

# **The Language Socialisation Experiences of a Grade R Child in a Black Middle-Class Multilingual Family**

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Master's in Education:

Applied Language & Literacy Studies

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## ABSTRACT

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South Africa (SA) is home to 11 official named languages; its Language in Education Policy (LIEP) identifies multilingualism as one of the defining characteristics of its citizenry (DOE, 1997). Moreover, English is the official Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) in most ex-Model C schools nationwide. It is the language that is reported to be valued by the middle-class, people who are known for placing a high premium on education (Soudien, 2004; Alexander, 2005). The aim of this ethnographic Language Socialisation study is to explore the language socialisation experiences of a Grade R child in a Black middle-class multilingual family residing in a Cape Town suburb.

The study is framed by the question: What are the language socialisation experiences of a child from a Black middle-class multilingual family? It uses a socio-cultural approach, drawing from linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics and sociolinguistics to critically analyse the language ideologies, language practices and linguistic repertoires evident in both the home and school domains across which the young child traverses. Concepts such as multilingualism, Family Language Policy and 'mother tongue' identity are reviewed and used to gain insight into the lived language experiences of the Grade R child. The concepts of assimilation (Soudien, 2004) and anglonormativity (Christie & McKinney, 2017) are reflected on as markers of school language practices and ideologies.

Findings reveal that the Grade R child is an emergent multilingual who participates meaningfully in multilingual conversations with her family but only produces English. Despite the evident heteroglossia (Bhaktin, 1991) of the family's language practices through translanguaging (Garcia, 2009; Blackledge and Creese, 2010) and drawing from the range of resources in their linguistic repertoires (Busch, 2012), the parents continue to use their Tswana and Xhosa ethnicity as markers of their language identities. The parents want their children to speak their heritage languages for identity reasons. They also want them to speak English to 'fit in' with their peers and to access learning. They see the teaching of Setswana and isiXhosa as their sole responsibility thereby absolving the school. Their view enables the schools' status quo of anglonormativity to go unchallenged. The child, thus, experiences heritage languages as identity markers and languages reserved for home, and English as a valuable language resource that gives access to learning. The notion of a single language identity remains complex for a child who is expected to be multilingual at home but monolingual at school.

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**Keywords:** Language Socialisation, Multilingualism, Translanguaging, Emergent Bi/Multilingualism, Family Language Policy, 'Mother Tongue' Identity, Heritage Languages, Language Ideologies, Language Practices, English Hegemony, Anglonormativity

## TSHOBOKÔ

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Aforika Borwa ke legae la dipuo tse 11 tse di theilweng tsa semmuso; Tumelano ya thuto ya puo ya naga, *Language in Education Policy (LIEP)* e supa dipuo tse di ntsi tsa naga jaaka nngwe ya dimelo tse di tlhalosang baagi ba yone (DOE, 1997). Godimo ga seo, Seesemane ke puo ya semmuso ya go ithuta le go ruta, *Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT)*, mo dikolong di le di ntsi tse e neng e le tsa Model C go ralala naga. Ke puo e go kaiwang kgotsa e bonwa e na le boleng ke batho ba setlhôpa se segare ga khumô, batho ba ba itsegeng ka go beela thuto mo maemong a a kwa godimo (Soudien, 2004; Alexander 2005). Maikaelelo a thuto e ya *Language Socialisation* ke go sekaseka maitemogelo a puo a ngwana wa Mophato wa R, wa lelapa le le setlhôpa se segare ga khumô, le le buang dipuo tse di ntsi tse di farologaneng ba nna kwa sabapong ya Motse Kapa.

Thuto e, e ikaegile ka potso e: Maitemogelo a puo a ngwana o o tswang kwa lelapeng la Bantsho le le setlhôpa se segare ga khumô, le le buang dipuo tse di ntsi tse di farologaneng ke afe? E dirisa tsela ya botsalano jwa setso, e tsaya sekai sa puo sa dithuto tsa ngwao ya batho le mekgwa ya bone (*Linguistic Anthropology*), dithuto tsa dipuo tse di dirisiwang - *applied linguistics*, le dipuo tsa botsalano (*Sociolinguistics*) go sekaseka ka kelotlhoko dikakanyo tsa dipuo, ditiriso tsa puo le kgobokanyo tsa puo tse di bonagalang kwa gae le kwa sekolong tse ngwana a iphitlhelang mo go tsone. Go ikitse ga megopolô e e jaaka Dipuontsi, Molao wa puo wa lelapa (*Family Language Policy*) le 'Puo ya gae' di a sekwasekwa go batla go itse go le go ntsi ka maitemogelo a botshelo jwa ngwana wa puo wa Mophato wa R. Megopolô ya go dira se se tshwanang (Soudien, 2004) le tlwaelego ya puoesi ya Seesemane (*Anglonormativity*) (Christie & McKinney, 2017) di bontshiwa jaaka matshwao a ditiriso le dikakanyo tsa puo tsa sekolo.

Ditshwetso tsa dipatlisiso di bontsha gore moithuti wa Mophato wa R o ithuta dipuo tse di ntsi tse difarologaneng mme o tsaya karolo mo dipuisanong tse di mosola tsa dipuo tse difarologaneng le ba lelapa la gagwe, mme Seesemane ke sone fela puo e a e ungwang. Le fa e le gore lelapa le diragatsa melao ya dipuo tse di ntsi (*Heteroglossia*) (Bhaktin, 1991) ka go fapaanisa dipuo (*Translanguaging*) (Garcia, 2009; Blackledge and Creese, 2010) le go tsaya sekai go tswa mo didirisweng tsa bone tsa bokgoni jwa bone jwa dipuo tse di ntsi (*Linguistic Repertoires*) (Busch, 2012), batsadi ba tswela go dirisa setso sa bone sa Setswana le seXhosa jaaka dipuo tse di supang se ba leng sone. Batsadi ba batla gore bana ba bone ba bue dipuo tsa ngwaoboswa ya bone gore ba kgone go ikitse. Ba batla gape gore ba bue Seesemane gore ba kgone go 'amogêlêlêga' mo ditsala tsa bone le gore ba kgone go nna le tsela e e bonolo ya go fitlhelela thuto. Ba bona e le maikarabelo a bona gore ba rute bana ba bone Setswana le seXhosa mme e seng sekolo. Pono e ya bona e

letla gore molao o o beilweng wa sekolo wa tiriso ya puoesi ya Seesemane o se nne le kgwetlho. Ka jalo ngwana o bona dipuo tsa ngwaoboswa ya gagwe e le dipuo tse di kayang setso sa gagwe gape e le dipuo tsa kwa gae, mme Seesemane e le puo e e botlhokwa le tsela e e bonolo ya go fitlhelela thuto. Maikutlo a gore puo e le nngwe e botlhokwa a thata mo ngwaneng ka go lebeletswe gore a itse dipuo tse di ntsi kwa gae fela a itse e le nngwe kwa sekolong.

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## ISISHWANKATHELO

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UMzantsi Afrika likhaya labantu abathetha iilwimi ezili-11 ezimiselweyo ngokusemthethweni. Umgaqo-nkqubo kazwelonke wolwimi kwezemfundo, *iLanguage in Education Policy (iLIEP)*, ubalula imeko yeelwimi-ninzi njengenye yeempawu babonakalo ngazo abemi beli (DOE, 1997). Ngapha koko, isiNgesi lulwimi olumiselweyo lokufunda nokufundisa, *iLanguage of Learning and Teaching (LOLT)*, kwizikolo ezininzi ebezisaya kwaziwa ngezezikolo zeModel C, kwilizwe jikelele. Ikwilwimi oluchazwa njengoluxatyisiweyo ngabo abakumgangatho ophakathi ngokufuma, abantu abaziwa njengababalaseleyo ekuxabiseni imfundo (Soudein, 2004; Alexander, 2005). Injongo yolu phando-nzulu lwe-Ethnografi yoLungiselelo lwaBantwana ngokoLwimi Kukulhola amava ngendlela alusebenzisa naluqonda ngayo ulwimi umntwana ofunda iBanga R wosapho lwabaMnyama olukumgangatho ophakathi ngokufuma noluhlala kwihlumela ledolophu laseKapa

Olu phando-nzulu lusekelwe kumbuzo othi: Mava mani umntwana ophuma kwikhaya elikumgangatho ophakathi ngokufuma nolulwimi-ninzi awasebenzisayo ukuqonda nokusebenzisa ulwimi? Olu phando-nzulu lukwasebenzisa indlela yokuqonda ngemikhwa nenkcubeko yoluntu, lukwahlomla nakwizifundo zokuziphatha kwabantu ngokolwimi, *linguistic ethnography*, izifundo malunga nokusetyenziswa kolwimi *applied linguistics* kunye nezifundo zefuthe lezentlalo kwiilwimi ezithethwa luluntu ekuhlaleni, *sociolinguistics*, ukuze luhlalutye iingcamango ngolwimi, iindlela zokusebenzisa ulwimi kunye neelwimi zengingqi ezibonakalayo ekhaya nasesikolweni, ndawo ezo umntwana akhankatha khona. Iingqikelelo ezifana neelwimi-ninzi, umgaqo-nkqubo wokusetyenziswa kolwimi elusatsheni, kunye nobuni ngokolwimi lwasekhaya/ulwimi lwebele, ziyavelelwa zikwasetyenziswa ekuqondeni amava okuphila olwimi lomntwana okwiBanga R. Iingqikelelo zokuzifanisa (Soudien, 2004) kunye ne-anglonormativity (Christie & McKinney, 2017) ziyacingisiswa njengeengcamango ezibhentsisa iindlela zokusebenzisa nokucinga ngolwimi lwasesikolweni.

Okufunyanisiweyo kolu phando kukuba umntwana okwiBanga R ngumntwana osaphuhlayo kwiilwimi ezininzi, othatha inxaxheba ebhadlileyo kwiincoko zosapho lwakhe ezibandakanya iilwimi ezininzi nangona ethetha isiNgesi kuphela. Nangona usapho luthetha ngendlela ebonakalisa usetyenziso-kunye lweelwimi (Bhaktin, 1991) nendlela olutshitsha-tshintsha noluzixuba-xuba ngayo iilwimi (Garcia, 2009; Blackledge and Creese, 2010) lukwahlomla kubutyebi bengxubevange yeelwimi abanazo, *linguistic repertoire* (Busch, 2012), abazali bayaqhuba nokusebenzisa uhlanga lwabo lweSetswana nesiXhosa ukuchazeni ubuni bolwimi labo. Abazali bafuna abantwana babo basebenzise iilwimi zabo zemvelo ngezizathu zobuni. Bakwafuna ukuba bathethe isiNgesi ukuze 'bamkeleke' kwiintanga zabo bakwazi

nokufikelela kwimfundo. Bakubona ukufundisa iSetswana nesiXhosa ngengoxanduva lwabo-  
Ngokwenza njalo bayasikhulula isikolo kolo xanduva. Umbono wabo uvumela isikolo sigcine  
imo ye-anglonormativity (ukulindela ukuba isiNgesi sithethwe ngumntu wonke  
bekwasisebenzisa ngendlela ethile) ingaphikiswa. Amava omntwana, ngoko, abonisa iilwimi  
zemvelo njengelwimi ezibonakalisa ubuni nezibekelwe ukuba zisetyenziswe eikhaya  
kuphela, ze isiNgesi sibe bubutyebi bolwimi oluxabisekileyo olusondeza uluntu kwimfundo.  
Umbono wokuba umntu unobuni bolwimi olunye ngontsokothileyo emntwaneni kuba  
ulindeleke ukuba abe lwimi-ninzi ekhaya ze abe lwimi-lunye esikolweni.

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## DEDICATION

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I dedicate this dissertation to my departed husband Lehlogonolo 'Lee' Molate (1983-2015). Its completion jolts back the memory of your words; "true greatness is not sudden - you grind it out over time". And, I dedicate *tshoboko* to your heritage language background.

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---

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U-Dr Asanda Jonas Benya ongumhlobo othembekileyo, kum nakubantwana bam for many years – they has been very supportive of my postgraduate studies and my academic career in general. My children enjoyed every ice cream date and the many hours at a time of being looked after them when I needed to rest or catch-up on my writing. I have also drawn a lot of inspiration from watching the due diligence with which they travelled their own academic journey. I appreciate their discreet but very significant support – including being an attentive listener.

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- *Phambili manina!*

## LIST OF ACRONYMS & TRANSCRIPTION CONVERSIONS

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LOLT	- Language of Learning and Teaching
LIEP	- Language in Education Policy
LST	- Language Socialisation Theory
NLS	- New Literacy Studies
FLP	- Family Language Policy
,	- Short pause
„	- Long pause
[ <i>Italics</i> ]	- Translation
()	- gesture/expression
–	- analysis focus
//	- overlapping/simultaneous speech

**Bolded text:** emphasis

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Introduction

This exploratory Language Socialisation (LS) study sought to examine the lived language experience of a Grade R child amid the language socialisation practices of her Black multilingual family and their English ex-Model C school in a Western Cape suburb. For this study, I selected a Black middleclass family, whose youngest child, the main participant, was enrolled at Lily Flower Pre-School\*, the Grade R of an ex-‘Model C’ (‘White’) state primary school in the Western Cape Province, during the academic year 2017. In this chapter, I present a background to this study, reflecting on the scarcity of local LS studies that focus on the home domain; thus, I motivate for the significance of this study and highlight the most prominent literature I have reviewed. I also present the language dynamics of South Africa as officially a multilingual nation. Lastly I outline the chapters of my report.

### 1.2 Background

There is very little research on language and literacy socialisation practices in the home domain, in South Africa. Research that focuses on how these socialisation practices shape the child, and what implication this shaping might have on the learning trajectory of a child are even scarcer. Local studies investigating language practices in the home domain are Reynolds (2013) and Mkhize (2016). Reynolds’ work investigated language maintenance and language shift in bilingual homes; and Mkhize studied home literacy practices of bilingual students learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). One of the significant findings from Reynolds’ study was that children are agentic in language shift and maintenance; through their choices and attitudes, they can determine what languages are used or discarded in the home environment (Reynolds, 2016; 103). This finding gives rise to my interest to establish a Grade R child’s experiences and agency in the language socialisation processes as they traverse between their home and school. I review Mkhize’s arguments more specifically in the last section of literature review.

South Africa is home to 11 official named languages. The Department of Education, as stated in the Language in Education Policy (LIEP) claims to be recognising this cultural diversity as a national asset and prides itself as promoting multilingualism; it

asserts that learning more than one language should be a general practice and principle of South African society (DoE, 1997:1). This is an expression of societal multilingualism (Tshotsho, 2013). I depart from this view in exploring the picture of multilingualism on an individual level by exploring language socialisation practices within the home and school domains. The significance and relevance of my inquiry, consequently, is threefold. Firstly, identifying the language and literacy practices at home is significant in recognising the linguistic resources that a child comes to school equipped with. This knowledge is potentially beneficial for use by schools in being better prepared for learners who enter formal schooling. Secondly, focusing on how socialisation practices shape the child and what this positioning means for the child in the schooling system could help in evaluating the language policies of a school, and determine whether the current policies and learning programmes build on and develop the learning experiences that a child brings with them to school. Lastly, my study seeks to reveal the current language repertoire and language socialisation experiences of a young child, taking consideration of the language histories of their multilingual family and their school where English is the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT). This knowledge is particularly important for LIEP makers; it raises a critical question of whether the current national language policy is cognizant of the linguistic tools of a South African child, and evaluates the extent to which the child is recognised and valued in the policy. Further, it raises questions of what language experience and identity a child has as a result of language ideologies and practices of the two domains. And more importantly, this research will develop knowledge about children's linguistic resources to inform teachers who need to work with this knowledge at school. This study is framed by the question: What are the language socialisation experiences of a Grade R child in a Black middle-class multilingual family? The following sub-questions were instrumental in providing an in-depth perspective:

- What are the notable language socialisation practices in a multilingual home and Grade R class?
- What language ideologies exist in the home and school domains?
- What are the language histories and current language repertoires of the the Black multilingual family?

- To what extent do the language histories, language repertoires and language practices shape the language practices and language identity of a child?
- What contribution does the school domain have on the current language repertoire and identity of a Grade R child?

#### **1.4 Chapter Outline**

Chapter 1 lays a background for this study and gives an overview of the language dynamics of South Africa. It also highlights the key research questions to the study and provides a motivation for its significance.

In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical framework that follows a socio-cultural approach, drawing from sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and language socialisation. I critically review literature relating to bi/multilingualism, linguistic repertoires, language ideologies, English hegemony, Family Language Policy and language identity within a multilingual context.

In Chapter 3, I present the research methodology adopted. I motivate for choosing to employ case study and linguistic ethnography as my research designs – I highlight the interpretive nature of my research designs. I also give a detailed background of my research participants.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I provide extracts of data drawn from interview transcripts, naturally occurring interactions and artefacts. I use these to generate a discussion and analyses. Chapter 4 focuses on language ideologies, language practices and linguistic repertoires to trace the family members' language histories, embedded values and attitudes and current language practices. Chapter 5 presents a discussion on Family Language Policy, school language policy and language experience and identity of the family as giving context to the main child participant's consequent language experience.

In Chapter 6, I make conclusions and recommendations based on the critical review of the literature as well as the data analysed in this research.

## CHAPTER 2 – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

---

### 2.1 Introduction

In this research, I use a socio-cultural approach, drawing from linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics and sociolinguistics. I also draw on post-structuralist theory, which situates language within social meaning rather than as a neutral medium of communication (Norton, 2010). Linguistic anthropology is the home of Language Socialisation studies, while applied linguistics is home to language policy studies. Rather than paying attention on the abstract structure of language, Sociolinguistics focuses on the actual speech of communities and how they use language (Mesthrie, 2008: 66). The main concepts that I define in this chapter are language socialisation, bi/multilingualism, linguistic repertoires, language ideologies, English hegemony, Family Language Policy and language identity within a multilingual context.

### 2.2 Sociolinguistics & Language Socialisation

Mesthrie et al (2009), make a distinction between two branches of theories within linguistics. One of the branches is the Chomskyan approach, a theoretical framework focused on an idealised, non-social, psycholinguistic language competence of an individual; thus, the focus is on language structure and the cognitive processes of language acquisition (Mesthrie et al, 2009: 4). Language acquisition requires a natural assimilation into language that involves intuitive and subconscious learning (Schutz, 2007: 1). The social approach of Sociolinguistics on the other hand focuses on the social processes of acquiring language (Mesthrie et al, 2009: 4). Opposing the dominance of Chomsky's (1965) concept of 'linguistic competence' – the knowledge of language code, Hymes (1966) coined the term 'communicative competence': "the system of use children acquire within a social matrix of language is" (Johnstone & Marcelliono, 2010:3). In his observation of language, Hymes believed that communicative competence required more than competence in the grammar of a language; it requires competence in the acceptable ways of using language within a social environment. Hymes thus theorised language within a social approach.

Following Hymes's shift from the Chomskyan principle of idealised linguistic competence, Ochs and Scheffelin (1986) outlined the study of Language Socialisation (LS) as a shift from studying language acquisition from a purely cognitive perspective to viewing it as "socialisation through language and socialisation to use language" (Ochs & Scheffelin, 1986: 163). That is, language is used as a tool for advancing a society's ideas, beliefs and attitudes, which are used to socialise individuals to use language in prescribed ways that enables them to become recognised as competent members in a niche community and cultural context. Framing LS as an approach that is grounded in ethnography, He (2012: 588) also views language socialisation as a branch of linguistic anthropology that focuses on the process of becoming a culturally competent member of society through language use in social activities. Thus, at the core of language socialisation inquiry is the interest to explore the language ideologies of a society through identifying both implicit and explicit language ideologies. Also, language socialisation aims to observe and make connections between salient language practices, and ideologies of particular societies that are being studied. Moreover, LS theory views language as a significant medium in developing children's social and cultural knowledge and sensibilities, which extend the scope of language that focuses on language acquisition. Language acquisition tends to focus on the mother to child interaction whereas language socialisation extends to include communities with an emphasis on language as being integral in how children are raised to become members of families and communities (Ochs & Scheffelin, 2012: 1). Thus, LS takes on a Sociolinguistic orientation rather than a Psycholinguistic approach, which studies language using a cognitive development lens.

Expanding on her theory of Symbolic Interaction (SI) of society's impact on the individual's socialisation, Mead (1956) argues that, despite external influence, an individual remains an active agent of their socialisation throughout their life (Ochs, 1986: 1). Thus, both the individual and the society are co-constructors in their socialisation interaction. Studying the everyday literacy practices of bilingual 4<sup>th</sup> grade children and their families in a rural Kwazulu-Natal community, Mkhize (2016: 45), concurs with the idea of an individual having agency to assume an active participatory role in a sociocultural context. Relating to children's meaning making, she maintains that not only are children active participants and co-constructors of

knowledge, but they also exchange roles with the 'knowledgeable others'; and flexibly take on teaching and learning roles. Through participation in language-mediated-interactions, children acquire implicit knowledge about the social order and systems of beliefs (Ochs, 1986: 2). Further, Sterponi (2012: 242) maintains that the language socialisation paradigm frames apprentices as having agency in the social world. She also investigates the contribution children offer through their actions to variations in and transformations of prescribed practices. Therefore, language socialisation becomes a process of navigation and negotiation between children, parents/adults and society at large.

I draw on post-structuralist theory that positions a child as learning through beliefs that are made apparent to them and through different ways they interact with others (Nolan & Raban, 2015: 11). This view assumes a child as novice who gets encultured in the views, beliefs and practices of knowledgeable others. According to Hedegaard (2004) (in Nolan & Raban, 2015:11), the relationship between the child and a society in the process of child development exposes them to the beliefs system of a society and socialises children to their local goals and values. Nolan & Raban (2015:11), caution against viewing a child's development as universal, rather, they propose that the development of children is interwoven with the social and cultural world. According to Norton (2010: 1), post-structuralism views the discursive practices of society as sites of struggle, whose linguistic communities display heterogeneity that is characterized by conflicting claims to truth and power; instead of framing language as a neutral medium of communication, it argues for viewing language with its social meaning, in a frequently inequitable world. Thus, at the core of post-structuralism concerning language is the view that language is central to an array of systems of power/knowledge that characterise and govern our social institutions, disciplines, and practices (Morgan & Norton, 2013: 1).

Furthermore, Ochs & Schieffelin (2012: 11), are of the view that

“Language socialisation research also builds upon studies of linguistics and sociocultural heterogeneity and hybridity to analyse how children are socialised into forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1979) that privilege languages, dialects, registers, genres and styles over others and the consequence of language maintenance and shift”.

Thus, language socialisation research also draws from literature that is oriented towards language and sociocultural diversity, and the dynamic nature of language. Even with the knowledge of linguistic diversity and dynamism in societies, research shows (Makoe, 2014; Makoe & McKinney, 2014) how children are socialised in environments where some languages gain privilege over others at the points of language contact. Focusing on the local context, South Africa, I adopt a bi/multilingual approach to studying language socialisation practices of a Black middle class family and an ex-Model C school where the youngest member of the family, a Grade R child, is enrolled.

### **2.3 Bi/multilingualism**

With South Africa being a culturally and linguistically diverse society, multilingualism is common and a reality that is in the forefront of the LIEP (Department of Education, 1997). The official status afforded to 11 languages could be interpreted as one of the ways the country recognises the linguistic diversity of its citizens. Considering that there are reportedly over 700 hundred languages in the world (Lewis, 2009), it is unsurprising that multilingualism is a very common phenomenon (Cenoz, 2013: 3). Wolff (2000: 3) also attests to multilingualism being a norm rather than the exception in Africa and worldwide.

According to Buckley (2005: 153), multilingualism refers to being able to use and/or understand two languages; a term often used interchangeably with bilingualism in language studies. Buckley argues that a definition of bi/multilingualism should not only consider the individual speaker, rather, it should also consider the social, cultural and linguistic context of the speaker (Buckley, 2005: 154). This view scrutinises the role that society and family domains play in shaping one's linguistic repertoire. Within a family domain, multiple languages can be used depending on what topic is being discussed and who is participating in the conversation (Dyers, 2008: 114). The European Commission (2007)'s definition of multilingualism as "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day to day-to-day live" (Cenoz, 2013: 5), takes a sociolinguistic perspective of understanding the complex phenomenon of

multilingualism. That is, multilingualism is understood as a social practice that goes beyond the individual use of named languages. Individual multilingualism refers to a person's ability to use language while societal multilingualism refers to the use of languages in society (Cenoz, 2013: 5). Therefore, it is possible for a multilingual person to exist in a monolingual society, and vice versa. Tshotsho (2013: 41) finds it problematic that the South African language policy has not made it explicit whether its language aims is individual or societal multilingualism.

### **2.3.1 Eurocentric Multilingualism**

Although the common understanding of multilingualism and the definition given in LIEP (DOE, 1997) as being the use of more than one language prevails, there is some critique on how multilingualism is conceptualised and even enacted. For example, Banda (2009:1) believes that the promotion of multilingualism through giving official status to 11 languages (societal multilingualism) as in the South African constitution (RSA, 1996a) is in fact “the promotion of 11 monolingual streams of distinct languages in their equally homogeneous speech communities, and bilingualism is paradoxically said to arise through education using a singular language (albeit the mother tongue)” (Banda, 2009:1); Banda describes this view of language as based on Western and colonial notions of multilingualism that encompass multiple monolingualisms. From the notion of multiple monolingualism came the term ‘parallel monolingualisms’ that was coined by Heller describing keeping languages separate, or in ‘two solitudes’ (Heller, 1999 cited in Cummins, 2007: 223). Creese and Blackledge (2008) termed this ‘separate bilingualism’ when relating to bilingual pedagogy discourse of teachers who insist on the use of target language only (Blackledge & Creese, 2010: 104-105). A target language is a term commonly used in sequential or successive bi/multilingualism (Erdei, 2010: 6; Cenoz, 2013; 105) to describe a second language that a person is learning.

Additionally, Wolff (2000: 4) uses the terms ‘colonial di and triglossia’ to describe the pairing of African languages with the language of the ‘colonial master’ as a form of multilingual studies in a non-exhaustive review of the literature in the mid-nineties. That is, multilingualism would be seen as competency in an African language and a colonial language such as English for instance but not two African Languages. In

South Africa, however, traditional bilingual models of education involved English and Afrikaans language instruction. Currently, English ex-Model C schools easily adhere to policy requirements of promoting multilingualism by offering English and Afrikaans language subjects at Foundation Phase (FP), and rarely African languages. They appear not to be transgressing the multilingual promotion aspirations of policy because the definition of bi/multilingualism is vaguely described as knowledge of more than two languages in the 1997 LIEP (DOE, 1997: 1). When an African language is offered at the schools, it is often at a level of conversation or to offer some cultural experience, or as a third language (named Second Additional Language (SAL)).

Concepts such as additive bilingualism have emerged from the promotion of multilingualism in policy and in late modern contexts (Banda, 2009; Cenoz, 2013). Cenoz (2013: 6) describes additive multilingualism as an addition of a language to the linguistic repertoire of a speaker while the first language continues to be developed. The assumption here is that the speaker has a single language that they have acquired first and a second one is added to it. Seemingly, the South African language in education policy's strategy is premised on this model; in the Foundation Phase (FP), learners take a first language, which is called Home Language (HL) and add a second language, First Additional language (FAL) which they learn as a subject. The multilingualism that is envisioned by the national language policy and practiced in the ex-Model C schools thus, is one that is embedded in language ideologies that separate and compartmentalise languages into neat categories (McKinney, 2017). Further, the levelling of language in subjects: Home language, First Additional Language, Second Additional Language reveals a monoglossic orientation in language policy and only considers sequential rather than simultaneous bi/multilingualism. Erdei, (2010: 6) describes sequential bi/multilingualism as learning a second language after the first one has been acquired while more than one language is acquired at the same time with the latter form.

Tshotsho (2013: 42) points out the dichotomy of a ministry of education policy promoting multilingualism while the current government entrenches English as the

language of business, government and industry at the expense of African languages. She believes that it is for this reason that policy is moving towards monolingualism making its multilingualism advocacy a mere symbolic gesture (2013:14). Skutnabb-Kangas (1998) believes that monolingualism is language regression rather than progression; she maintains that it “suggests an out-of-date, obsolete and primitive status, therefore, the educational system should provide both the children belonging to minorities and to majority with a high level of bilingualism” (Erdei, 2010: 3). Using Makoni's concept of language 'disinvention' , Makoni & Mashiri (2007) believe that it is the fluidity of languages "which leak into one another" that should be described in order to gain understanding of social realities of language users rather than a development of language policy that seeks to separate and compartmentalize languages (Blackledge & Creese, 2011: 1198). Therefore, I use the term translanguaging that describes speakers' fluid movement across identifiable named languages rather than code-switching that tends to focus on the functional language separation (Garcia, 2009; McKinney, 2017).

### **2.3.2 Translanguaging**

According to Buckley (2005: 157), code switching is a common practice for bilinguals; different aspects of different languages are mixed for emphasis or to convey a certain message. However current research shows that codeswitching is a normative practice among bi/multilinguals and is not necessarily used for a specific purpose. Buckley (2005) also notes that bilingual children develop a conscious ability to distinguish different languages between the ages of 3 and 6. This view is contrary to the general belief that using more than one language confuses the child. In recent studies, the codeswitching paradigm as a language practice of multilinguals has been problematized. This it is due to claims that it supports the ideological construction of languages as clearly identifiable and bounded (McKinney, 2017: 22). Garcia (2009) is one of the scholars that began to question the validity of boundaries between languages (Blackledge & Creese, 2010: 106). As such, she shows a preference for the term translanguaging rather than code-switching to describe the usual language practice without the diglossic functional language separation in bi/multilingualism. According to McKinney (2017: 24) translanguaging fits the heteroglossic nature of the language repertoire of multilinguals. A number of scholars refer to translanguaging as:

“An approach to the use of language, bilingualism and education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been socially constructed as belonging to two separate language” (Garcia 2009; Garcia and Li Wei, 2014).

This conceptualisation of language shows a shift from the multilingualism that is packaged as multiple/‘parallel monolingualisms’ (Heller, 1999); where languages are lined up and used parallel to one another, instead of being used in fluid ways. The progressive conceptualisation of language in translanguaging makes in-roads for what Gutierrez refers to as the ‘third space’; an interactional constructed space where hybrid language use and literacy practices combine (cited in Guzula, et al, 2015).

### **2.3.3 Emergent/Receptive Multilingualism**

Another aspect of multilingualism is identifying and describing the developmental languaging of a child. Garcia (2015: 322) defines emergent bi/multilingualism as the children’s process of potential in the development of bi/multilingualism, which positions children as competent rather than at a language deficit. She advocates for the use of this term in English dominant countries such as the United States of America where it is common to give English language learners labels that focus on what learners are lacking rather than the positive development of language, e.g. ‘Limited Language Proficiency’ (2015: 322). The labels described in Garcia (2015) are consistent with the psycholinguistic rather than sociolinguistic approach to language. The psycholinguistic approach aligns with terms such as Productive and Receptive (‘lingua receptiva’) competence, which measure the language development of bi/multilinguals (Rehbein et al, 2011; Herknrath, 2011). It is a measure of how much a person can produce language and understand their interlocutors. Rehbein et al (2011: 248) describe receptive multilingualism as one of the modes of multilingual communication whereby people who interact use a language and/or language varieties that differ and are still able to understand each other without the aid of any additional language. Referring to children who are learning English as an additional language, Garcia cautions against presenting the acquisition of English as a monoglossic endeavour – rather, she proposes learning it as a bilingual endeavour (Garcia, 2015: 325). In the local context where African languages are used alongside English in the home, I find the term ‘emergent

bi/multilingual' useful in describing the linguistic repertoire of a child who is acquiring multiple languages simultaneously, and is not yet competent in all or some of the languages they are exposed to.

## **2.4 Linguistic Repertoire**

Recent theorising of the concept of linguistic repertoire (e.g. Johnstone and Marcelino, 2010; Busch, 2012; Blommaert and Backus, 2011) build on Gumperz and Dell Hymes' earlier conceptualising of language in social use. Busch (2012) draws on the theoretical framework set forth by Gumperz (1960) in discussing the notion of linguistic repertoire in interactional sociolinguistics and under the conditions of super-diversity. Conceptualising linguistic repertoire as a social phenomenon, Busch (2012) draws on a post-structuralist view, using Jacques Derrida's concept of deconstruction and Judith Butler's notion of normativity and agency in developing a comprehension of linguistic repertoire. Lastly, drawing from her empirical study with immigrant children in Austria, Busch takes on a biographical and multimodal approach in exploring linguistic repertoire. She develops a linguistic portrait as a tool that gives a visual presentation of a person's repertoire and uses this to explain and explore this concept.

Similar to Hymes' definition of a speech community, Gumperz (1946:37) defines a speech community as 'any human aggregate characterised by regular and frequent interaction over a significant span of time and set off from other such aggregates by differences in frequency of interaction' (Busch, 2012: 504). That is, a group of people who share a similar way of interacting and using language constitutes a speech community. Thus, the notion of verbal repertoire links to a particular speech community (Busch, 2012:504); members of this community share the same norms and values about language in how they communicate. Gumperz (1946) also puts forth the notion of multilingual repertoire, where named languages and varieties are seen as a unit despite the distinctiveness of their grammars that separates them into bounded entities (Busch, 2012:504). This wholeness of languages relates to current debates about the concepts of language crossing and translanguaging. Thus, the concept of language repertoire, employed within a framework of social interaction is viewed as defiant of normative and constraining categorisation of speakers' speech

styles and languages (Busch, 2012: 504). Therefore, linguistic repertoire can be seen as a fluid way with which speakers communicate in a social environment; in a particular speech community.

Jacque Derrida drew from his writing about his personal language trajectory (Busch, 2012: 507). From this he developed a concept of deconstruction, whereby he deconstructs his own language history, pointing out that a linguistic repertoire is not limited to telling what language one has, but can also index what one is lacking, despite that they might be desiring it or feel deprived of – the desire may be born from having been deprived of the resource. Butler, on the other hand, looks at the relationship between linguistic repertoire and language, and argues that ‘the restrictive power of categorisation is particularly felt when language is not self-evidently available’. This refers to the way people are not legitimized or do not legitimize themselves as speakers of a particular language. Referring to Butler’s (1997: 16) notion of agency of the speaker, Busch (2012) argues that a repertoire can be viewed as a place for restrictions and potentialities for the speaker. That is to say, a speaker can be held back from or access their full communication potential.

Blommaert & Backus (2011: 9) trace the trajectory of one’s language knowledge by looking at language in terms of ‘learning’ rather than ‘acquisition’, motivating that their choice takes a view of language development as an on-going process. Language learning is connected to the traditional approach of studying languages in school, usually focusing on the grammatical rules while acquisition requires a subconscious assimilation into language (Schutz, 2007:1). Their approach matches Garcia’s (2015: 322) description of emergent bi/multilingualism as a process of potential in multiple language development. Like Busch (2012), Blommaert and Backus (2011) also situate the notion of linguistic repertoires within a sociolinguistic paradigm. They view repertoires as biographically organised complexes of resources that follow the rhythms of human lives (Blommaert & Backus, 2011: 9). This view alludes to the idea that one’s linguistic repertoire is a portrayal of their life experience that shows the multiplicity of their language resources and the changing nature of language; it also portrays language learning as process rather than a destination.

One of the ways in which linguistic repertoires get expanded in language learning is through what Blommaert and Backus (2011: 12) refer to as ‘encounters’ with

languages, arguing that through mobility across the globe, people may encounter and learn minimal forms of languages. They name these minimal forms of language learning as age-group slang learning, temporary language learning, single word learning, and recognising language (Blommaert & Backus: 2011). With the first form, people may learn particular bits of language popular in a certain age group which ceases to be part of their language repertoire in the later age stages of their lives. Also, through travel encounters, a person can learn short phrases in a particular language to fit a particular purpose but later forget those phrases.

It is apparent from the thoughts of scholars above that language cannot be viewed as a single entity but a multiplicity of expressions within a person. The shift in sociolinguistics has been to conceptualise linguistic repertoire within a speech community that does not separate language into codes (langue) as done when naming languages. Interestingly, however, in the biographical language portrait tool, language is often separated into neat categories even though it is known that bi/multilinguals engage in processes of translanguaging.

## **2.5 Language Ideologies**

Language ideologies are cultural beliefs that are encoded in linguistic forms and that frequently shape language practices (Riley, 2012: 447). Similarly, Makoe & McKinney (2014: 659, drawing on Blommaert 1999; Woolard & Schieffelin 1994, 2000; Blackledge & Pavlenko 2002) define language ideologies as “a set of beliefs, values and cultural frames that continually circulate in society, informing the ways in which language is conceptualised and represented as well as how it is used”. Language ideologies are views or assumptions people hold about a particular language/s and language practices as well as speakers’ language use. Both these definitions of language ideologies concur with the Whorfian conceptualisation of ideologies as informing language use. In this study, I seek to uncover these underlying views, attitudes and beliefs about language that inform language use.

Beginning with the Constitution of South Africa and Language in Education Policy (LIEP), it is interesting to note that, although the legal framework and official documents commit to promoting multilingualism, in practice, the dominance of English in the public sphere remains unchallenged (De Klerk, 2002: 31; Tshotsho,

2013: 42). One such public sphere where the Hegemony of English remains unchallenged is the school domain, where English is used as the LOLT throughout a child's schooling career in most ex-Model C schools. It is however a common practice that children receive 'Home Language' LOLT in their African languages for Grades 1-3 and switch to English LOLT in Grade 4 in most South African schools. This practice is however not prevalent in former English medium ex-Model C schools where languages other than English are taught as subjects and treated as 'separable and boundaried', a dominant ideological construct of languages that McKinney (2017: 19) argues as being orientated towards a monoglossic view of language. Monoglossic ideology conceptualises languages as boundaried, autonomous and stable systems that exist with or without speakers (Guzula et al, 2016: 212). Contrary to a monoglossic language approach, the concept of language heteroglossia is proposed. According to Bakhtin (1991), heteroglossia refers to "the complex simultaneous language use of a diverse range of registers, voices, named language or codes, in our daily lives' as well as the potential tension between these" (Guzula et al, 2016:212). Thus, this view of language assumes a more fluid use of language and moves away from multilingualism that is conceptualised as the number of named languages an individual can display competence in.

Makoe and McKinney (2014: 661) also point out LIEP's silence about the dominance of English; and call for a consideration of using more than one language in the classroom; a practice that would be a good reflection of how multilinguals already use language; and a practice that already exists in schools in rural and township settings. Neglecting to mention the role of English in society and the normativity of translanguaging among multilingual people when addressing multilingualism suggests that the language policy has not fully considered the language beliefs and practices that exist in ensuring an inclusive language policy that benefits its culturally diverse and multilingual society. Pludderman's (2015: 188) believes that policy is a process that carries an ideological load rather than being merely a text; the different ways it is interpreted by different groups is reflective of the power relations that exist between them. Makoe and McKinney (2014: 662) further argue that Government and policy makers hold a "monolingual ideology of a single 'legitimate language' that prevents teachers from recognising the range of their learners' linguistic resources". Recognising only one language as a legitimate language tends to have a limiting

effect on the multilingual child. They miss out on being able to understand subject content and asking questions in ways they can express themselves best. This view would hold for children who have more exposure to their African languages than English, the language of schooling that they have to contend with. But, what are the language dynamics for the black middle class child who attends an ex-Model C school?

## **2.6 The Black Middle Class & ex-Model C Schools**

According to Soudien (2010: 352), the “Wealth Survey Finds” of 2006 revealed that 2 million out of 22 million adults in South Africa had ascended to the ranks of the middle class. In his analysis about what constitute a middle-class, Southall (2016: 59) argues that the definition one uses for social class is dependent on the purpose that such a description must serve. Focusing on wealth and social orientation as the purpose of description, Soudien (2010: 353) characterises the middle-class as typically owning their homes and as people who place a high premium on children’s education and their ability to speak English. Without putting emphasis on race and ethnicity, Buckley (2005: 172) also reflects on the values of the middle-class in society acknowledging that, these are reflected in schools. Similarly, Neville Alexander (2005: 4) states that “because of the role model status of the middle class in most societies, the monolingual habitus becomes generalised in such a manner that the vast majority of the people come to believe in the anglophone Africa”. Monolingual habitus is a term that was coined by Ingrid Gogolin (1994) to describe the irony of oppressed people who value and valorise the colonial languages at the expense of their own indigenous languages (Alexander, 2005:4). Therefore, the middle-class is believed to possess some power in influencing what is learned at school and what language/s are used.

Following Soudien (2010: 353) characterisation of the middle-class as being people with access to material resources and placing a high premium on education and the ability to speak English, it would be unsurprising for a Black middle-class family to enrol their children in an ex-Model C school. Considering that all state-aided schools are state schools, Christie and McKinney (2017; 11) argue that technically there is no such thing as ‘Model C’ schools but the term has become common in public discourse to denote previously Whites-only schools. Some of the markers of this

class of schools is the preservation of cultural and linguistic ethos of historically white-only parent bodies, and their location in previously white-only residential areas (2017: 12). Although both the residential areas and the ex-Model C schools have diversified to include Black people, the status quo remains; the schools continue to offer home language instruction for English and Afrikaans speakers. As such Christie and McKinney believe that the overwhelming dominance of English in the schooling system is indicative of the colonial logic within which it operates. Therefore, the Black middle-class has to assimilate into this anglonormativity - a term coined by McKinney that is described as “the language ideology and practices that exclusively valorise English - the expectation that people will and should be proficient in English and are deficient (even deviant) if they are not” (McKinney & Guzula, 2016; McKinney, 2017: 80). In an assimilationist position it is the values, traditions and customs of the dominant group that frame the social and cultural context of a school. White English speakers often constitute the dominant group in English ex-Model C schools in Cape Town (Soudien, 2004: 95). Both assimilation (Soudien, 2004: 96) and anglonormativity (McKinney, 2017) are practices and ideologies in the ex-Model C schools that play a hegemonic role in the narrative of progress towards integration in schools (Christie & McKinney, 2017: 9).

## **2.7 English Hegemony**

The South African language reality is that English is the LOLT at most ex-Model C schools (a minority of these schools use Afrikaans as LOLT) and in all schools from Grade 4 thus affording it hegemony in education. A language is considered hegemonic when it partially replaces other languages through its exclusive use in certain domains of society like homes, schools, workplace, and media, with a looming possibility of totally replacing these other languages (Gupta-Basu, 1999 in Alexander, 2008: 12). Reflecting on children’s language influences in South Africa, Alexander (2008: 17) argues that:

“... since their role models overtly and repeatedly demonstrate their lack of belief in the capacity of indigenous languages to fulfil all the functions of language in all domains of modern life, the people begin to accept as ‘natural’ the supposed inferiority of their own languages and adopt an approach that is

determined by considerations that are related only to the market and social status value of the set of languages in their multilingual societies”

In this excerpt Alexander reveals the attitude of the middle-class towards the use of African languages. He points to society’s inability to see how indigenous languages can be used in all spheres of modern society, attributing that inability to the perceived poor functionality of African languages; a view that positions these languages as somewhat deficient. The reality of English being endorsed as the LOLT in schools and the obligation for students to adhere to English in order to progress to tertiary education level is one way that English gains functional value above African languages (Tshotsho, 2013: 40). I would argue that, as such, current language conditions offer no incentive for people to value African languages, while tangible rewards are ‘within reach’ for using English.

Drawing on Crystal (1997) and Philipson’s (2003) analysis of the global dominance of English, Alexander (2008: 13) highlights the overwhelming statistical evidence that portrays English as having current dominance in the domains of international trade, finance, world governance and in tertiary education, science and technology, and the publishing industry. Moreover, colonial languages are almost always awarded official status in post-colonial states, and as such retain power in terms of national exposure in the media and government publication (Banda, 2009: 7). Further, Banda argues that this power of colonial languages has somehow distorted the multilingual landscape of Africa, claiming that “it becomes desirable, and even fashionable, for individual to acquire colonial languages at the expense of local ones” (2009: 7). Similarly, De Klerk (2002, in Tshotsho, 2013: 40) confirms the power afforded to colonial languages, English and Afrikaans, via being the only two languages used as media of instruction at tertiary institutions. She maintains that this status quo remains in spite of government policy of multilingualism promotion. The correlation between the status awarded to colonial languages and the distortion of the multilingual landscape of Africa that Banda (2009:7) points out shows how the status of English and its affordances nationally and internationally popularises it more than African languages and multilingualism.

According to Tshotsho (2013), owing to lack of a viable medium of instruction, most black parents are willing to take the risk of English only; “it is out of desperation that African language speakers want their children to learn for instrumental purposes so

that they can access education, housing and health services” (2013: 43). Thus, the idea that the majority of African language speakers *choose* English as the LOLT over indigenous languages is not necessarily a true reflection. Similarly, Heugh (2013: 15) dismantles the myth that parents want English only education for their children. She argues that the high value attached to English is due to the significant role it plays in international communication, higher education and the economy, but that reality is by no means that parents’ loyalty to indigenous languages is proportionally diminished.

### **2.7.1 Language Shift**

Deumert (2010: 31) believes there is always a possibility of language shift or language maintenance at the point of contact between two or more languages. In countries like South Africa where Colonial languages receive more prestige and offer citizens more incentives for their use, a language shift is likely to be anticipated. A language shift refers to the choice to use a language that is dominant in society above one’s heritage language (Cekaite & Kheirkhah, 2015: 320). He (2012: 587) describes the term ‘heritage language’ as referring to a language that is inherited or used at home and is different to the mainstream language in society. A language shift occurs over a generation when the next generation are no longer able to use the home language or non-dominant language. It can be noted in South Africa how political leaders and heads of states use English to address the public, a practice that increases its status in the perception of South Africans. This gives context to Kamwamangalu’s (2003: 227) claim about the existence of a steady language shift, from African languages to English, which can be traced back to the birth of democracy in South Africa. His claims are based on research done by de Klerk (2000), Kamwangamalu (2001) and Reagan (2001). The studies Kamwangamalu drew from were mainly of middle-class families. He identified the factors that influence language shift as including, but not limited to socioeconomic pressures, language status, language attitudes and institutional support (Kamwangamalu, 2003: 227). The cause of this language shift can be attributed to the economic power, educational influence, social status and prestige of English as a language (Kamwangamalu, 2003: 228). In my opinion, Kamwangamalu’s view of language shift assumes a complete shift in use of African language to English – there is no exploration of the idea that people would shift to English. In research on two

Coloured Afrikaans speaking families, Reynolds (2013: 2) found that Afrikaans was maintained in the families despite domains outside the family becoming more English dominant. As such, she noted slight language shift rather than a complete shift.

### **2.7.2 Language Maintenance**

A counter response of language shift as a result of language contact is language maintenance. The South African constitutions' (RSA, 1996) awarding official status to African languages and LIEP's (DOE, 1997) promotion of African languages at schools are indications of this strategy. Ndlangamandla (2010: 71) is of the view that the recognition of language shift as language loss stems from a prescriptive and purist sociolinguistic view that any form of translanguaging is undesirable in maintaining African languages. Moreover, he proposes a comprehensive revision of language maintenance to make a consideration for urban societal multilinguals and shifting multilingual identities that learners perform in various domains. Also, Blackledge and Creese (2011: 1196) critique educational aims that are focused on language maintenance, arguing that their endeavour adopts a 'monolingual ideology (Grosjean, 1985) that stems from 'language separateness'. Seemingly, both ideas about a language shift towards a single language (English) and language maintenance (African languages) are premised on ideologies that view languages as separate bounded entities. Further, they give no apparent consideration to translanguaging practices of multilingual people. The orientation for language shift and language maintenance seems to take a monoglossic rather than a heteroglossic lens on multilingualism.

### **2.8 Family Language Policy**

A Family Language Policy (FLP) is the explicit and observable planning a family undertakes in relation to language use among its family members within their home; it is also the management and negotiation of how languages are learnt within that family (Fogle et al, 2008: 907). In their study of how a family in Sweden tries to maintain their heritage language in a society where the dominant language of the

majority of the citizens is used, Cekaite and Kheirkhah (2015) observed and identified language practices that the family used, of which most were expressed through the family language policy. FLP thus refers to a set of communicated strategies about how to use language in a household. Curdt-Christiansen (2018: 420) describes it as "explicit and overt as well as implicit and covert language planning in relation to language choice and literacy practices within home domains and among family members". Grosjean (1982: 172) argues that the language policy of a family or a community can be an explicit way of prescribing bi/multilingualism to young children. In this instance, parents choose what languages to expose their young children to. Language choice features prominently in negotiating language policy within a family. According to Cekaite and Kheirkhah (2015: 322), the age of children has a great bearing on how the language choice and policy is negotiated within a household. The younger the child, the more likely it is that the languages preferred by the parents get used. They also warn against constraining the language choice of a child, suggesting that such a practice may hinder conversation (Cekaite & Kheirkhah, 2015:322). That is, when caregivers in a multilingual family constrain the child to using a particular language at a particular time, they limit the way in which that child expresses themselves. These language strategies are common in practices such as codeswitching and the one-parent, one-language approach within a family language policy. The one-language one-parent approach confines a child to using a particular language with each parent in an effort to maintain each parent's heritage language (Cekaite & Kheirkhah, 2015: 320).

Similar to language socialisation in the school and other domains of society, the home has an approach that communicates language aspiration. While the language aspiration of a nation and schools are explicated in concrete form, namely, LIEP and School Admission Policy documents, the home's Family Language Policy (FLP) is often implicit. It becomes apparent in the patterns of language practices within the home; these are often telling of the views, beliefs and attitudes a family holds about language. According to Fogle and King, (2013:72), central to FLP theory is a focus and consideration for language beliefs, and in particular, language management and language planning, and the 'decision-making and strategies concerning language' within the families.

Furthermore, Curdt-Christiansen (2018: 421) maintains that, at the basis of FLP theory is Spolsky's (2004, 2009) model of interrelated components of language ideology, language practices and language management, within the LS theoretical framework. Fundamentally, it is through family members' perceptions of language, how they use or wish to use language and their efforts to maintain language that FLP comes to life. FLP also broadly encompasses families' desire for any language change, including language shift. Fogle and King (2013) note that even when the policy has not been consciously decided on or made explicit, families will still carry out a de facto policy that is identifiable through family members' interactions (Van Mensel, 2018: 233). Thus, similar to nations and institutions' efforts and aspirations to manage societies' language/s, families have their own language management strategies that I believe may be directly or indirectly influenced by the policies of societies and nations in which the family units belong.

## **2.9 Language and Identity**

Home language is also termed as 'mother tongue' by some scholars. In this study I use both terminologies interchangeably, and as terms that carry the same meaning. 'Mother tongue', the common phrase used to describe an individual's primary home language has come under many scholars' scrutiny. Mills (2004), has deemed the phrase both complicated and problematic. She argues that it disguises as a metaphor that expresses and structures people's attitudes and ways of thinking while enabling and constraining linguistic practices, suggesting that the metaphor represents 'mothering' (2004:162). Thus, the phrase may mislead one to believe that mothers are the dominant shapers of linguistics practices within a household, and that children take up their mothers' language. Further, Makoni and Meinhof (2003), Sebba (2000) and Winkler (1997) as cited by McKinney (2017:48) criticise this gendered phrase maintaining that it assumes that a child follows the language identity of the mother only. They view the notion of 'mother tongue' as perpetuating the idea that all individuals have one single language that they learn from birth; an idea that is in itself monoglossic (McKinney, 2017: 48). It is contrary to the varied linguistic repertoires of bi/multilingual speakers. Also, contrary to the metaphor of mothering as suggested by Mills (2004) earlier, in a separate study in South Africa, multilingual children identified their fathers' language as their home language when

asked about 'mother tongue' identity (McKinney, 2017: 48). Furthermore, Romaine, (1995) and Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (1989) state that it is crucial to differentiate between those descriptions of 'mother tongue' that give inaccurate labels of ethnicity and linguistic proficiency, and those that are telling of one's language identity (Mills, 2004: 162). Rampton (1990: 109) proposes the term 'language loyalty', connoted to 'native language' and 'mother tongue' which is useful in describing language as a symbol of group identification. Nongogo (2007:43) attributes the use of ethnicity as a marker of language identity to the SA apartheid construction and imposition of ethnicity. As such, the claim to language ethnicity does not necessarily correspond with language proficiency. I find that symbols of group identification can be problematic in that they create false 'ethnolinguistic identity' (Blommaert 2005: 214) boundaries, which present complexities for translinguals' language identity. However I find the term language loyalty useful in dispelling the idea that speakers need to have a particular level of proficiency to claim a particular language or their multilingual identity. 'Language loyalty' may be particularly useful for young emergent multilinguals who are not yet using all their families' home languages to the expected level of functionality.

Referring to the identities of multilingual children, Norton (2010) makes the argument that these cannot be limited to defined categories, such as national and ethnic languages, cultures and race (Mkhize, 2016: 45). That is, bi/multilinguals assume multiple identities and move in fluid ways between these identities. Similarly, Rampton (1990: 108), critiques the use of the terms 'mother tongue' or 'native speaker'. A basis for his critique is the reality that in most multilingual nations, children normally encounter two or more language at an early age, and a variety of false assumptions are perpetuated by the notions of 'mother tongue' and 'native speaker'. Additionally, because some children acquire more than one language simultaneously (Erdei, 2010), the notion of 'mother tongue' poses a challenge for multilingual children. It assumes a monoglossic orientation to language identity and assigns monolingual identity to these children. Further, it sets precedence in how language learning is enacted in schools. That is, the First Language (L1) and Second Language (L2) categorisations of language learning at school constructs learners as either monolingual or sequential bilinguals. Furthermore, Erdei (2010: 6) suggests that in the case where children are simultaneous bi/multilinguals, they

assimilate all the languages at the same time. In this case, Laszzyak (1996, in Erdei 2010: 6) is of the view that bilingualism would be known as the child's mother tongue. I would argue that although this is known to be true in theory, in practice however, a children's bilingual identity is backgrounded in bureaucratic institutions. What is foregrounded rather, is an index of their language using 'a' single named language, and usually pointing to one of the parents' heritage language. The irony of the term 'mother' tongue in the local African context is that, culturally, very rarely will a person's 'mother tongue' be their mother's heritage language (McKinney, 2017: 48). Recalling an equivalent expression of 'mother tongue' in isiXhosa – "ndiluncance ebeleni" [*I have suckled the language (tongue) from the breast*], I also problematize this notion. I argue that it takes no consideration for linguistically mixed families and their translingual practices.

This argument exposes flaws in the concept of mother tongue identity that compels children to confine their language identities into set language categories as experienced in the formal schooling system. This is also implied in the LIEP (DOE, 1997) in its promotion of single mother tongue identity and general compartmentalised view of languages. The notion of single 'mother tongue' identity is problematised by several scholars. In light of the aforementioned arguments, defining a bi/multilinguals language identity is in essence restricting the diversity and fluidity of their linguistic repertoire.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have outlined the theoretical framework for my study, identifying the socio-cultural approach that draws from linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics and sociolinguistics as underpinning my research. Although there is a scarcity of local Language Socialisation studies that focus on young children in the home domain, I have found the work of Nongogo (2007), Mkhize (2016) and Reynolds (2013) useful in understanding language practices of multilingual children and families. I have largely drawn from the work of Ochs and Schieffelin in understanding language socialisation. I have also reviewed literature taking a critical approach to multilingualism (e.g. Garcia, Blackledge and Creese, Blommaert and Backus, Busch). Additionally, some of the prominent themes I have explored are: linguistic repertoire, language ideologies, English hegemony, Family Language Policy and

home language identity. In chapters 4 and 5, I draw on this literature as a basis of my data analysis and discussion.

## CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

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### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections; research design, participants and researcher reflexivity, data collection methods, data analysis and ethics considerations. The methodology underpinning this study is an interpretive approach. It is one that undertakes to understand a phenomenon from an individual's perspective, and to investigate interaction between individuals within a sociocultural context (Creswell, 2009: 8, in Scotland 2012:12). Hence my choices of the case study method and ethnography, particularly linguistic ethnography, methods which are detailed and interpretive. The research strategy that I adopted was to conduct a single case study in a multilingual home and former 'Model C' school. I conducted fieldwork in the two research sites during the period from the last week of August 2017 to the third week of September 2017. The main methods of collecting data were semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes, still photography of artefacts, and audio recording of both naturally occurring interaction, which were recorded by participants, and audio recording of interviews and researcher observations recorded by myself.

### 3.2 Research Design

I conducted a qualitative research study; making use of elements of ethnography and case study methods of collecting data. Taking an ethnographic approach was very useful in exploring language and socialisation practices. According to Heath (1982: 74), using ethnography is useful in describing the ways different social groups take and make knowledge from the environment. Through ethnography, social patterns can be observed and interpreted more comprehensively. Also, I took an interpretive approach by employing linguistic ethnography. Linguistic ethnography (LE) views language as communicative action that functions in social context in ongoing routines of people's lives; and also examines how people use language and the narrative it presents about wider social constraints, structures and ideologies (Copland & Creese 2015: 27). LE afforded me a framework with which to interact and interpret my data set, both on and off site. Further, in the study of language socialisation, Heath (1982: 74) argues that ethnography must offer a clear description of literacy events in order for us to comprehend how patterns such as

time and space usage, and caregiving roles are interdependent with literacy events in a community. I also found the ethnographic approach as described by Heath to be applicable in studying language practices in intimate household spaces as successfully as studying communities.

The use of the case study method added to the comprehensibility of studying social patterns as can be noted with ethnography. According to Flyvberg (2011: 301), the intensive nature of a case study allows for more detail, richness, completeness and variance. A case study can be defined in various ways, but Merriam-Webber's dictionary (2009) simple definition of a case study being "an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or a community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment" does well in describing the way I conducted my research study. In my study, I focused on studying the case of one child within an African multilingual family and their school environment. By virtue of my study being focused on socialisation practices, I could not study the child in isolation, hence the decision to include the home and school as the research sites. Making the decision to conduct my research in two sites came with more ease than studying multiple cases. Cresswell (2012: 63) raises an important consideration, the question of whether to study a single case or multiple cases. He argues that choosing a larger number of cases tend to weaken the overall analysis of the study and minimises the depth of each individual case. Although the goal of the case study is not to generalise to other populations or people, one can generate from it theoretical insights that apply more broadly. Also, the choice of studying one family has afforded me more time to do an in-depth analysis. Even with the limitations in a small-scale study such as this, it is imperative to understand a complex phenomenon like language socialisation in depth, especially given the lack of studies connecting home and school socialisation in South Africa. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of this small-scale study allowed me to track closely the revealed themes and nuances in practices and ideologies, findings which are useful in knowledge production rather than proving hypotheses or making generalisations.

Lastly, I mainly undertake a narrative approach in reporting the findings of my research. According to McAlpine (2016: 34), a narrative is one of the many

interpretive approaches in social sciences – commonly used in sociology, organisational studies, gender studies, and education, and which is also linked to histories and biographies that link to current events and actions in participants' lives. Through observing and noting occurrences in the child's daily life as they traverse between the home and school domains, I attempted to creatively build and present an evidence-based narrative of how the practices and ideologies of these social spaces situate the child and also reflect on the extent to which they shape the child's language identity. With the child being the primary participant in this study, my main objective was to develop a narrative that reveals the child's lived language and literacy experiences at home and at school, and begin to make deductions about what those tell about the lived language experience of a multilingual African child with a reality of being part of a Black African middle class society, residing in a suburb and who is part of a former 'Model C' school community.

### **3.3 Research Participants & Researcher reflexivity**

My participants were identified through the help of the Grade R teacher whom I was introduced to by a fellow student researcher during the construction of my research proposal. I sought participants based on preselected criteria following from my research question. That is, the Grade R pupil had to be from an African middle class family who are multilingual and reside in a suburb. From the three families with Black children in Grade R that were suggested by the teacher, I selected the Ngxanga family. I was fortunate to get consent on the full participation of the parents, and assent from their minor children; 6 year old Viwe\* and 11 years old Bontle\*.

My research participants, the Ngxanga\* family, together with the two above-mentioned children, also comprises of Mma\* the mother and Tata\* the father. Their heritage languages are Setswana and isiXhosa, respectively. Both parents are professionals and university graduates who hail from the North-West and Eastern Cape provinces, respectively. Having moved to the city in their university days, they now reside in their suburban home in the Western Cape Province, which is a short commute to their children's schools. Between the four of them, the family has Setswana, isiXhosa and English as their linguistic resources. It was to my delight that this family's home languages matched my own. This became an advantage for me as a researcher during my data collection period and transcription and analysis

processes. This shared linguistic repertoire allowed me 'insider' status that enabled me to communicate with the Ngxangas with ease; it also meant that I could translate all the transcripts myself. Also, being a researcher with a shared socio-economic classification with the participants, in my view made us relate on a horizontal level – I found that the parents were not intimidated by my researcher 'status'; in one instance Mma expressed her concern of their tight schedule interfering with my submission deadline – to which I put her at ease.

While shared linguistic repertoire afforded me 'insider' status, conducting research in the intimate and private space of the Ngxangas' home made me aware of my 'outsider' limitations – particularly working with young children where assent had to be negotiated on an ongoing basis. The 'outsider' dilemma would arise on instances where the main child participant would move to one of the bedrooms while I was observing and recording. My research instincts dictated that I keep a close following of the child, while my 'outsider' status restricted me and induced discomfort in entering intimate spaces of an already intimate research site. What also became beneficial was my experience as mother of young children. It gave me insight to ascertain when to persist in asking questions to Viwe and when to withdraw. These 'insider'/'outsider' dilemmas of ethnography, as described by Gregory and Ruby (2011:170), allowed me moments of critical self-reflection on my role in my research; and allowed me to think about how to make decisions on the spot and shift my practice where necessary, in attempts to authenticate my research. Below is an overview of the participants' details.

**Table 1: Research Participants Overview**

<b>Home</b>					<b>School</b>
<b>Research Participants</b>	Viwe	Bontle	Mma	Tata	Teacher
<b>Province of Origin</b>	Western Cape	Western Cape	North West	Eastern Cape	English
<b>Heritage Language/s</b>	IsiXhosa Setswana	IsiXhosa Setswana	Setswana	isiXhosa	English
<b>Family Language/s</b>	IsiXhosa Setswana English	IsiXhosa Setswana English	IsiXhosa Setswana English	IsiXhosa Setswana English	English

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected by making use of semi-structured interviews, observations, audio recordings and photography. The adult members of the household were interviewed twice each. Due to the age of the main child participant, I did not conduct ‘formal’ interviews. Rather, I made notes of informal interactions I had with her, and also notes of her interacting with others when I was in the home. The spontaneous moments that arose to ask her questions, like during interviews with her parents, became meaningful instruments that allowed me opportunities to ask her specific questions and as I needed them during the course of my fieldwork. A pre-interview meeting was set up prior to the commencement of my data collection month where we negotiated and agreed on specific times that I could interview and observe the family interactions. Observations were scheduled for at least about one (1) hour every alternate day; in those times I took field notes and recorded interactions; interview sessions were also scheduled in the same time period. With the consent of the parents and assent of the children, the parents also audio recorded some naturally occurring interactions at scheduled times of their choice and sometimes spontaneously, with each recording not running longer than thirty minutes. The exact times for interviews, observations and self-audio-recording were negotiated with the family. I also collected data using language biographies, drawing from Busch’s (2012: 511) body-shape language portrait model. Each family member coloured in different shades of colour to show the language resources in their repertoire - producing a portrait of themselves. This activity was used more as a tool to provide an opportunity for discussion of the resources in family members’ repertoires rather

than to establish their language repertoires. In a language biography of a French participant, Busch (2012: 509) argues that the a person's linguistic repertoire is not limited to what language they have but also includes what they do not have but still desire. Lastly, I photographed print and artefacts in the home and school.

In the school domain, my focus was on audio recording the main child participant during play time and classroom time over a period of 19 days. I focused on oral interactions between the child and her peers, and between the child and her teacher (and teacher assistants). During that period, I also observed those interactions and took detailed field notes. An interview was set up with the Grade R teacher. The first interview was conducted on my first day of field work; a follow up interview was scheduled towards the end of the fieldwork. Data were collected at school simultaneously with the home site, but different time schedules. With the Grade R schedule running until midday, I collected my data in the morning while I visited the home in the evenings and weekends when parents had returned from work. Below is an overview of the data collection period.

**Table 2: Data Collection Overview**

Fieldwork Details		
Method	Number	Details
Interviews	6 interviews	<u>Interviewees:</u> Parents Child participant Teacher(school)
Observations	10 days (home) 9 days (school)	<u>Duration:</u> 1 Hour audio recordings
Participants Self Recordings of naturally occurring interactions	6	<u>Family Events:</u> Bedtime story Family Dinners Vehicular school commute
Artefacts	1 1	Language poster Language portrait activity
Field notes	19 journal entries	Taken at every site visit, including during scheduled interviews sessions

### 3.5 Data Analysis

In analysing data, an ethnomethodology approach using conversation analysis was used to show turn-taking between the family members as captured in the audio recordings. Ethnomethodology is a sociological approach to language and communication that refers to the study of the relationship between what is done and

what is known about interaction (Jaworski & Coupland, 2006: 16). I also employed the linguistic ethnography approach. Linguistic ethnography enabled me to connect the communicative practices to broader ideologies of language, which are enacted through these practices. From the data captured from the interviews, I analysed the views, attitudes and beliefs the household members and school teacher/s hold about language and literacy of children; and evaluated the role their own socialisation background played in the views, attitudes and beliefs they hold. After transcription, I identified dominant trends and themes, which I then traced and color-coded. Initially, I followed themes in analysing extracts. From the broader theme, I then identified individual extracts for close analysis, which I then used to generate discussions that appear in the data analysis chapters 4 and 5.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Careful ethical considerations were applied in both research sites. In consideration of research ethics, consent forms were issued to the adult members of the home to sign on individual behalf, and on behalf of the minors in their care. I also sought verbal assent from the child participants. Throughout the data collection process, participants were reminded of their right to withdraw their consent and assent at any time during the fieldwork period, should they wish to do so. All identities have been anonymised – pseudonyms were used for each participant. The geographical location information revealed is limited to naming of the province, villages of origin and type of residential dwelling of the participants. Similar ethics consideration were employed for the second research site, the Grade R child's school. The actual name of the school has been kept anonymous by offering a pseudonym. The identity of the child, teachers and learners has also been protected by using pseudonyms. Also, the collection of audio and visual data from the classroom was limited to that of participants' interaction with the primary participant of this study, the child. Consent forms were signed by parents of the children in Viwe's Grade R class except for three. No data including the three learners was used for analysis in this dissertation. Finally, no recognisable photographs of any participants were taken; the photographs taken are limited to pertinent language and literacy artefacts in the classroom and playground.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have outlined the research methodology that I employed in this dissertation and justified its validity. Owing to the nature of my inquiry, I have opted for a qualitative research strategy, employing linguistic ethnography and taking on an interpretive approach. I used preselected criteria based on my research questions in choosing my research participants. The main data collection tools used were semi-structured interviews, observations, structured activity, audio recording and still photography. Analyses and major findings of this dissertation are found in chapter 4 and chapter 5.

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\*All names except the researcher's name are pseudonyms

## CHAPTER 4 – LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES, PRACTICES AND REPERTOIRES

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### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by providing a language background of the Ngxanga family. Further, I explore the main child participant's linguistic repertoire and language practices with the aid of a language portrait she had drawn and a short conversation extract between herself, older sister and mother. Furthermore, I present the family's linguistic repertoire and their language use. I make reference to the family members' language portraits and use them as background for discussing their language ideologies and practices. At the core of the discussion is the language histories of the parents and current language environment that shape their values, beliefs and attitudes towards their languages. I also explore their current language practices and how these link to their language histories, social environment and the language practices of their children, particularly Viwe.

### 4.2 Multilingual Family Background

The Ngxanga family fits the description of being multilingual, owing to Setswana, isiXhosa and English languages being visibly used in varying ways in their household. Having been born and raised in the North-West province, the mother and wife in this family, Mma, grew up being surrounded by Batswana and speaking the language in her home and school. When asked to reflect on her language history from the rural village where she grew up, one of the ways she would respond is “*Setswana, Setswana all the way*”:

<i>Babalwa</i>	<i>Ok masi ..sithethe nge nge langweji okhule uyithetha [Let's..Let's speak about the the language you grew up speaking]</i>
<i>Mma</i>	<i>Setswana</i>
<i>Babalwa</i>	<i>Setswana, abamelwane? [Neighbours?]</i>
<i>Mma</i>	<b><i>Setswana Setswana all the way</i></b>

From this bold proclamation one begins to see the history of South African tribal segregation (Maake, 1991:57) that seemingly contributed to creating largely unilingual language experiences for some families, and separation and compartmentalisation of languages according to ethnicity (Nongogo 2007:43). Mma's repeated mentioning of her heritage language is indicative of the sense of pride and exclusivity she feels about her language, what Rampton (1990: 109) has termed 'language loyalty' as describing language as a symbol of group identification.

Her first formal encounter with an additional language was at school where English was the LOLT from Grade 6. Although she had switched to an English LOLT by then, she retells candidly how her teachers taught all subjects in Setswana, even during English language class. She counts translation and the use of Setswana alongside English as having been valuable language support to understanding subject content that was mediated in English. This is evident in the text message response I received from her, clarifying what grade she started learning in English: *“From standard 4 [Grade 6], Setswana was often used to ensure that there is understanding on what is being taught”*. Mma’s language background suggests that her middle to high school experience was a multilingual one. Despite the switch in LOLT from Setswana to English in Grade 6, Setswana was used to support learning of subjects in English. Nowhere in the interviews does she mention her competency in English as having prevented her from succeeding in high school, including matric where she would have taken a national examination to qualify her for entrance in tertiary institution across the country. She does, however, reveal her view that her limited competency in English largely contributed to her failure in the first year of tertiary education, where English was solely the LOLT. This is evident in in one of the interview responses where she had to reflect on her language experience at university:

*“Saying few words nje [just] but **it was a a struggle** (hm) and I knew that I had to do something so I started reading lots of books everything I could get my hands into I got the library card (hm) to get books (hm), so you can imagine which means my **school work was lagging behind because now I needed to learn English first** before I can be able to study what’s in the books (hm) and I was attending with people who are older (hm) they knew what they were talking about they were in the field (hm) the experience and all of that **I got totally lost** and I was like okay this is rough (mh hh) so **I failed my first year**”*

Mma’s home, schooling and university language experiences also suggest that she moved from a Setswana-dominant language home environment to an English-dominant university environment. Interestingly, she had a bi/multilingual classroom experience when an additional language (English) switched places with her home language (Setswana) by becoming the LOLT. Although she encountered English as LOLT from the sixth to twelfth grade she does not mention six years of English LOLT

as having prepared her for an English only learning experience at university. Rather, she emphasises her limited competency in English as having made her lag behind in understanding university course content. She believes that her language learning strategy of improving her English by reading many books cost her time she would have spent learning course content and keeping up with her peers whom she feels were more experienced in her field of study and had no difficulty with English. Consequently, her strategy to develop her English proficiency to meet the demands of her English medium courses proved to be a little too late for that first academic year - she failed that year. Mma's language experience indicates the mismatch between the linguistic resources of a learner and language practices of the university as the likely cause of her failure. Strikingly, Tata reports to have suffered a similar fate as Mma - he became unsuccessful in his first year of university also in his view, owing to a case of mismatch between his language resources and the university's medium of instruction. Additionally, Tata's earlier language experience growing up mirrors that of Mma's. He gives this account of his language encounter, in a separate interview:

“No no no everything is in English (Hm) but u u utitshala **uzakuendapha** esenza umzekelo ngesiXhosa [*But the teacher **will end up** making the example in isiXhosa*] (Hmmm) ukwenzel'ba **siyiundastende** le nto ithethwayo ukuba kuthe'thukuthiwa ngale nto [*So that **we can understand** what is being said, what is being meant by what is being said*]”

Tata's initial recollection foregrounds an English monoglossic language experience at school that mirrors that of Mma's when he was clarifying that all subjects were taught in English. His elaboration on classroom language practices, however, follows on to reveal that isiXhosa was used alongside English to facilitate understanding. This means that his language experience at school was bi/multilingual rather than English monolingual. To have had this language experience indicates that isiXhosa was a shared linguistic resource between himself, his peers and the teacher. Moreover, Tata's language use above reveals his comfortable use of isiXhosa and English together: he begins his utterance in English, then uses the words *uzakuendapha* [*will end up*] and *siyiunderstande* [*so we can understand it*], a fusion of the two languages and ends with isiXhosa. This is language heteroglossia in practice as noted as being a typical language practice of multilingual speakers (Bhaktin, 1991; McKinney, 2017: 24), and what (Garcia, 2009) has termed translanguaging. With the parents having similar language histories, albeit in different

languages, it is unsurprising that they experienced the same language difficulties in their respective English-medium universities. Except for Afrikaans universities, South African universities use English as the medium of instruction (De Klerk 2002, in Tshotsho, 2013: 40) despite students' language demographics. It is unsurprising then that Mma and Tata's language backgrounds are mirrored considering that they both hail from parts of their provinces that were previously Bantustans, where black people were grouped according to their heritage and ethnic identity (Maake, 2009); Setswana in Bophuthatswana (North-West) and isiXhosa in Transkei (Eastern Cape). As such, they went to African schools, a different schooling system experience to what their children now have at their English ex-Model C schools.

### 4.3 Child Language Practices & Linguistic Repertoire

It is evident in the discussion above and extracts to follow that translanguaging is one of the noticeable language practices for the older members of this multilingual family. It is intriguing to note however, that Viwe speaks in English regardless of the languages she is addressed in. Mma and the teacher's comments on Viwe's languaging corroborates my observations; with Mma noting that *"You speak to her in either language she'll respond in English"* and the teacher maintained that *"she's never ever spoken any other languages"* (Extract 5G: Chapter 5).

Although neither Viwe's parents nor the teacher identify her as an English speaker, Mma and teacher's experience note English is prominent in Viwe's linguistic repertoire. Extract 4A below is a conversation between the family members that displays the relationship between Viwe and English. It is an extract from the biography activity I jointly participated in with all the family members. Viwe here is being questioned about the language representation in her language portrait (Image 1) that she had just finished colouring in simultaneously with all the other family members. Everyone remained in conversation with one another throughout the activity as they also had to share crayons. Mma assisted Viwe labelling her portrait at the end of the activity.

#### ***Extract 4A: Language biography - 'The most important one!'***

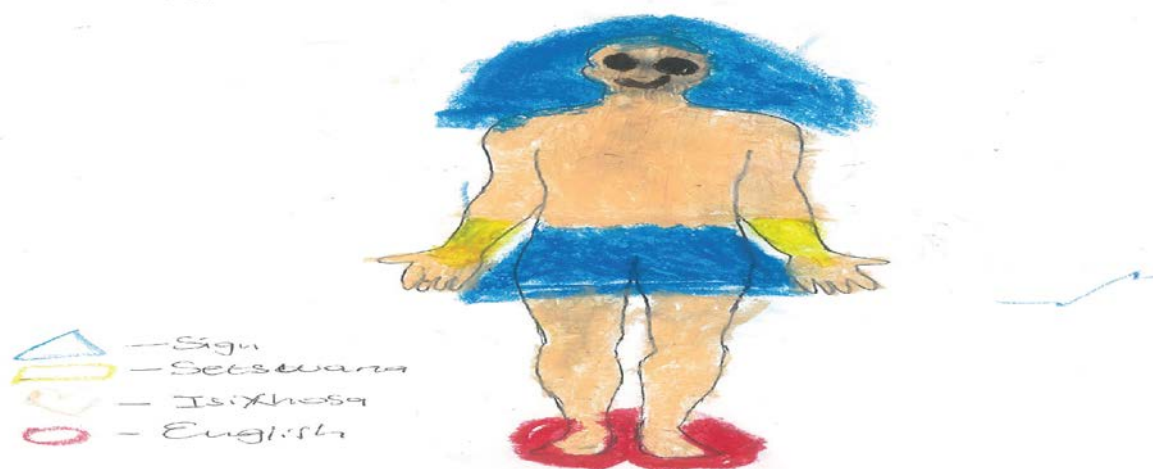
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Babalwa	Unay'ipen? [ <i>Do you have a pen?</i> ]
Mma	And the i- i-yellow? [ <i>And yellow?</i> ]
Bontle	Yellow?

Viwe Hmmm  
 Tata Red?  
 Mma Hawu!  
 Viwe Tshwana (regional pronunciation of Setswana)  
 Mma Tshwana,, keSetswana neh? [*Tshwana ,, it's Setswana, right?*]  
 Viwe Yes mama  
 Bontle Did I do Setswana right? (Referring to spelling)  
 Mma //Siright!! [*It's right/correct*]  
 Tata //Siright!! [*It's right/correct*]  
 Mma Red?  
 Viwe Hhhm  
 Mma Ga o a itse? [*You don't know it?*]  
 Bontle **The most important one!**  
 Viwe (Giggles)  
 Mma **The one you're speaking,, right now**  
 Tata It's Afrikaans (teasing)  
 Bontle The one that you **always always always** speak  
 Viwe (Giggles loudly) ,, uhhh English  
 Mma Engrishhh

**Image 4.1: Viwe's Language Portrait**

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Consistent with her quiet demeanour, Viwe offers minimal verbal communication as she interacts with her family. She mostly uses a variation of sounds and gestures to communicate with her family during this activity. Precisely for her shy demeanour, Mma and older sister Bontle prompt Viwe to get her to speak about the image she has coloured in. It is not uncommon in this family to experience Bontle offering language mediation between her parents and Viwe. Although there is no notable

language breakdown between the speakers in this instance, Bontle's use of English only, which differs from the parent's translanguaging indicates that she may have become accustomed to speaking only English to her younger sister. Guo (2014: 50) uses the concept of cultural mediation to describe a mediator as a person who facilitates communication, understanding and action between persons; I adopt the same concept to describe Bontle's mediation between a person (Viwe) and language. Additionally, Bontle's insight about Viwe's dominant language and its value in her everyday life is evident in the prompting cues she offers: *"the most important one"* and *"the one that you always always speak"*. In the former prompting cue Bontle is expressing her perception of what language Viwe considers valuable. Also, her statement implies that she equates her sister's language production to language value. That is, speaking English more means she values it more. Further, the latter prompting cue implies that she is conscious of Viwe's language repertoire and language practices. Thus, I maintain that Bontle's perception is indicative of her five years seniority to Viwe and perhaps her longer experience in her participation in language socialisation, which crucially includes six years of formal schooling. I call it a participation, similar to Mead (1956) and Mkhize's (2016) argument that, despite external influence, children's agency allows them to remain active in participating in their socialisation.

Similarly, Mma appears to be mindful of Viwe's language use when she offers Viwe the clue *"the one you are speaking right now"*. Although Viwe does not speak much in this extract, her responses: *"Yes mama"* and *"uhhh English"* are enough for her to conclude that she is speaking English in that very instance. I would also add that Mma is using her knowledge of what language Viwe has been using from the start of the activity as well as of her daughter's usual languaging to arrive at her statement. Therefore, Bontle and Mma's utterances point to their collective language experiences and perceptions of Viwe as English dominant.

Despite Mma's knowledge and experience of Viwe's dominant language, she does not necessarily adjust her languaging to match Viwe's like Bontle does. This could be because of a combination of belief in her daughter's comprehension of languages beyond English and a family language plan for their daughters to learn Setswana and isiXhosa. In extract 4A, Mma's language practices range from using Setswana, translanguaging to an English only utterance. She does this seamlessly even when

talking to Viwe, which indicates her belief that Viwe can comprehend their African languages even if she is not producing them. This is a feature of receptive bilingualism that I will argue as indicating emergent multilinguals.

Mma also ends this conversation with a seemingly deliberate mispronunciation of the word English and even puts emphasis on the part of the word she mispronounces, “*Engrishhh*”. This could be interpreted as her way of disassociating herself from this language and perhaps emphasizing the families’ experience of Viwe speaking more English than everyone else at home. This self-detachment from English can be observed in how Mma describes it as language that she has been clothed with “*ndisinxityisiwe [I have been clothed with it]*”. The very act of exposing her children to different languages shows a multilingual language socialisation that is taking place. In choosing to produce English rather than Setswana Viwe is proving to be a participative agent of her language socialisation; Sterponi (2012: 242) believes this to be the socialisation paradigm that frames children as having agency in their social worlds. Although it may appear that Viwe is exercising agency in using English out of personal choice within her family, the other environments that Viwe traverses have to be considered in ascertaining the roots of the presence and dominance of English in Viwe’s repertoire. If English is not her parents’ heritage language, whose language is it then, and why does it occupy the space and position it does in Viwe’s language repertoire?

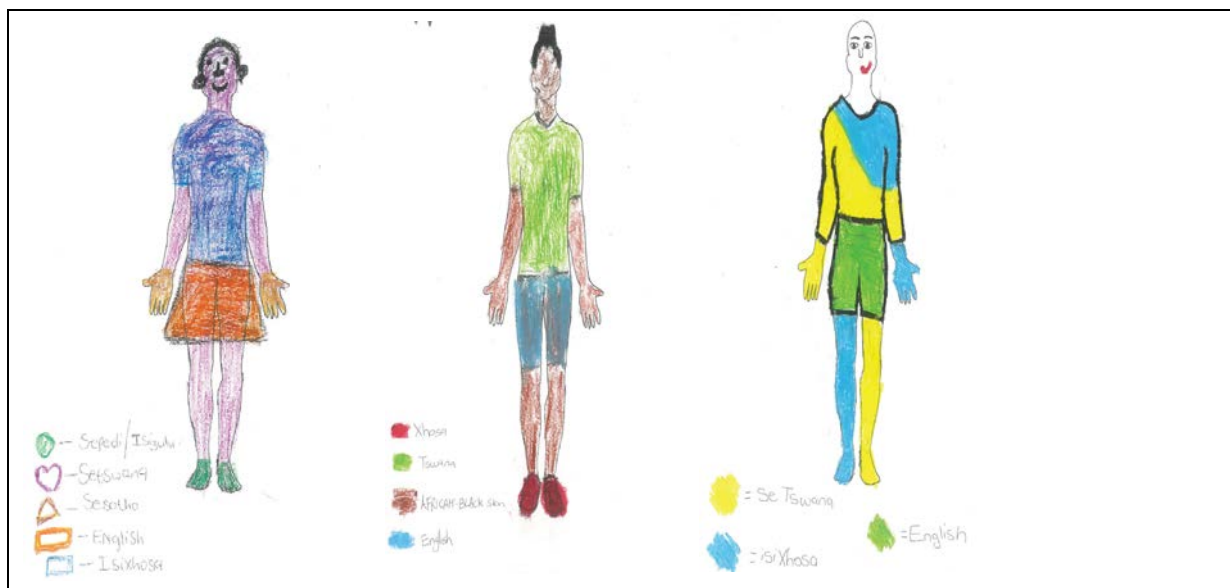
#### **4.4 Family Language Portraits – Linguistic Repertoire**

I unpack the language dynamics of the Ngxangas and conceptually situate Viwe’s language practices and identity by providing the language portraits of all the family members. I also analyse two extracts of family interaction where language practices are enacted, as extracted from a naturally occurring interaction in the home.

##### ***Image 4.2: Family Members’ Language Portraits***

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Mma	Tata	Bontle
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(Full images in Appendix A)

The images above were produced in the same language biography activity as Image 1. This activity created a non-threatening environment in which Viwe could participate freely. I use these images as visual backgrounds for my analyses and discussions of extracts 4B1 and 4B2 below; both these extracts were generated from the conversations that arose during the construction of the portraits.

### **Extract B1: Language Assimilation - 'Ndisinxityiswe njee'**

- Mma And then English is my skirt  
 Babalwa Hm-h, do you want to tell us about that  
 Mma Well uhm I feel that it since I'm getting clothed (hm) **so it forms part of me because it's everyday same as isiXhosa**  
 Babalwa isiXhosa is a  
 Mma The t-shirt  
 Babalwa Hm ,, can you tell us more about isiXhosa?  
 Mma isiXhosa **ndisinxityiswe njee** (laughs) [I have been clothed isiXhosa, just]  
 Babalwa (laughs)  
 Mma When I'm with him (hm-h) in all honesty I the I didn't know the language up until I met , I knew about the language but I had a bit of attitude towards the because bayangxola maan [They are noisy, man] (laughs)  
 Babalwa Bayangxola xa bathethayo [They are noisy when they speak]  
 Mma They are very loud and I didn't even show any interest up until I met him so ndasinxiba [I wore it] same as English

In the visual presentation together with the discussion of her language portrait, Mma conceives of English as external and secondary to her language. She has

deliberately coloured in her heritage language Setswana as her skin, while using the symbolism of detachable items of clothing, the skirt and shirt for English and isiXhosa, respectively. Her choice of words confirms this; “*Ndisixityiswe njee*”. Although she is referring to the language, the idea of being ‘clothed’ with the language can be applied to English. Using the words “*same as isiXhosa*” when talking about English and the extent to which these two languages are part of her suggests that she has also been clothed with English. It is unsurprising that she views isiXhosa and English this way – they are languages that she learnt and acquired after her Setswana; English through schooling and isiXhosa through having met and married her husband. Consequently, the learning of these two languages can be attributed to two reasons; schooling and her husband. Her struggle with her studies at university due to English pushed her to develop her competency in it. She also reports to having eventually worn isiXhosa “*ndasinxiba*” despite admitting to having had an attitude towards it initially. Lastly, she communicates a mirrored experience between English and isiXhosa in the way she wore it. Thus, Mma continues to use her ethnicity as a marker of her languages despite her diverse language repertoire and language practices. Her embrace of isiXhosa and English also show ambiguity in her sense of language claim and ownership.

The shift in her choice of passive to active voice in ‘having been clothed’ to ‘clothing herself’ with isiXhosa and English tells of her acceptance of these languages as part of her repertoire, though she considers them external. Together with her agency in deciding to learn these languages, it suggests also an assimilation that had to happen, or a ‘sink or swim attitude’. A person assimilates when their social and cultural context become framed by values, traditions and customs of the dominant group (Soudien 2004: 95). Therefore, it can be said that Mma has in some sense assimilated into isiXhosa by virtue of having initially felt that the languages were thrust upon her until she made the choice to own them. In extract 4B2 below, Tata provides a breakdown of his language portrait, reflecting on how he views his heritage language and other languages that he has come to know. Contrary to Mma’s language use, Tata produces no Setswana in this extract despite Setswana featuring in his language portrait (see Image 2) – another indication that Mma may have assimilated into isiXhosa.

**Extract 4B2: Language Purity - "Xhosa colour which is pure"**

- Tata Wherever the skin is showing (hm hm hm) so I said there African with the black skin//
- Babalwa Black skin hm, okay
- Tata So that takes takes into account the language uh of black people (hm-h) and then uhm , and then uh uh **I just used English on the shorts** (hm-h) on the trouser
- Viwe (giggles)
- Bontle **Everyone has English, oh except???**
- Tata You put on//
- Viwe **I do have English!**
- Babalwa Did you guys discuss about this, English being a language that you put on yourselves before? (laughs)
- All (laughter)
- Tata No
- Babalwa Okay
- Tata So **same as isiTswana** uhm uh uh it's a language that
- Mma (laughs) hayi guys nikopile [*you have copied me*]  
(laughter)
- Babalwa Okay uzakuba yimediator u-// [*you'll be the mediator*]
- Mma We think alike (laughs)
- Tata Jonga nasi isiTswana isiXhosa zii-t-shirts zombini, **ibhlukhwe yiEnglish, ibhlukhwe sisiketi** [*Look, here is Setswana here is isiXhosa, they are both shirts, the pants are English, the pants are the skirt*]
- All (laughter)
- Tata But **but I've got Xhosa only on shoes**
- All (laughter)
- Babalwa Okay so masize nge [*let's come with*]//
- Bontle But//
- Babalwa It's fine it's fine , it's fine it doesn't matter I was just uh teasing
- Tata So the **shoes are like I said** the the **colour scheme is all all the languages**
- Babalwa So **including isiXhosa**
- Tata **Yes**
- Babalwa Okay
- Tata And then I decided to have like a **Xhosa colour (hm) which is pure**
- Babalwa Hm and it's red, yima ke [hold on] that's quite interesting that you encompass all the, African languages black African languages//
- Bontle Venda//
- Babalwa Why did you not mention them?
- Tata ,, I have mentioned **those that I speak** but uh//
- Babalwa The others?
- Tata The **others** are just I think it was just uh **interest on all languages of black people**
- Babalwa Okay
- Tata Like uh ,, **I can hear a lot of them** (indistinct) Sepedi and so on

Akin to Mma's language portrait explanation, Tata also presents English as an item of clothing - pants. Moreover, he describes the pants as being equivalent to the skirt that is seen in Mma's portrait - "*ibhlukhwe yiEnglish, ibhlukhwe sisiketi*" [*The pants are English, the pants are the skirt*]. He frequently uses the words "same as isiTswana" when explaining the visual image of his isiXhosa language resources; somehow alluding to similarities in language histories between himself and Mma. He seems to

be emphasising the insignificance of English in comparison to the rest of the languages in his portrait when he describes having *“just used English on the shorts”*. Thus, both English and Setswana (English and isiXhosa in Mma’s case) are viewed as accessories, language resources that are part of the linguistic repertoire without changing or influencing their language identity. Tata’s conceptualisation of his additional languages does not express the same feeling of having had to assimilate to his additional languages even though he affords them the same status as Mma does of her additional languages.

Another commonality is that both parents seem to be claiming a monolingual identity based on their ethnicity despite having embraced their additional languages, which feature in their language portraits in Image 2. Additionally, Tata includes other African languages in his portrait seemingly representing them equally by assigning the one colour (brown) as the languages occupying the larger part of his repertoire. His separation of isiXhosa (red) at the feet shows that he values isiXhosa more than the other African languages. He sees his Xhosa-ness as separate and as ‘pure’: *“And then I decided to have like a Xhosa colour which is pure”*. Ironically, although Tata seems to be taking a pan-Africanist approach to language when he colours-in all African languages he knows with the same colour, brown; and explains that he considers isiXhosa as part of the mix when he colours in with a matching complementary red colour. However he still insists on making a distinction between isiXhosa that he explains as being pure, and other languages. It appears that despite the embrace of other languages in one’s repertoire, Tata and Mma continue to use their ethnicities as markers of their language identities despite their apparent changing linguistic repertoires and language practices. There is seemingly no evident claim of Mma and Tata’s multilingual status for sequential bi/multilinguals that would perhaps be evident in simultaneous bi/multilinguals like their children who are learning all three languages simultaneously at home.

Other than the purist ideology that Tata expresses in relation to isiXhosa, he also seems to be conflicted about claiming the rest of the African languages as his own perhaps due to not producing those languages in speech. There is only evidence of him speaking isiXhosa and English in all collected data. While he expresses language pride and solidarity with other African languages that he has coded as

'African black skin' in his portrait, including languages in which he rates his competency as being able to "*hear a lot of them*" - meaning to understand but not speak them. Conversely, he shows an outright rejection of English, which is ironic, considering that he uses English more than any other African languages apart from isiXhosa.

It is also quite intriguing to experience a strong presence of English in the Ngxanga household, a language that Viwe communicates largely in, being viewed by both parents as being secondary. To show the undeniable presence of English in this family, despite the parents' loyalty to their respective heritage languages, all four members of the family have represented English in their language portraits; Mma, Tata, and Bontle as similar type of clothing, while Viwe has it on her feet as shoes. Further, Bontle also notices this trend and excitedly, commenting that "*Everyone has English, oh except?*" Based on Viwe's bold response and objection "*I do have English!*" I am convinced that Bontle's second part of her utterance is directed at Viwe's portrait. Also, I would add that, because Viwe's representation of English, being at the feet, is different from the family, Bontle might have missed it at first glance. Although I came to the conclusion that Viwe's representation of language and colour was arbitrarily selected, I find it enthralling that her representation differed drastically from the rest of the family, especially because the family views English as the language she uses the most and one which Bontle claims as Viwe's most important one. In view of Mma and Tata's apparent loyalty to their heritage language, and the implicit disassociation from and minimisation of English in their language repertoires, I analyse extracts from naturally occurring data that reveal the various language resources the family members draw from when they communicate. I also analyse the heteroglossic (Bhaktin, 1991) nature of their language practices, with translanguaging being a fitting descriptor of these practices, together with the complexities and challenges of ideologies that view language monoglossically (Guzula et al, 2016:212).

## 4.5 Family Language Practices

Extracts 4C1 to 4C3 are taken from a self-recorded family conversation involving all members of the family, some moments before Mma reads a bedtime story that had been selected by Viwe upon Mma's request. The first extract shows the language use in the family in the absence of myself as the researcher. I pay particular attention to language use between Mma and Viwe, and Tata's translanguaging.

### **Extract 4C1: Translanguaging**

---

Mma Tsamay' o... [*Go and...*] (indistinct)  
 Tata Mh?  
 Mma (indistinct)  
 Tata Hm-h  
 Viwe Ma  
 Tata Abantwana baza... [*The kids will*] (indistinct)?  
 Mma Hm, Vivi\*  
 Viwe Mama  
 Mma Ha-a, mh-h [*No*]  
 Viwe Heh?  
 Mma Ha-a [*No*]  
 Viwe (laughs)  
 Mma Vivi o sharp? [Vivi, are you okay?]  
 Tata **Esokolweni nenze ntoni Vivi?** [*What did you do at school?*]  
 Mma Upapa wakho o buwa le wena [*Your dad is talking to you*]  
 Viwe Papa [*Dad*]  
 Tata **Nenze ntoni esokolweni except playing?** [*What did you do at school, except playing?*]  
 Viwe Except playing?  
 Tata Hm  
 Viwe (laughs) - (TV playing in the background), We don't really do homework like the grade one  
 Mma O itse mang wa ko Grade 1? [*Who do you know from Grade 1?*]  
 Viwe Mh?  
 Tata **Uzakuyibek'apha next year** [*You're in for a tough time next year*]  
 Viwe (laughs)  
 Mma **Heh hayi ndatsho ndanewari** (laughs) [*Hey, now I just got worried*]  
 Viwe I said we didn't really do homework?  
 Mma But what did you do at school?  
 Tata They do classwork  
 Viwe Ahhhhh ohhh!  
 Mama  
 & Tata (Laugh)  
 Tata **Uzakuxakwa ke, ngoku!** [*She will be stuck (confused) now*]  
 Mma Vivi re buwa le wena what did you do at school? [*Vivi we're speaking to you*]  
 Viwe Uhm , uhhh I forgot to tell you that I was in my (indistinct)  
 Mma Ha-a nna a ke go utliwe shem [*ah no, I don't hear you shame*]  
 (isiXhosa news playing in the background)  
 Tata Uthini na? [*What are you saying?*]  
 Mma Ha ke mutwli [*I can't hear her*]  
 Viwe My project

- Mma What about your project?  
 Viwe The one of under the sea  
 Tata Khawuthi i-remote leyo [*Pass me that remote*]  
 Mma Wa reng Vivi what about the project? [*What are you saying Vivi*] **This is serious**, are you supposed to do a project?  
 (silence)
- 

Extract 4C1 showcases a variety of the parents' language practices with Viwe. It also presents the invisible permeable boundary that exists between the home and school; that is, through doing a project Viwe draws from the literacy practices of both the home and school domains. Moreover, it shows parental involvement in Viwe's education – father initiates the talk about school, and both parents express concern about their daughter not having communicated about the project that was due the following day. Later on, they involve big sister Bontle to assist Viwe with gathering pictures and information from old magazines for the project. As such I would identify this interaction as a literacy event (Heath, 1982:50). In my analysis, however, I focus on the language interplay between multilingual parents and their child who brings in school literacy practices; a school that I have already described as being former 'Model C' with English as the LOLT.

Focusing on Mma's language use first, these are some examples of her utterances extracted selectively from Extract 4C1, where she is using language fluidly and creatively, intermeshing more than one language in some utterances and using only Setswana in others:

**Mma:**

Upapa wakho o bua le wena [*your father is talking to you*] (Xho-Set)

Heh hayi ndatsho ndanewari [*Hey, now I just got worried*] (Xho – (Eng))

Vivi re bua le wena [*We are talking to you*] what did you do at school? (Set – Eng)

Ha ke mo utlwe [*I can't hear her*] (Set)

---

\*Setswana parts have been underlined

The first line is an example of a code meshing between isiXhosa and Setswana. At first glance, and if frequency is used as a standard of classifying what language Mma is communicating in here, then it could be said that Mma is speaking in Setswana including some isiXhosa. However, the same utterance can be seen as isiXhosa with some Setswana – *Upapa wakho ubua (ubuwa) le wena*. The paradox here is that the word bua (buwa) has been appropriated into isiXhosa by a Setswana heritage

language speaker, Mma. Further, by inserting the prefix ‘u’ to the word *papa*, Mma is conforming to the isiXhosa grammatical lexicon which easily deems her utterance as isiXhosa. Further, using Myers-Scotton’s (1993:20) classification of language use in code-switching, I would say that isiXhosa is the matrix language. Ultimately, these different interpretations point to the complexity in classifying and compartmentalising language. Moreover, in the same conversation, Mma also switches to isiXhosa - *Heh hayi ndatsho ndanewari*, appropriating and Xhosalising the English word *worry* to *wari*. Her use of isiXhosa in these ways is indicative of how she has been clothed with (“*ndisinxityisiwe*”) the language and accepted what has been dictated by ‘the way’, claiming Setswana language identity for herself. Hence, she later admits to accepting isiXhosa as part of her language repertoire despite having grappled with the language initially – “*ndasixiba*” [*and I clothed myself with it*]. Tata’s talk below shows a similar pattern of translanguaging as noted with Mma.

**Tata:**

*Eskolweni nenze ntoni Vivi?* [*What did you do at school, Vivi?*] (Xho)

*Nenze ntoni esikolweni* [*What did you do at school*] *except playing?* (Xho-Eng)

*Uzakuyibek'apha* *next year* [*You're in for a tough time next year*] (Xho –Eng)

*Khawuthi iremote leyo* [*Pass me that remote*] (Xho – Eng)

---

*\*IsiXhosa parts have been underlined*

The difference in Tata’s language use, however, is the exclusion of Setswana. Even when Mma momentarily shifts her gaze and addresses Tata directly in Setswana – “*Ha ke mo utlwe*”, his languaging remains uninfluenced by Setswana. Thus, the two adult multilinguals’ languaging is similar in that they move fluidly across resources of more than one named language, but different in that Mma uses Setswana, isiXhosa and English while Tata uses only isiXhosa and English. The difference is unexpected if we consider that both parents have positioned each other’s languages in the language portrait discussion as being on the same level. But in Tata’s case, it may be that his Setswana is part of the collective African languages that he explained as “*I can hear a lot of them*” in extract 4B2. Even with that reality, it is quite noticeable how Mma has assimilated into and embodied isiXhosa language identity. This is suggestive of two elements - claims of power dynamics that place Nguni above Sotho languages (Maake, 2009) and gender power dynamics. Thus, isiXhosa (Nguni) seems to have dominance over Setswana (Sotho) in this instance; and the

language of the patriarch is used over matriarch. The gender power dynamics owing to 'culture' become more evident when Mma justifies assigning their children an isiXhosa home language identity in the next chapter; *"well because of the way we were raised and the kids normally take the father's side"* (Chapter 5, Extract 5E). Lastly, both parents easily identify single languages in their language portraits as their home languages but their actual languages practices reflect a multiple language identity.

Distinct from her parents' language practices, Viwe's language use remains consistently in English. However, her comprehension of isiXhosa appears to be quite developed for someone who rarely makes utterances in isiXhosa. When her father says *"uzakuyibek'apha next year"*, Viwe responds with laughter, a reaction that shows that she understands what her father has just uttered. The pitch and tone of the laughter is similar to the loud giggle she responds to her mother with in extract 4, which indicated that she was amused and in agreement with her family's accurate identification of the language she uses the most. When translated directly, *'uzakuyibek'apha'* means 'you will put it here'. Of course, when looking at Tata's utterance in context, it is clear that he is not referring to the meaning of the word in isolation. What he is referring to is the hard time that Viwe will face in Grade one if she carries on the rate she's going; being unable to tell what she did at school besides playing. For Viwe to understand what her father was saying without requiring translation or clarification gives a good indication of her development of receptive language competence in isiXhosa. Therefore, I argue that not only is Viwe a receptive multilingual, she displays features of an emergent multilingual, whose multilingualism is developing. Also, her language learning is context-based and embedded in the culture of the language rather than focused on grammatical competence. Thus I would argue that Viwe is engaged in language acquisition, a process whereby language is not taught explicitly (Schutz, 2007:1).

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***Extract 4C2: Emergent Bi/Multilingualism – 'She can Hear Motho waModimo'***

Bontle  
Mma

*Can you just try for one night, just for one night  
Are you gonna be scared to sleep alone?., hayi [No], don't influence, tshini!*

- [Hey!], mh? But mommy and daddy are just next door so Lolo\* can sleep in the other room is that fine?
- Viwe           Okay
- Mma           Are you sure you look scared (laughs)
- Bontle        Look at her
- Mma           (Laughs) heh? **Tlogela go ja so seo [Stop eating that]**
- Bontle        **Don't eat that**
- Mma           **Tsamaya go latlha [Go throw that away]**
- Bontle        **Go throw that**
- Mma           **She can hear motho wa modimo motlogele [God's child, leave her alone]**
- Bontle        **Yes mommy**
- Mma           **Heh Vivi?**
- Viwe           **Yes mama**
- Mma           So o tshaba go robala o nosi [So you're scared of sleeping alone]
- Viwe           Mh?
- Mma           O tshaba go robala o nosi, o tlo robala ko godimo [You are scared if sleeping alone, you will sleep at the top]
- Viwe           Which one
- Mma           Lolo's bed
- Bontle        You can sleep on mine
- Viwe           Okay
- Mma           Mh?
- Viwe           Okay mama

Another prominent language practice that features in this family's interactions is the translation strategy. When translation has been offered it has usually been from the older child to the younger one, and usually in Setswana to English but seldom from one African language to another. That is, between Setswana and isiXhosa in this case. This act of translation is shown in the previous extract 4C2 above where Mma reprimands Bontle for translating every word she says to Viwe - [*She can hear God's child, leave her alone!*].

Additionally, this extract reveals Viwe's participation in a multilingual interaction. She is not producing much language in the conversation but her responses indicate that she is participating meaningfully. As noted earlier, Viwe persists in responding in English regardless of the language of address. Also, the intervention of Bontle who is quick to translate Mma's utterances to Viwe makes it difficult to ascertain the degree of her meaningful participation. If we use a psycholinguistic analysis of Viwe's language she would be classified as a receptive bi/multilingual. Receptive bi/multilingualism is described in Rehbein et al (2011: 248) as the ability to

understand a variety of languages without producing them; it focuses on proficiency rather than communicative competence – an intuitive and functional control of language (Hymes 1972, 277). However, Viwe is language functional in this interaction. When Mma reprimands Bontle for intervening – “*She can hear motho wa modimo motlogele [God’s child, leave her alone]* she also verifies with Viwe that she understands when she asks: *Heh [Yes] Vivi?* Therefore, it would be fitting to view Viwe as an emergent bi/multilingual rather than simply a ‘lingua receptiva’ - a term form receptive bi/multilingualism (Rehbein et al, 2011; Herknrath, 2011). Emergent bi/multilingualism is more fitting because it describes language learning and acquisition as a process of potential development in children (Garcia, 2015: 322). It also positions children as competent rather than at a language deficit. Although Mma dismisses Bontle’s intervention based on her understanding that Viwe did not need translation, Bontle’s intervention is supportive of Viwe’s bi/multilingual development. Bontle’s advantage is having more years of language exposure to their parents’ languages. Extract 4C3 below shows the role of an older sibling in facilitating the language learning process of the emergent multilingual through translation and translanguaging. It is also interesting to notice the power-shift and interplay between Mma, Viwe and Bontle.

***Extract 4C3: Language Brokering ‘Oh so you must // Bend your back’***

---

Viwe                    *Mama look here I’m gonna slip, whoops!*  
Mma                    *(laughs)*  
Mma                    *Gqobis’iqolo tititin [bend your back] (singing)*  
Bontle                  *Mh-m it’s not gqobis’iqolo it’s gobis’iqolo (singing)*  
Mma                    *(laughs)*  
Viwe                    *Gobis’iqol (singing)*  
Bontle                  *Gobis’iqol’ tintintin gobisiqolo*  
Mma                    ***Oh so you must//***  
Bontle                  ***Bend your back***  
Mma                    *Ohhh*  
Bontle                  *And this look, gobis’iqolo’ //tsintsintsin gobis’iqol’//*  
                              *//tsintsintsin gobis’iqol’//*  
Viwe                    ***How do you bend your back!***  
Mma                    *Did you know Vivi that it says gobis’iqol’*  
Viwe                    *Mh-m*  
Mma                    *What did you think it was*

Viwe //(*indistinct*)//  
 Bontle Gqomis'iqolo (*laughs*)  
 Viwe Gqom'isiqol'  
 Mma Ohhh  
 Viwe Whoa!  
 Bontle *But say it fast, but I only realised because ooLutho told me*  
 Mma *Ohhh le wena mo bone ne o re gobis'iqol' gqobis'iqol' then they taught you how to say it*

---

The family's language practice shows creativity, fluidity and flexibility; even when they are engaged in acts of translation from one language code to another it seems to be done in a way of developing the language competency of one by the other who is more knowledgeable in said language. This spontaneity of language interaction is visible in the opening two lines of this extract where Mma and Viwe were in the kitchen doing house chores. When Viwe alerts her mom to the potential hazard of her slipping "*I'm gonna slip, whoops!*" Mma, spontaneously breaks out into lyrics of a popular local genre, house music. Although the genre, house music, is international, the South African version of the genre is common in a variety of South African languages. It is also one of this genre's characteristics to use language flexibly by intermeshing various African languages including English. When these languages are being used they are often not in their standardized forms. When Mma breaks into a house song '*Gobis'iqolo*' [*bend your back*], it is in response to the word '*slip*' that Viwe has used. Although *gqobi'siqolo* does not mean slipping, it can be argued that Mma has used it here to tell Viwe of what could happen if she slipped and fell; she would '*phul'iqolo*' [*break her back*], a Zulu expression. Again, Mma did not say *phul'iqolo*, however, I suspect that Mma might have made an error in making a language selection for a verb she wished to use; she used '*gobisa*' [*bend*] instead of '*phula*' (*break*). Interestingly, *phul'iqolo* and *gobis'iqolo* are both popular house songs; a point which could have contributed to mom not having selected the correct one when responding to Viwe. Also, these expressions are in isiZulu, a language belonging to the Nguni languages group, which does not appear in Mma's linguistic repertoire. Her heritage language is Setswana, a language belonging to the Sotho languages group.

Similarly, isiZulu also is not mentioned as one of the languages in Bontle's repertoire. However, unlike Mma, isiXhosa, also an Nguni language is Tata's

heritage language, which both parents claim to be their children's home language. Also, in joining in the conversation, Bontle acts as a multilingual brokering expert. Firstly, by correcting her mother and sister she positions herself as an expert both in popular culture music and in languaging. She gives the correct articulation and pronunciation of the '*gobis*' mother articulates as '*gqobis*'. Mma is not the only one who struggles with articulation of this isiZulu phrase, Viwe also mispronounces the word. What is even more intriguing in Bontle's expertise in helping her family learn articulation and translating the meaning of the word is her admission of having been a novice as well; she admits to having been helped by her family in the Eastern Cape in learning the articulation and meaning of the word. This is indicative of the language socialisation extending beyond the nuclear family to including extended family (Also, she points out the articulation technicalities; that it is easy to get the word wrong if it is said hurriedly).

Extract 4C3 shows not only the language expertise between a mother and a child, and between an older sibling and her sister who often gets offered translations as means of developing her multilingualism; it also shows the influence of spaces beyond the home. In this instance, extended family and popular culture music become language spaces in which one or more of the Ngxanga family members navigate and gain language experience. Although the family has defined prominent language codes in their family (isiXhosa, English & Setswana), spaces beyond the home, like popular culture music, influence the language diversity. Through this external influence Bontle's repertoire has expanded allowing her to bring in isiZulu at home through explaining what *gobis'iqolo* means. Also, the way that Mma uses language with emergent multilingual Viwe is similar to how language acquisition takes place during the language development stages of a young child. That is, language is not explicitly taught, rather, a child learns it through being exposed to or experiencing it (Schutz, 2007:1). Even with all the evidence of language dynamism and translanguaging practices of the Ngxanga family, who use their heritage languages in their home and with extended family members, it is undeniable that English occupies a significant space in this family particularly for Viwe.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The family's language histories revealed the parents' heritage languages and glimpses into the language experiences of their earlier years. Viwe's language portrait and discussion revealed her linguistic repertoire - the dominance of English and the emerging development of African languages. Although she produces only English, she is able to participate in conversation with her parents when they speak isiXhosa, Setswana or when they translanguage. While both parents claim their heritage languages as their home languages, their language practices reveal that English forms part of their languages. They foreground their Xhosa and Tswana ethnicities as markers of their language identity rather than claiming a multilingual identity. They display language heteroglossia through the practice of translanguaging in their day-to-day interactions at home. Translanguaging features strongly as a tool for mediating language together with the older sibling who uses her experience to mediate for Viwe, even when it is not necessary. The family has apparent strategies around language based on the parents's language experiences and language aspiration. The next chapter focuses on identifying the Family Language Policy influencing their language, their home language identity as well as the hegemonic influence of English in the home and school domain.

## 5. FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY, LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE AND IDENTITY

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### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the concept of Family Language Policy (FLP) to indicate the language ideologies of the Ngxanga family, and the consideration and planning they have in place to fulfil their language aspiration. I particularly highlight the complexities of decisions the parents have to make regarding the place and role of African languages and English in their home and extended family, and their children's schools. I also provide a discussion on language identity and interrogate the use of the terms 'mother tongue'/'home language'. I show the complexities that the concept of home language identity presents for multilingual children for their own sense of identity and the identity they have to assimilate to at school.

### 5.2 Family Language Policy

Extract 5A below is from a follow up interview with Viwe's parents where I had asked them to reflect on their experience and feelings about their children's schools being English medium schools. It reveals the parents' sense of responsibility in teaching of African family languages; language ideologies and language histories informing practice; as well as beliefs and attitudes about English.

#### ***Extract 5A: Language Values, Beliefs, Attitudes and Expectations***

---

- Mma For us **I don't think there is any problem** cos that's why we're trying to **we knew** that moving here was gonna be was gonna be or **exposed them to that** I mean (hm) the schools are different and all that (hm) so so **I don't think it's a concern//**
- Babalwa The language of the school
- Mma Ja
- Babalwa The fact that it's English medium school
- Mma And again **we feel that it's up to us** to **expose them** to what we want so that's why **we took the initiative** that uhm every year they either in Taung actually they go to both in a year on **both sides** so eh uhm June or December they are in Taung or Engcobo, so uh I think it's the **parents' responsibility** to expose the kids to what they want
- Babalwa Whatever language?
- Mma Ja ja //
- Babalwa They want them to learn okay fair enough
- Mma So uhm again **I think it makes it easier for them to also socialise** with other kids as well who speak different languages (hm-h) so **English** is just there for them to be able to **interact with others** and//
- Tata And and it's a language of learning which **if** the schools are **teaching in English all the concepts** (hm) it is also **important to that they in that environment** or

- that they **don't struggle** with learning because//
- Mma Like we did (laughs)
- Babalwa (laughs) about that that eh, cos I think you might have mentioned
- Mma Ndim [*It's me*]
- Babalwa Or was it you okay
- Mma **I struggled with English** I realised//
- Babalwa So then you say so they won't have those issues they'll be focusing on content you said
- Tata Yes
- Babalwa Ja
- Tata Yes yes, so so I think that's that's what was **important in terms of the choice of school** knowing that uh they get the language as early as possible (hm-h) and then and then uh and then **at least the learning side will go on** (hm-h) it's just that their **identity of who they** are now, in order for them to **know other languages** (hm-h)
- Mma **It's our responsibility**
- Tata Then then we know that there are **not gonna get that at school** (hm) like a lot of things that the kids are not gonna learn at school that **we have to teach them** at home//

---

Mma begins by defending their choice of English medium school and proceeds to elaborate on how she sees English as being an advantage that is deliberately chosen for their children. Her emphatic use of the words: *"I don't think there is any problem"* and repeated in *"I don't think it's a concern"* in a single turn indicate the confidence she has in their choice of school. She expresses full consciousness of what language encounter their children would have moving to their current residential area (and schools). Knowing the kind of language experience their children would be exposed to, which they do not object to, the parents seem to have made well-considered language decisions along with their plan to exposing their children to heritage languages. Mma explains the initiative of taking their children to their families in their respective home towns annually as being motivated by the responsibility they feel towards exposing the children to the languages they "want", isiXhosa and Setswana. Moreover, she explicitly mentions how it is *"the parents' responsibility to expose the kids to what they want"*. There seems to be two language interests expressed by Mma here. One is the idea that that their choice of suburban school fulfils the English exposure part of what they want; and the other being the strategy of sending their children to their hometowns, ensuring that their children get exposed to their African home languages. Further, Mma mentions the added advantage that English brings for their children, which is to make it easier to socialise with other children who speak different language, adding that English aides

their interaction with others. Mma, sees English as the 'lingua franca', a common language that enables people who do not share the same home language/s to communicate. Thus, Mma's rationale suggests that English brings convenience in socialising with others; moreover, it affords social inclusion for their children at school.

Tata extends the rationale for their choice of school by introducing a literacy consideration to their language plan. He points out the reality of English being the LOLT. Also, he uses the conjunction 'if' to show the connection between the LOLT, language exposure and learning experience: "*if the schools are teaching in English all the concepts (hm) it is also important to that they are in that environment or that they don't struggle*". Thus, the justification he makes is the importance of a match between the school language and the children's language. His rationale is similar to the school's admission policy regarding language (Appendix B); it is required that a prospective learner must be sufficiently proficient in English prior to admission to avoid prejudicing them in their academic progression. It is then unsurprising that the parents are seemingly unbothered by the English-medium school and the invisibility of African languages there in comparison. It is consistent with what they want – taking initiative and responsibility for home languages exposure and teaching at home while their children get to be immersed in English which Tata believes will assist them in learning concepts at school.

It seems that the parents are justified in wanting their children to be highly competent in the language that the school values, English. A child who does not fit the school's language plan will likely not be admitted; they will be considered to be language deficient and thus deviant to the school's basic admission requirement. The parents' language histories appear to be instrumental in their valorising of English. Mma admits in the extract above that she "struggled with English". Further, Tata again motivates for the importance of the choice of school, echoing his previous sentiments about the correlation between language competence and academic success. He also reveals another language ideology relating to learning; the belief that earlier exposure to English will give the children a better chance of success at school. Even though he seems to be valorising English on the one hand, he reiterates Mma's point about the importance of learning other languages, but also re-emphasises their sense of responsibility in teaching languages other than English.

Additionally, he recognises it as a responsibility towards crafting a sense of identity. Because the parents recognise English as valuable based on their schooling language histories while also seeing the importance of their African languages as an identity marker, they resort to a language policy that creates a language binary: African languages as the responsibility of the parents while the school is apportioned English teaching responsibility.

Both parents seem to accept that the school will take care of the English teaching while they assume responsibility of African language teaching and learning at home. As such, the parents absolve the school of any responsibility towards teaching of any other language besides English. Evident in the parents' language ideologies is the lack of consideration of the possibility that the school could be a site of learning many languages, including their own, and learning through many languages. That is, the school is capable of being multilingual – representing and mirroring the interests and practices of multilingual homes and societies. The irony is that the expectation of a multilingual society is stated in the preamble to the 1997 LIEP. Despite this expectation, it is not surprising that the parents are not envisioning such a possibility. Their personal experience of language and schooling and the realities of what language choices they are presented with through former 'Model C' schools tell them that English is the only legitimate academic language, and without it, one is in danger of academic failure.

Viwe's parents' lived language experience and aspirations appear to be one of the conditions that have inspired their language plan. Annually, they send their children to the North-West and Eastern Cape provinces where their extended families reside, in pursuit of diverse cultural and language experience for their children. Their expressed values show that they leave language planning for English to the school but their actual language practices at home show that they support Viwe's English development. They buy English storybooks and enable her to speak in English. Consequently, they believe that by immersing the children in their heritage languages during holiday periods, they will afford them fluency in Setswana and isiXhosa, in addition to English that they are already immersed in at home and school. Although they identify enabling periods of African language immersion as part of their language strategy, they do not recognise their input in enabling the English language development. What is apparent here is that both English and

African languages form part of the Ngxanga family's language policy. They recognise the need for language maintenance (Cekaite & Kheirkhah, 2015: 320) due to their English dominant environment, but also acknowledge their current environment as necessitating a partial language shift towards English.

Furthermore, continuing from the interview above, Tata had this to say about the everyday practicalities of their language plan:

### Extract 5B1: Language Plan

---

- Tata Hm so if for example we did colours and then there's a colour we didn't do and **she's like okay what is this colour** then that's//
- Babalwa Iqale kanjalo [*That is how it started*]
- Tata Ja but **but it's a deliberate effort** (hm) or sometimes say today sithetha [we speak] isiXhosa (hm)
- Mma (laughs)
- Babalwa Who's the first one to break it between the//
- Tata **L'umncinci** [*the younger one*]
- Babalwa L'umncinci [*the younger one*] (laughs), okay
- Tata **But uyazama** [*she tries*] now cos she **ebekade erefus-a** [used to refuse] //completely//
- Babalwa //Completely//
- Tata **To participate**
- Babalwa Oh
- Mma You speak to her in either language **she'll respond in English**
- Tata Uyabona ngokuya bebesiya eNgcobo, **ubuye ebalisa ngezitory ngesiXhosa** [*You see when they went to Engcobo, she came back telling about stories in isiXhosa*]
- Babalwa Oh
- Mma I think it's the **pressure as well** cos the **others can speak the language** and she realises that//
- Babalwa Cousins
- Tata Hm
- Babalwa Okay okay //
- Mma Hm//
- 

Evidently, this family is deliberate about home language exposure and their role as parents in this language plan. For example, they have attempted to make deliberate use of isiXhosa at times. This deliberate language plan includes coming up with colour names in English and translating them (Extract 5B); explicit language learning exercises and sending the children away for language immersion experiences seems to be meeting their aspirations for their children. While the parents make an

effort in the teaching of their African languages, this extract shows that Viwe is an active participant of her language socialisation – “*she’s like okay what is this colour*”. Both Mkhize (2016: 45) and Reynolds (2013: 2) attest to children being agentic in opportunities to learn but also to resist a language. By asking for a translation of a colour from English into isiXhosa, she is displaying a vested interest in African languages as well. Moreover, Tata believes that their efforts are paying off. Although Viwe largely speaks English and is likely to be the first one to “break the rules” of speaking the language that the family has decided on for that day or activity, Tata is quick to recognise the benefits of sending the children to their families: “*But uyazama [she tries] now cos she ebekade erefus-a [used to refuse] completely ...Uyabona ngokuya bebesiya eNgcobo, ubuye ebalisa ngezitory ngesiXhosa [You see when they went to Engcobo, she came back telling about stories in isiXhosa]*”. Mma shares the same sentiments, and also believes that the company of cousins who speak their heritage language affords Viwe the necessary pressure to acquire and learn the language.

The families’ strategies employed in their language plan reflect the responsibility they accept: to teach their children their heritage languages at home. In my view, they accept it because they express no expectations for the school to teach any other language beyond English and subject content. In a follow-up interview, they state beliefs regarding the standard of African languages at their children’s schools:

**Extract 5B2: isiXhosa – ‘But it’s simple language they’ve made it easy’**

---

Mma	<b>In isiXhosa they teach them isiXhosa but in their books it’s like it’s basic</b> isiXhosa it’s not like//
Tata	//So so//
Babalwa	//Can// you make an example?
Tata	So
Mma	They will uhm kuthwa yintoni [ <i>What is it called</i> ]? They’ll write,, it’s like words they put together eish I can’t even think about//
Babalwa	Okay//
Mma	<b>But it’s simple language they’ve made it easy</b>
Tata	And and again most of the things they do when they teach isiXhosa (hm-h) they’re teaching them how to communicate <b>it’s like they’re teaching uh an English kid and then there’s a lot of translation</b>
Babalwa	Okay?
Tata	There’s a lot of uh uh translation from uhm uh uhm uh molo [ <i>Hello</i> ] hello
Babalwa	Eh-e [ <i>Yes</i> ]
Tata	In Afrikaans that happens as well
Babalwa	Okay
Tata	Like they give them words in Afrikaans

Babalwa So it's uh uhm, conversational  
 Tata Yes  
 Babalwa Uh Xhosa amd conversational Afrikaans  
 Mma Hm  
 Tata Yes  
 Mma Ja ja  
 Tata So so so when they are being taught isiXhosa they use a lot of English (hm)  
 Babalwa **Is Xhosa being assessed?**  
 Mma Hm  
 Tata **Third language**  
 Babalwa **Third language, what they call Second Additional Language**  
 Mma Ja ja  
 Tata Hm

---

Through their expressions 'it's basic isiXhosa' (Mma) and "it's like they're teaching English kids" (Tata), both parents are critical of the level of isiXhosa at school. In this instance, they are referring to their older child, Bontle's, school which follows a similar language plan as Viwe's school. A choice of isiXhosa as a subject option, usually Second Additional Language (SAL), only features from Grade 4. Mma believes the standard of isiXhosa is low based on the written work she has seen in Bontle's books. She seems more dissatisfied with the written isiXhosa than the conversational – she finds the language too simple. This suggests an expectation that Mma may be having about school. Because they already accept the responsibility of teaching their children they may be expecting the school to take care of the academic work – in literacy, written work seems to be assigned more value than oral work. Towards the end of the extract when Tata tells of isiXhosa being a third language – it puts some perspective on Mma's concern on the language being too simple and easy. In my view, the low level at which isiXhosa is offered at their children's school (third language) is indicative of the language hierarchy which most values English. They seem to be undermining the teaching strategy of using translation in the classroom – the irony is that they learnt English in the same way in their primary school when all they could speak was their home language. Tata's comment that the teaching is targeting English speakers is significant in reflecting on the idealised learner when school language policies are drafted. The reported level of isiXhosa offered suggests that it is not intended for isiXhosa home language speakers.

### 5.3 Monolingual Norm Myth

For Multilingual families, home language identity is not as easy to articulate as might be the case for a family with a long history of generational monolingualism. As discussed in chapter 2 (Banda, 2009, Rampton 1990, Tshotsho 2013, McKinney 2017) the notion of mother tongue is not without its complexities. The language portrait activity analysed in Chapter 4 has indicated some of the identity complexities experienced in a young family who use language flexibly (translanguaging); whose adults' language history differs from their children's experience and context; and who have a seemingly solid family language plan. Extract 5C1 gives insight into Viwe's language experience, a combination of perceptions and apparent experiences from the parents and children, respectively.

It is unsurprising that Viwe considers English as a language that is dominant in her linguistic repertoire. She has frequently displayed a preference for it, explicitly, regardless of what other language she is addressed in by her family. Extract 5C1 illustrates this. Extracts 5C1 and 5C2 are from a spontaneous interview with Viwe. Preceding my interview with Viwe I needed to find out what language she preferred being interviewed in; similarly, the same offer to interview the family in the language/s of their choice was presented.

#### Extract 5C1:

Babalwa uViwe andiqondi uyafun'ukuza  
*[I don't think Viwe wants to come]*  
 Mma **I don't think she'll even understand**  
 Tata //Uzounderstanda// *//[she will understand]//*  
 Babalwa //Uzounderstanda// *//[she will understand]//*  
 Mma You think so?

---

#### Extract 5C2:

Babalwa **Abantwana bayaqonda** *[children understand]*, can I ask you a question?  
 Viwe Hm-h  
 Babalwa **Ndikubuze ngesiXhosa Tswana**  
*[Should I ask you in isiXhosa], Tswana*  
 or must I ask you in English. Which  
 one do you choose?  
 Viwe Uhmmm  
 Babalwa There's Xhosa here [referring to the  
 language portrait], English in the  
 middle and close to mommy here is

Tswana

Viwe Uhhh  
 Babalwa Which what language must I use?  
 Viwe **The middle**  
 Babalwa I must use the middle so I must use  
**English**

---

Firstly, I must express that Viwe was extremely shy, especially in the first few days of my visits. This was my observation of her at home and at school in instances where questions were directed at her, specifically. As seen in extracts 5C1 and 5C2, much prompting became necessary to get her talking. One of the interesting things to note in extract 5C2 is the first turn, which was my way of reassuring Mma that Viwe would be able to understand my question. When Viwe did not join us immediately after I had called her, I had thought that she did not wish to join us “[*I don't think Viwe wants to come*]”, but Mma on the other hand was more concerned about whether she would understand questions about language choice and home language as can be noted in extract 5C1 above.

Contrary to the concern expressed by Mma in extract 5C1, Viwe's final response of “the middle” in extract 5C2, meaning English, indicates that Viwe had no difficulty understanding the question and was able to make a language choice, even though it was made with minimal words on her side. Another factor to note in my interview with Viwe is her actual response, the language she chose to be interviewed in and how she expresses this choice. It corroborates well with the language her family associated her with during the language portrait activity. English is the language that she predominantly converses in, and now the language she explicitly chooses to be interviewed in. In my opinion, it would be premature however to make the determination Viwe has chosen English exclusively as her language.

Lastly, I consider the parents' involvement in the conversation. Upon seeing that Viwe seems to be experiencing difficulty answering the question, Tata begins to doubt if Viwe understands the concept of language: “*Do you know what a language is?*” It is interesting that Tata's question is not about whether she understands what ‘a home language’ is, but directed at questioning her understanding of the concept ‘a language’. Judging by the simultaneous laughter of both parents after Viwe

responded with a no “*mh-m*”. I would say that the parents doubt whether their daughter understands the concept of language. In retrospect, my interjection in giving my opinion about what Viwe understands and has chosen might have been a bit premature. But this is telling of the experiences and biases that we as researchers carry to our research site. My experience with children (and my own children) might have played a role in my assessment of Viwe’s participation. Although I problematize my intervening here, Extract 5D below provides some clarity in Viwe’s understanding of language.

## 5.4 Language Identity

The concept home language identity can present complexities for multilinguals whose linguistic repertoires and language practices are changing and expanding over time. Although multilinguals with a long history of monolingual heritage language may easily identify a single home language using ethnicity, younger multilinguals whose parents come from different ethnic groups may experience difficulty in choosing a home language. Further, terminology such as ‘mother tongue’ identity adds to the complexity. In this section I present the perspectives of parents and children in claiming language identity.

### 5.4.1 Parents’ Perspectives

The extract below is from an interview with Viwe’s parents, some moments after I had a brief conversation with Viwe about what she considers to be her home language:

#### Extract 5D: *Home Language/s*

---

- Babalwa     Okay uh so so let’s go back now to (laughs) your interview  
 Babalwa     Uhm tell me what would you say uh your kids’ home language is uh if you had to tick a form? We’ve seen-//  
 Mma         Well because of **the way** we were raised (hm) and the kids **normally take the father’s side**  
 Babalwa     Okay  
 Mma         Ja in **that way** sisiXhosa [*Yes, in that way it is isiXhosa*]  
 Babalwa     So Xhosa because the surname is alsooo?//  
 Mma         Whoa **even if the surname was something else**, but it’s... ja [yes]  
 Babalwa     Okay  
 Mma         Ja [*yes*]

- Babalwa // (indistinct)//  
 Tata // (indistinct)//  
 Mma Yijonge apha baby, **but uhm if in all honesty, they speak English more than any other language** (hm) ja but **obviously efomini sizothi sithetha isiXhosa thina apha kulo mzi** [*ja but obviously in the form we will say we speak isiXhosa here in this house*]
- Babalwa Okay, why do you why do you say isiXhosa?  
 Mma Because we are **only given one choice** and **they know Xhosa more than uhm isiTswana** (hm) because if it was Tswana more than isiXhosa so then I would say **Tswananyana** there (hm) maybe but then heh! (laughs) because of like I said **the way** we were raised I think it's actually it's actually funny because//
- Tata I think I think for me to answer that question **I don't even think about it sisiXhosa**
- Babalwa Okay?  
 Tata So so so **it doesn't mean if i language awuyithethi** [*you don't speak a language*]//
- Babalwa **Ayoyakho** [it's not yours]//  
 Tata If I was born in Kenya or wherever neh (hm) or I went there and now isiXhosa and isasazi (hm) at all (hm) my **home language** still remains (hm) **what home is** (hm)
- Babalwa Okay? So//  
 Tata So so now it comes back to that context abethetha ngayo uba uh uh uh it's almost **linked to nationality** if if if uhm uh.,, if your father is Irish you'll always be Irish so if utata wakho ngumXhosa **uzosoloko ungumXhosa therefore nehome language yakho izakuba sisiXhosa** [*so if your father is Xhosa you will always be Xhosa and your home language will be isiXhosa*]
- Babalwa Nokuba awusithethi [*Even if you don't speak it*]  
 Tata **Idilutation isuka apho** [*Dilution comes from there*] (oh okay) that's why **ndidefaulta** [*I default*] **very quick**
- T, B & M (laughter)  
 Tata It's Xhosa  
 Babalwa Xhosa e-e  
 Tata And **akukho noba ndicinge** ukuba uyakwazi ukusithetha nesisixhosa ndisibhalileyo [*there is not even a need for me to think whether you know even this isiXhosa that I have written*] but//
- Babalwa So home language has nothing to do in your opinion with fluency  
 Tata With Ja  
 Mma Ja ja [*yes yes*], again with us **because our parents were both speaking one language** (hm) **so it was easy** ubuyazi ba kuthwa ungumntwana **wakulo tatakho** [*you would know that it is said that you belong to your dad's family*] that thing and as much as that was the case waitse gore ha ore [*you know that when you say*] my home language ke Setswana so if I'm filling a form **for myself** my home language **ke Setswana**
- Babalwa That's because there's just one language ja [*yes*]  
 Mma There is only **one language** ja [*yes*] so it doesn't have to be la nto 'ba [*that thing of*] actually I like my mom's side more (hm) so I think **this one** is gonna struggle [*pointing at Viwe*] especially Bontle because **she's always reminding me that but mama ke** [*I am*] **Motswana as well** (hm) so l//
-

From the onset, the way that my question is framed in turn two exposes both my use of the monolingual ideology of single home language and my discomfort with this ideology when I qualify my question with the add-on: “if you had to tick a box”. This shows my critique of my own question as an artificial one. Firstly, to enquire about one’s language identity in singular, “*your kids’ home language*” is to assume that there is only one language that the said people identify with. The question is premised on a monoglossic ideology, which I will argue largely stems from a Eurocentric idealisation of language. In attempt to get a direct answer, the second part of my question, “*uh if you had to tick a form?*”, further compels the interviewee to conceptualise home language identity as a single named language, an ideology that she is perhaps accustomed to, having completed school enrolment forms for Bontle and Viwe (Appendix D: school application form). Analysing the way I have asked the question about filling a form shows my cognisance that this question is less about the language practices and more about people being forced to answer in completing bureaucratic processes like form-filling. Interestingly, as narrow as the question is, Mma finds no difficulty in offering a response initially, which might be attributed to this practice she has been socialised into. Repeatedly, she refers to the ‘way’ she was raised and how that ‘way’ dictates that isiXhosa becomes the children’s home language, affording no status or power to the mother’s heritage language, Setswana, even though it features in the family’s language portraits. Seemingly, this ‘way’ that Mma is talking about, is a culture that she has been socialised into; one that not only assigns monolingual identity, but that shows the patriarchal norm in language identity. It could be argued that translanguaging across Setswana, isiXhosa and English is ‘the’ home language of the Ngxangas, perhaps a consequence of multilingualism that is intergenerational coupled with urban language experience that is largely English. Based on the language practices and experience of this family, I argue that the expectation for any multilingual to have a single language identity is both narrow and unrealistic. If the power that ‘culture’ has afforded patriarchy in language identity is hypothetically stripped away, and the monoglossic language ideology imposed on multilinguals by dominant social spaces temporarily suspended, what meaning would the notion of home language/‘mother-tongue’ identity assume? Is the notion of home language/mother tongue relevant in this family whose linguistic repertoire can be viewed as fluid? The notion of home language identity gives an impression of a false boundary between the home and the

school domains. That is, it supports the idea that people have one language that they speak at home, which does not necessarily cross between socialisation spaces. Although I find the term 'home language' more progressive than the gendered 'mother-tongue' that Makoni & Meinhof (2003), Sebba (2000) and Winkler (1997) problematized, both terms create difficulties for multilingual families whose (bi/multilingual) home language practices are often mismatched with what is on offer as Home Language (HL) at the former Model C schools they send their children to.

Mma attributes the idea of home language identity for their children to the 'way' they were raised. She considers it a norm to take the cultural identity of the father, dictating the children's 'mother tongue' as isiXhosa. When she says '*But in all honesty*', she appears to be admitting and acknowledging the language reality of her children: that of having a predominantly English language repertoire. Also, '*But in all honesty*' is perhaps an admission of what that language repertoire could be communicating – possibly a mismatch between the language identity, which they as parents have assigned to their children against what the tongues of their children seem to produce, or the language identity they claim for themselves as children, considering that their language practices differ from their parents. That is, even though Mma says isiXhosa is their children's home language she knows that their children, especially Viwe, do not speak much of it at home. Interestingly, when the suggestion is made that perhaps the isiXhosa identity is linked to the surname that the children have taken up, Mma is quick to dismiss that idea. However, the hesitation and the 'but' that follows, together with a series of close ended '*ja*'s, suggest that there is more she could say regarding the subject.

Despite what the parents know their children to speak, Mma is unambiguous in her decision that, in the forms they fill out, they will indicate an isiXhosa identity. This is evidenced by Mma and Tata's unanimous belief that a child takes the language identity of the father. Seemingly, Mma is staying true to the 'way' they have been raised - the norm of taking the father's language identity. When elaborating on her stance, Mma gives two reasons: parents are given one choice and the children know isiXhosa more than Setswana. Furthermore, she adds that if the converse was true, then perhaps Setswana would be considered, but she uses the suffix '*nyana*' in her response, to denote 'a little bit' or that Setswana would stand a chance to be mentioned, but not devoid of isiXhosa. This minimisation of her heritage language

when set up against isiXhosa is an indication of the cultural and social hierarchy that assigns power to one gender over the other in determining language identity of the parents' offspring.

Furthermore, the views expressed by Tata assert a different confidence than seen in Mma's response about the language identity of their children. He sees the matter as being settled and non-debatable; that the child's mother tongue is isiXhosa, despite his spouse's heritage language being Setswana. As if clarifying the issue of English clearly dominating Viwe's tongue, he maintains that language competency in a said language does not determine one's linguistic identity. That is, the fact that their children, particularly Viwe are seemingly more fluent in English than their heritage language does not disqualify them from claiming isiXhosa home language/ mother tongue identity. Like Nongogo's (2007) research on African language speaking children, his example about the Kenyan and Irish father supports this. Also, in his example about the Irish dad, he reiterates Mma's earlier sentiments about being socialised into a paternal heritage identity, hence his confident declaration of their children's home language being isiXhosa.

Considering that the Ngxangas are a multilingual family who use language flexibly, drawing from their full linguistic repertoire when they communicate with one another, particularly the parents, I find Tata's comment 'idilution isuka apho ke' [*dilution comes from there*], that's why ndidefaulta [*I default*] very quickly' both intriguing and rather idealistic. Notwithstanding that father is using three languages, isiXhosa, Setswana and English, in a single utterance, he intertwines and uses the two languages creatively, contradicting his very own language ideology which expresses language purism. '*idilution*' and '*ndidefaulta*' are examples of this creative and flexible language use, which can be described as codeswitching, code meshing, or simply translanguaging. The irony here is his use of translanguaging to express purist views like in Nongogo's research (2007: 48) where one of the learners claimed their Pedi ethnicity as pure by stating "*Ke moPedi feela, full time!*" The verb here from '*ndidefaulta*' [*I am defaulting*] is default expressed in the context of reverting. What Tata is expressing here is what I would describe as his tacit perception about the implication of a language heteroglossic family owing to mobility. He seems to be of the view that the heritage language is the default set language that he goes back to when there is confusion about identity. The defaulting could

also be referring to the way they were raised, culturally, that according to him simplifies language identity whenever there seems to be identity disorientation. From the sentiments expressed by Tata, I would argue that, although he embraces multilingualism and takes no issue with himself and his family translanguaging, he also takes pride in his heritage by wanting to retain his language and cultural identity of being Xhosa and speaking isiXhosa.

Also, considering that Tata has been talking about family mobility and children whose heritage language and language of proficiency are mismatched, I would propose the dilution he is referring to here is that of language identity, hence his quick claim that he 'defaults very quickly'. This means that the heritage language of a multilingual person (or someone whose language fluency does not match their heritage language) would be their default identity. Tata also communicates that human mobility creates 'impure' language conditions or confusion about language identity; sharing that he defaults quickly could be his expression of retaining language purity or heritage language identity. Thus, for him, filling out a form inquiring about the language identity of their children comes with no hesitation, even though he knows that their proficiency may be questioned.

Lastly, Mma, speaking to the idea of a mismatch between heritage language and proficiency, defends and validates the confusion that might be ensuing with their children, by acknowledging that they had a different language history to hers and Tata's. This is an important factor to consider when understanding the language dynamics of the Ngxangas. Both Mma and Tata's parents, respectively, spoke the same language when back in the villages where they grew up. For them, their parents' identification of what language identity their children would assume was simple. In addition, although Mma and Tata had English as the official medium of instruction in their respective schools, having the advantage of sharing the same heritage language with their teachers, they report that they were largely taught in their mother tongues. They also did not grow up in a large city suburb or environment where English dominated. In fact, in one of the interviews with Tata, he confesses to having been pretty much taught all of his school subjects in isiXhosa, narrating how their isiXhosa speaking teachers had to adopt a language translation strategy in order for them to follow textbook content and concepts that were in English "*No no no everything is in English but u u utitshala uzakuendapha esenza*

*umzekelo ngesiXhosa ukwenzel'ba siyiundastende le nto ithethwayo ukuba kuthe'thukuthiwani ngale nto [the the teacher will end up making an example in isiXhosa so that we understand what is being discussed, what is meant by this]".* What he commended to be a great strategy, would also work to his detriment later on when he arrived in a tertiary institution where success depended largely on fluency in English, which he was not confident in "*then ke ngoku [now] it's only now like I say in Pretoria I started having to now if I wanted to ask for anything now, now I must speak English which is like even though I have passed matric but I've never spoken the language at all*". Consequently, both Tata and Mma experienced difficulty adjusting to the medium of instruction of their university in the first year of study, after having enjoyed language support in their heritage languages in their respective high schools.

Reflecting on her childhood, Mma also reiterated that it was "Setswana all the way' in all social domains she interacted in. In view of the parents' language experiences growing up, it becomes clear that even when children are taught in their 'mother tongues', if these languages are not also used in other domains viz universities and workplaces, the children become disadvantaged. Similar to Mma and Tata's experience, even though their schools supported their home languages, superficially, the power and dominance of English prevailed when it came to tertiary institutions. Perhaps what their schooling language encounters indicate is the polarization and separation of languages between the home and schools as problematic. These views deny the language reality of multilinguals where people are expected to perform in either one language or another, that is, to act as monolinguals. They also create a perception that language spaces have imaginary boundaries that are not permeable.

Mma raises an intriguing point of how having one language, or parents who share the same language, simplifies mother-tongue identity for their children "because our parents were both speaking one language (hm) so it was easy ubuyazi ba kuthwa ungumntwana wakulo tatakho [*you would know that it is said that you belong to your dad's family*]" (Extract 5D). This implies that multilingualism presents a complexity of language identity for that individual. In my view the child, in this case, who comes from a language diverse background is left with very little room to assume a language identity, where monoglossia is the norm. They can either use the

patriarchal system, where it is considered the norm to take up paternal identity or choose just one language from their language repertoire, as it is assumed that a person has one mother tongue. Perhaps it is for this very reason that the notion of ‘mother tongue’ is problematized (Makoni & Meinoff, 2003; McKinney, 2017: 41; Mills, 2004:161; Sebba, 2000; Winkler, 1997). A different use of terminology could be useful in eliminating some of these identity complexities.

Similarly to Mma’s observation of complexity for associating oneself with a particular language if your parents’ heritage languages differ, in a previous study I made the same observation about two multilingual parents; the mother whose parents’ heritage languages’ were the same, tshiVenda, had no difficulty claiming tshiVenda language identity (Molate, 2016: 28). For the other adult in the study, however, both the question and notion of mother-tongue identity were rejected. Having come from a polygamous household with a variety of home languages, he opted for not claiming heritage language identity; rather, he chose to associate himself with English, a language that he saw as offering upward social mobility. This was also the language he had now chosen for his young daughter and household. Thus, from the case studies of the Ngxanga and my previous study (Molate, 2016), I would argue that the notion of ‘mother tongue’ identity assumes a monolingual family experience and this is a monoglossic concept.

#### 5.4.2 Language Identity - Child’s Perspective

Asking Viwe about her home language was challenging. Considering that she is a rather reserved child who was a few days shy of being six years, it was unsurprising to hear short responses. Realising these dynamics, I became very animated in my gestures to try to get her to relax and to use her hands to respond if she did not wish to use her words. Prior to the question in the first turn, we had just asked her to choose which language she preferred being interviewed in. isiXhosa, English and Setswana were the three languages she could choose from; she chose English.

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#### Extract 5E:

Babalwa      Okay fine I’m happy to use English, what’s your home language?  
 Viwe            ,, **my language**  
 Babalwa      Yes what’s your language? What’s Viwe’s language?

Viwe (silence)  
 Babalwa Do you want to think about it?  
 Viwe ,, **I don't know**  
 Babalwa Okay, do you wanna tell me another day?  
 Tata Do you know what **a language is?**  
 Viwe ,, **mh-m**  
 Mma //(laughs)//  
 Tata //(laughs)//  
 Babalwa She knows **she's just chosen she wants English** but it's fine you don't have to tell me but you can think about it and maybe tell can I tell you what my uhm ohm language is?,, I've got three,, Xhosa,, English and a little bit of Tswana,, and you?

Viwe **A little bit**  
 Babalwa A little bit of?  
 Viwe **Of of Tswana**  
 Babalwa A little bit of Tswana and?  
 Viwe **And Xhosa**  
 Babalwa How much is the Xhosa is it this big (stretching arms wide), this big (drawing hands closer) or this big (putting cupped hands together)!?  
 Viwe **(laughs) this big** (drawing hands closer)  
 Babalwa Oh this big, uh how much is the English?  
 Viwe **This big** (starts off with hands drawn closer then slowly stretches wide)  
 Babalwa Sma- is it huge!  
 Viwe **(laughs)**  
 Babalwa Sho that's wide, let me guess Tswana I think it's in the middle (screeching sound)  
 Babalwa Okay this is Tswana like this (small), is that small right and where is the Xhosa, is it inside (less than Setwana) or outside (more than Setswana)  
 Viwe Outside (more than Setswana)  
 Babalwa Okay this is the Tswana (small) and this is the Xhosa (medium) where is the English? Inside (small) or out out out (large)  
 Viwe (giggles)  
 Babalwa Good job you did so well (laughs)  
 Mma (laughs)

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Considering Viwe's language practices in both family-self recorded interactions and my observation, it came as no surprise that Viwe chose to be interviewed in English. It is the language she produces more than any of the two other languages in her home. What I could not necessarily deduce was what she would choose as her home language. Both parents had already identified their respective heritage languages as their home languages, while Bontle claimed isXhosa and Setswana as hers. The hesitation in giving a response shows Viwe's mindfulness about the concept of home language. But, it also reveals confusion about which language to chose and whether or not she could choose all of them. When I ask her whether she

wants to think about it she oddly answers “,, I don’t” which leads her father to question her sense of knowledge about what a language is. By virtue of being able to indicate what language she wants to be asked questions in, it could be argued that Viwe does know what a language is. Her response “,, mh-m” may be her way of escaping the conversation of having to choose ‘a language’ and perhaps the pressure of everyone having chosen different languages without her knowledge of what criteria she is expected to use to distinguish what qualifies any of the home languages as ‘a’ home language - Her father chose isiXhosa; her mother Setswana; and Bontle chose both. I would argue thus, that the idea of having to choose a single language is very complex for a child who experiences more than one language at home and who also sees different family members choosing different languages for reasons unknown to her.

The question she could answer with more ease, but requiring verbal prompting, is the measure of the three languages in her repertoire. Mainly following the signs and gestures I made, Viwe is able to quantify the levels of each language in her repertoire using gesture to indicate small, medium and large. Ultimately what becomes evident is her repertoire is largely occupied by English, followed by isiXhosa and Setswana – in descending order. This indicates that Viwe is using the visible ‘productive’ use of language as an indicator to measure what language has the most or least space in her repertoire. If this is so, it would be consistent with my observation that Viwe mainly speaks English?

## **5.5 English Hegemony**

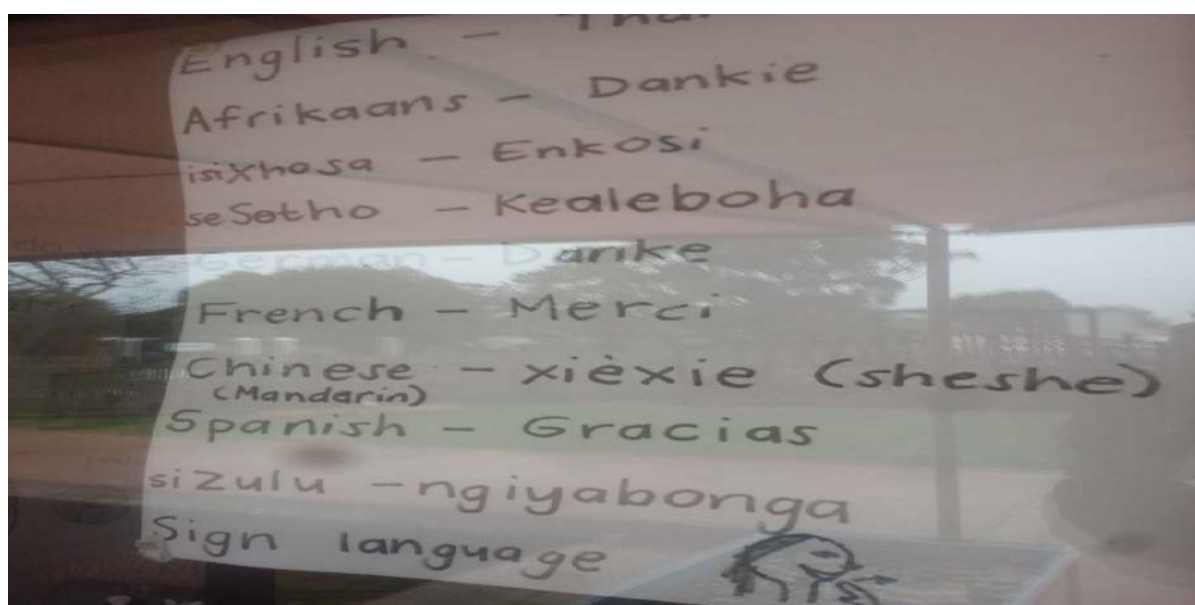
In this section, I demonstrate the hegemony of English through exploring the language practices and ideologies that exist in Viwe’s school, analysing the school language policy as well as exposing the tacit complicit role the national language policy plays in influencing schools and homes

### **5.5.1 School Language Practices and Ideologies**

In the sections above, I have given evidence and provided an analysis of the Ngxangas’ language background, embedded language ideologies and notable language practices. They are a multilingual family, whose expressed language

identities are influenced by their language backgrounds and possibly the amalgamation of language experience between a Xhosa father, Tswana mother and children who dip in and out of various languages but largely communicate in English. The extracts I have drawn from so far show flexible language use in this family, despite the strong prominence of English in the children's repertoire, particularly in Viwe. The image below that is on display at the entrance door of the Grade R gives a glimpse of the language ideologies of the school in the way the languages have been listed.

***Image 5.1: 'Door poster' – Implicit language hierarchy***



With English being the language that the learners say 'thank you' in at school, and sign language to have shown prominence in the weeks I spent at the school, the teacher reports to have worked together with the learners and facilitators to make a list of the ways to say thank you in different languages across the globe. This initiative foregrounds recognition of linguistic diversity and shows the aspiration of the school to being more language inclusive. What is backgrounded is the language ideologies that are communicated subtly by this poster. Firstly, there is an implicit language hierarchy that positions English at the top, and thus as the default language, from which other languages are translated. Although it is not clear whether this poster was the original draft that the teacher wrote when collaborating with her colleagues and the grade R learners, I would argue that writing English first on the list shows the position and status English occupies in the school. It is also not

surprising that English would be positioned in this way, considering the Grade R teacher's heritage and home language is English, the majority of children and parents whom this poster is intended for are English home language speakers and the schools LOLT is English.

### 5.5.2 School Language Policy – Anglonormative Socialisation

Although Viwe's Grade R pre-school, Lily Flower, and the primary school they feed into do not have a language policy document, they do have a brief section within the school's admission policy that makes a stipulation about their stance on language. The admission policy is a document that is open to public viewing as it is available on the school's website. Having looked at other former 'Model C' school's admission policies (see appendix C), I noted that many express the same sentiments in their language policy as Lily Flower. Below is an excerpt from Lily Flower's admission policy (see appendix B), which I scrutinise:

*"[XX School] is a single medium Grade R and the language of instruction is English. Accordingly, pupils admitted to [xx] will need to be sufficiently proficient in English so as not to prejudice their academic progress."*

Essentially, what this excerpt reveals is an ideological positioning the school takes concerning language; the role and value of English in the school; their stance on language inclusivity; as well as knowledge and implicit beliefs they hold about language and literacy. By declaring that they are a 'single medium' school where English is LOLT, Lily Flower positions themselves as operating from a monolingual bias and anglonormative paradigm. In essence, what they postulate is that they value monolingualism and privilege English above other official South African languages. Indeed, the exclusivity and hegemony of English is evident in the same school admission policy. This is expressed in their ironic statement about the details of their commitment and aspirations for their Grade R learners:

*"Lily Flower is committed to providing an environment of excellence in early childhood development in its Grade R classes. It is the intention of Lily Flower to provide a racially, culturally and socioeconomically diverse environment".* (Lily Flower Admission Policy)

The irony here is that, while they aspire to provide a 'racially' and 'culturally' diverse environment for the learners, they miss the connection between race, culture and language diversity. That is to say, no consideration is made of the reality that racial and cultural diversity come with language diversity - multilingualism. Thus, the school's embracing of diversity is limited to racial, culture and socioeconomic status (if at all) and takes no consideration or aspiration for language inclusivity that comes with racial and cultural diversity of their prospective learners.

Expressing an expectation for a learner to have "sufficient proficiency" prior to commencing Grade R (the learner would be 4-5 years at the time of the interview and 5-6 years old by the time they start Grade R) suggests that there is a standard of English proficiency that the prospective learners have to match up to. Because there are no details provided about this proficiency or what the school uses as a measure in the school admission policy statement, I would imagine that a learner's proficiency in English is perhaps determined at the learner and parents' interview. With such a prescriptive language requirement, in a country where the majority of learners are non-English home language speakers, the burning question would be what kind of learner is idealised by this policy and whom does it include? In my evaluation of this extract, I would argue that an English Home Language (HL) speaker is the imagined learner. Further, if the learner is black and is not an exclusive English HL speaker, they must be of a middle-class socio-economic status; which is likely to have English as one of their home languages; who are also likely to have better access to resources that will give them access to sufficient English proficiency. Thus, the expectation that the learner must have 'sufficient proficiency' for admission further exposes their anglonormative bias. It also gives the impression that the school anglicises the children by socialising them into a higher English proficiency; both parents and children are being socialised into anglonormativity because only English is expected at school while multilingual families' other linguistic resources are neglected. Effectively, what the school communicates are their rules for being part of the Lily Flower school community; that "sufficient" English proficiency gives you access to the community and that once you are in the community your competence in English will be valued.

The very policy of the school and many other schools in the region (see appendix C) demonstrates an anglonormative (Christie & McKinney, 2017) and assimilationist

(Soudien, 2004) ethos as crucial for academic success. I would also add that these schools' policies are inconsistent with the national language plan, and the policy document itself which are open to wide interpretation against inclusive multilingualism, perpetuate language injustices and inequalities in schooling, even among learners from the same socio-economic class. It is children from the Black middleclass families that are prejudiced by such policies and practices. If they are to swim, not sink, they are to assimilate to the language practices of the schools, which I identify as White English-speaking and middleclass. Although Buckley (2005: 172) argues that schools are sites for middle class aspirations, I extend the argument to being 'the representation of the language of the White middleclass aspirations' that are being advanced, owing to the 'monolingual habitus' that is being maintained by the middle class and ex-Model C schools (Alexander, 2005:4).

In the interview with the teacher, there was mention of additional languages that learners get exposed to in their Grade R year: isiXhosa, Afrikaans and sign language. The teacher expressed their keen interest in including other languages in the two Grade R classrooms. One of the ways they do that is offering language lessons in isiXhosa and Afrikaans (Western Cape official languages) by making use of their one teacher who can speak Afrikaans and their classroom assistant (also a Cleaning Operative) whose home language is isiXhosa. Another way is classroom activities which gave birth to the production of the poster in extract 4D2 already analysed above. Thus, in consideration of the multilingual poster and the school's language policy, I argue that the way isiXhosa is being introduced to the learners adds to the valorising of English while isiXhosa and any additional languages get relegated to an inferior status. Unfortunately, the dominance of English is one of the consequences of colonial encounter that have created contexts which are imposed on a community through schooling (Riley, 2011: 503). The school, thus, becomes a site for English valorisation and devaluing of African Languages. I would also argue thus, that Viwe's language repertoire is indicative of the English hegemony that reigns in her school, which she then carries to her home space. I would also argue thus, that Viwe's language repertoire is indicative of the English hegemony that reigns in her school, which she then carries to her home space.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Owing to Viwe's young age, there is very little expressed input from her towards the family language policy. What is apparent is that both the parents and the school have an idea of what languages they wish to socialise children into. On the one hand, the parents want their children to speak their heritage languages for identity reasons. They also want them to speak English so that they can 'fit in' with their peers and to be successful learners. On the other hand, the school wants to maintain the status quo of English being LOLT. They do this by keeping their exclusive language policy that appeals to parents who want well-resourced schools and access to English, with an expectation that the child must come with some level of proficiency in order to access learning.

## CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

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### 6.1 Introduction

The main aim of this research was to generate knowledge about the lived language experiences of a young child in a Black multilingual family, who attends an English medium ex-Model C school. I focused on investigating the language histories, language ideologies and practices of the family members, and determining the young child's experience in participating in language socialisation at home. Another focus was to make language connections between the home and the school domains through examining family language policy and school language policy as well as language practices in both domains. Lastly, I explored the limitations of the notion of 'mother-tongue' and the complexities of home language identity for a child who experiences multilingualism at home but English monolingualism at school.

### 6.2 Findings

The findings reveal that Viwe is an emergent multilingual who produces English but participates meaningfully in conversation with her family who translanguage using Setswana, isiXhosa and English. Owing to their language histories, the parents use their Xhosa and Tswana ethnicities as markers of their language identities. Ironically, even though their language biographies reveal that they grew up bilingual at minimum, they continue to claim a monolingual identity. Moreover, despite their evolved and expanded language repertoires and current language practices that involve using three languages at home, they continue to claim ethnic monolingual identity rather than multilingualism. Their language ideologies extend to their beliefs and understanding of their children's language identities. Although they want the children to speak their heritage languages, they do so for identity reasons. Furthermore, they show a preference for a patriarchal rather than a matriarchal identity for their children. This is evident in their assignment of a Xhosa language identity for their children.

Seemingly, their past and current encounters with languages form the basis of their beliefs about their heritage languages and English in schooling. Because of these encounters and the high premium they place on education, Viwe's parents want their children to speak English so that they can 'fit in' with their peers and to access

learning successfully. Thus, they relegate the learning of their heritage languages to the home, showing a keenness to take responsibility of teaching heritage languages while absolving the school of this responsibility. Their view enables the schools' status quo of anglonormativity to go unchallenged. Thus, their Grade R child experiences African languages as identity markers and as languages reserved for home, and English as a valuable language resource that gives access to learning. The notion of a single language identity remains complex for a child who is expected to be multilingual at home but monolingual at school. I argue that multilingual homes have a challenge of rethinking and considering the concept of language identity as fluid and as evolving as are their linguistic repertoires and language practices. Moreover, schools have a challenge of transforming their school policies and language practices to be reflective of the multilingual repertoires of children rather than reinforcing the monolingual myth.

### **6.3 Limitations**

Time constraints and the scope of a Masters dissertation is one of the biggest limitations for this study. The length of fieldwork limited my opportunities to record a variety of naturally occurring interactions. Added time to observe the family routines during school holidays when the children spent more time at home may have expanded my insight into the language socialisation processes in the home domain. Further, relying on the family to self-record their interactions meant that I did not always get the recording of the events we agreed to – the family had very little time to record themselves due to spending longer hours of their days at work and at school. Some of the audio that they recorded could not be used due to poor sound quality. Another limitation was working on a single case study.

### **6.4 Implications**

It is unsurprising that Viwe speaks English to her family despite the parents' language aspirations and language strategies of exposing her to Setswana and isiXhosa at home and during holidays. English remains the more widely used language both at home and school. The reality of Viwe's suburban life and spending long hours at school means that English has more influence on her linguistic repertoire. This is not to say that school is the only place that influences the Ngxanga family's languaging at home. Both parents work in English dominant work

environments, children's cartoons I observed on television in the home were all in English, and all the story books I found in Viwe's room were in English. But because Viwe spends most of her day at school, I would still maintain that school has more of an influence on Viwe's language repertoire. Furthermore, her interest in English animation and story books may be perpetuated by the hegemonic status that English enjoys. Despite the stated intentions to promote multilingualism in schools and society, the national language policy also plays a role in shaping the language climate of schools.

The problem with conceptualisation of language does not begin with schools and their largely monolingual language policies. It begins with the broader national language policy, LIEP, from which the schools take directive. The call here therefore would be for teachers and schools to have more inclusive criteria in their recognition and assessment of language; criteria that considers that children do not only have one language identity – they may have a variety of family languages that are used simultaneously and interchangeably.

### **6.5 Direction for Future Research**

My study only focused on the language practices of a Black middle-class family, a constituency which is far less than the majority of children from Black working-class families in South African state schools. These are children who have less exposure to English than children who go to ex-Model C schools – but have to contend with an English LOLT from the fourth grade onwards. To this end, I would suggest a longitudinal ethnographic study that investigates multiple cases studies of marginalised multilingual families' language and literacy socialisation practices with children who attend state schools.

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## **APPENDICES**

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Appendix A: Language Portraits

Appendix B: Lily Flower\* School Admissions Policy

Appendix C: Model C Schools' Language Policies Excerpts

Appendix D: School Enrolment Form

Appendix E: Ethics Approval Letter

Appendix F: Consent Forms

Appendix G: Interviews Questions