)and I'm like, wow, thank you that's a great compliment and I'm like why do you say that, well because of your accent... [Thabo]

Thabo acknowledges that there is a distinction between his 'unaccented' accent and that of "other people" referring to Black people who have a 'distasteful' accent. In this extract, there is an explicit association made between the social value of having the 'right' accent. A number of assumptions are made of the participant based on the way he speaks; his accent is a signifier of great intellectual ability and a wealth of knowledge. Accent does not only denote race but reveals the hidden signifier that is class. This is an assumption that is made in the absence of substantial proof or evidence of the individual's academic performance.

The psychology of attraction reveals that there are a number of factors that attract or draw us towards certain people. In terms of interpersonal attraction, physical attraction and similarity are aspects of an individual that appeals to us (Braxton-Davis, 2010). Thabo illustrates this attraction. The way he speaks and in essence, the manner in which he carries himself attracts people to him. Those who share similar traits to Thabo or who see him on a regular basis- geographic proximity- are more likely to be attracted to the way he speaks and show an interest in his accent.

To decide what is normal, superior and inferior, intelligible and acceptable reveals the way in which the distribution of power operates in society (Matsuda, 1991). This is an illustration of symbolic violence that can be described as subtle and gentle and is in some ways invisible (Bourdieu, 1997). Racialisation is a type of domination that becomes so deeply internalised and it not only affects the individual's experiences and subjectivity but also determines the identities conferred on the subject marking what is normal and abnormal, what is acceptable and what is not or who is educated and uneducated. Ursula explains how her accent is appreciated and valued by some of the people she has had previous encounters with.

Like some people like Black people who don't know how to speak English properly sometimes will actually say you know I wish I knew how to speak English as good as you [Ursula]

Literature indicates that English is regarded as the language of the economy and the ability to articulate yourself meticulously serves as a great asset for upward social mobility and to gain a certain amount of respectability (De Klerk, 2000). What is imperative to acknowledge is that language proficiency and accent are not mutually exclusive but that they function as a unit in a similar way to how race and class are

configured and occur simultaneously. Bourdieu (1997) states that accent is a marker of authority; it influences how people will receive you, the opinions they formulate about you and this determines your level of credibility.

A few of the participants acknowledged that although they were at some point prejudiced to individuals who have an accent, they have come to the realisation that one's accent is not an accurate marker with which we can measure intelligence and that it is usually they people who do not speak in a desirable way that have the most valuable to contribute to conversations.

After realising what I was doing to that person and how I viewed people with an accent, I personally started feeling bad like I'm judging someone on his accent. I don't really know him or what marks he gets, I just assume that because of his accent that he is less educated and is not as smart as me. I guess my perception has changed when I came to varsity I actually don't mind cause if they get a better mark than me the stuff they actually say and get past their accent well, then what's to say he's not smarter. What's to say he doesn't have the full potential to be whatever he wants to be [Thabo]

Whenever I hear people say that I'm thinking so basically uhm it is ok wow, you didn't go to one of those rural black schools all the way in Soweto growing up in a township. Oh on you went to a white school, nice and you speak with the accent nicely, that's what I think about and I'm like ok it doesn't matter if you grew up in the township you can get the accent right but uhm for me I don't know whenever I hear people say that I'm like ah really though just because a person speaks with an accent, it doesn't mean they are uneducated or stuff like that [Tshepo]

People who who have accents are usually the most wise [Mohale]

Thabo expresses that he began to feel guilt about his negative attitude and intolerance of people who have an accent. With maturity and self-introspection came a different understanding and appreciation of the opinions of others despite how they sound.

Creese (2010) argues that the ability to hear someone with a different accent when they speak is not an impossible task if prejudice and negative attitudes are removed from the equation. By attentively listening and engaging, we might come to the

realisation that Mohale has.

4.1.1.2 Contention over Accent

Participants revealed that although their accent is usually received positively by others and has been largely conceived as a valuable attribute, their experiences indicate that there are some feelings of ambivalence and contention about how well they speak English. Tshepo describes his experience around compliments about his accent as bittersweet. He reveals that he is of two-minds when it comes to how he is expected to embrace what seems to be a complement but is actually is a source of his indignation.

I don't know well ah positives are based on negatives things na what I mean. Like when people say I 'm not like most Black people like ah what is that supposed to mean like you don't have that strong black accent like you grew up from a township and you you don't act this way you are different like in a good way and based on that like thank you. There are times when ah ah being monolingual and having this accent this accent made me seem like I 'm like I 'm better from the rest but like I don't know sometimes I 'm like ok I 'm kinda offended [Tshepo]

There are a number of points to note from the extract. Tshepo acknowledges that although he is being praised for his accent, there is an implicit condescending tone to this statement. He is conflicted about whether to fully embrace this complement and is somewhat apprehensive about this exchange when it occurs.

Ursula recalls a similar experience were she was "complemented" on her accent but her response was not one of enthusiasm but annoyance and disbelief. Mohale, on the other hand, is clear the he does not appreciate any mention about this accent.

Wherever you go people will always judge you on the way you speak, I 've had one person when my mom bought the house this one guy White guy was the retailer, retailer? Ya the retailer, whatever those people are (giggles) when I started speaking he was so shocked he was like oh my goodness you speak

so good English you would never think so ya (pause) some people are so ignorant in life [Ursula]

I don't like it when people comment on my accent, I don't like it at all [Mohale]

When asked whether people have made direct comments or remarks on her accent, Lindi said the following:

Uhm just for uhm if I am speaking to someone that I am speaking to for the first time a lot of the time the reaction has been oh you have an accent. First of all it is just that you have an accent (giggles) and ya so people have sort of uhm acknowledged it. Maybe in hindsight that could be considered something that has negative connotations because it is almost like they are assuming I am not supposed to sound the way that I do; maybe in that sense I have gotten some negative feedback [Lindi]

In this extract Lindi begins by making light of the fact that she has an accent and in the process of speaking, acknowledges that there may be underlying implications and assumptions that accompany this comment. These participants indicate mixed feelings and contention about what other people seem to consider as harmless and would not be considered as offensive.

Micro-aggressions are described as unintended comments that are discriminatory. These are characterised as incessant, gratuitous comments by White people to Black people that appear to occur unconsciously and automatically (Solorzano, 1998). Comments, like those made in the extracts above, can be considered as micro-aggressions. What makes it difficult for participants to articulate their feelings is because micro-aggressions appear to be innocent and well meaning but according to Solorzano (1998), they verify attitudes around white supremacy and the perception of Black inferiority. There are subtle racial nuances that are neatly hidden in micro-aggressions. This explains the ambivalence expressed by the participants. Underlying micro-aggressions is power and ideology. It appears to be innocuous and is displayed

as a complement. It is important to note that micro-aggressions do not necessarily occur top-down from White people to Black people but can also occur horizontally between Black people.

Although not explicitly communicated in the extracts above, the participants seem to allude to the idea that their blackness is experienced in a somewhat problematic way in society. Their reflections on past experiences illuminate some of the areas of discontent and frustration that they encounter in their everyday lives.

4.1.1.3 Accent as a Marker of Social Class

Accent and language serves an ideological function; to separate the elites from the 'common folk', from what is considered prestigious and what is not. Ideology at its very core serves to divide people (Matsuda, 1991). This ideology causes bitterness in some and stirs up resentment between different groups of people. It draws lines that cause further inequalities and discrimination.

I've also been told once that just because I speak English, it doesn't mean I shit ice-cream (giggles)
cause at the end of the day we all shit the same and [Ursula]

I have been told that I am spoilt because I only speak English [Mohale]

Ah for the most part ah from the comments that I have heard I would conclude that most of them think of think of a Black person with this accent think that they are above other Black people [Lindi]

Most of the participants were accused of thinking highly of themselves and being pompous. At first some expressed that they are unaffected by the judgments of others and that they simply do not have any regard for them but upon further probing, some

made contradictory statements and indicated that although they are not emotionally or psychologically affected by the perceptions of others, this was not always the case from the beginning. The following extract with Ursula illustrates this emotional turmoil.

Participant: ... A lot of the time people will be like you are not White, you are Black you mustn't speak a White person's language so ya

Interviewer: In instances like those, how do you feel about what they say

Participant: I'm over it now (giggles) I think I feel like whatever people say im like ya okay that's your opinion, I'll still keep moving so I really don't care now

Interviewer: Before you got over it, how did you feel before that

Participant: I hated it, like I would come home crying sometimes because people would say no you aren't Black enough, you can't hang out with us or oh you are trying to fit in so yeah I would hate it

Feelings of alienation and loneliness were quite dominant throughout the accounts of the participants. A person's accent can create social boundaries and these boundaries reinforce accents and linguistic ideology (Matsuda, 1991). It is also used to mark barriers of difference between in-group members (Rudwick, 2009) such as Black people with 'white' accents and those with a rural and backward 'black' accent.

According to Rudwick (2009) Black South Africans who are unable to speak English and can only communicate in African languages receive lower salaries and are classified as the working class. English is perceived as a ticket out of poverty and poor living conditions and is described as a tool of empowerment for many (De Klerk, 2000).

The responses from participants indicate that their parents are financially stable and economically advantaged. The parents have played an instrumental role in the acquisition of English by their offspring and De Klerk's (2000) research reveals that parents of children who attend English medium schools can afford the tuition but they also have a deep desire to see their children succeed in the future so they insist on them being proficient and eloquent in English and this is often at the expense of their mother-tongue language.

Participants attributed their monolingualism and certain behaviours classified as 'white' to their environments and upbringing. There was a strong insistence that they did not choose to be this way but that because of their middle class status, they were exposed to different kinds of opportunities and privileges that are not necessarily afforded to other fellow Black people.

I practice White things but not because because it's something I chose to do but it is because of my surroundings that give me the opportunity lucky to get to do things like outside like certain situations. Like it is something I can do because my parents worked so hard you know, what I mean it is not like something I chose like if I am given the opportunity to play the piano then why not, know what I mean?
[Thabo]

I guess I was just blessed to go to really good schools and my parents also taught us very good English
[Ursula]

Uhm for the most part I believe it is very much due to circumstance and that's all I have as my reasoning for it because I feel like that that's the reason I have this accent-circumstance; where I've grown up I, the people I have been around for most of my life is the reason that I have this accent and I don't necessarily think that I am not in touch with my culture or anything like that, it just has to do with my circumstance so that's that's my justification for it [Lindi]

I am this way because of my upbringing [Mohale]

Schools we went to were like ah English schools... I got pushed to being more in English schools and uhm at some point I went to a bordering school [Thabo]

What comes through in each account is that the participant's social class position in society allowed for certain exclusive privileges such as learning playing the piano. It is important to consider the symbolic structure of race and class and the meaning attached to these configurations. An activity such as playing the piano symbolises prestige and sophistication and is typically associated with whiteness and also accompanied with wealth. This is not only what it symbolises but also indicates the kinds of meanings such representations hold.

Adapting to speaking in English is described as a natural consequence of their upbringing and the sequence of events that led to their monolingualism such as moving away from the household and into diverse spaces such as bordering school where English serves as the common medium of communication and instruction. The logical assumption that can be derived from these accounts is that Black monolinguals proficient in English only are mostly those who fall into the category of middle-upper class on the social strata.

Mbembe (2015) would explain the above comments by participants as possibly revealing an inward desire for whiteness. Mbembe's (2015) theory argues that Black people have a strong libidinal investment in whiteness and as a result are propelled by this desire to want to be like White people or in fact to be White. His stance is that Black people are dependent on the narratives or understanding of the 'Other' in order to paint a picture or image of themselves. Mbembe (2015) further claims that Black people have become consumed and engulfed by whiteness and it has therefore become a part of their own identities.

Molefe (2015) critiques this notion and claims that Black people simply desire upward

mobility and that this is completely different from a libidinal investment in whiteness. Molefe (2015) explains that the Black subject is constantly in a permanent state of fearing that he/she will experience a loss of their material resources. This means that the Black subject must work tirelessly in order to be accepted by White people and be welcomed into White circles where the real opportunities lie. Therefore, when examining these accounts, it is far too simplistic to say that so-called 'coconuts' want to be White or are ashamed of being Black. Molefe (2015) insists that we ought to consider the material conditions of Black people before making blanket statements about their psychological condition.

The schooling environment is pertinent in understanding the identity formation of the youth. Soudien (2001) explains that post-apartheid racialised subjectivities are being contested in multiple ways. Certain discourses are being challenged and resisted by the youth in an attempt to renegotiate racialised subjectivities. Youth identities are not only based on race but on popular culture (Dolby, 2000). Class status has, in some social landscapes, become as important as race and in some instances is more important (Soudien, 2008).

4.1.1.4 Contextual Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1997) explains that different kinds of cultural capital hold particular amounts of value in certain social fields. Being fluent in English and also speaking with the 'right' accent may serve one in the world of work and employment and open opportunities that enable upward social mobility. Creese (2010) indicates that Black

people in Canada are required to lose their heavy accents in the promise of being more employable.

I've been to Europe and ah it serves in your favour if you can speak English or you go to an area like a posh area in SA and theirlike (changes accent) ah no he is like a B.E.E guy his dad blah blah blah (resumes natural accent) but then when they hear you speak with this accent, the whole the whole connotation changes right away. They write you automatically different in some areas not all and in other parts as well [Thabo]

Although accent and proficiency are assets in some social environments or settings, this power may be restricted or limited in other contexts.

I remember this one situation where uhm my cousin and I went to this one place in the rural area but we call it a township and we went there so now I 'm like 15 at this point and usually he comes over to my grandparents home so he comes and he chill there and whatever. Today it was kinda different because he wanted to chill with his friends and I didn't really want to cause I know how this is gonna end up, they aren't going to treat me the same because I 'm a cheeseboy but I go and uhm it affected my interaction with them because after id said my name they'd already judged me for the person I am [Thabo]

Like this one time my my friend and I were refused to climb on the bus in braam because we only speak English so yeah the bus bus driver just would not let us on. I mean that that really sucked but yea...[Mohale]

In the rural areas or townships, being monolingual can cause a great deal of distress and discomfort for these individuals. The consequence may be that they are ostracised by the group and made to feel different. Thabo explains that he had no desire to interact with the group of individuals out of fear of how he would be received. There is a sense of feeling judged and misunderstood. Rudick's (2009) research indicates that 'coconuts' in the township are marginalised and ostracised and that this usually results in psychosocial problems. This view is strengthened by the following passage:

Id say I feel left out ya, it sucks but ya id say for me (pause) I'm always like ah I wish I could be a part of this conversation but a I'm not and ah at times I'm really like it really sucks to be me right now with this thing I have [Tshepo]

Uhhmm man at family gatherings I wont lie like and like uhm I don't know and like if we are going to our uncles at their place or a friends place and like we just gonna chill with their kids and we are there and I'm like okay. Luckily my cousin is also like me cause if I was alone, I don't want to lie id be depressed all the time [Tshepo]

Fanon (1967) proposes that there is a difference between the oppression and discrimination of Black people and Jews, which he describes, as an over-determination from without and an over-determination from within respectively. According to Fanon (1967) Jewish people are oppressed or attacked because of their religious identity but unless one engages in discourse with a Jew, it cannot be determine whether he/she is Jewish or not. Because of their white skin, Jews can pass as White. This is referred to as an over-determination from within. This differs from Black people whose skin pigmentation is the source and cause of their afflictions- an over-determination from without. This is oppression that occurs because one is Black.

The same logic can be used when exploring the experiences of 'coconuts' from the extracts above. These individuals' race is not in question when they are in particular spaces (over-determination from without) and they are interpellated as Black until at some point, it becomes apparent that he/she cannot speak an African language. It is the inability to communicate in vernacular that makes the distinction between the 'real Black people' and the 'coconut' (over-determination from within). In this moment, this subject is interpellated differently: as a 'coconut'. He/she is no longer part of the in-group but becomes an outsider. Fanon (1967) further describes this as a zone of non-being or non-existence. This alludes to Chigumadzi's (2015) idea about 'coconuts'

never quite belonging on either ends of the spectrum in terms of race. The affective force of class and race is revealed in the passages above and highlights the experiences of embodied blackness and how in some instances this is visible and in others invisible.

Being unfairly judged and gossiped about by neighbours, strangers and community members were part of the negative experiences as explained by Ursula and Thabo respectively. Gluckman (1963) describes gossip as idle talk between circles of people. Gossip fulfils the function of causing conflict and inequality. It is also a method of control, social surveillance and gatekeeping of certain ideals and discourses.

A lot of gossiping, a lot of gossiping and we obviously don't understand for instance like our Malawian side of the family, we obviously don't speak Chewa and (inaudible) of our language so ah so a lot of gossiping and they get annoyed because we don't know how to communicate and they can't always speak English... [Ursula]

They will they will speak about you in front of you, they won't take your view or your stance or whatever you have to say they won't take into consideration. When it comes to some things they will allow you in like only when you are useful for money to buy something at the shop but the rest of the time they won't see you as anything else [Thabo]

In particular spaces, the inability to speak an African language can have real social consequences for participants. In the event that participants have attempted to speak an African language, they have been criticised for how they sound and these types of reactions from others have been discouraging to some participants.

Wherever we go we just get told (giggle) we just don't fit in so we would try and learn my parents language and then we would speak it and try and speak it and just be told no, just stick to your language... so we don't really make the effort sometimes to actually try [Ursula]

There is only one moment in my life where I kinda felt bad and ah we were all taught zulu and then

when I ah I got help and I write a speech down in zulu and my my teacher told me, is this really you I cant hear your accent and you sound so different from how I expect people to sound {Tshepo}

De Klerk (2000) speaks about this love-hate relationship Black people have with the English language. On the one hand it holds social and economic value but on the other hand, speaking mostly English in everyday conversations is perceived as a cultural betrayal, as an abandonment of one's heritage and indicative of an overall moral decay and acceptance of western traditions and customs.

Uhm I would say that people definitely don't understand that's it's a circumstance thing and they are very quick to judge or to come up with their own conclusions. Uhm I think it is just easier for people build their perceptions based on what they see immediately and just sort of easier for them and especially if you link it back to uhm SA's past, they are very quick to assume that uhm you are you are not fully appreciating the liberation that you have now as a Black person [Lindi]

Lindi expands further on this by adding that because she is unable to communicate in an African language, people assume that she is not in touch with her culture and has abandoned her roots. While it is possible to view code-switching negatively, it could also be a form of agency deployed by the individual to subvert the racial identities imposed onto them. Code switching in it iself can be considered a performative act, one of the multiple ways in which we choose to enact our identity and more importantly exercise agency.

Aah I think we could go back to the ideas that people perhaps thinking I'm not connected to my culture that I am unaware of what my heritage is or what my culture is or where I come from and perhaps I think I am above everyone else [Lindi]

Lindi refers to the perception that others may have of her, and others like her, and mentions that part of the issue is that the youth and those born post-apartheid have not fully comprehended and understood the struggle for freedom fought by their

forefathers and ancestors. The impression is that this current generation has lost their way, have little regard for their cultural identity and take little pride in being Black. Erasmus (2008) notes that our society is divided into a rigid dichotomy between 'apartheid's children' versus 'democracy's children'. These so-called coconuts are labeled as such because they exhibit behaviour that is presumed to be White and Black people who seem to be overly concerned with politics and the continued struggle of our time are branded as 'crusty dusties'. Erasmus (2008) states that it is these essentialist ways of discussing and understanding race that keeps us trapped in thinking about racial identities in fixed and rigid ways.

Chigumadzi (2015) is adamant that 'coconuts' are not simply individuals who emulate whiteness and are carriers of it. Chigumadzi's (2015) views are that 'coconuts' are exercising their agency and resistance against institutional racism and white supremacy by having their voices heard in the recent student protests around the country. Chigumadzi's (2015) argument is that 'coconuts' are indeed concerned being politically active and are aware of the current social conditions, as were 'apartheid's children'. Coconuts' proximity to whiteness allows for them to see the injustices and inequalities. Their middle-class status does not shield them from oppressive structures (Molefe, 2015) and they too are fighting for recognition, are fighting against a system that is historically designed to alienate them. 'Coconuts' are not sitting on the sidelines of history but are right in the middle of the continued struggle for absolute liberation. This is in contrast to the view that 'coconuts' have abandoned their culture and have no interest in their history. In a way, 'coconuts' like 'non-coconuts' are fighting for their place in history and their right to an acknowledged existence.

What also emerges from this data are that within blackness, there are fault lines. Lau & Mumighan (2005) describe a fault line as distinctions within a group that can divide or split the group into subgroups. With regards to race and racial identities, there are a number of fault lines present particularly amongst the Black community. The non-demographic fault lines such as accent and language have caused a division within the Black community. This illustrates the fluidity of race and forces us to think about re-imagining race.

Affect and emotions cannot be separated from the raced subject. Fanon (1967) refers to a libidinal economy that includes feelings of fear, love, hate, desire, fantasy, pain and denial (to name a few). It is vital to understand the mobility of affective structures and how they help to define the individual in relation to the world and the psychological effects of a racialised history. Desire is an affect that allows an entry point into understanding issues around race and into understanding the place of the individual in this matrix.

4.2 Progression towards Monolingualism

4.2.1 Disrupted language Acquisition

From an early age, the participants lived and were brought up by their grandparents in either rural areas or in the townships. Their grandparents played a pivotal role in their acquisition of their mother tongue that ranges from Sepedi to Mbembe for the participants at hand. The introduction of native languages was largely influenced by the presence and involvement of grandparents. Rudick (2009) explains that upon

returning to the township or areas where 'coconuts' are expected to speak their mother tongue, these individuals are confronted with contrasting cultural and sociolinguistic values. This may make this interaction unpleasant and unbearable for some.

I guess the moment that led to this when well I grew up speaking Pedi, I grew up with my grandparents and my mom so now growing up, at a certain age my mom had to move out the house cause she had a job or whatever and coming to a different place and being thrown into a place where they speak English, it kinda then enforced I guess as a young person when everyone around you starts speaking English you have to get into the program. Basically that and I didn't visit as much as I used to, I didn't go back and that probably limited me a bit more because then when you only start speaking only English at home with your parents [Thabo]

The move away from his grandparents and moving to a new and different geographical location interrupted Thabo's acquisition of Sepedi. He explains that his exposure to Sepedi was diminished because he was not interacting with his grandparents frequently. This reveals that his grandparents were instrumental in the process of acquiring the language and as a result there was a disjuncture in the process of being fluent at his mother tongue. He also mentions that the space he found himself in required that he be proficient and knowledgeable in the written and spoken English, this reinforces White hegemony and supremacy in that English is the dominant language.

In the passage below, Tshepo mentions the influence of television and the media that he was exposed to and that these programs are predominantly in English. Not having the influence of his grandparents to ensure that he and his cousin become accustomed to Zulu culture and the language resulted in him speaking predominantly in English.

I started out ah with ah learning Zulu cause ah I'm Zulu and Zulu culture and I spoke a bit when I was with ah my grandparents but then ah I think what id say is ah what would what pushed me towards

being monolingual is that I never really spent time with talking to any of them at home so especially me and my cousin so we basically grew up learning ah things on our own and ah all we did was watch tv and chill with each other and you know on tv everything is in English and and that's how we did everything and schools we went to and that's how we did everything and schools we went to like ah English schools [Tshepo]

Although there seems to have been some early exposure to a vernacular language, there is only a very basic and limited vocabulary and comprehension of these languages. There may be some ability to hold a very brief conversation in vernacular but the lack of vocabulary would restrict further conversation in that particular language.

Interviewer: How much sepedi would you say you know

Participant: Now?

Interviewer: (nods)

Participant: Enough to hold a conversation for like ah not long not very long

Interviewer: Ok, so you would have to switch

Participant: Ya nah, I'd have to switch, I'd have to switch because I won't be able to say the word in Pedi and then I have to switch to English yeah [Tshepo]

Tshepo explains that he finds himself in a peculiar situation where he may want to participate in a certain topic that is of personal interest to him but finds that he cannot sustain the conversation in vernacular and consequentially, his contribution to the topic is minimal.

Ah getting a good flow of conversation is ah what I'd say cause right now I only can only do a few simple things like say hello but onwards like let's say ah ah a topic in soccer and I ah break into English and ah you find that's that's where you find that the conversation stops [Tshepo]

I can only say a few things like hi yeah... [Mohale]

With this inability to fully express oneself in vernacular come feelings of embarrassment coupled with frustration not only at the situation but at the perceived sense of lack in the self. In this sense, an African language serves as cultural capital. Not understanding or being able to communicate in vernacular has serious interpersonal consequences in terms of relating to others and conversing freely.

Interviewer: In terms of communication, are there certain things you feel you can't express in front of them [family]

Participant: Yeah especially when it comes to cultural events, well not cultural events but like things like funerals and weddings. I can't fully participate cause then they will do something where I feel left out. I remember this one time it was my uncle's funeral and I don't know how I got stuck to this but they were singing our family song our traditional song and I know it a bit but I didn't know this is happening. I got stuck there I just found myself there and we were singing and I'm just like lip synching at this point, it was very embarrassing [Thabo]

There seems to be a genuine desire and willingness to pick up on the language at a later stage of their lives but this process is quite discouraging and disappointing. Participants experienced hostility and negativity from the community, strangers, friends and some family members when attempting to speak in their respective languages or simply found it more challenging to acquire the language later in their development.

I guess when we grew up we were always put into a corner so we don't really make the effort sometimes to actually try to what can I say like, we don't make the effort of trying to fit in, if we don't understand something, we don't understand something and we normally you know get told that we think we are better than others and we are arrogant because we only know how to speak English so ya...Wherever we go we just get told (giggle) we just don't fit in so we would try and learn my parents language and then we would speak it and try and speak it and just be told no, just stick to your language. We would try and speak Zulu and be told no so we just said fine, we can't do anything about it so we will just speak what we know [Ursula]

And uhm with time we started trying to learn like from ages 3-7 a few words and onwards uhm as the fact that I didn't talk to my family more and more in my own language and uhm I got pushed to being more in Eng schools and uhm at some point I went to a bordering school so ya no contact with them basically so it was too late and I realised that uhm ok trying to learn a new language will be too hard to learn another language will be too hard [Tshepo]

There is only one moment in my life where I kinda felt bad and ah we were all taught zulu and then when I ah I got help and I write a speech down in zulu and my my teacher told me, is this really you I cant hear your accent and you sound so different from how I expect people to sound. And like ya it is ya uhm but honestly that's also one of the reasons why I wasn't so eager to pick up the language cause every time I speak it they are like ah you don't sound proper when you are speaking cause it cause my accent and it is set to sound like this to all languages so I'm like ah you know what...[Tshepo]

All the participants agree that being bilingual or multilingual would be a useful and valuable asset in aiding in effective communication in different social circles and in relating people of all kinds. There appears to be a sense that there is a desire to learn other languages apart from English but the experiences of the participants suggests that they do not feel there is a strong social support structure that will motivate and help facilitate this process and this is disheartening for these individuals.

If I were bilingual, it would definitely help in terms of relating to my family especially when I go back to Zambia and then but uhm to be honest though I wouldn't choose to be able to speak the Mbemba, Tsonga or Zambia languages id choose to ah to be able to speak something that would assist me living in SA learning like Zulu or something like that uhm that's what I would choose [Lindi]

I feel more doors would be opened [Tshepo]

In most cases parents in the household did not enforce one's mother tongue and parents did not necessarily make a concerted effort to encourage their children to learn more of their native languages. Participants in this study attended multi-racial English medium schools where they taught in English and expected to assimilate themselves with the culture of the school and to middle-class civility (Fataar, 2009). De Klerk (2000) argues that Black parents who actively advocate and encourage their children

to learn and speak English more frequently even in the household is because they do not consider African languages as beneficial to advancing their children's educational careers and life trajectories. This is not because they do not value their culture but they believe that having a good command of English is in the best interests of the children in the long run.

4.2.1.1 Coping Strategies and Mechanisms

Feeling like a 'misfit', odd and different are some of the ways one could describe how monolinguals feel particularly among people who they believe to be dispassionate and judgmental towards them. A dominant theme of not belonging and social alienation is common in the narratives of these monolinguals. Moments of discomfort have been experienced in different contexts particularly during family gatherings or events that require that the extended family be present.

I guess uhm (pause) like when when I go to family right it is quite difficult to communicate with them cause they speak like Pedi and whatever and I don't speak any of those languages, so I guess I felt discriminated when your own family sees you as like as if you aren't you are not a part so you can't have the same conversation so you feel felt out and ah I don't think it is funny but at the time they call you cheeseboy. I guess that's one of the times I can think I've been discriminated against and ah they remind you like every time you use a big word, they remind you that like yeah... [Thabo]

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have the same conversation so you feel felt out and ah I don't think it is funny but at the time they call you cheeseboy. I guess that's one of the times I can think I've been discriminated against and ah they remind you like every time you use a big word, they remind you that like yeah [Tshepo]

In other scenarios participants felt disrespected and misunderstood especially by strangers or people they are not entirely familiar with.

...when you go to pick n pay and the shop uhm what do you call them the shop tellers, the shop what are they called (laughs), they are like when I uhm tell them that uhm look I cant I cant speak the language that you are speaking, their often you know the the the reaction is or the way that they behave afterwards is in a manner that does uhm exclude me or make me feel like I am no longer able to interact with this person on a level where they would like treat me with respect or where they would ya they would treat me with respect they sort of I guess you could say they sorta ah rude to me after finding that out [Lindi]

Like there was one time when ah I was getting my fridge from my apartment and this woman started speaking to me in Zulu and she asked me why aren't I speaking that and I was like nah I don't really speak it. She was like ah ok, weird and I'm like uhm not gonna lie, it is kinda weird but ah [Tshepo]

These participants, to deal with the anxiety and awkwardness of such situations, used different coping strategies. Silence is employed as a way of avoiding uncomfortable questions and unpleasant confrontations. Retreating from or avoiding conversations or potentially embarrassing situations is a way of protecting oneself from criticism, ridicule and unwarranted societal judgments.

I will I will be silent I I definitely won't like ah express myself as much in that conversation as I would in a circumstance where we are all speaking English [Lindi]

Like then people start speaking in Setswana like I'll just keep quiet [Mohale]

Like I had one friend who was very aggressive and he would say ah bra you need to learn now and I always said to him ya I'll try I'll try but uhm you know I guess because we were all in a school where we all spoke English (inaudible) only thin is that we were in bordering school and us us the guys spoke Zulu and id keep quiet so ya that's it [Tshepo]

I have become shy in talking to people new people and in fear that just because of our ethnicity and they start speaking the language, they think I can speak the language and I'm just there like aha aha ill

like have such cases where people will be like ah we are both black, so how come you don't speak the language and I'm like fine you know ah I'm sorry, I'm gone, I'm not gonna talk so yeah type of... yeah [Tshepo]

I don't put myself in new situations where I know I'm gonna be put out [Thabo]

The passage above paints a picture of fear and anxiety that have come as a result of experiences with others and responses from them. Avoidance poses as a logical solution to situations where one is made to be ashamed or belittled in one way or the other. To manage situations, short and concise answers are given when spoken to in vernacular. This strategy is employed as a way of showing interest in a particular topic but also concealing the fact that the individual is not fluent in the language. This is also a form of self-policing and self-regulating.

I won't say much, I just keep my responses short and yeah... [Mohale]

there are moments like for example it was a wedding (inaudible) and uhm my mom left for somewhere and uhm my cousin wasn't there he was at school and it was just me so I was walking around ah and I went to where all the guys were cooking and bonding and they started talking and I introduced myself and whenever I had to answer the question I had to be like oh yeah yeah I know what you are talking about, I'm just one of the boys like you you know and whenever it was my turn to answer, I kept it short and simple and like and not prolong it like ya ya like okay cool [Tshepo]

Being straightforward and establishing that the language is not understood was a different kind of strategy used by Lindi. Shop tellers usually met this with obnoxious slurs.

You go to pick n pay and the shopkeeper will assume I know how to speak a native language so pretty much day to day basis and how I navigate or how I how I deal with situations like that is I'll often just straight away say, sorry I don't understand you, I don't even, even though I know a few words every now and then I feel like it is easier to establish straight away that I can only speak English [Lindi]

A response like this can either enable a good flow of communication after it is

revealed or it can potentially lead to further probing or interest by others that is an unbearable and frustrating experience for some individuals.

Ah it varies like there was one time when ah I was getting my fridge from my apartment and this woman started speaking to me in Zulu and she asked me why aren't I speaking that and I was like nah I don't really speak it. She was like ah ok weird, and I'm like uhm not gonna lie, it is kinda weird but ah [Tshepo]

In the passage above, Tshepo admits to the situation being 'awkward' and a slightly uncomfortable one. In the last part of his sentence, "uhm not gonna lie, it is kinda weird but ah..." he also inadvertently admits that he finds himself to be peculiar. Not only does he find his monolingualism to be an imposition but also he finds himself to be strange or "abnormal" because of it.

4.3 Performing Blackness

The participants offered explanations about the idea of 'acting Black' in stereotypical ways. Their understandings of racial behaviours were drawn from racial representations they have become accustomed to (Adbi, 2015). Black people were described as loud, boisterous and easily excitable.

Participant: My own sister she was like okay now you are acting no not Black, you are acting ghetto so ya

Interviewer: What does that mean

Participant: Like hoodrat, like all up in your face loud and like ya gangster like [Ursula]

I'd have to say when you are acting Black it is more excited or enthusiastic about certain things, also there is this whole, cause I'm Black I'm loud loud. Also stereotypical things like oh money uhm how people think Black people see women and ah like money [Tshepo]

Black people uhm such things would be talking very loudly like some people will tend to think that if

you are in a conversation you shouldn't be speaking loud cause that's such a Black thing [Lindi]

It is like you know when you are loud and stuff, just being Black [Mohale]

Lindi reveals that when in the company of her White people acquaintances there are certain topics that she does not discuss with them or certain subjects she chooses to not engage in when she is with them. Lindi's belief is that her White people counterparts may not be able to relate to some aspects of being Black.

Uhm I know because I have because I actually have White friends I do know that when certain things wouldn't necessarily jell into their way of life so for example ah what can I think of. Ah I don't think they would understand the notion of Black people just generally washing their hair less than them especially if it is relaxed, I'm not gonna wash my hair everyday or every second day. That is not the maintenance process. So I would be weary about sharing that information or showing them that I don't wash my hair as often because I don't think they'd understand.

Lindi also admits that she is cognisant of the difference in the type of music Black people and White people enjoy. To accommodate this, she deliberately changes the kind of songs she listens to in the car depending on who is present.

Ya like for example when I'm in a car and it is only Black people in the car then I won't go through by whole play-list, I will select songs that I know they will enjoy so ya I think maybe that's an instance where I am a bit weary and I'm like I can't just play my White music to all these people (Laughs)

In this sense, Lindi is conscious of her performance of race in different social settings and is careful to behave in the socially expected ways specific to certain contexts.

Certain contexts demand that one refrain from certain behaviours. Lindi shares her experience in the extract below:

Participant: ya uhmmm (pause) you almost feel like ya perhaps there are things you can't do because you feel like you will be judged if you do a certain behaviour but if I sort of adhere to the norms of the environment then I don't think anything would happen

Interviewer: What are some things you wouldn't do

Participant: uhmmm like maybe holding back on in terms of dancing, maybe there are certain things you cant do like you cant be working those sort of things. Ya that's all I can think of right now [Ursula]

This can be explained using the concept of mimicry proposed by Bhabba (1984). This is when a particular group of people imitates certain cultural practices of their oppressor or of the dominant culture. This does not suggest that the colonised do not have a culture or identity separate from their oppressor. Mimicry is simply to assume a culture that is not originally your own. In Fanonian terms, this process would be described as splitting.

Meta-stereotypes refer to group members' beliefs about how their group is stereotyped by other groups of people. When that group then acts against those views so as to avoid confirming the stereotype, this is referred to as a stereotype-threat (Wakefield, Hopkins & Greenwood, 2012). Frie (1997) uses a Lacanian framework and argues that our sense of self is dependent upon the acceptance of the other; this inter-subjectivity is fulfilling a sense of lack in the self through the other. We do this when interacting with others in our daily lives. The subjectivity is dependent of the other.

The other participants were adamant that they do not change any kinds of behaviours when they are with White people and claimed to be consistent in all contexts. The intriguing part is that they seemed to notice the change in behaviour of others but seemed oblivious to the possibility that they too may unconsciously change their behaviour to suit the crowd they are in.

I think what is so different about me is that I am the same with White people and Black people, Indian people [Ursula]

Some people will take it overboard because when they are with certain people they will have an accent and with other people they have a different accent [Ursula]

I have a friend and she knows other African languages but like only heard her speaking Eng only and like ill look at her and she knows to act a certain way cause she is with these people and I can just see it but sometimes ah when she is with the the black people and I can just see it but sometimes ah when you can sense the atmosphere around her is now, in this mode and I can see a switch in that mode. That's something I don't have which is why I don't put myself in new situations where I know im gonna be put out cause ah I cant do what she does. She knows how to switch into this mode like ah now im around black people and now this how we talk, this is how we act. Im the same, im constant and ah people will ask and you yeah man you are not on the same wave length but luckily I have people who understand so yeah [Tshepo]

Like for me ah im the same yeah like this is me and I don't change when im with those people or those [Mohale]

Butler (1990) states that the identities we perform occur on an unconscious level and we are not always conscious of these behaviours or actions. This may be a plausible explanation as to why most of the participants could not recall any events or moments in which they have changed their behaviour in any way. When discussing the performance of race particularly the accusation some Black people are faced with of 'acting White', a number of questions spring to mind. By not behaving 'Black' and 'acting White' is one supposed to feel ashamed of being a sell-out and not being truly Black or have they simply mastered at 'playing the game' in different social fields? We all perform our race in one way or the other, this is not exclusive to Black people but it appears that Black people have more pressure and incentive to perform it more frequently. Butler (1990) argues that there is no gender (or raced) identity but in doing, we create. There are various ways of resistance and subversion. In some ways we subvert these identities and in other ways we regulate them by performing them.

4.4 Self-Identification

4.4.1 Blackness not Always Salient

Participants noted that their blackness is not salient in most interactions they encounter with others, and for the most part, they do not think of their race unless it is implied or mentioned by others or in situations where other Black people discriminate against them because they do not fit the criteria of being 'Black enough'. These individuals have become accustomed to their middle class status that comes with certain cultural capital that poses as more valuable than race in most social environments or contexts. In some ways these participants could be considered as 'colour-blind' in that they are not conscious of race particularly their own or the differences between theirs and their White counterparts.

Now and again you sorta realise that you are a Black in a White environment uhm just simple things such as I can go back to the hair example, just that as a Black girl I would have to do the braids and my relaxed. If a White girl asks me for a hairbrush and I have braids I'm like sorry I'm Black, I don't need a hairbrush one right now and it was sort of some things like that that remind you of your blackness or that I am Black and different to those around [Lindi]

For me I never really experienced that until, in my school, I never really used to hang out with But the one time my grade probably realised that ok, is when at break we started playing soccer but we didn't play ah ah I choose you Daniel, it was like oh no White people against Black people and that's the one point in my life where I really realised ah I'm Black so ya [Thabo]

Dolby (2000) considers the new youth identity as more pertinent than race and having the ability to transcend race and replace this concept with common interests and taste in music, fashion trends and overall cultural differences. This globalised identity means that race may not play such an important role in determining the kinds of people one chooses to befriend which explains the increase in multi-racial friendship circles.

A key finding was that although these participants interact with people of all races, gender and nationalities, the female friendship circles appear to be more heterogeneous including a racial mixture of White people and Black people although not necessarily in proportion. It seems that the females either preferred a racially mixed circle or one that is predominantly Black. The male friendship groups are more homogenous consisting of mostly Black people with the exception of one or two White people males who become part of the group in such a way that they are no longer considered 'White' anymore but more 'Black'.

I have found that I need a lot of friends from different backgrounds in order to feel like I am fully sharing who I am. For example if I only had Black friends I feel like there would be a side to me that I would have to hide or wouldn't be able to express in the same way others can relate. And if I only had White friends it would be the same story I think what it has meant for me is that I have to have a lot of friends from different places so I've felt that it has been a lot of moving from social group to social group or from situation to situation in order to feel fulfilled and in order to feel like I am giving fully of myself [Lindi]

Uhm I think for the most part, my close friends starting from grade 8, we started being close from grade 8 onwards what I noticed in my school is that the close friends got racialised so like uhm the black guys from grade 8 to 11 to 12 and we also had white friends you know but people came in and like they weren't there for long and like they were just there to chill with us for few others and then gone [Tshepo]

Like I have Black friends in my circle that I hang with like one is from Kenya, another ah Congo so yeah I mostly only have Black close ah close friends [Mohale]

I have a group of friends who just generally like to hang out with more Black people than a mixture so I'm more open to hanging out with a crowd that is open to all sorts of races because you have different classes you different backgrounds you don't have just this one race so ya I don't really like hanging out in places where it is just Black people only [Ursula]

The reasons for this was unclear from the data but Mohale, in the passage below, argues that this is one way of him reasserting his Black identity. He refuses to be

considered or thought of as a 'White Black person' who is not authentically Black and wants to desperately be White. He feels that by befriending his own, he is embracing his blackness. Even though he cannot speak an African language, this does not make him any less Black.

I don't want to be around a group of White people only and then it is like I'm the token Black in that group no, I'm not a token anything [Mohale]

Interestingly enough, Ursula alluded to the same concept of not wanting to be perceived as the token Black and cited this as one of the reasons she prefers to have a diverse circle of friends or predominantly Black friends.

I think with White people I try and be more Black than with Black people because I don't want to, I want to be the Black girl among White people, I don't want to be just one of them [Ursula]

This is contrary to perceptions of participants in Rudick's (2009) who perceive 'coconuts' as individuals who are ashamed of their culture and who secretly desire to be White. A dominant or common trend in the findings is that these participants were constantly redefining blackness in their own world.

Participants expressed that they feel comfortable and free as monolinguals when they are with their friends. There is a sense of acceptance and belonging that they receive from their friends that they did not receive elsewhere. Their friends are understanding of their life stories, are non-judgmental and do not make them feel different or misunderstood. Lindi explains that her friends offer her freedom to be who she truly is. Uhhmm because they don't have expectations of me. They don't expect me to speak their language; they don't expect me to speak a certain way. Perhaps they or had their perceptions of how a Black person should be but they don't judge me if I don't fit into that sort of stereotype of their perception of

what a Black person should be [Lindi]

Well ah not a lot of people know me here but those who do know me accept me I guess [Thabo]

Like uhm my friends are like ok this is you cause like uhm most of my friends are people in school and people and they are like okay we know you for you so this is you man and some like the friend I said who is aggressive with me learning my language you know he accepts [Tshepo]

According to Fanon (1967), it is crucial to take into account that the Black subject's proximity to whiteness may mean that he/she's experiences will be different from one who is of a lower social class, who may not be privileged and have the social cultural capital.

In some instances, participants have experienced their presumed lack of blackness as quite problematic in navigating their social world. Du Bois (1997) posits that double consciousness is a sense of constantly looking at the self through the eyes of others particularly White people and in this case, participants are constantly looking at themselves through the eyes and perceptions of both other Black people and White people.

There is only one moment in my life where I kinda felt bad and ah we were all taught zulu and then when I ah I got help and I write a speech down in zulu and my my teacher told me, is this really you I cant hear your accent and you sound so different from how I expect people to sound [Tshepo]

There is a policing around blackness and what counts as 'Black enough' and what does not meet these arbitrary and impossible standards. There is a preoccupation from all races about what Black looks like, sounds like and behaves like. This is also indicative of fault lines within blackness. This state of double consciousness is not just problematic because the world is structured on white hegemony and subjectivity

but it is problematic because we exist in a time where blackness is constantly seeking to establish itself, to prove its legitimacy and to reassert itself. In other words, these individuals are caught in a war of two worlds while trying to find their own identity against a backdrop of racialisation and racial distinctions.

The contention felt over their accents reveal that these participants are aware of the ways their blackness is received and interpreted by White people. The discomfort and uncertainty about phrases such as 'you don't sound like you grew up in the townships' indicates the realisation of the implications and racial undertones of such statements. This can be understood as second sight (Du Bois, 1997) because it is the acknowledgement and understanding of the peculiarities that come with being Black but also the insight that just knowing this does not alleviate the inner conflict or unpleasant consequences that accompany this knowledge.

It is their embodied cultural capital that allows these individuals the power to move with relative ease in different social contexts and makes it possible to overlook moments when race is salient and they are hailed into different racialised subject positions (Adbi, 2012).

4.3.1.2 Awakening to Blackness

Du Bois (1997) describes the veil as a moment that occurs in which the Black subject recognises for the first time that he/she is different from White people and that this difference is based on the colour of their skin and the meanings attached to the Black body through historical discourses. Some participants were able to recall a moment or

episode that took place when they 'discovered' their blackness but their narratives alludes to a series of moments and events that brought about this racial consciousness.

Thabo's story highlights how a culmination of experiences led to an awakening of his blackness. Through acquiring knowledge about Black history, he explains that he became conscious of political movements and issues related to race. For him, his Black identity requires one to go on an ongoing journey of evolving and be committed to learning and exploring the history and culture of Black people.

It happened for me when I started doing black history and it kinda touched me that I don't know that much. You start questioning anything you do and then you shift that anger onto others things like it is not my fault, it is my parents fault, it is society's fault. I started rebelling for a while, I didn't like it at all and then I started hearing Malcom X speeches and I was like oh I can take on a black identity and still be black without actually being...cause i started reclaiming my identity and realised that if you want that identity you are gonna have to start changing everything bout you. It is something you have to be fully committed to [Thabo]

His description of this phase of his life echoes the work of Xtose & Bayaya (2011) who explain that in the journey of embracing one's identity as a Black, there are several stages that one typically encounters. Above, Thabo attributes his frustration to different actors and to society at large. He is enraged and possibly resentful about not only the role of others that have resulted in his monolingualism and perceived detachment from being a "true Black" but also anger towards himself.

Xtose & Bayaya (2011) explain that in this stage, anger is normal as the individual undergoes an internal transformation where blackness takes centre stage in their lives and governs how one's self-identification occurs. Thabo admits that he has actively and purposefully immersed himself in Black culture in order to re-establish his Black

identity. He begins to challenge what he has learnt and has come to know about the world and himself in it. He clearly states that he is questioning his behaviour, actions and perhaps even the very thoughts that led him to be who he is. It is this awakening that incites this journey, this inquiry and this interest about being Black in a White world (Fanon, 1967).

For Ursula, this moment of discovery occurred from a young age and she is constantly reminded of her blackness because she has a European surname and typically, without physically seeing her, people assume that she is White and she explains that she senses the confusion and dismay from others when they realise that she is indeed Black.

I don't know hey (pause) cause we don't have a normal Black surname but I will give you an example with my sister. She applied for her learners and because they don't look at you and go through surname so she was right at the back of the queue and they called out Smith which is the last person on the list and she came through and they were like are you Smith and they weren't obviously expecting a Black person. I think that also comes through a lot I get that all the time like people will always be like *Smith¹⁾ and they will look up at me and be like (confused expression) so ya maybe that's the thing like all the time ill be like ya people are shocked that a Black person has an English surname. I get that all the time [Ursula]

This moment of the veil being lifted from Lungelo occurred at a school trip with his peers. In his case, he fulfilled an existing stereotype that Black people generally cannot swim. It was this moment that racialised him and his White peers.

I think ah it was grade 9 grade 9 we were in a tour ah some and we were going to a dam to swim so that already plays into the black stereotype like ah I'm Black and I can't swim. You know was like ah guys I can't swim ah id l've to try but I can't and we were at this dam and like ok guys you can go swim and like all these people start jumping in in jump jump (claps) and they are like e bra come jump in come in man and I put my foot in the water like e bra I can't do it. I can't some in, I'm sorry man I really can't do

it that's when I realised I'm black, I'm really black and there were also parts where there was a swing like it was near the dam like they attached a rope to the last swing and you just jumped like yeah I realised cause like all my other black friends and I'm like guys I'm not doing that. I'm like guys I'm not gonna jump in and like dive into the pool. 1 I can't swim and 2 it looks dangerous and I'm like ya I'm definitely black. I can't do this. I'm just too black for this like nah I'm out. I'm black here, you're white and I'm black and we are different [Lungelo]

4.3.1.3 Reclaiming Blackness

Participants have an understanding of the term 'coconut' as an individual who is of a certain social class, attended model C schools and behaves in ways that are not deemed as black but white. The negative and derogatory labels that some have been subjected to include 'oreo', 'coconut' and 'cheeseboy'. These are different ways of implying that a Black person is not truly black but he/she embodies certain behaviours that are considered as white such as having an English accent and speaking exclusively or predominantly in English.

Thabo describes a cheeseboy as someone who did not grow up in areas such as the township and whom, from an early age, was exposed to a life of comfortability and in some cases opulence. This is an individual whom does not have a great understanding of the struggles of being Black. Durrheim & Mtose (2006) explain that prior to democracy and under apartheid, being Black was thwarted with exclusion, violations, oppression and extreme marginalisation. Black people were unable to participate in the economic, political and social spheres like White people. Black people were colonised and oppressed because of the pigment of their skin and because of the meanings attributed to blackness.

Interviewer: You have mentioned the word cheeseboy twice, please unpack the meaning of it

Participant: To my understanding a cheeseboy is someone who grows up and gets cheese in his lunchbox

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant: And he gets cheese and stuff for lunch and I guess it's a term of, I don't know where it comes from but you just happen to know, I guess when you grew up in the kasi you just know what it means, know what I mean

Interviewer: So what is it

Participant: Oh, it's a person who doesn't grow up in the same way as someone else has who grew up in the township. All he knows is cheese and like and white bread and all these funny things, like a contrast to someone who hasn't grown up with all this stuff like chips and archaars and stuff. So yeah cheeseboys is someone who has a different background and uhm he has grown up differently, he has never lived in the township [Thabo]

Thabo has internalised this concept and actually refers to himself as a cheeseboy, which is different from the other participants who acknowledge that according to the definition of a 'coconut', they could be classified as one, but they do not necessarily self-identify as 'coconuts'.

Like I remember I went to this quarter thing with one of my friends and I told him you know, I'm a cheeseboy right, he said yeah I know. He smiled at me and he looked at me and said yeah I know and I was like ah ok cool [Thabo]

This was in contrast with the other participants who found that the definition of being a 'coconut' is too simplistic and narrow-minded. A key finding is that participants described their identities in multi-layered, multi-faceted and interesting ways. There was no admission to feeling 'fully black', but there was also no denial or abandonment of their blackness either.

Uhm I'd say (pause) the thing I consciously change is more uhm (pause) I don't know how to explain this but less of me-me cause I don't want to sit I'm on the white side of things when it comes to uhm when it comes to black things, I wouldn't say I'm a black-black, I'd say uhm I'm more of in the middle but when I'm with white people I don't want to say I can just be me but I can shift more that side in order to blend in you know [Tshepo]

In other cases, participants are re-inscribing what it means to be Black and refuse to think of themselves in fixed and rigid ways but have a fluid understanding of racial identity and they do not conform to what has been prescribed as the kind of blackness one should be.

I'm not forced just because I am Black, to learn a Black language [Ursula]

Ursula's statement is the crux of identity politics. The point is that there is no particular way of being Black because race is a social construct that is constantly shifting and evolving. Conforming to a certain 'type' of Black is in some ways constraining. Identification with blackness can close off other possibilities of being and in fact to disidentify with it may prove to be more liberating for the individual. If we stand by a rigid view of what it means to be a specific raced-subject, we rob ourselves of various identifications that we could assume.

Uhm I strongly believe that now as a Black person you don't have to change your culture or change your beliefs or do any of that but you definitely have to be more open to accepting the accepting others and their way of doing things you have to open up your mind essentially is what I am saying and you have to be accepting of all cultures, all races and all heritages. That what it means for me, for me it is not so much it is just it is not fighting for freedom but now as a Black person it is about what you do with that freedom like how you will integrate yourself into this new society. [Lindi]

I identify myself as being Black because I am Black but anything that separates me is that I don't speak a SA language but I can still contribute to the country. I see myself as someone who can still bring change, I see myself as a part of society. I don't want people different cause I don't see myself different anymore [Thabo]

This is redefinition of being Black and taking ownership of the different facets and textures of one's Black identity. These participants dispute the idea of a constant and tangible Black identity and through a journey of self-discovery, have come to accept

the different sides of what their blackness entails in our contemporary context.

Chapter Five

5.1 Conclusion

This chapter offers a concise overview of the research and highlights the main areas that emerged from the findings.

5.1.1 Concluding Thoughts

The term 'Coconut' is one ascribed by society and is not necessarily a label with which the participants self-identify. Though there is an understanding of what it means to be a 'coconut', there is a resignification of the term, it has come to be conceptualised as

complex socialisation into the world. One becomes a so-called 'coconut' and is a product of their upbringing, opportunities, social environments and class position. Participants are reclaiming the term and in so doing exercising their agency. To echo Chigumadzi (2015), 'coconuts' refuse to simply be thought of as mindless puppets that emulate whiteness and be agents of it. The experiences of the participants reveal that their privilege and acquired cultural capital does not except Black people from implicit racism or discrimination.

It is this proximity to whiteness that causes them to question their positions in the world. Even though these individuals have assimilated to White culture and possess a wealth of social capital to ensure they navigate with ease in White spaces, they are cognisant that they are in some ways still outsiders. Black people mostly experientially note issues of race because racial identity is such an integral part of their self-concept (Adbi, 2012). We cannot diminish the significance of race in our society and the symbolic meanings attached to these different racial classifications. Therefore, it is not unexpected that being a 'coconut' is experienced in conflicting, contentious and complex ways.

Micro-aggressions are an example of some of ways that whiteness cannot fully accommodate blackness (Chigumadzi, 2015). This comes with a feeling of being caught in two worlds, being a part of one world or the other but never fully or never completely. Cultural capital is contextual because in some environments one is considered as not "white enough" or "black enough". This can be explained as a sense of hybridity; feeling like two polar opposites in their identity. There is a continuous questioning of one's identity, grappling with it and interrogating one's place in the

world to find where you fit in. This corroborates with our academic understanding of multiple, ever-evolving, shifting and fluid identities that one assumes. In the words of Hall (2000), we are always in a state of becoming.

Chigumadzi (2015) explains that 'coconuts' typically experience a 'nervous condition' where one constantly questions what is implied by remarks such as "you speak so well, you sound like you went to a proper school'. For some Black people this means that they are always in a state of questioning and wondering and at the worst of times, in a state of non-being (Fanon, 1967). There is a normalised policing of blackness in our society not only from Black people towards other Black people but also from White people. Acting or behaving in ways that are considered to be contrary to a "real Black person" typically does not go unnoticed by others. This links with the work of Foucault (1986) where he explains that there is a constant gaze of others and in the case of race, surveilling that takes place externally and internally where the individual begins to engage in self-checking and self-monitoring behaviours. This further aggravates and heightens the already nervous condition in which some find themselves.

There is merit to Molefe's (2015) argument that Black people are not trying to be White or fixated with whiteness, but that they seek upward mobility, the opportunities to privileges, access to resources and a particular lifestyle that does not include exorbitant amounts of debt and a continuous and tiring struggle at navigating institutionalized racism and hegemonic white supremacy. This line of thinking ought to be interrogated further because it objects to a 'coconut' as being someone who has lost his or her roots and who does not grasp what it means to be Black (a question

neither of us has a definitive answer to).

The very term 'coconut' is problematic in nature. It is defined as a Black person who behaves in ways that have historically been considered as belonging to 'White culture'. What is interesting to note is that this derogatory label is usually used quite loosely to refer to any Black person who appears to not fit into what a 'proper Black person' is truly like. So what this means in practice is that if one gives off the slightest impression that he/she embodies anything that resembles whiteness, this individual is immediately classified as a 'coconut'.

What makes this problematic is partially due to the absurd criterion that constitutes this classification. Attending a model C school, speaking with a 'twang' or accent, associating closely with White friends and listening to non-Black music are some of the attributes of a 'coconut'. Displaying or possessing any one of these traits typically leads to being shunned or shamed and labeled a 'coconut' in spite of behaviours or evidence that indicates pride in and appreciation for African culture in other forms. In other words, you could love African music or indulge in African dishes quite regularly but because of your friendship circle and inability to speak an African language, you are considered as not Black and therefore perceived as a sell out or 'coconut'.

Being a monolingual further compounds this subject position. Rudick's (2000) study reveals that even though some members of the community were ostracized because they were perceived as White, they are still able to communicate in the dominant language of the township. This means that they are in a better position than monolinguals to navigate their way around certain spaces and possess the

communicative ability to assimilate and relate to people of their own tribe and ethnicity. The language barrier that monolinguals face is a unique and precarious challenge. This implies that monolinguals face an entirely different challenge to other 'coconuts' that are bilingual.

However, all these various experiences of both bilingual and monolingual 'coconuts' serve as an indicator of the inequalities that continue to persist post-apartheid.

Chigumadzi (2015) is of the opinion that the very idea of a 'coconut' reinforces and perpetuates the unequal distribution of power, wealth and resources. 'Coconuts' are living symbolisms of the vast class differences and discrepancies between the poor struggling working class and the Black elite. The narratives of these individuals reveal some the hurdles that face Black people but also illustrate some of the ways that race is visible in some contexts and invisible in others. Gender is performed and so is race. According to Butler (1990), we all have the ability and capacity to act and furthermore, we have the capacity to act in our own interests. We should not underestimate the ability of 'coconuts' to use their cultural capital in ways that benefit or promote them in social arenas. These individuals are not puppets who have no sense of agency. Though their power as Black people may be limited or constrained in some contexts, it does not render them completely powerless (Molefe, 2015).

The so-called 'coconuts' in this study do not abhor their blackness nor deny they are Black and neither articulated a desire to be White; instead there is a resistance against being described as White and denied their Black identity. These individuals have not denounced their blackness but have instead found ways of expressing what it means to be Black in different and interesting ways. They are actively challenging the notions

and preconceived ideas that society seems to hold such contempt for. In essence what they are communicating is that being Black and privileged does not exempt the Black subject from subtle and ubiquitous racism at an institutional level. In the same breath, being a Black middle class citizen does afford you access to different spaces and opportunities than people who are working class. Just being Black is in itself a troubled subject position (Durrheim & Mtose, 2006). However, this does not imply that they do not share the same history or share the same struggles because as Molefe (2015 p. 3) puts it, "all Black pain is material" and that is what unites us.

5.2 Re-imagining Race

One of many atrocities of colonisation is cultural pluralism that Essed (1991) describes as a system that preserves, maintains and reinforces racial differences between groups so as to make it appear as though these differences are inherent and therefore warrant for segregation and division between groups. Cultural pluralism exaggerates and magnifies these differences in order to ensure particular groups become identified and remembered by these differences. This is in line with Morrison's (1975) thoughts on racism. She explains that the function of racism is merely to serve as a distraction, to keep people so preoccupied and absorbed in minor differences so that we miss the urgency of now while attempting to prove that you matter, that you are equal and that you are capable. The same logic applies for racialising practices and intragroup discrimination amongst the Black community.

Society seems uncomfortable, rattled and unsettled about Black people who "do not fit the mould". What proves to be difficult, but not impossible, is coming to terms with

the fact that race is a social construct; blackness is a social construct and whiteness is a social construct. There is no way of measuring if one has reached his/her maximum potential of blackness. Indicators such as whether one chooses to keep their natural hair or wear extensions, or whether one chooses to wear African attire or embrace more of a western style are all arbitrary. There is no litmus test that proves Black authenticity because such a concept does not exist. Attaining some kind of authenticity and acceptance as a Black person is impossible because this construct is always changing, continually evolving. It is not based on something tangible or real so as our understanding of identity changes, so will societal ideals. People should decide the kind of Black they choose to be (Ratele, 2013) and not be co-opted into becoming a particular brand of Black.

The concept of race is a fairly new one in the history of mankind, only coming into existence approximately 500 years ago (Banton, 1988). Before that, other forms of other did indeed exist but race was not one of them. What this tells us is that it is possible to re-imagine a world where blackness is conceptualised in more fluid and non-essentialist ways. In deconstructing the construct of race, we open ourselves to new ways of re-imagining the world and our place within it.

5.3 Reflexivity and Limitations

5.3.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an important process that must be undertaken by every researcher in the social sciences (Willig, 2013). It allows for a process of reflection but also space

to explore methodological concerns and ponder on the kind of knowledge being produced or reproduced.

I engaged with the term blackness in a vague manner throughout this research and it is of importance that I address how I conceptualise blackness. Molefe (2015) refers to whiteness as a cognitive state in which White people feel superior to others and therefore discard the narratives of those who are 'non-White'. To say that I have conceptualised blackness in contrast to this definition would mean that I perceive blackness to be the opposite of superior-inferior. This would be incorrect. When I make reference to an awakening to blackness, I am echoing Biko's (1978) views about being unshackled and liberated from an inferiority complex that has plagued the mentalities of Black people for centuries. The Black consciousness movement was not just about seeking liberation from without but pursuing internal liberation as well (Biko, 1978). To awaken to your blackness, is to be mindful of your history as a people, to take up your cross and continue to fight the against regimes that seek to disempower you because as Durrheim and Mtose's (2005) study has found, the struggle for freedom and absolute liberation is not complete. To be mentally enslaved is to be economically and socially handicapped.

This study was deeply personal for me and I had a personal vested interest in pursuing these narratives because I found myself on a journey of trying to discover my own identity. I was constantly aware of the many intricate ways that the stories of these individuals resonated with mine and also acutely cognisant of certain information that were contrary to some of my own worldviews. Having been raised by my grandparents for the first three years of life, I moved from the township to a small

town where I was encouraged to learn and speak English. My strong command of the language at such a young age ensured that I was a marvel in the site of my parent's friends and even close family members. I experienced a disruption in my own acquisition of my mother tongue and I have actively pursued avenues of correcting this 'deficit'. I too have been called a 'Coconut' on many occasions and most of my contention is that I do not feel like one and more importantly, I do not feel like it is my fault that I have 'become' one.

I approached my interviews with my own standpoint in mind and I kept voice recordings of some of my feelings towards particular participants who I perceived to not 'be trying hard enough to be Black'. This has been my own struggle most of my life and I was perturbed by cases where the individual gave off the impression that being Black did not carry with it a particular kind of history and pain.

The issue of power is forever present in a research-participant relationship (Willig, 2013) and in order to establish rapport and an adequate level of comfortability with my participants, I felt it necessary to share parts of my own story, not to bias their viewpoints or lead them to particular answer but to establish a common ground and familiarity that came from a personal place that they may have been able to relate to.

I believe that my position as a Master's student interviewing predominantly first year students afforded me some credibility with the participants but I am also cognisant that this may have been threatening to some participants and affected the quality of information I received from a few. I found it quite peculiar when one of my participants asked whether I had been to a township before. This occurred during the

interview so I could not interrogate this further because it was entirely irrelevant to the purpose of the interview. This stuck with me and I wondered for quite some time if he was asking this question innocently to see if I understood or could relate or if there was something about my aura, my presence that made him feel that I was different from him in some ways.

Reflexivity was useful and insightful because I had to be consciously aware of myself at all times throughout this entire research process. I was able to explore some of my worldviews and opinions and if anything, this has been therapeutic in trying to resolve and consolidate my own racial and individual identity.

5.3.1.1 Limitations and Future Considerations

In retrospect, the intersectionalities of gender and race were not thoroughly explored although there was some reference to the gender differences in the composition of friendship circles. There may have been various contexts where gender was more pronounced or salient than what race was. In approaching research and attempting to contribute meaningfully to existing bodies of work, this constant consideration of this intersectionality is of utmost importance particularly because it illustrates the influence of different factors on subjectivities.

Methodologically I had thought it would make for an interesting thesis if I included discourse analysis and presented this using this dual method of analysis. It would have made for richer quality of data to explore and dissect some of the discursive repertoires employed by participants in justifying, defending and explaining certain

subject positions. Discursive psychology is interested entirely in text and in the performative nature of language (Willig, 2013). Discursive psychology analyses how people manage and negotiate social interactions in order to accomplish interpersonal objectives. It is also invested in understanding the broader ideological and institutionalized systems of power that give rise to particular discourses. It questions and explores how discourse enables or constrains, liberates or limits what can be spoken, by whom and under what conditions.

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