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Linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the omission of sounds and syllables in Xhosa speech: an explanatory guide for 2nd language learners of the language.

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Doer of many firsts. Generational curses breaker.
The chosen one. The best is yet to come sweetie!

ABSTRACT

The shortening of words, sometimes even to just one syllable, variously referred to as clipping, reduction and truncation, is a recognized phenomenon in slang but also in authentic speech. Most of us know that the English farewell "*Goodbye*!" often reduced to just "*Bye*!" is a clipped form of "*God be with you*" and that "*ad*" is a shortened form of "*advertisement*". In fact, a body of scholarship on historical and contemporary clippings in English and many of the world's languages has, and continues to be, developed. The reduction of sounds in the lexicons of African languages, particularly Xhosa, is, however, a neglected field – a lacuna that I
noticed when struggling to explain the phenomenon to English and Afrikaans speakers who could not align the written Xhosa word with its spoken form. In this thesis, therefore, I foreground the struggles of 2nd language learners of Xhosa at the University of Cape Town in comprehending spoken Xhosa and explain that being a tutor of the language at this level led me to conduct the research. I felt the need to establish a database of the most truncated forms in the language and the phonological processes at play so that entry level students of the language (as a 2nd language) as well as more advanced learners would have access to commonly reduced words as well as explanations of the most widely occurring phonological processes involved in the omission of sounds. To ensure that the research kept its focus on actual student needs, a short survey was conducted with 2nd language students of Xhosa at the university to ascertain the extent to which they see the development of listening skills as desirable in a communication course. In addition, a pilot listening test was conducted with two groups of students – the one group receiving an intervention providing information on reduced forms in Xhosa, the other group taking the test without the intervention. Scores are tabulated and discussed, and recommendations made based on the outcomes of both the survey and the tests.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to outline the most prevalent reduced forms of Xhosa spontaneous speech and then assess whether second-language learners may enhance their listening and comprehension abilities by learning and practicing these forms. Since reduced forms frequently differ greatly from the standardised forms usually taught in language classrooms, they present special difficulties for second-language learners. Reduced forms are especially prevalent in informal and fast speech. By emphasising these characteristics and investigating whether explicit exposure and training might improve learners' capacity to navigate spoken Xhosa in the real world, the study seeks to close this gap.

It is necessary to give some background information on my motivation for conducting this research before diving into the theoretical and methodological aspects of the current study. This study is not simply an academic quest but also a very personal analysis of my own linguistic practices and those of the people around me. My personal experiences as a bilingual first-language Xhosa speaker and the difficulties I have seen in language acquisition settings are what drew me to this subject. For my Honours dissertation (Mahlumba, 2022), I studied the linguistic analysis of syllable clipping in informal Xhosa by a 22-year-old Cape Town-based bilingual first-language Xhosa speaker. The purpose of this auto-ethnographic study was to identify trends in my personal communication, particularly in the areas of spoken and written language in social media settings. The objective was to determine the commonly clipped word kinds, clipping techniques, and the underlying reasons for these linguistic decisions. I also investigated whether the clipping patterns I saw were impacted by cross-linguistic processes (see Toribio, 2004; Olsen, 2016) namely those resulting from my bilingualism in Xhosa and English.

One important outcome of this study was that one of the most clipped group of nouns in Xhosa was Class 1a. These contained kinship names that were derived from the complete forms *dadobawo* and *udadobawo*, respectively, such as *dabs* (meaning "paternal aunt" in the vocative) and *udabs* (meaning "paternal aunt" when referring to her in the third person). The term *tamnci*, which I borrowed from *tatomncinci*, was also used to refer to my father's younger sibling. I used *ncinci*, which is derived from *mamomncinci* (roughly, "small mother"), to allude to his wife. Other examples were *mntkbw*, an extreme contraction of *mntakabawo* (‘my brother/sister’), and *mfethu*, a

shortened form of *mfowethu* (‘my brother’ in the vocative). These instances highlight the language practices' cultural and social relevance in addition to demonstrating how common clipping is in Xhosa.

Another group of words that were regularly clipped in my data were personal names. For example, *Siyabulela* became *Siya* and *Sinentlahla* was shortened to *Sne*. Additionally, place names were shortened: *Gugulethu* was abbreviated to *Gugs*, *Sterkspruit* was trimmed to *Sterke*, and *Masiphumelele* was abbreviated to *Masi*. In urban and youth language practices, where brevity and simplicity of articulation are valued, these clipped forms—especially for place names—often mirror a larger tendency. These clippings can occasionally also be used as indicators of in-group identity, indicating familiarity and a sense of belonging in particular social settings.

Cross-linguistic impacts were visible in my clipping behaviour, especially in how I handled borrowed or hybridised phrases. To preserve the Xhosa phonological pattern of words ending in vowels, for example, a dummy suffix /-e/ was added when *Sterkspruit* was clipped to *Sterke*. This change reflects the multilingual reality of the *Sterkspruit* region, which is home to speakers of Xhosa, Sotho, and Hlubi, and serves to "Xhosalize" the Afrikaans-sounding name. By ensuring that borrowed phrases conform to the phonological and morphological standards of the recipient language, these adjustments show how speakers traverse linguistic barriers.

The impact of tsotsitaal and teenage language practices on my clipping patterns was another important finding. For instance, tsotsitaal, a hybrid urban vernacular that combines aspects of multiple South African languages, is closely linked to the extremely reduced form of *mfethu*, which is derived from *mfowethu*. Although tsotsitaal was traditionally associated with young males in township areas, its use has spread beyond socioeconomic and gender barriers. I am one of the numerous bilinguals who use it as a dynamic and innovative form of expression nowadays.

Researchers like Mesthrie and Hurst (2013) have observed analogous phenomena, such as the avoidance of locative suffixes, as shown in forms like *edorp* instead of *edolophini* (‘to town’), even though studies on tsotsitaal have not expressly focused on clipping. The interdependence of these linguistic occurrences has been further underscored by more recent research on young languages, such as the work of Simango, Dowling, and Brookes in Mesthrie, Hurst-Harosh, and Brookes (2021), which has shown similarities between Xhosa clips and tsotsitaal.

Building on these discoveries, my Honours research showed that clipping reflects identity, creativity, and social belonging in addition to being a language economy activity. Linguistic ideology, pragmatic reasons, and cultural standards frequently influence the word reduction decisions speakers make. For instance, I use clipped forms like *Gugs* for the township name *Gugulethu* because I'm familiar with the place and I want to fit in with my peer group's casual, conversational manner.

Even with the abundance of research on youth and Tsotsitaal languages, nothing is known about the precise function of clipping in these dialects. Using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, my Honours dissertation sought to close this gap by offering a thorough examination of my own linguistic practices. This thesis expands on that framework by examining spontaneous spoken language in addition to written clipping behaviours. My goal is to advance knowledge of how these mechanisms work in regular communication by analysing reduced forms in naturalistic speech.

Whether explicit training in reduced forms can improve the listening and comprehension skills of second-language learners is a key question driving this study. Authentic spoken input, which is usually faster and more varied than the precisely enunciated forms taught in textbooks and classrooms, can be difficult for language learners to understand. It can be challenging for students to analyse and process the input when reduced forms obscure the intended meaning. Nonetheless, prior research on other languages indicates that focused instruction can assist students in creating coping mechanisms. Teaching students to identify reduced forms, such as gonna (from going to) or wanna (from want to), for instance, can greatly enhance their listening comprehension, according to research on English as a second language (Brown & Hilferty, 2006).

To sum up, this study is a combination of my own linguistic experiences, theoretical investigation, and real-world language teaching factors. I intend to contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of Xhosa as a living, dynamic language by investigating the relationship between reduced forms, bilingualism, and second- language acquisition. In addition, I want to offer helpful advice for language teachers, stressing the value of including real-world spoken input in the curriculum. By exposing the rich complexity of Xhosa and its speakers, I hope to refute simplistic ideas about what it means to "speak a language fluently" and promote a more inclusive and contextually aware method of teaching the language.

1.1 Focal research problem and rationale

Background

A crucial difficulty in language acquisition has been brought to light by the knowledge I acquired from my honours studies and my experiences instructing Xhosa as a second language. During conversation, Xhosa speakers frequently omit vowels and even consonants in favour of shortened, reduced, and clipped word forms. For second language (L2) learners, this natural phonological phenomenon commonly causes challenges. L2 learners see a disjunction between the formal, standardized Xhosa they read in texts or learn in class and the dynamic, fluid spoken forms they hear in daily encounters, in contrast to native speakers who naturally pick up these patterns through immersion.

For instance, although clear enunciation is frequently emphasised in classroom instruction to facilitate comprehension, real-world speech does not always follow this meticulous articulation. The structured grammatical explanations found in textbooks may be difficult for learners to reconcile with the simplified forms used by native speakers. Additionally, informal texts or dialogues in Xhosa literature, where these reductions are common and necessary to comprehend tone, mood, or even humour, increase the difficulty.

Current problem

There is a significant lack of resources for Xhosa L2 learners. Language-learning resources for Xhosa prioritises vocabulary, grammar rules, and acceptable pronunciation while frequently ignoring the reality of spoken language. As a result, students become frustrated and may become disengaged since they are ill-equipped to interpret the natural reductions they come across in media or discussions. This disparity emphasises the necessity of focused efforts to close the gap between formal education and real-world speaking.

Goals for this study

I wanted to accomplish three main goals with this thesis:

(1) Using a range of real sources, such as interviews, media clips, and recorded conversations, identifying the most prevalent reduced forms in spoken Xhosa.

(2) Providing these forms to L2 learners in an organized and accessible way via a comprehensive list of commonly truncated words and phrases

(3) Conducting a pilot study in which students take part in a listening test based on the most common truncated forms my data revealed.

Why conduct this study?

Across languages, reduction, clipping, and elision are well-established occurrences (Frandrych, 2004; Hamans, 2018; Ikhsan et al., 2021, Jamet, 2009; Batchelder-Schwab, 2023; Casali, 1997). These processes represent regional and contextual variances and function as indicators of sociolinguistic identity in addition to linguistic efficiency in Xhosa. Teaching students to recognise and understand reduced forms is consistent with the communicative approach to language instruction, which places more emphasis on practical language use than rigid grammar rules. Additionally, this research has the potential to address more general concerns of language access and equity by giving students the skills they need to explore real speech. Language obstacles can prevent many L2 learners from participating fully in social, academic, and professional settings. Therefore, improving listening comprehension is a way to enable students to participate more fully in multilingual communities as well as an academic objective.

This thesis aims to further the field of Xhosa linguistics in addition to its instructional contributions. Studies on Xhosa phonological processes are still few, especially when it comes to L2 acquisition, despite the abundance of research on phonological processes in other languages. This study intends to close a significant gap by recording the trends and mechanisms of spoken contemporary Xhosa, providing information that could be useful to linguists, educators, and policymakers in addition to language learners.

The importance of interventions

The difficulties Xhosa L2 learners encounter in balancing formal education with natural speech highlight the necessity of focused interventions. By listing the most widely used reduced forms in spoken Xhosa and conducting a pilot research intervention to assess its efficacy, this thesis aims to fill this need. This study intends to improve Xhosa L2 learners' listening comprehension and general language ability by bridging the gap between formal and informal language use.

The goal of this endeavour is to significantly advance our knowledge of phonological processes in African languages as well as the teaching of Xhosa as a second language.

It opens the door for more inclusive and successful language education methods by emphasising the dynamic interaction between linguistic theory and real-world application through its emphasis on reduction, clipping, and elision.

The relevance of this study to prior theoretical work on Nguni phonology

Ever since Lanham's (1960) seminal study on Nguni phonology in which he categorically stated that the spoken language was not fit for phonological analysis, there has been a dearth of studies on the topic. Lanham (1960:6) referred to everyday, conversational speech as containing "slurrings, elisions and degradation of contrastive sound features" and concluded that "basing a first analysis on slurred quick speech produce nothing but chaotic complexity." Sixty-five years later and there still are no studies using transcriptions of casual, fast spoken Nguni languages. This study therefore addresses the gap in the corpus and hopefully embraces the very chaotic complexity Lanham cautioned scholars against!

In the next sections I will discuss the various types of phonological truncation (reduction, clipping and elision) and where I have been able to find studies on these topics germane to other indigenous African languages, I include their findings and discussions.

1.1.1 Reduction

Brown and Hilferty (1986) explain reduction in terms of the processes of contraction, elision and assimilation that occur in words, usually in spoken language. Bringing the lens of reduction to focus on Bantu languages, Kraska-Szlenk (2010:83) argues that morphophonological reduction in Swahili generally occurs with high frequency words, an issue that resonates with my own observations that the more a word is used, the more likely it is to undergo some form of sound or syllable reduction.

Reduction in language has a long history - although he did not name it as "reduction", the playwright John Ervine (born in 1883) was clearly referring to this linguistic phenomenon when he criticised the English for being "a lazy lot" who constantly left out syllables when they spoke:

> why be bothered to say extraordinary when you can get away with strawdiny? ... it has the additional effect of causing confusion (quoted in Mencken, 1948: 39).

I will use academic definitions of reduction to help guide my data collection and analyses but also will not ignore the fact that the issue of confusion, so light- heartedly referred

to by the playwright, is also important since I have witnessed a similar confusion in our second-language students of Xhosa who will be taught, for example, that *ecaleni kwendlela* means 'next to the road' but might easily hear (and even see written) the reduced form *ecankwendlela* where massive reduction has occurred (see Johnson, 2004 on the issue of massive reduction in American English).

1.1.2 Clipping

Syllable clipping is a very specific process that has phonological, morphological, and semantic features. Katamba (2005:80), discussing the phenomenon in English argues that clipping is:

> The term for the formation of a new word-form, with the same meaning as the original lexical term, by lopping off a portion and reducing it to a monosyllabic or disyllabic rump.

Jamet (2009:17-18) gives examples of common clippings in English including “bi” from “bisexual”, “trad” from “traditional, fridge” from “refrigerator” and “diss” from

“disrespect” and points out that sometimes the clipped word takes on a different meaning from the full form, and gives the example of “curio”, being the clipped form of “curiosity” referring only to an object while “curiosity” refers to the abstract noun meaning “inquisitiveness” or a noun meaning “very rare object” (Jamet, 2009:19).

Scholars who have included reference to clipping in Southern African languages include Bock (2013), Deumert and Masinyana (2008), Mensah (2018) and Dowling (2011) but none of these studies have attempted to systematize and classify clipping as it occurs in Xhosa. In terms of clipping in Bantu languages, a classification of clipping does occur in Bosire’s (2009) work which focusses on word truncation in Sheng (Swahili-English slang) – this study has proved instructive, particularly in terms of the way in which I will approach the purely linguistic analyses of clipping in Xhosa.

1.1.3 Elision

Crystal (2008:166) understands elision to be "the omission of sound or sounds in connected speech" – a good English example would have [wʊd hæv] which is elided to *would've* [wʊdəv]. Elision in Bantu languages is frequently referred to by scholars (see Nurse and Philippson, 2006) but the explanations and discussions on it are often directed at academic linguists, not at learners of the language who need simple guidelines and examples. An exception is Pahl, Ntusi and Burns- Ncamashe (1972)

who, in their matric grammar of Xhosa written in the language (*IsiXhosa sebanga lematriki*) refer to elision (*ushiyo*) in a number of different contexts, two being:

1. *Ukushiywa kwesakhi-sibanjalo emva kwesilandulo* (Elision of the copulative morpheme after a negative) e.g. *Oko akwaziwa* ***mntu*** (That is not known by anyone)
2. *Kumbuzo esithi kuwo isibanjalo sichazwe sisichazi* (In a question in which the copulative describes a qualificative) e.g. ***Sizathu*** *sini na esabangela ukuba angabuyi?* (Why [what is the reason] does s/he not return?) (Pahl and Ntusi, 1972:175 – translations my own)

Other instances of elision mentioned by Pahl, Ntusi and Burns-Ncamashe (1972:202) are the elision of the relative concord before a labial, e.g. *Aba bantu abayazi into* ***amabayenze*** [*a(ba)ma bayenze*] (These people do not know what they should do). These elisions are seldom referred to in second language Xhosa classes, which generally only refer to the elision of the initial vowel of the noun in the vocative, e.g. *Ndixolele,* ***mama***. Forgive me, mother and after negative constructions, e.g. *Andifuni ti.* (I don't want tea).

Although not concerned with Bantu languages, Lightfoot (2016) is one academic keen to make second language learners aware of elision in the spoken version of the German language. He is of the opinion that when discussing authentic spoken language, it is necessary to include reference to elision which he describes as "dropping certain sounds, sometimes resulting with words fusing together" (Lightfoot, 2016:24). He further elaborates that elision is often the result of "other sounds in the environment" (Lightfoot, 2016: 28) and continues that we can view these as contractions, as opposed to ... types of whole word omission" (Lightfoot, 2016:28). Lightfoot also makes the important point that exposure to these kind of omissions in spoken versions of the language "may be necessary for communication in the real world" (Lightfoot, 2016:26).

The table below attempts to lay out the distinctions between clipping, reduction and elision but it must be remembered that the definitions of these terms have traditionally been formulated with reference to English. Because of the blurring between the terms and the definitions in relation to these processes in Xhosa (and even in English) I have chosen in this thesis to group all instances of clipping, reduction and elision under the general term truncation and then, when further analysis is required to focus on the specific phonological processes at play.

Table 1: Different types of Truncations in Xhosa

Feature	Definition	Examples	Context
Clipping	Shortening a word or phrase by removing part of it while retaining meaning.	***Ecankwendlela*** (from *ecaleni kwendlela* 'on the side of the road') **Udabs** (from **udadebawo** 'paternal aunt') ***Kweli*** (from ***kweli lizwe*** 'in this country')	Informal speech often adopts clipped forms for brevity.
Reduction	Shortening or simplifying function words or auxiliary verbs in casual speech.	***Ndizohamba*** or ***Ndohamba*** (from ***ndiza kuhamba*** 'I will leave') ***Veske*** (from ***ndivele ndisuke*** 'I just') ***Ngas'ke*** (from ***ndinga ndingasuka*** 'I wish') ***Bocim' iTV*** (from ***Hamba uyocima iTV*** 'Go and switch off the TV')	Common in fast speech and informal contexts.
Elision	Omission of a sound, syllable, or letter in rapid or casual speech.	***Mas'hambe*** (from ***Masihambe*** 'Let's go'**)** ***Ndiyak'thanda*** (from ***Ndiyakuthanda*** 'I love you')	Helps maintain rhythm and speed in conversational English.

1.2 Research Questions

Because so little has been done on reduction, clipping and elision in Xhosa regarding how they might be systematized and introduced to second-language learners, it is important that I attempt to categorize the types and contexts that occur regularly in spoken and informal written forms of the language.

In addition, the extent of their use in Xhosa needs to be ascertained through reference to sociolinguistic factors such as age, bilingualism as well as the dichotomy between formal and informal speech and written texts, and an analysis of how reduction, clipping and elision are performed, by who and why so that second-language learners can be armed with knowing when to expect these forms and from which speakers.

For the reasons stated above my research questions are:

1. What are the most common reduced (truncated), clipped and elided forms of Xhosa words in a corpus of a) Xhosa modern poetry anthology and b) contemporary Xhosa pop lyrics AND a) WhatsApp voice notes and b) natural conversations through participants?

2. What morphological and phonological processes are used in these reduced forms?

3. What are the pedagogical approaches of teaching reduced forms to second language learners of Xhosa?

4. What sociolinguistic factors are relevant when discussing reduced, clipped and elided forms in Xhosa?

1.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have given the motivation behind the study and an explanation of the phonological processes involved in natural spoken language that can cause the omission of syllables and sounds: a phenomenon that impacts 2nd language learner comprehension. I have laid out my research questions which I attempt to answer thoroughly in the next chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the definitions, discourses and theoretical framework that is used to analyse the data. The literature in this section is what served as the study's source of inspiration. Key terms and concepts used in studies on reduction, elision and clipping in English (Tomaka, 2017), clipping in Romance languages such as French (Kilani-Schoch,1996) and Germanic languages (Hamans, 2018) will be scrutinized and, where appropriate, methods of analysis in describing syllable truncation used by these authors applied to Xhosa.

To further contextualize the study and broaden its scope, works that highlight different analyses of reduction in language in text (Fandrych, 2008), syllable reduction in online and social media communication (Kadir et al., 2012), in other African languages (Bosire, 2009), in personal names (Neethling, 1994) and in tsotsitaal (Hurst-Harosh, 2022) will be consulted in order to extend my analyses to include linguistic, sociolinguistic and stylistic factors. As clipping has received a greater amount of focussed scholarship that would be easily accessible to 2nd language learners (without specific linguistic training), this form of reduction is afforded more discussion in the section below.

Finally, I discuss works that deal with comprehension issues with 2nd language learners (Vandergrift, 2007) as it is important for me to uncover theories on how one can best teach listening skills especially in the context of being able to identify syllable reduction in rapid speech by native language speakers and in so doing interpret the meaning of the reduced word or utterance.

2.2 Different Analyses of Reduction

Scholars discuss the omitting of sounds in words in several different ways, and I would argue that the focus of their analyses is influenced by the languages they study. It is a process that together with other non-rule governed processes is responsible for a large part of vocabulary innovation (see Kapatsinski et al., 2020). Truncations are most likely to occur in natural and informal conversational settings

or writings (Hanique et al., 2013). After engaging with such texts, a stance can be taken that the omission of sounds and syllables in a language is a universal linguistic concept. From my initial research, however, I have discovered that in Xhosa there has been a dearth of focused work on this linguistic phenomenon, although scholars such as Neethling (1994) and Moyo and Mphande (2004) have contributed to the area of study. This MA study aims to fill in some of the gaps by providing nuanced but niched scientific linguistic research on the different processes of sound reduction in Xhosa as well as a sociolinguistic discussion on the connection between clipping and bilingualism and urbanization.

2.2.1 Clipping and Truncation

Clipping, sometimes referred to as truncation, is the removal of a segment or segments of a word while retaining its meaning. It is important to view this phonological process first and foremost with reference to Xhosa before looking at studies focusing on other languages. For example, Batchelder-Schwab (2023) examines truncation in relation to possessed nouns in Xhosa, many of which are kinship terms/. Batchelder-Schwab (2023:4) argues that this kind of truncation has "an expressive connotation of endearment" and gives the following examples:

> *umama wam → umamam 'my mother'*
> *umama wakho → umamakho 'your mother'*
> *umama wethu → umamethu 'our mother'* (Batchelder-Schwab, 2023:6).

Batchelder-Schwab argues that deciding to use the full form or the reduced possessive form "is entirely syntactically and semantically optional". His participant informed him that the RPF (Reduced Possession Form) "is much more affectionate, close and even child-like" (Batchelder-Schwab, 2023:3). Further research by this scholar revealed however, that the RPF does occur in other environments such as when body parts are named to express pain, as in:

> *Umlenz'am! My leg!*
> *Impuml'wam! My nose*! (Batchelder-Schwab, 2023:10)

The /o/ of *impumlo* becomes a glide before the reduced possessive *-am.*

Cook (2014:343) in an article on adjectival reduplication in Zulu notes the truncation of the final syllable of the adjective *-fishane* to *-fisha* in the reduplicated form, giving as an example *umntu omfisha-fishane* 'a short person'.

Simelane (2016:112), in a study of the linguistic variety of women in a correctional institution in Swaziland, notes that the prisoners clipped the English word hospital to *hosi*, the Swati word *umshushisi* 'prosecutor' to *shu* and the Swati word *libhontjisi* to *libhontji*.

Apart from the studies referred to above, I struggled to find any focused scholarship on truncation or clipping in any of South Africa's Nguni languages – more scholarly work in the field is needed.

The situation is different in Europe where lexical truncation has received a good deal of attention although it is important to remember that studies of clipping are necessarily influenced by the languages under scrutiny. For example, Kilani-Schoch (1996:145) in her chapter on clipping in French concludes that speakers have an "intuition of how an abbreviation should end" and, from her analyses, is convinced that Dziubalska-Kofaczyk's model of universal word accounts for French abbreviations by characterizing them "mainly through the (default) preference for binary-beat foot with a word-final consonant".

Hamans (2018), in his paper on clipping in English, German, Dutch and Swedish, notes the ubiquity of the /-o/ suffix in abbreviated forms in these languages and hypothesizes that speakers may have borrowed a coherent set of disyllabic lexemes from a prestigious foreign language (this has relevance for my own study of bilingual Xhosa-speakers' clipping). Hamans refers to "Neoclassical clippings" which he describes as a new process of clipping – disyllabic clipping ending in -o. He concludes that "All modern languages seem to contain neoclassical forms such as: disco < discotheque, stereo < stereophonic record" (Hamans, 2018:43).

Clipping is a way of forming new lexemes therefore some scholars consider it as a part of morphology. For example, Plag (2003:116) argues that:

> Truncation is a process in which the relationship between a derived word and its base is expressed by the lack of phonetic material in the derived word.

Fandrych (2008 [online]: no page number) suggests that when analysing clipped forms of words, we should not concentrate so much on morphemes but rather consider “a whole gamut of sub morphemic elements, ranging from mere initials, groups of letters, syllables and splinters to full (not infrequently even complex) words” and insists that when we analyse such forms, we need to have a “a more flexible approach than mere morpheme analysis”.

It is a process that together with other non-rule governed processes is responsible for a large part of vocabulary innovation. Truncations are most likely to occur in natural and informal conversational settings or writings (Badarneh, 2010:5). Clipping differs from back-formation in that it shortens words made of lengthier words without altering their part of speech or meaning. Back-formation may modify a word's meaning or part of speech (Abdullayev, 2023:146) such as the English verb *edit* deriving from the noun *editor*.

Categories of clipping

Depending on whatever part of the word is clipped, clipping can be categorized into the following types: back clipping, fore clipping, middle clipping, and complex clipping (Ikhsan et al., 2021:148).

Back clipping refers to the word being clipped from behind, meaning the beginning of the word is retained for example *ad* (clipped from *advertisement*).

Fore clipping is when the word is clipped from the front, retaining the final part of the word. For instance, *plane* (from *aeroplane*). While middle clipping is clipping of the word from the centre by retaining the middle word. For example, *flu* (from *influenza*).

A process known as complex clipping happens when truncation occurs at various places in the word and where for example, the beginning of one source word can be merged with the beginning of another source word, e.g. *sys~~tem~~* + *admini~~strator.~~*
→ *sysadmin* (Gries, 2006:537).

These types of clipping will be important when classifying the categories of Xhosa clipped forms and will fall under the methodology section.

Clipping in online and social media communications

Studies on clipping in online and social media communications generally focus on abbreviations. Alazzawie (2022:11), using Canadian students' WhatsApp

conversations, contends that when they are online not all texters employ the same language abbreviations. The author highlights variety in abbreviated words like "something," which can be written as both *smthg* and *sthg* by the same texter. In my study however, I will focus on clipped forms that occur both in texts and oral communications, not purely abbreviated written forms. However, the observation that variation is a factor will inform my study as it might be the case that there are variations in the way in which speakers clip lexical items.

Cybersocializing on Mxit

Although it focuses on casual chats, Bock's (2013) essay on cybersocializing on Mxit among young South African students is pertinent to this study. According to Bock digital media networks are popular sites for socializing among young people. Her research is around the global phenomenon called textese – which can be defined as the shortening of language in instant messaging and texting. Mastering this code alone won't make you a proficient user; you also need to be aware of the right chatting genres and registers.

From a discourse analytical viewpoint, in my research I also investigate these conventionalized genres and styles. Bock (2013) concluded that casual chats frequently used text speak abbreviations like *mfe2*, which is a reduction of *mfowethu* ‘my brother’ (Ibid.:82) with the numeral 2 standing for the phoneme /thu/. Although Bock's work focuses more on discourse analysis than morphological processes, it is clear from the data presented that clipping also occurred in the conversations by Xhosa speakers (e.g.the clipped form *ndzawbona* ‘I will see you’ for *ndiza kukubona*), which the author refers to as "contracted spoken forms" (Ibid:84). Bock's research on text-speak contractions and abbreviations contrasts with that of Deumert and Masinyana (2008), who identified few instances of this type of language. In fact, the authors contend that in the middle of the 2000s, SMS writing was seen as an important part of common literacy (Ibid.:118). They established that when writing in Xhosa, people tended to use full sentences rather than abbreviations (Ibid.:133–134).

Deumert and Masinyana (2008:134) refer to a condensed SMS they delivered to study participants. The initial message in Xhosa read:

Ndicela uthumele ezinye isms uba unazo please. Ndazifumana ezokuqala,

'Please send more SMSes if you have, please.
I got the first lot'

enkosi, kodwa zilungile ezinye. Xolo :-). Enkosi! Ubulise bonke! 'thank you, but more will be fine. Sorry :-). Thanks! Say hi to all!
The abbreviated SMS was:

Ndcl tmle ezny isms ba nazo plz. Fumana ezkuqla, nks, kdw zlngle zinye.
'Plz send other sms if u have plz. Got first ones, thank you, but more will be fine.' *Xol :-). Enks! Ublse bnke!*
'Sorry :-). Thanks! Say hi to all!'

Deumert and Masinyana (Ibid.) report that rural participants laughed that the message's sender was now so well-educated that he had forgotten how to write Xhosa because they couldn't understand the condensed message, according to the authors.

They compare abbreviations in English with those in other languages, concluding that English exhibits far more instances of truncated words than, for example Xhosa "English appears to be particularly prominent in the extensive use of abbreviations (a reflection of the maxims of brevity and speed), whereas other languages with established abbreviation standards in this media exhibit substantially lower rates" (Ibid:135).

It is crucial that 16 years later, additional evidence of abbreviations in Xhosa is given to challenge Deumert and Masinyana's assertion that, despite certain non-standard forms appearing in Xhosa on social media, these "are rarely conveyed by the modification of spelling" (Ibid:137).

Clipping in other African languages

Bosire (2009) discusses the techniques used by Sheng (Swahili-English slang) speakers when they clip, a process he describes to as "truncation" (Ibid:82). He states the following:

> clipping of words from both edges with a circumfix added (/o-, -o/); clipping of words from the right edge with a subsequent dummy suffix added (/-o/-sh/) and clipping of a word from the right edge without any suffixation but with compensatory lengthening. (Ibid).

A dummy suffix is one that does not have a meaning but merely aids in making a word sound foreign in this situation (Ibid). Words like *safari* become *safoo* as he uses them as an example of word-final truncation with a final dummy suffix, noting that "the number of syllables does not matter, and all forms are targeted" (Ibid:83).

Bosire also provides examples of words that have been abbreviated using the dummy morpheme /-sh/, such as the transformation of the Swahili word *mrembo* (beautiful person) into the Sheng word *mresh*.

Another truncation device in Sheng consists of deleting the final syllable and lengthening the final vowel of the resulting final syllable (Ibid) – thus *Mimi* (I) becomes *Mii* and *Sisi* (We/Us) becomes *Sii* (Ibid.:83). Bosire (Ibid.) also contends that in Sheng, nouns are the only words that are truncated or clipped.

Truncation in African youth language practices

Exploring urban youth language practices, Kießling and Mous (2004:20) assert that truncation, also known as clipping, evident in English slang words such as *pub* for "public house," *newsie* for "newspaper seller," and *fan* for "fanatic" is widespread in African urban youth variations. Their examples of clipping in Sheng, a Swahili and English based language, are grouped according to the type of clipping and the source language: truncation with final -i (sometimes orthographically --ee) such as *hedi* for *headmaster* and *tichee* for *teacher*, English being the source language for both words. The authors note truncations of Swahili words with final — o such as *chapoo*, a clipped form of *chapati* 'pancake', *faroo* 'horse' from *farasi* and *obaro* 'street' from standard Swahili *barabara*. These final vowels are also referred to as "dummy affixes" in the literature (see Kießling and Mous, 2004:20; Bosire, 2009). The Sheng word *obaro* 'street' is also an example of what Bosire (2009:82) refers to as an example of a process by which the first syllable of the target word is clipped if it "contains more than two syllables" and "all other syllables after the coda of the second syllable" are also clipped.

Bosire (2009:82) also notes that:

> that the dummy circumfix /-o/ does not add any new meaning other than alter the phonological shape of the words involved and is therefore only a tool fashioned by Sheng speakers to manipulate the shape of lexical items, give them a foreign-sounding, Sheng character.

In other African languages such as Nouchi, a language that emerged from urban Cote d'Ivoire, Indoubil, a slang from the Republic of Congo[1], Camfranglais, a vernacular of Cameroon. These are all African languages where truncation predominately operates on French words, as well as some English words. An example in Nouchi is the French word *commande* (order) which is clipped to *mando*. In Indoubil, the English word *bungalow* is clipped to *ngalo*. The English word, *marathon* is clipped to *mara* in Camfranglais. Lastly, the French word *clandestine* meaning *secret* is clipped to *clando* in the youth language variety of Cameroon. Discussing loanwords in both Tswana and Swahili, Batibo (1996:40) notes that "where loanwords would otherwise be phonetically long, both languages have engaged other strategies such as clipping to reduce them. This is the case with hospital ~ *sepatela* and passport ~ *pasa* in Tswana; and *quadragesma* ~ *kwaresima*; inspector ~ *spekita* and passport ~ *pasi* in Swahili."

Truncation of noun prefixes by Sotho children

Demuth and Ellis' research into the way in which children acquire Sotho noun prefixes refers to the truncating of prefixes by children. They observe that "there was a greater likelihood of prefixes being truncated with words that were already a disyllabic foot" (2009:98) and that high frequency nouns like *dintho* 'things' were more likely to be uttered with a null prefix (just as *ntho*) (2009:101).

Clipping as a sociolinguistic phenomenon

The use of clips is frequently restricted to a specific socioeconomic group within society, according to a sociolinguistic perspective (Fandrych, 2004; 2008). The use of clips in both youth and professional language demonstrates a speaker's

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indubil

acquaintance with the subject matter as well as the speaker's desire to consolidate his/her membership in a certain social group (Mesthrie, 2021:105).

In a study on the clipping of words in a WhatsApp group chat, the researcher showed that users communicate seamlessly without any difficulty during their clipping patterns (Ikhsan et al., 2021:56). Furthermore, people usually used the longer terms if the situation was more formal and shortened them in an informal setup.

Clipping as an indicator of endearment and familiarity

In this regard, clippings have the same reasoning as diminutives and that is to sometimes show endearment as well as familiarity (Badarneh, 2010). During clipping patterns, Ikhsan et al. (2021) state that the new term may entirely replace the longer original word, however it does not change the word class and the meaning of the word itself. As it occurs in English, the same can be said for the Xhosa language that when a word is clipped, it becomes common usage therefore its frequency increases. Usually, people prefer a more quickly and easily pronounceable version (ibid).

Clipping in Xhosa personal names

Iziteketiso is a noun from noun class 8 that is formed from the verb -*teketisa* and means to call by nickname or jokingly and affectionately address people in Xhosa. The verb *ukuteketisa* includes the following glosses in *The Greater Dictionary of Xhosa, Vol.3* (Pahl et al., 1989:254):

1. Call (a child or adult) by a pet name or a term of endearment.
2. Call (a detestable, repulsive, revolting person, thing or action) by a less harsh, disgusting, offensive, unkind or obscene name; use a euphemism.
3. Call a person by a nickname, eg one based on an obvious characteristic, such as Mathumbu (intestines) for one with a large stomach.

Isiteketiso which is in singular form is often derived from the entire official first or personal name (Neethling, 1994:89). *Iziteketiso* are not gendered in that both men and women frequently have them. In addition to serving as nicknames, these contractions of first names can also serve as first names (Neethling, 1994:89). For instance, the name *Mphowabadimo* (Gift of the Gods) in Sotho is shortened to *Mpho*, which means ‘Gift’. *Mpho* often serves as both a first name and a nickname.

Furthermore, Neethling (1994:88) ascertains that the longer form loses its validity as a first name if the shorter form is used more frequently as the official name. For example, in Xhosa the name, *Siya*, which is short for *Siyabulela*, frequently serves as an official first name.

Personal names can take on a variety of morphological forms such as the process of being truncated to form new names. They belong to the noun class 1a in singular and the noun class 2a when used in plural. A personal name can be shortened to create *isiteketiso* by deleting a syllable without requiring any additional adaption (Neethling, 1994:90). These observations flow from a study on nicknames which was conducted by Neethling (see Neethling, 1994) with Xhosa-speaking students at the University of Western Cape. Neethling's study (Ibid.) includes the names *Khayalethu* ‘our home’ which is clipped to *Khaya*, and *Mncedisi* ‘helper’ which is abbreviated to just *Mnce*. With *Khayalethu* (Literally: Home of-our = Our home) the possessive *lethu* has been clipped to leave just the word for 'home' minus its initial vowel: *Khaya*, while with *Mncedisi*, which is derived from the noun *umncedisi* 'helper' (from the verb *ncedisa* 'assist') the clipping to just *Mnce* has not been morphological as with *Khayalethu* to *Khaya*, but syllabic since *Mnce* is semantically empty.

Another example that demonstrates the deletion of the first and second syllables while keeping the remainder is in the name *Nokuzola* meaning ‘the calm one’, *Noku* is clipped, and *Zola* is the remainder. However, like the clipping of *Khayalethu* to just *Khaya*, *Nomawethu* which means ‘one of us’ is clipped to *Wethu* but in this instance it is the possessive that is retained and the form *Noma* which is clipped. With *Nokuzola* and *Nomawethu* being clipped to *Zola* and *Wethu* respectively it is important to note that both these names are female names but in the *iziteketiso*, these names lose their feminine markers, -*no* and -*ma* through syllable clipping (Neethling, 1994:90).

As already referred to with *Mncedisi* being clipped to just *Mnce*, the formation of *iziteketiso* can result in loss of lexical meaning via the truncation of salient syllables. When the name *Mqokeleli*—which means ‘gatherer’—is clipped, *Mqo* is the result (Neethling, 1994:90). The name *Mqo* has no significance culturally or semantically. The position taken in this section of the thesis, however, is that proper names in the form of nicknames do not require lexical meaning to serve as names. In *iziteketiso*,

lexical meaning is frequently unnecessary (Neethling, 1994:90). However, it is noteworthy that other names preserve their lexical meaning even when clipped. Names such as *Zola* from *Nokuzola*, still has its lexical meaning of 'calmness', and *Monde* from *Nomonde* (*umonde* is a Class 3 noun meaning ‘patience’) are examples of such.

Moyo and Mphande (2004) bring about a further and nuanced discussion into the process of clipping personal name in Xhosa to create nicknames. He states that: “Two syllables are the maximum stem size in the language to which a name can be truncated to form a nickname”.

As a result, names like *Vuso* are not shortened because; “They are already minimum foot size since the shortened name must be bi-moraic[2]”. The full or genuine name cannot be replaced by the nickname due to cultural norms which insist on the preservation of the meaning of the name (Moyo and Mphande, 2004:110). This means that a person with the name *Thandi* would naturally go by *Thandeka* in a formal setting unlike in English, where a person with the name *Tony* doesn’t necessarily have the first name *Anthony* (Moyo and Mphande, 2004:110). However, Moyo and Mphande fail to refer to the fact that although a child might be named *Tony*, the original form of the name is *Anthony* and thus *Tony* is indeed a clipping.

The insertion of the /-s/ and /-sh/ sounds after clipping of Xhosa personal names to nicknames frequently happens in a fun and intimate setting between interlocutors (Neethling, 1994:90). The trimming of *Nolitha* to *Litas*, *Noluthando* to *Thandos*, *Thobeka* to *Thosh*, and *Siphokazi* to *Sphosh* are a few examples of these descriptive morpheme suffixes in use in nicknames, operating much like /-zo/ in *Mamzo* (a truncated form of mama à mam with the suffix -*zo*) being used to indicate closeness (see Dowling, 2021:54).

[2] A mora (plural morae or moras) is a basic timing unit in the phonology of some spoken languages, equal to or shorter than a syllable. A short syllable such as ba consists of one mora (monomoraic), while a long syllable such as baa consists of two (bimoraic) - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mora_(linguistics)

Clipping of proper nouns in Nigeria

Kari (2016) discusses word-formation strategies in Degema, an indigenous language of Nigeria, and observes that in this language proper nouns are frequently clipped. The clipped form of a personal name is a less formal variation of the non- clipped form. This clipping involves a reduction in size as well as an additional addition of the suffix -s, which is followed by a vowel that "perfectly harmonizes with the vowel in the second syllable of the clipped word" (Kari, 2016:88), for example, the name *Ohoso* is clipped to *Ohoos* via what I would argue is metathesis which is the transposition of a sound in a word, in this case the final /o/ is transposed to pre-final consonant position. Kari (2016) states that syllable clipping boosts the languages' lexicon as more words are created in the language without tampering with the meaning of the original word.

Much like Degema, for speakers of another indigenous language of Nigeria, Igbo, it is common linguistic practice to clip proper nouns. In this instance, only personal names are clipped in Igbo (Onoura, 2016: 29) but they note that personal names are formed from phrases and words which are typically used in their clipped (short) variants (ibid). Clips in Igbo are not monosyllabic, take for example *Chima* which is clipped from *Chiamoge* which means "God knows the time" and *Uche* which is a clipping of *Uchenna*, meaning "father's mind" (Onoura, 2016:33). Clipping of Igbo personal names also happens in which "the first syllables are cut off", for *Naedu* from *Chinaedu* as well as *Naasa* which is clipped from *Chinasa* (Onoura, 2016:34).

Clipping in Sotho

In Sotho, a South African indigenous language, the part of speech most likely to be cut from Sotho personal names is the noun in the case of sentence names (Liketso, 2009:68). *Reaubokamorena*, 'we praise you Lord' is clipped to *Reauboka*, 'we praise you'. Another example that depicts this is *Morenaonalenna* which means 'the Lord is with me' is clipped to *Onalenna*, meaning 'he is with me'. Given that one of my main objectives is to classify the kinds of clipping that take place in Xhosa the research into Igbo and Sotho clippings are relevant as there are direct parallels with the truncation of personal names in Xhosa, e.g. *Siya* for *Siyamthanda* (a Xhosa name meaning *We love him/her*), although the morphemes that are clipped (verbal or nominal) might differ across languages. It is important to note that *Reauboka* 'We praise/thank you' is backclipped from *Reaubokamorena* (Liketso, 2009:68).

A form of fore-clipping is *Morenaonalenna*, which is clipped to *Onalenna* in Sotho. According to Liketso (2009:70) it is acceptable to remove the portion of a name whose absence has no impact on the name's meaning in Sesotho.

Bilingualism in the reduction of personal names and in Tsotsitaal

In the clipping of personal names in Xhosa, bilingualism as a sociolinguistic phenomenon is present. This may be seen by shortening first names using a system that works for both English and Afrikaans (Neethling, 1994:90). Consider how the suffix -i, -ie, or -y is used to modify the name *Vikelwa* which means 'protected' to use the nickname *Vicky* or *Vickie*. Therefore, borrowing from English and Afrikaans nicknames for Xhosa is acceptable. This comes as no surprise because the borrowing of Xhosa from these two languages is a well-known and long-standing historical occurrence. To further illustrate borrowing from English and Afrikaans, we have the repeated middle consonant in *Bussie*, clipped from *Busiswa* meaning ‘blessed’ and *Solly*, clipped from *Solomzi* which means ‘eye of the home’. *Bussie* and *Solly* are both nicknames that are found in all three languages’ (English, Afrikaans and Xhosa) lexicon of nicknames.

Bilingualism causes clipping to also occur in tsotsitaal. The slang word *bra*, which is mainly used by Xhosa and Afrikaans speakers is a shortened version of the word "brother," an English noun (Neethling, 1994:90). Hurst and Buthelezi (2014:188) state that clippings are another characteristic of tsotsitaal and give the following example of tsotsitaal speech with the clipped words highlighted:

> Mamela autie, yam le weyi ayidibenanga neeweyi zokhrawuna, uyabona? Le weyi idibene nento **yesgila (school)** for yena **mfethu (brother)**, uyazithola?
>
> *‘Listen, my brother, this thing has nothing to do with being inducted to the numbers gang language, you, see? This thing has to do with school for the brother, do you get it?’*

In the above sentence *isgila* is a clipped form of *isigila* which is a tsotsitaal term for school, here the VCV structure of the Class 7 noun prefix *isi-* is reduced to just *is-* while *mfethu* is a clipping of *mfowethu* ‘my brother’. This is described as elision as the vowel element of the noun prefix has been elided.

Hurst and Buthelezi (2014) note that Tsotsitaal and urban Xhosa frequently have clips as a design element. Simango (2021:20) observes the use of clips and shortenings in a Tsotsitaal conversation, which he characterizes as typical of informal discourse. Dowling (2021:54) also observes the clipping of an Afrikaans word by a Xhosa-speaking announcer on *uMhlobo Wenene* (the official radio station for the Xhosa language), who instead of saying *uyabuya* 's/he is coming back' (with the root verb *buya* 'return') uses the slang *uyatrega* shortening the Afrikaans word *terug* 'back' to *treg* and forming an Xhosa verb from it.

Mesthrie (2021:105), discussing Ngwenya's (1996) research into Tsotsitaals, notes that:

> Areas of innovation identified by Ngwenya are nicknames, abbreviations of names of people and places and use of an -s phoneme with names to signal informality (e.g., Thandi > Thandis).

The author concludes that these are reminiscent of clippings or truncations with final -il and - o common in Sheng of Kenya (Ibid.)

Having dealt with clipping extensively, I now move on to elision, another aspect of spoken speech that can impact 2nd language learners' ability to improve their comprehension skills.

2.2.2 Elision

Vowels are frequently omitted in rapid speech in several African and European languages (Casali, 1997, Barry and Andreeva, 2001; Simango and Kadenge, 2014). For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the conditions that propel elision to occur in the everyday conversations of Xhosa 1st language speakers. Because this study is intended for 2nd language learners to be able to use as a guide, I will present the elision processes in as simple language as possible, while still referring to theoretical data where appropriate.

Syncope

The interconsonantal vowel elision, also known as syncope - the absence of one or more internal sounds in a word, particularly an unstressed vowel - is one sort of elision that indicates an informal register (Harford and Malambe: 2015, 343). A

typical orthographic symbol for elision of the vowel is an apostrophe, which is used in both Swati and Zulu as well as in Xhosa.

Some common instances of interconsonatal vowel elision in Xhosa can be found in Noun Class 7, such as are: *isitulo→ is'tulo* 'chair', *isikolo→ is'kolo* 'school', the same instance of interconsonatal vowel elision occurs in the Tsotsitaal term for school (see above), where *isigila* is elided to *is'gila* and Noun Class 15, the infinitive class, *ukuhamba→uk'hamba* 'to go'.

How are vowels omitted in syncope?

To gauge how vowels are omitted, an explanation of three circumstances will be presented.

i) a high vowel must be omitted; otherwise, a vowel may not be omitted. Harford and Malambe's (2015) research exemplify this using the word *bashayeli*, which in isiZulu means "drivers." Because the beginning vowel in that word is not high, it cannot be elided to *b'shayeli*.

ii) the omitted high vowel needs to be at a less noticeable location. The second-to-last syllable is emphasized in Bantu languages, and this is accomplished by lengthening. Examples are the isiZulu word for bread, *sinkhwa→s'nkhwa*.

iii) vowel elision is that it must occur as a component of a functional morpheme rather than a lexical morpheme. Segments in lexical terms will have fewer reductions, according to Casali (2006). Function terms in English have more compact forms, e.g. *I will* is frequently elided to "*I'll*" and *cannot* becomes *can't,* respectively. All languages strive to preserve lexical elements more than non-lexical ones. this is due to the greater semantic content that lexical items encode. For instance, the word *umkhuhlane* (flu) cannot be elided to *umkh'hlane* in isiZulu (Harford and Malambe: 2005, 3450.). This is because if one omits the /u/ in *umkhuhlane*, there could be a minimal pair meaning there could be another vowel that could presumably go there.

In a much earlier study, Mzolo (1968:195) claimed that vowel elision occurs frequently before words that start with vowels in everyday speech, such as *ngibon'amadod'amathath'entabeni* (I see three men on the mountain). It would be

ngibona amadoda amathathu entabeni if spoken slowly, deliberately, or emphatically.

Challenges of Elision for L2 learners

According to Koster (1987), the main reason elision presents difficulties for L2 learners is that the absence of sounds frequently results in misunderstandings or a complete inability to recognise words. Elided speech may appear fragmentary or unfinished to learners who have not yet grasped the whole phonetic structure of words. This discrepancy impairs their comprehension of spoken language and can provide a serious obstacle to fluency.

Furthermore, a listener's proficiency with the language's particular phonetic patterns frequently determines their capacity to interpret elided forms. Because of their considerable exposure, native speakers can fill in the blanks automatically and have an implicit comprehension of common elisions. However, it takes intentional thinking for L2 learners to identify elided forms. L2 learners may find it difficult to identify these modified words if they are not intimately familiar with the phonetic subtleties of the language, which could give the impression that spoken language is unpredictable.

Koster emphasises how the vast mental lexicons of native speakers enable them to automatically predict and evaluate changes in pronunciation. L2 learners, on the other hand, frequently require intentional training to achieve this degree of flexibility. Without this kind of instruction, students' comprehension is inflexible, leaving them vulnerable to misinterpretations in everyday conversational situations where omissions are common.

2.2.3 Assimilation

According to Crystal (2001:39) assimilation refers to “the influence exercised by one sound segment upon the articulation of another, so that the sounds become more alike, or identical”. Koster (2019:57) notes that the oldest term used to refer to assimilation is “sandhi”, which is an old Indian word referring to putting together, or “linking”. Koster (2019: 69) argues that a common explanation for assimilation is

that it occurs because the speaker wants to “save effort”. Koster comes to the very important conclusion that assimilation is generally rule-governed, but the problem is that non-native speakers do not know these rules:

> words in connected speech show a great deal of variability, especially at word boundaries, depending on phonetic environment, prosodic features, speaking rate and speaker. Many of these variations, such as assimilation, are rule-governed but **as these rules differ from language to language they are likely to lead to incorrect identifications of phonemes and words by non-natives.** (Koster, 2019:135). (My emphasis).

Having established the processes behind clipping, elision and assimilation it is now imperative that I discuss the issue of 2nd language comprehension skills and how these can be improved by interventions that consider their influence in creating difficulties for these learners.

2.3 Second language (L2) Listening Skills

Listening comprehension is one of the most challenging language skill to develop and second language learners (L2) often experience nervousness when trying to comprehend what an L1 speaker is saying. Kurita (2012:31) argues that “appropriate instruction for L2 listening could reduce learners’ anxiety”. The reason why learners experience such stress in the first place is that high frequency sequence words are frequently produced by native language speakers as chunks that can be reduced to phonemes or even have entire syllables omitted (Field, 2003: 329). Due to this, native speakers may process auditory material automatically and effectively while paying minimal attention to specific words (Vandergrift, 2007: 192). This contrasts with L2 listeners, as they have less linguistic knowledge and what they hear cannot be processed automatically; they must actively pay attention to what they are hearing. This suggests that given the speed of speech utterances by native speakers, a sizable chunk of what L2 learners hear may be lost. This means that not only do learners not get the chance to reproduce what they hear in their own attempts at speaking the language but also that they do not notice features of the input (Kurita, 2012:32).

Understanding the causes and mechanisms of why and how learners struggle with voice input can help develop a program of straightforward practice tasks that aim t o address listening issues.

L2 learners need to be able to have sufficient information of what is being said (being able to process the grammatical and lexical input) before they are able to contextualise the utterance.

As in many L2 learning contexts, in Xhosa many high-level communication breakdowns start with minor mistakes. For instance, listeners could hear *Abantu bangaphum' ngoku* and interpret it as 'people should not go out now' instead of *Abantu bangaphuma ngoku* 'people may go out now' just because they interpret the final vowel of the first sentence as /i/ because the final vowel of the subjunctive has been elided (*bangaphumi*).

Commonly, the assumption is that a word is not in the listener's lexicon when the listener fails to understand it. But this isn't always the case; it only means that what they hear is frequently reduced, clipped, or elided. As Field (2003:329) states "standard citation forms of words are modified when they occur in connected speech".

2.4 Word Recognition Processes

Word recognition in both native (L1) and second language (L2) speakers is complicated. Koster explores this in his ground breaking 1987 research *Word Recognition in Foreign and Native Language: Effects of Context and Assimilation.* The study focusses on the cognitive processes that go into processing words, specifically examining the impact of phonological changes like elision and reduction that are increasingly common in normal speech. Koster's study clarifies the basic distinctions between the approaches taken by native speakers and second language learners in terms of word recognition and the ways in which their different levels of phonological competence impact their processing strategies.

According to Koster (1987), a language's native speakers have an instinctive, intuitive knowledge of the phonological changes that take place in fluid, natural speech. Native speakers' mental vocabulary is so ingrained with these transformations—such as reductions, elisions, and changes in pronunciation—that they can identify a word even when it is reduced or altered in speech (Koster, 1987:6). By using their internal vocabulary and contextual signals to interpret the meaning of the word, native speakers can recognise this shortened version with ease and without conscious effort.

On the other hand, when words experience such phonological shifts, L2 learners frequently do worse in word recognition. Word recognition is a more conscious and intentional process for L2 learners, particularly when they encounter rapid or informal speech that differs from the rigid patterns they were taught in class (Koster,1987:10). L2 learners might not be accustomed to the phonological reductions that take place in spoken language in everyday situations because they typically encounter words in their formal, written forms. For L2 learners who are not used to processing informal spoken forms of the language, this discrepancy between formal and informal speech exposes a significant obstacle.

Context is very important in word recognition. In addition to their phonological competence, which allows them to identify words with altered phonology, native speakers also rely significantly on contextual signals. When words are uttered in reduced versions, these cues aid native speakers in deducing their meaning. However, because they might not have gained the same degree of acquaintance with the subtleties of informal spoken language, L2 learners frequently find this difficult.

Second language learners frequently rely more on visual signals to aid in their word identification process, such as reading written material or lip-reading (Koster, 1987:1). Native speakers, on the other hand, process spoken language mostly through auditory signals. L2 learners may require extra assistance to recognise words because they are less effective at processing spoken language, particularly in noisy settings or when speech is rapid. When the language is spoken rapidly, this dependence on visual signals becomes even more crucial. For instance, a Xhosa student who is solely accustomed to normal word pronunciations could find it difficult to follow a fast-paced Xhosa discussion when words are shortened or omitted.

Phonological processing abilities must be emphasised in language instruction for second language learners. In addition to teaching grammar and vocabulary, effective second language training should equip students with the skills necessary to comprehend words in their shortened and modified forms (Koster, 1987:12). As a result, students would be better able to comprehend spoken language in authentic settings. In the instance of Xhosa, listening activities that expose L2 learners to shortened forms and rapid speech should help them better understand how words evolve in everyday conversation. This could enhance their general word recognition skills and increase their ability to comprehend spoken language.

Koster (2019) advocates for a more comprehensive approach to language teaching by emphasising the significance of contextual processing and phonological ability in word recognition. This would entail introducing students to the informal and modified versions of the language they will come across in everyday communication in addition to teaching them the formal structures of the language. This could involve more dynamic and participatory language exercises for Xhosa learners, like conversing with native speakers, listening to casual conversations, and practicing pronunciation in more natural contexts.

With the correct teaching methods, the native and L2 speakers' differences in word identification skills can be closed. L2 learners can improve their fluency and self-assurance in processing spoken language by emphasising the development of phonological competence, especially in identifying shortened and altered word forms. By doing this, students will be more capable of communicating effectively and comprehending the subtleties of the language, just like native speakers.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

With an emphasis on theories pertaining to language comprehension, cognitive load, and listening processes, this theoretical framework incorporates cognitive psychology. It examines how learners process Xhosa reduced forms and is based on cognitive load theory (CLT), top-down and bottom-up processing models, and instructional design concepts.

Theoretical treatments of syllable reduction are not the focus of this study; their occurrence in spoken Xhosa will be dealt with descriptively.

This study will focus on theoretical treatments of comprehension which will be drawn from the field of cognitive psychology. This theory considers learners as constructors of meaning based on prior knowledge and selective processing of input and is relevant to my study as it aims to compare students' comprehension skills both before and after receiving information regarding syllable reduction in Xhosa.

It is anticipated that students' cognitive processes will adjust when they receive instruction on syllable reduction in Xhosa, resulting in improved oral and written language understanding and interpretation.

2.5.1 Cognitive Psychology and Language Comprehension

According to cognitive psychology, learners use both top-down and bottom-up processing in the active, constructive process of language comprehension (Sweller et al., 2011:45). Sweller et al. contend that comprehension involves sophisticated systems rather than passive cognitive processes. Learners interpret new information by applying their prior knowledge and cognitive abilities. Students are required to decode new linguistic structures while incorporating them into their prior knowledge when learning a second language, such as Xhosa (Vandergrift, 2007:198). When learners come across reductions like elision and syllable reduction, which are common in languages like Xhosa, this interaction becomes much more complicated.

For language understanding, both top-down and bottom-up processing are essential. Decoding the smallest speech elements, such as phonemes and syllables, which lead to larger structures like words and sentences, is known as bottom-up processing (Sweller et al., 2011:47). Learners must modify their bottom- up processing strategies to identify and understand decreased speech forms, such as elision, which are common in the Xhosa context (Vandergrift, 2007: 200).

On the other hand, top-down processing makes predictions about the incoming speech by drawing on pre-existing knowledge, expectations, and contextual cues (Kurita, 2012:12). By enabling students to predict words or phrases even when parts of the speech are cut or omitted, this kind of processing can improve comprehension. Understanding reductions may depend on learners' ability to identify and fill in the gaps in speech, which is made possible by their familiarity with Xhosa grammar and vocabulary (Joyce, 2013: 3). As a result, both top-down and bottom-up methods support comprehensive speech understanding.

2.5.2 Cognitive Load Theory and Language Learning

A framework for comprehending how learners' cognitive capacities are used during learning is offered by Cognitive Load Theory (CLT). According to CLT, learning might be hindered if the cognitive load surpasses the human cognitive processing capacity (Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2003: 3). The difficulty in learning a language is creating lessons that enable students to efficiently handle cognitive load. A balance between internal cognitive burden—the task's inherent complexity—and external cognitive strain—the needless stress imposed by poorly designed tasks—is especially important to comprehend phonological reductions such syllable elision in Xhosa (Sweller et al., 2011: 55).

Managing cognitive load is essential for language learners when they come across complex linguistic structures. According to CLT, teaching should concentrate on improving students' language processing skills while lowering unnecessary cognitive load (Paas et al., 2003:5). Simplifying the presentation of reduced speech forms and offering precise instructions on how to recognise and handle these reductions should be the main goals of instructional strategies in the context of this study. To help learners manage their cognitive load, training could start with basic, non-reduced forms of Xhosa and then progressively add more sophisticated reductions (Sweller et al., 2011:59).

CLT also stresses the value of repetition and practice in lowering cognitive load. Learners may become automatic in identifying reduced forms if they are exposed to them on a frequent basis, which would lessen the cognitive load needed to understand them (Sweller et al., 2011:64). By lowering the intrinsic and extraneous load, this gradual method enables students to concentrate on understanding rather than decoding each reduced form (Paas et al., 2003:7).

2.5.3 Bottom-Up and Top-Down Processing in Reduced Forms

When learners encounter reduced speech forms, there is a close interaction between top-down and bottom-up processing. In bottom-up processing, students try to figure out the speech's phonological structure. When syllables or morphemes are left out, as in elision, this becomes difficult, and learners have to put in more effort to recognise words. Learners must practise bottom-up processing by concentrating on minimum cues like syllable sounds or word structure in a second-language context like Xhosa, where these reductions are common.

Conversely, top-down processing enables students to predict, from context, the words and sentences they are likely to hear (Vandergrift, 2007:202). To compensate for gaps in auditory information, learners interpret the limited speech using their prior knowledge. Top-down processing is an essential tool for understanding reductions because, for instance, learners who are familiar with the fundamental grammatical structures of Xhosa may anticipate specific phrases or sentence patterns that aid them in predicting the omitted words (Kurita, 2012:16).

Language understanding depends heavily on the interplay between these two cognitive modalities. Learners must be able to use both top-down processing to fill in the blanks based on contextual cues and bottom-up processing to identify reduced forms. According to the study, the capacity of students to combine these two approaches will be crucial to their comprehension of Xhosa reduced forms.

2.5.4 Automaticity and Word Recognition

A key idea in both cognitive psychology and language learning is automaticity. It describes the capacity to process data rapidly and effectively without requiring a lot of mental work (Joyce, 2013:5). Automaticity in word recognition in language comprehension enables students to decode words without actively paying attention to their phonological structures. Learners enhance their listening comprehension and word identification skills as they become more accustomed to identifying reduced forms of speech (Sweller et al., 2011:66).

When learners are processing speech at realistic rates, when reductions like elision occur often, automaticity is very crucial. In this situation, learners can understand the message without using excessive cognitive resources due to their capacity to swiftly identify reduced forms, even when they are not completely stated. Learners

can acquire this automaticity through repeated practice and exposure to reduced speech forms, which will facilitate processing of these forms in real-time speech (Joyce, 2013: 6).

2.5.5 The Role of Instruction in Cognitive Processes

To control cognitive load and encourage the growth of language comprehension abilities, instruction is essential. CLT states that instructional strategies should be created to reduce unnecessary load and improve students' capacity for efficient information processing (Paas et al., 2003: 7). This means that while teaching language, teachers should concentrate on giving students the resources and techniques they need to understand reduced speech forms without overloading them with information.

Teachers could, for instance, employ strategies like clearly presenting reduced forms and then having students listen to these forms in context during activities. In addition to lowering cognitive load, this method encourages the growth of automaticity in identifying certain forms (Sweller et al., 2011:67). Furthermore, scaffolding strategies like giving hints or incomplete information can help students improve their top-down and bottom-up processing abilities, which will ultimately improve their capacity to process reduced speech forms (Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2003:8).

2.6 Conclusion

This theoretical framework, which focusses on top-down and bottom-up processing as well as cognitive load, is based on ideas of language comprehension and cognitive psychology. These models provide a thorough grasp of the cognitive difficulties related to reduced forms in Xhosa and how learners process them. It is anticipated that learners would enhance their understanding of reduced forms in Xhosa by utilising Cognitive Load Theory and concentrating on the management of cognitive resources during instruction. Additionally, this study highlights how instructional methods help learners overcome the difficulties presented by restricted speech patterns by promoting automaticity development and cognitive processing.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Positionality

It is important for me to acknowledge my positionality in the study. I am a postgraduate student in the African Languages and Literatures Section of the School of Languages and Literatures where I tutored 2nd language beginner Xhosa students from 2022 to 2023. The listening intervention was conducted in 2024. Students were informed of my study by the lecturer and were invited to ask questions about it before agreeing or choosing to opt out of any intervention. No pressure was placed on students to take part, and students were encouraged to speak freely about any concerns they might have. The lecturer involved placed no pressure on the students and assured them that even if none of them wanted to take part that would have been acceptable and would in no way influence their assessment grades. In a brief introduction to students, I did not reveal the implicit goals of the study but merely informed them of the issue of listening and how I wanted to know more about the challenges that students might encounter.

Methodological motivations

The two-pronged methodology used in this study to gather and examine qualitative data on reduced forms in Xhosa is described in this chapter. Two main goals were carefully considered when designing the research approach. The initial goal was to create an extensive database of Xhosa reduced forms that records their usage in spoken and written language. To find and categorise these reduced forms, a methodical examination of numerous sources—including written materials, interviews, and recorded conversations—is required. By doing this, the study should provide a thorough understanding of the linguistic mechanisms underlying Xhosa reductions, offering important new perspectives on the language's natural spoken form.

The second goal was to design and administer listening assessments specifically for Xhosa second language learners. These assessments are intended especially to gauge students' proficiency in recognizing and understanding reduced forms in everyday speech. The study uses a carefully crafted series of listening exercises that mimic real-world conversational situations to do this. The goal of these activities is to evaluate

students' listening comprehension and adaptability to native speakers of Xhosa by exposing them to a variety of reduced forms, such as elisions, contractions, and assimilations.

A comprehensive analysis of the linguistic properties of reduced forms as well as their influence on language acquisition is made possible by this two-pronged approach. Through a combination of data gathering and empirical testing, the study offers a thorough examination of the function of reduced forms in ordinary speech. It also clarifies the difficulties second-language learners encounter in identifying and interpreting these reductions, providing possible solutions to improve instructional methods.

In conclusion, this methodological approach helps to close the gap between language pedagogy and linguistic theory. It not only improves knowledge of how Xhosa reduced forms work, but it also offers a useful framework for evaluating second-language learners' ability to process these forms. The study advances our

knowledge of Xhosa as a dynamic and changing language by addressing both linguistic and educational aspects.

3.2 Developing a Data Base of Reduced Forms

In the first section of the study, the collection of Xhosa reduced forms—elided or contracted expressions commonly found in informal speech—is the focus. Since these forms are an essential part of spoken, natural language, it is imperative that second language learners of Xhosa comprehend them. Reduced forms frequently deviate greatly from formal language and may exclude syllables, morphemes, or entire words. Fluency and comprehension require these forms, particularly in informal conversations and multimedia settings like social media and music.

To create the database, examples of these forms were gathered from a variety of written and spoken sources. This database provides resources for later listening assessments as well as a starting point for analysing the composition and frequency of reduced forms in Xhosa.

3.2.1 Written texts

To gather reduced forms from written texts, resources that represent contemporary, ordinary language use had to be found. These resources typically capture idiomatic terms and informal speech patterns, in contrast to standard literature. The following are some of the written works chosen for this study:

a) Dialogue in a classic Xhosa text *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* (AC Jordan, 1940).
b) An anthology of contemporary poetry was selected, specifically Athambile Masola's *Ilifa* (2021). Urban Xhosa-speaking audiences find resonance in Masola's work because it catches modern issues and linguistic approaches. Her poetry is a perfect tool for recognising reduced language patterns because it regularly uses conversational forms.
c) Popular Xhosa-language songs' lyrics were also examined. Song lyrics frequently mirror spoken language patterns, including abbreviated forms that naturally arise in expressive or fast-paced speech, particularly in genres like afro pop. Prominent Xhosa-speaking musicians, Nathi Mankayi *(Amagama)* and Vusi Nova *(Ndikuthandile)* whose lyrics are renowned for their genuine language use are among the songs selected for this study.

The selection of written sources places more emphasis on content that uses informal speech patterns than formal language. This method makes it possible to depict the language more accurately as native speakers would experience it.

3.2.2 Data from Oral Texts

Another abundant source of reduced forms, particularly those that arise naturally in informal discourse, was oral texts. The following sources provided oral data for the study:

a) WhatsApp Voice Notes- Three voice notes were collected from young, urban, bilingual female university students who speak Xhosa as their primary language and are between the ages of 18 and 25. Younger, urban speakers are more prone to use reduced forms in their quick, informal speech, which is why this group was selected. These participants' bilingualism makes it possible to investigate the potential effects of code-switching between Xhosa and English on the usage of reduced forms.

b) Elicited Dialogue with First-Language Xhosa Speakers- Participants from the same demographic as shown in (a) participated in elicited dialogue sessions. To record the impromptu usage of reduced forms, this method encouraged participants to talk about well-known subjects in Xhosa. Our goal in conducting this dialogue was to examine reductions that take place in casual, natural communication.
c) Social Media Content (TikTok Video)- Additionally, speech samples were gathered from a young (23-year-old), multilingual, urban Xhosa speaker who released a TikTok video discussing prevalent social and cultural topics in Xhosa. TikTok is a useful tool for documenting young people's modern language use since it encourages a casual, conversational tone that closely resembles colloquial speech.
d) WhatsApp Voice Note from a Rural, Middle-Aged Female Speaker- A voice note from a rural, middle-aged (55 years), female, first-language Xhosa speaker was included to represent a wider variety of dialectal and generational variances. This participant offers a different viewpoint since elderly and rural speakers could employ different reduction patterns, which could represent more conventional or conservative linguistic forms.

We can investigate possible differences in reduced forms based on age, gender, and whether a person lives in an urban or rural area thanks to the wide range of speech samples provided by this collection of oral texts.

3.3 Developing listening tests for use with 2nd language learners

Listening assessments specifically designed for Xhosa second-language learners were developed using the condensed forms found in both written and oral sources. The purpose of these assessments is to gauge the participants' proficiency in identifying and interpreting reduced forms, which is essential for achieving conversational fluency. To guarantee the listening test'' efficacy and compatibility with students' proficiency levels, several procedures were taken during the development phase.

Students who have finished a 12-week intense starting program in Xhosa (SLL1101F) were the intended test takers. Students were expected to have a fundamental mastery of Xhosa vocabulary, sentence structure, and pronunciation to take this course, which covered foundational abilities.

Participants were divided into two groups for comparative purposes:

1. **Group A (Non-Intervention Group)-** This group did not receive any prior training on recognising reduced forms before taking the hearing exam. Following the first test, they received an intervention that included instructions and guidance on how to identify and understand restricted language forms. To ascertain whether the intervention had enhanced their performance, they retook the exam.
2. **Group B (Intervention Group)**: Prior to the test, this group was given specific instruction on reduced language forms. They received instruction on how to identify reductions in spoken and written Xhosa, emphasising common patterns such as morpheme and syllable deletion.

This two-group design makes it possible to analyse how direct instruction affects students' understanding of reduced forms, which offers important insights into language teaching methods.

3.3.1 Participant Criteria for the test

- Native English speakers learning Xhosa as a second language: Assessing the processing of reduced Xhosa forms by speakers who are not familiar with this linguistic trait is made easier by concentrating on English-speaking students.
- Having finished the SLL1101F course: The rigorous introductory curriculum of the course guarantees that students have a comparable level of basic Xhosa knowledge.

The purpose of these criteria was to reduce baseline knowledge variability by establishing a homogeneous group.

3.3.2 Research Ethics

Careful ethical concerns were made throughout the study because some data sources are sensitive, especially those that involve voice notes and social media content. The School of Languages and Literatures Ethics Committee granted ethical approval for the use of voice notes from WhatsApp, interviews, and in-person testing.

All participants were made aware of the study's objectives, data collection procedures, and their freedom to discontinue participation at any time without facing any repercussions

before beginning the study. All participants also received guarantees about the confidentiality of their data and their anonymity, particularly when audio recordings were used. During analysis, voice notes and other recorded data were anonymised and kept in a secure location.

The study complied with copyright regulations and properly credited publicly available sources, including published poetry and song lyrics. This study's ethical framework demonstrates its dedication to upholding participant privacy and intellectual property rights.

3.4 Conclusion

The thorough methodology used in this study has been described in this chapter, which includes the development of listening assessments for Xhosa second- language learners as well as the establishment of a database of reduced forms. This methodology catches a wide range of reduced forms in contemporary Xhosa by using a variety of written and oral texts. Additionally, the study sheds light on the impact of explicit teaching on understanding by comparing second-language learners who had previously received training on these forms to those who had not.

In the following chapters, the results of the listening tests will be presented, along with an analysis of the impact of reduced forms on learners' comprehension abilities. This study contributes to the field of language education by highlighting the importance of colloquial features in language teaching and by offering practical strategies for helping learners navigate the nuances of conversational Xhosa.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

Since "truncation" and "reduction" are both typically phonologically predictable, this chapter utilises the terms as synonyms to present the facts. Truncation is the process of reducing or shortening linguistic formations, frequently by leaving out syllables or morphemes without sacrificing meaning. Natural speech and casual written communication frequently exhibit this tendency, especially in bilingual or multilingual settings where speakers switch between languages. This study examines truncation to learn how it functions in Xhosa speakers' writing and speaking.

Several data sets of truncations are tabulated in this chapter, along with a numerical count of how often each occurs and its complete form. For non-Xhosa speakers, English translations are also provided to help with understanding and to set the scene. A thorough examination of truncation patterns in various contexts and media is ensured by the vast range of sources and speakers represented in these data sets.

Among the data sets examined are the following:

a) WhatsApp audio notes from young, bilingual, urban first-language (L1) Xhosa speakers in their early 20s that contain oral truncations. These voice notes, which capture impromptu speech patterns, provide insights into casual, conversational language use.

b) oral truncations that were discovered during casual interviews with young, multilingual L1 Xhosa speakers. This data emphasises truncation in environments that are semi-controlled yet nonetheless natural.

c) oral truncations in a middle-aged L1 Xhosa speaker's voice message on WhatsApp. By comparing younger and older speakers, this dataset explores possible age-related variations in truncation patterns.

d) A young, bilingual L1 Xhosa speaker's oral truncation in a TikTok video. This information sheds light on the usage of truncation in social media settings, where originality and conciseness are frequently crucial.

e) Xhosa speakers' written truncations in literature, poetry and song lyrics. In contrast to its application in impromptu oral communication, these artistic mediums demonstrate the creative use of truncation in structured, written language expressions.

This chapter attempts to give a thorough grasp of truncation as a linguistic process by examining these data sets. The prevalence and patterns of truncation among Xhosa speakers in various circumstances will be clarified by the numerical data and examples provided. This investigation adds to more general conversations about language diversity, reduction, and the adaptive character of written and spoken language expression.

4.2 Data Collection and Methodology

WhatsApp voice notes, casual interviews, TikTok videos, a volume of contemporary poetry, a classic Xhosa novel were all used as data sources for this study to reflect a variety of naturalistic speech circumstances.

In terms of sociolinguistic variables, the following points are important:

For example, the voice notes on WhatsApp shed light on how truncation happens in informal online discussions, while TikTok videos show how young Xhosa speakers participate in informal, publicly shared spoken speech. Conversely, informal interviews record spoken language in an observational but conversational context, providing information from comparatively unplanned conversations.

Comparative study across age groups and communication modes is made possible by these many sources, and consideration is given to whether digital platforms, which promote brevity and quick interactions, may also promote more truncation. Data limitations include potential effects of bilingualism on language choices and variations in sound quality, particularly with digital recordings. However, to capture the diversity and adaptability of truncation within Xhosa, every data type was carefully addressed.

4.2.1 Understanding Truncation in Xhosa Phonology

In Xhosa, truncation, also known as reduction, is the regular shortening or deletion of syllables or sounds within a word. Numerous phonological elements, including syllable structure, stress, and the organic prosody of spoken Xhosa, have an impact on this process (Tomaka, 2017:25). Xhosa, like many Bantu languages, favours open syllable structures. When these structures are broken in informal or fast speech circumstances,

syllable reduction frequently results. Furthermore, by simplifying language in casual conversations, truncation might facilitate communication, especially when the shortened forms are nonetheless phonologically and contextually identifiable to other Xhosa speakers (Androutsopoulos, 2006:419).

In this study, I use established Xhosa phonological criteria to detect and quantify occurrences of truncation, considering certain contexts where syllables are likely to be decreased. Vowels may be dropped at morpheme boundaries in some verb or noun forms, for instance, or syllables may be dropped if they are unstressed or appear in well-known, high-frequency words. Particularly in situations requiring quick communication, these reductions support the preservation of speech rhythm and fluency.

4.2.2 Sociolinguistic Relevance of Truncation

Truncation is a social issue among Xhosa speakers as much as a phonetic one. Specifically, the adoption of abbreviated forms by speakers is influenced by age, context, and bilingualism. Truncation may be more common among young, urban, bilingual speakers who want to show linguistic innovation, build social identity, or match their language use to that of their peers. Conversely, in more formal settings, speakers who are older or middle-aged could exhibit less omissions. This distinction emphasises how older speakers may use more comprehensive forms, particularly in situations when they are unfamiliar with the conversational setting or audience, whereas younger speakers may use truncation as a sign of casual, peer-oriented discourse (Schilling, 2013:96). For more on the interplay between sociolinguistic factors and truncation see 5.5.3.

4.2.3 The Role of Technology and Digital Communication

Language usage and perception have changed because of the introduction of digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp and TikTok. Faster communication methods tend to encourage more casual, abbreviated forms of language. This also applies to Xhosa speakers, especially younger ones. Users of WhatsApp may rely more on shortened formats for efficiency and readability due to the simplicity of capturing voice notes and the instantaneity of digital conversations. Examining how Xhosa speakers modify their language to fit time-limited, dynamic formats are made easier by TikTok, a platform that promotes conciseness and is well- known for its short, captivating videos.

This study examines how Xhosa speakers manage the conflict between preserving their

linguistic uniqueness and modifying their language for digital environments that require quick, effective communication in addition to examining truncation in these digital situations. Thus, digital circumstances not only provide a setting for language use but also influence how truncation manifests itself, which may increase its usage among younger, tech-savvy speakers.

4.3 Truncations in Oral Texts

4.3.1 Obtaining Voice notes.

To elicit voice notes via WhatsApp from bilingual Xhosa-speaking youth, I sent friends (who had agreed to take part in the study and had been informed of the ethical implications) a voice note asking them to respond to a few questions on the topic of long-term relationships. The responses were natural, witty and in line with the kind of conversations we would normally have.

Table 2: WhatsApp Voice notes (bilingual youth)

Oral truncation	Numerical count	Full form	English Translation
ku'maintaina	1	ukumaintaina	'to maintain'
yabo	4	uyabona	'you see'
sifik'eyunivesithi	1	sifika eYunivesithi	'we arrive at university'
woyimaintaina	4	wokuyimaintaina	'of maintaining it'
mpend'lo	2	impendulo	'an answer'
bavumelan'	1	bavumelana	'they agreed'
is'kakhulu	1	isikakhulu	'a lot of times'
ba'	4	ukuba	'to be' '/'that
s'yajola	1	siyajola	'We are dating'
sayigcina	1	siyayigcina	'We are keeping it'
ay'pheli	1	ayipheli	'it is not ending'
ngeyoba	1	ngeyokuba	'that is'
abantw'abatsha	6	abantu abatsha	'young people'
as'khuli	1	asikhuli	'we are not growing (up)'
s'khula	1	sikhula	"we grow (up)'
ay'zusebenza	1	ayizukusebenza	'it is not going to work'
mntase	1	(u)mntu wasekhaya	'sibling' [friend]
bathi 'bana	1	bathi ukuba	'they are saying that'
kak'hle	1	kakuhle	'well' [adverb]
unyamezela	1	ukunyamezela	'to endure'
ulasta	2	ukulasta	'to last'
yoba	2	yokuba	'of being'/ 'of that'
'bengathi	2	ibe ngathi	'it becomes as if'
awuz'boni	1	awuziboni	'you don't see them/yourself'

az'beke	1	azibeke	‘and s/he puts/lays them (down)’
‘sube	2	Kutheni kusuka kube	‘why is it’
mhlambi	5	mhlawumbi	‘maybe’
kus’thwa	1	kusithiwa	‘it is said’
akhomntu	1	Akukho mntu	‘there is no one’

ufanel’ba	2	ufanele ukuba	‘you should be’
‘uba	4	ukuba	‘to be’/ ‘that’
say’ncokola	1	sayincokola	‘we chatted about it’
sis'wam	1	sisi wam	‘my sister’
‘buza	1	ukubuza	‘to ask’
bendik'xelele	1	bendikuxelele	‘I had told you’
k'la	1	‘kula’	‘in this’
es'thanda	1	esithanda	‘that we love
ixesh’elide	7	ixesha elide	‘a long time’
s’thetha	1	sithetha	‘we are talking (about)’
abant’wababini	1	abantu ababini	‘two people’
sifun’uzama	1	sifuna uzama	‘we want to try’
ngexesh’elinye	2	ngexesha elinye	‘at the same time’
amehl’ayazula	1	amehlo ayazula	‘the eyes are wandering’
mninz’umsebenzi	1	mninzi umsebenzi	‘there is a lot of work’
abant’wabaninzi	6	abantu abaninzi	‘a lot of people’
‘funek'ba	1	kufuneka ukuba	‘it must be/it is necessary that’
uz’misele	1	uzimisele	‘s/he is serious/determined’
ngok’cinga	1	ngokucinga	‘in thinking’
siz’nikwa	1	sizinikwa	‘we are given them’
azonto	1	ayizozinto	‘it’s not things’
es’khule	1	esikhule	‘that we grew up (with)’
qinis’apha	1	qinisa apha	‘harden here’
endiy’bona	1	endiyibona	‘that I see [it]’
az’kho	1	azikho	‘there aren’t’
uy’one	2	uyi-one	‘There’s one’
uqond’ba	1	uqonde ukuba	‘you understand that’
eb’sweni	1	ebusweni	‘on the face’
unalant’ba	1	unalaa nto yokuba	‘you have that thing of’
n’cela	1	ndicela	‘I politely request/please’
‘fanel’ba	1	ufanele ukuba	‘you are supposed to be’
ay’kho	1	ayikho	‘there’s not/none'
u’y’fumana	1	ukuyifumana	‘to get (it)’
bakhon’abantu	2	bakhona abantu	‘there are people’
nd’yakwaz’u’lasta	1	ndiyakwazi ukulasta	‘I can last’
k’qala	1	kuqala	‘first’
nd’yalasta	3	ndiyalasta	‘I am lasting’
‘nto	1	izinto	‘things’
bek’qhela	1	bekuqhela	‘[when] they mess with you [get used to you]’

k'loo nto	1	kuloo nto	'in that thing'
uku'gcina	1	Ukuyigcina	'to preserve'
u'sustainer	1	Uku-sustainer	'to sustain'
u'attainer	1	Uku-attainer	'to attain'
u'maintainer	1	Uku-maintainer	'to maintain'

ak'ho mntu	1	akukho mntu	'there is no-one'
u'communicator	2	uku-communicator	'to communicate'
ez'ninzi	1	ezininzi	'plenty/lots/many'
u'y'attainer	1	ukuyi attainer	'to attain'
zo'yi attainer	1	zokuyi attainer	'to attain'
'yazi	1	uyazi	'you know'
u'finder	1	uku-finder	'to find'
u'thin-thin	1	Ukuthini-thini	'etc'
ezaa 'nto	1	ezaa zinto	'those things'
a'yonto	1	ayiyonto	'it's nothing'
mas'ngathethi	1	masingathethi	'let us not speak'

4.3.2 TikTok video

I trawled publicly available TikTok videos and found one that the creator had made available and contained no adverse comments about others or incriminating detail about herself. It was an amusing reflection on her phobia of cats.

Table 3: Tik Tok video: young bilingual

Truncation	Numerical occurrence	Full form	English Translation
Ndifun'ubuza u'bana	1	Ndifuna ukubuza ukuba	'I want to ask that'
'yabona	4	uyabona	'Do you see?'
andinokwazi	1	Andinako ukukwazi	'I can't'
ulala	2	ukulala	'To sleep'
uphuma	1	ukuphuma	'To go out'
wayena-4	1	Wayeneminyaka eyi-4	'They were 4 years old'
Ndicel'uImi	1	Ndicele uImi	'I asked Imi'
noyijonga	1	nokuyijonga	'To even look at'
mam'am	3	Umama wam	'My mother'
tat'am	1	Utata wam	'My father'
kalok	2	kaloku	'like'
ndizaw'fa	1	ndizakufa	'I will die'
Ndik'xelela	1	ndikuxelela	'I am telling you'
caba	1	Kucacile ukuba	'It is clear'
mhlambe	1	mhlawumbi	'Maybe'
inoba	3	inokuba	'It could be'
ngok	1	ngoku	'Now'
zindlu	1	zizindlu	'It's houses'

tshom'yam	1	Tshomi yam	'My friend'
uvese	2	Uveske [uvele usuke]	's/he just'
yoba	1	yokuba	'To be'
endinothi	1	endinokuthi	'That I can say'
Ndizok'bambela	1	ndizokubambela	'I will hold on to'
nto	1	izinto	'Things'
uba	2	ukuba	'To be'
ezinto	1	Ezi zinto	'These things'

4.3.3 Natural conversation: young, urban bilinguals

In an indoor environment, I captured an impromptu dialogue between four young, urban bilingual speakers. As is common among their peer group, the conversation flowed effortlessly between English and their native language, Xhosa. Well-known topics in Xhosa were covered, offering a wealth of data for analysing casual, bilingual interactions.

Table 4: Natural conversation: young, urban bilinguals

Oral Truncations	**Numerical count**	**Full Form**	**English Translation**
'Bana	9	ukuba	'To be'
'qond'ba	12	uqonde ukuba	'you understand that'
ndiy'khumbulayo	1	ndiyikhumbulayo	'That I remember'
send'tsho	2	senditsho	'I said'
uba ungumxhosa	1	ukuba ungumXhosa	'to be Xhosa'
uqond'ba	1	uqonde ukuba	'you understand that'
iyand'phosa	3	iyandiphosa	'it misses me'
'khona omnye	1	ukhona omnye	'there is another'
sas'qala udibana	1	sasiqala ukudibana	'we were starting'
inton'nton'	1	intoni-ntoni	'whatever'
n'zothin'	2	ndiza kuthini	'What can I say/do'
uba k'laa ndlu ye'sbane	1	Uba kulaa ndlu yesibane	'He is inside the light house'
andibinal'ixesha	1	andibinalo ixesha	'I don't have the time'
'yabo'	3	uyabona	'you see?'
and'fun'u'xoka	1	andifuni ukuxoka	'I don't want to lie'
'ba	9	ukuba	'to be'
'hlambi	1	mhlawumbi	'maybe'
i'into ezibu-*dates*	1	izinto ezibu-*dates*	'stuff like dates'
phana	1	phaya	'over there'
ndiqhel'ukwenza	1	Ndiqhele ukwenza	'I'm used to doing'
nditshay'intsangu	1	nditshaya intsangu	'I smoke weed'
bendicing'ba	1	bendicinga ukuba	'I was thinking that'
ay'kho	1	ayikho	"there's no'
bend'tshilo	1	Benditshilo	'I said so'
az'kho *together*	1	azikho *together*	'they (things) are not together'

ngok' ndand'fika	1	ngoku ndandifika	'When I first arrived'
nd'yathand'u'jima	1	ndiyathanda ukujima	'I like gyming'
endingaz'thandiyo	1	endingazithandiyo	'which I don't like'
bend'thand'u'bhala iz'cripts	1	bendithanda ukubhala izicript	'I liked writing scripts'
and'kho *active*	2	andikho *active*	'I'm not active'
ndiz'fotile	1	ndizifotile	'I took photos of them/myself'
maz'bonwe	1	mazibonwe	'let them (things) be seen'
bayas'thanda	1	bayasithanda	'they love us'
'tat' 'am	3	utata wam	'my father'
'hlal' e…	2	ndahlala e..	'I stayed at'
z'ka…	1	Zika-…	'those of'
'mam' 'am	2	umama wam	'my mother'
aph'ekapa	1	apha ekapa	'here in cape town'
bend'hamba	1	bendihamba	'I was going'
nd'khulele	2	ndikhulele	'I grew up'
othand'u'ba	1	othanda ukuba	'Who likes to'

ingas'ke	1	ingasuke	'If only'
k'yatshisa	2	kuyatshisa	'it is hot'
k'yabanda	2	kuyabanda	'it is cold'
is'xhosa	1	isiXhosa	'isiXhosa'
'fik'	1	ufike	'and you arrive'
and'yaz	1	andiyazi	'I don't know'
mhla'mbi	1	mhlawumbi	'maybe'
s'yalingana	1	siyalingana	'we are the same age'
ofan' 'ba	1	ofanele ukuba	'who is supposed to be'
as'khulelanga	1	asikhulelanga	'we didn't grow up'
yes'bane	1	yesibane	'of the lamp'
nd'fika	1	ndifika	'I arrive'
nton	1	yintoni	'what is it'
and'fun' funda	1	andifuni ukufunda	'I don't want to read/learn'
n'zoposta	1	ndizoposta	'I will post'
bes'banintsi	1	besibanintsi	'there were many of us'
mand'ngayeki	1	mandingayeki	'I must not stop'
and'tshomani	1	anditshomani	'I don't befriend'
andinoba	1	andinakwazi ukuconnecta	'I can't connect'
uyabo	4	uyabona	'you see'
ube ne carry pack yakh	1	Ube ne carry pack yakho	'you have your own carry pack'
need'imali	1	needa imali	'needs money'
wenz'i-art	1	wenza i-art	'does art'
ak'kho bizi	1	akekho busy	'they're not busy'
ndimamel'nomculo	1	ndimamele nomculo	'as well as listen to music'
ngxak	1	ingxaki	'problem'
az'kho	1	azikho	'they aren't there'
as'kho	1	asikho	'it's not there'

andithand'u'badibanisa	1	andithandi ukubadibanisa	'I don't like mixing them, you know'
yaz'	1	yazi	'you know'
ndiqond'u'ba	1	ndiqonda ukuba	'i understand that'
ndandiqal'uFacebook	1	ndandiqala uFacebook	'I was starting Facebook'
wandicrayonish'ebusweni	1	wandicrayonisha ebusweni	'they coloured my face'
lo ebenxib'iiscrubs	1	lo ebenxibe iiscrubs	'the one who was wearing scrubs'
'khon'into ndiyicingayo	1	kukhona into endiyicingayo	'there's something i'm thinking of'
a'kho right	1	akekho right	'they are not all right'
kuzoba njani	1	kuzakubanjani	'how will it be like'
adinokwaz'uconnecta	1	andinokukwazi ukuconnecta	'I can't connect'
ndand'confused	1	ndandi confused	'I was confused'
ubiz'igama elithile	1	ubize igama elithile	'you say a certain word'
akhomnandi	1	akukho mnandi	'it is not nice'
uneento azenzayo nento	1	unezinto azenzayo nezinto	'they have things to do and stuff'
akhonto	1	akukho nto	'there is nothing'
nton nton	1	ntoni ntoni	'whatever'

4.3.4 WhatsApp voice note, middle-aged, rural

A WhatsApp voice message from a middle-aged speaker from a rural Eastern Cape location on WhatsApp. The location of the village is far from any major financial or business hub and the population is almost exclusively Xhosa-speaking. Permission was obtained to share the recording, which comprised natural speech patterns typical of informal, rural conversation The voice note provided insightful information about regional tempo and pronunciation.

Table 5: WhatsApp voice note: middle-aged rural speaker

Truncation	Numerical occurrence	Full form	English Translation
bezimka	1	bezisimka	'they were leaving'
dilika	1	yadilika	'it collapsed'
ndiqond'u'ba	2	ndiqonda ukuba	'I understand that'
ucing'ba	1	ucinga ukuba	'you think that'
wez'tena	1	wezitena	'of bricks'
xhom'iphahla	1	ukuxhoma iphahla	'hanging the roof'
caba	1	kucacile ukuba	'it is clear that'
send'tsho	1	senditsho	'as I am saying'
sis'thukuthezi	1	sisithukuthezi	'it is lonely'

4.4 Truncations in Written Texts

4.4.1 Truncations in a classic Xhosa text

To provide a more balanced representation of rural, non-bilingual Xhosa in the absence of sufficient financial support to do research in the Eastern Cape I searched studies on classic Xhosa texts, particularly where the given extracts from the novels represented standard, spoken Xhosa in this area. The text that produced the most examples of truncated forms in dialogue was *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* (The Wrath of the Ancestors) by AC Jordan written in 1940. This might have been because the author had an excellent ear for spoken Xhosa and represented it faithfully in his text, whereas other authors might have created dialogue that was not a true imitation of how people actually spoke at the time. More research into truncation in classic Xhosa texts would need to be conducted to establish whether or not dialogue had been "corrected" to avoid truncated forms.

The text has the following instances of spoken Xhosa with truncation (in Moropa and Nokele, 2008:73):

ST[1].85*: Khonkotha, ntlokw' enja, ngokuhlwa ndakuph' umphothulo*

TT.87: Howl away, dog's head, and tonight I'll feed you on *mphothulo*.

Looking at this extract one can discern a final vowel deletion in ntlok~~o~~ ~~y~~enja with this elision being substituted with the glide /w/→ *ntlokw'enja*. The initial vowel of *intloko* has undergone the normal deletion expected in the vocative. Another example of truncation in the form of elision in this extract comes with untruncated sentence *ndiza kupha umphothulo* being rendered as *ndakuph' mphothulo (ndi~~za~~ ~~ku~~kupha ~~u~~mphothulo →ndakuph'mphothulo)*. The truncation of the future tense from *ndiza kukupha* to just *ndakupha* and the elision of the final vowel of the verb and the elision of the following initial vowel of the object noun is evidence of the ubiquity of truncation in Xhosa as it was spoken even 85 years ago.

[1] ST stands for Source Text, while TT stands for Translated Text

4.4.2 Written truncations in a contemporary poetry anthology

The 3rd year students in the 2nd language stream are studying the poems in the anthology *Ilifa* by Athambile Masola (2021). The poems resonated with me as they reflect the way I, and many of my Xhosa-speaking friends, speak. The students have also hugely enjoyed them.

Table 6: Truncations in a contemporary poetry anthology

Written truncation	Numerical count	Full form	English translation
'de	2	kude	'until'
ngas'ke	2	ndinga ndingasuka	'I wish'
akhont'wibitheni	1	akukho nto ibitheni	'there's nothing, anyway'
naw'amandla	1	nawo amandla	'strength too'
khaw'zithuthe	1	khawuzithuthe	'sing your clan praises'
utat'ekhaya	1	utata wekhaya	'father of the house'
yinkcitha'xesha	1	yinkcitha yexesha	'it is a waste of time'
ma'khe	1	masikhe	'let us'
kuth'we	1	kuthiwe	'it is said'
mntan'am	1	mntwana wam	'my child'
zisis'pili	1	zisisipili	'they are a mirror'
into'kuba	1	into yokuba	'that [the thing of that]'
ngo'ba	1	ngokuba	'because'
amanz'omlambo	1	amanzi omlambo	'river water'
uyo'phuma	1	ukuya kuphuma	'to. .. from'
s'thandwa	4	sithandwa	'beloved one'
'va?	1	'yeva?	'do you hear?'
'iza	1	yiza	'come'
mas'ambe	2	masihambe	'let us go'
eb'suku	1	ebusuku	'in the night'
'izobona	1	yiza ubone	'come see'
ubhut'Xola	1	ubhuti Xola	'brother Xola'
yikak'apha	3	yikaka apha	'it's shit here'
u'ba	5	ukuba	'to be'

akukhw'apho	1	akukho ndawo apho	'there is nowhere where'
umahamb' ehlala	1	umahamba ehlala	'one that stays everywhere'
bungenaw'umongo	1	bungenawo umongo	'It does not have marrow' [is meaningless]
indaw'edume	3	indawo edume	'a famous place'
silahl'umlenze	1	silahla umlenze	'we are dumping the leg'
umlung'kazi	1	umlungukazi	'a white woman'
womlung'kazi	1	womlungukazi	'of a white woman'
lomlung'kazi	1	lomlungukazi	'of a white woman'
zomlung'kazi	1	zomlungukazi	'of a white woman'

4.4.3 Written truncations in popular lyrics

I looked at the deliberate usage of truncations in written lyrics of popular songs that are extensively shared. These expressions, which mimic spoken language patterns, are frequently employed to communicate authenticity, rhythm, or informality. The approach emphasises how the poetic flow and stylistic tone are influenced by written truncations in songs, which reflect everyday speech.

Table 7: Song 1: Ndikuthandile by Vusi Nova

Written Truncation	Numerical Count	Full form	English translation
nants'intliziyo	1	nantsi intliziyo	'here is the(my) heart'
nal'uthando	1	nalu uthando	'here is love'
s'thandwa	5	sithandwa	'beloved'
ndiyaz'thandela	1	ndiyazithandela	'I just love to'
nditsh'uthando	3	nditsho uthando	'I mean love'
kukhw'indlela	1	kukho indlela	'there is a way'
ndifun'uku'bamba	1	ndifuna ukukubamba	'I want to hold you'
ndifun'ukukuthanda	1	ndifuna ukukuthanda	'I want to love you'
ngaske	1	ndinga ndingasuka	'I wish'
uthath' umphefumlo	1	uthatha umphefumlo	'you take my breath/soul'
'thulisile	1	uthulisile	'you have quietened'

Table 8: Song 2: Amagama by Nathi Mankayi

Written truncation	Numerical occurrence	Full form	English translation
makuded' ubumnyama kuvel' ukukhanya	1	makudede ubumnyama, kuvele ukukhanya	'let the darkness be gone and light appear'
lendod'engenamali	1	lendoda engenamali	'of a man with no money'
ndiyak'thanda	2	ndiyakuthanda	'I love you'

usistofu sam esind'khusel' ezingqeleni zobusika	1	esindikhusela ezingqeleni zobusika	'that protects me in the colds'
selang' esindikhusel' emalangen' asehlotyeni	1	selanga esindikhusela emalangeni asehlotyeni	'of the sun that protects me from the summer sun'

ndifun'amagama	4	ndifuna amagama	'I want words'
ndifun'amagam'anencasa	2	ndifuna amagama anencasa	I want tasty words'
'Smakad'uzokukhusela	1	USimakade[3] uzokukukhusela	'God/The Eternal will protect you'
amagam'anenyani	1	amagama anenyani	'truthful words'

4.4 Conclusion

Several data sets of truncations were tabulated in this chapter, along with a numerical count of how often each occurs and its complete form. These data sets are now analysed and tabulated in the data analysis chapter.

[3] *USimakade* for God/The Eternal One only appears in the Zulu dictionary (Doke et al., 2006:756) but it is used widely by Xhosa speakers as well

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

I offer a thorough examination of the different kinds of reductions seen in both written and spoken Xhosa texts in this chapter. Finding and recording the most prevalent reduction patterns in ordinary language use is the goal of this investigation. Every incident of a specific reduction type is meticulously recorded and arranged into categories. This thorough method makes it possible to identify the most common reduction kinds, which is essential for comprehending how Xhosa native speakers simplify their written or spoken communication. These kinds of discoveries are very important for enhancing second-language acquisition methods and guiding language-learning procedures.

This study is significant because it can be used to assist the teaching of listening comprehension for second language acquisition. Teachers and researchers can develop focused awareness treatments for second- language learners by detecting common declines. These interventions can improve learners' comprehension and ability to speak Xhosa in natural settings by giving them a more nuanced grasp of how the language is used in everyday situations. Furthermore, the results are crucial for creating listening assessments that accurately capture natural speech patterns. Because they mimic the kinds of speech that students are most likely to hear in real life, listening assessments that include frequently occurring reductions are probably more successful in preparing students for social situations.

Elision and massive reduction are the two primary reduction domains that are the focus of the data analysis. Elision is the process of leaving out specific syllables, sounds, or morphemes from words or phrases. This behaviour is especially prevalent in informal or fast-paced communication, as speakers frequently put efficiency and fluidity ahead of full articulation. This study clarifies the precise circumstances in which elision occurs and the language components that are most likely to be omitted by recording instances of elision. On the other hand, massive reduction entails a more thorough simplification of words or expressions, frequently leading to drastically

changed forms. For second-language learners, this kind of reduction presents difficulties because it can significantly alter the original phrase's structure and content, making it more difficult to identify and interpret.

This analysis considers the problem of variation in addition to these two main forms of reduction. The term "variation" describes the various ways that reduction might take place among speakers, situations, or geographical areas. For example, depending on the formality of the communication, some reductions may be more common languages or social groupings, while others may change. This part of the analysis reminds students that language use is not consistent and that they need to be flexible and aware of various reduction patterns. Comprehending variation is essential for learners because it gives them the tools to function in a variety of linguistic contexts and improves their comprehension and response to native speakers.

All things considered; this chapter offers a starting point for dealing with the difficulties that reductions present to second-language learners. The study gives useful suggestions for improving language teaching and learning methods while also advancing our grasp of the complexity of Xhosa through the identification and analysis of elision, enormous reduction, and variety. The results help close the gap between classroom education and everyday communication by paving the way for the creation of learning resources that match the reality of natural language use, in addition to supporting the creation of more effective listening examinations.

The IPA (the International Phonetic Alphabet) was not employed in this section for two main reasons:

1) The findings are intended to provide a guide for 2nd language learners of Xhosa, most of whom are not linguists but who are studying the language for social and professional reasons. The IPA would be a deterrent as they would not be able to read the words as written in this alphabet.

2) Many teachers of Xhosa as a 2nd language do not know the IPA. Those I have spoken with have been excited at the creation of most reduced forms in spoken Xhosa as list that they could consult and incorporate into their lesson plans but admitted that seeing the words in IPA would be a deterrent to them using it.

Nevertheless, it would be hugely beneficial if a linguist were to render transcribe the truncated examples using the IPA – this could be a project for a future study.

5.2 Elision

As elision, defined by Crystal (2008:166) as “the omission of sounds in connected speech” was the most common form of reduction/truncation that occurred in my data I present my findings under headings that group these according to the actual sounds omitted in the process of elision. For ease of interpretation, I here provide a list of the abbreviations used in this section and the sections that follow.

5.2.1 Abbreviations used in Data Analysis

V	Vowel
C	Consonant
IV	Initial Vowel
FV	Final Vowel
VCV	Vowel Consonant Vowel (morpheme structure)
CV	Consonant Vowel (morpheme structure)
CVC	Consonant Vowel Consonant (morpheme structure)
V2	2nd Vowel
NP	Noun Prefix
SC	Subject Concord
OC	Object Concord

5.2.2 Elision of the IV of the NP

impendulo→ ‘mpend’lo
USmakade → ‘Smakad’
sisi wam→ sis’wam [vocative]
isithandwa → sithandwa→ s’thandwa [vocative]

5.2.3 Elision of the V2 of the NP

isikakhulu→ is’kakhulu
[isikakhulu] izicripts→ iz’cripts
[izicripts]
sisithukuthezi→ sis’thukuthezi-
[sisithukuthezi] zisisipili→ zisis’pili
[zisisipili]
ebusweni→ eb’sweni [ebusweni]
[locative] ebusuku → eb’suku
[ebusuku] [locative]

Note: After possessive concords there can be a partial or full elision of the basic noun prefix:

wezitena→ wez'tena
yesibane→ ye'bane

5.2.4 Elision of the C and CV of Class 10 NP

izinto → i'into (uneento
azenzayo) ezi zinto→
ezinto (ezi ~~zi~~nto)

5.2.5 Elision in the infinitive

a) Elision of IV only (*uku-* → *'ku-*)

ukumaintaina→ 'kumaintaina [~~u~~kumaintaina]

b) Elision of V2 of the infinitive (uku- → uk') after assimilation

ngokucinga→ ngok'cinga [nga-ukucinga → ngokucinga → ngok~~u~~cinga]

c) Elision of CV element of the *infinitive (uku-* → *u')*

ukunyamezela→ u'nyamezela
[uk~~u~~nyamezela] ukulasta→ u'lasta
[uk~~u~~lasta]
ukuzama → 'u'zama [uk~~u~~zama]
uku-sustainer→ u'sustainer [uk~~u~~-
sustainer] uku-attainer→
u'attainer [uk~~u~~-attainer]
uku-maintainer→ u'maintainer [uk~~u~~-maintainer]
uku-communicator→ u'communicator [uk~~u~~-
communicator] uku-finder→ u'finder [uk~~u~~-finder]
ukudibana→
u'dibana[uk~~u~~dibana]
ukuxoka→ u'xoka [uk~~u~~xoka]
ukujima→ u'jima [uk~~u~~jima]
ukubhala→ u'bhala
[uk~~u~~bhala]

ukubadibanisa→ u'badibanisa
[ukubadibanisa]
ukuconnecta→u'connecta
[ukuconnecta] ukulala → ulala
[ukulala]
ukuphuma→ uphuma [ukuphuma]

d) Elision of CV element of the VCV structure of the infinitive with vowel assimilation in the form of coalescence remaining

wokuyimaintaina → wo'yimaintaina [wa-ukuyimaintaina → wokuyimaintaina → wokuyimaintaina]
zokuyi-attainer→ [za-ukuyi-attainer → zo'yi-attainer [zokuyi-attainer]
nokuyijonga→ noyijonga [na-ukuyijonga → nokuyijonga → noyijonga]

e) Reduction/elision of complete infinitive prefix

ukubuza→ 'buza
[ukubuza] ukufunda
→ 'funda [ukufunda]

ukuxhoma iphahla→ 'xhom'iphahla (ukuxhoma iphahla]

f) Reduction of the *-ku-* morpheme in the form: infinitive + ku- R-a (with assimilation)

ukuya kuphuma→ uyophuma [ukuya kuphuma → ukuyophuma → u'yophuma]

5.2.6 Elision of the conjunction *ukuba*

a) Elision of full VCV (*ukuba → 'ba*)[4]

ukuba→ ba [ukuba]
kufuneka ukuba→ 'funek'ba [kufuneka ukuba] ufanele ukuba→ ufanel' 'ba
[ufanele ukuba] uqonde ukuba→
uqond'ba [uqonde ukuba]
unalaa nto yokuba→ unalant'ba [unalaa nto yokuba] uqonde ukuba→ qond'ba [uqonde ukuba] bendicinga ukuba→ bendicing'ba
[bendicinga ukuba]
othanda ukuba→ othand'ba [othanda ukuba]
ofanele ukuba→ ofan'ba [ofanele ukuba] (further

truncation of ele) ucinga ukuba→ ucing'ba [ucinga ~~uku~~ba]

b) Elision of full VCV and inclusion of stabilizing suffix -na *(ukuba → u'bana)*

bathi ukuba→ bathi'bana [bathi ~~uku~~ba+na] ukuba→ 'bana [~~uku~~bana]
ndifuna ukubuza ukuba→ ndifun'ubuza u'bana [ndifun~~a uk~~ubuza ~~uku~~ba+ na]

c) **Elision of the CV *(ukuba → u'ba)***
ukuba→ 'uba [u~~ku~~ba]
ndiqonda ukuba→ ndiqond'uba [u~~ku~~ba]

d) Truncation of VC of the conjunction with vowel coalescence remaining ngenxa yokuba→ ngeyo'ba [ngenxa ya-ukuba → ng~~enxa~~ yo~~ku~~ba] yokuba→ yoba [ya-ukuba → yo~~ku~~ba]

e) Truncation of IV and coalesced possessive element

into yokuba→ into'kuba [into ya-ukuba → into ~~yo~~kuba]

[4] In the examples in this section I include the preceding auxiliary or verb in order to show the context of the truncated form

5.2.7 Elision in Subject Concords (SCs) and Object Concords (OCs)

a) Elision of the vowel of the SC where the SC is CV

ayipheli→ ay'pheli -
[ayipheli] andifuni→
and'fun' siyajola→
s'yajola sikhula→
s'khula sithetha→
s'thetha
siyalingana→
s'yalingana
esikhule→ es'khule
azikho→ az'kho
ndiyalasta→
nd'yalasta
bekuqhele→
bek'qhele
kuyatshisa→
k'yatshisa
kuyabanda→
k'yabanda kuqala→
k'qala
masingathethi→
mas'ngathethi
senditsho→ send'tsho
sasiqala→ sas'qala
ndandifika→ ndand'fika
ndiyathanda→ nd'yathand' (further truncation of final vowel a) bendithanda→ bend'thand' (further truncation of final vowel a) benditshilo→ bend'tshilo
azikho→ az'kho
andikho→ and'kho
andiyazi→ and'yaz (further truncation of final vowel i)
ndifika→ nd'fika
bendihamba→
bend'hamba
ndikhulele→ nd'khulele
akekho bizi→ ak'kho
bizi azikho→ az'kho
asikho→ as'kho

besibanintsi→
bes'banintsi
mandingayeki→
mand'ngayeki
anditshomani→
and'tshomani
zika- (sc in a possessive formative with class 1a noun) → z'ka-

b) Elision of the vowel of the SC where the SC is V only

uyazi→ 'yazi
ukhona→ 'khona
uyabona→ 'yabona
uthulisile→ 'thulisile
uqonde ukuba-->
qond'ba

c) Complete elision of 2nd person singular OC *-ku-* in an infinitive

ukukubamba→ ukubamba
[ukukubamba] ukukuthanda→
ukuthanda [ukukubamba]

d) Elision of the vowel of 2nd person singlar OC *-ku-* → *-k'-*
bendikuxelele→ bendik'xelele
ndiyakuthanda→ ndiyak'thanda

e) Elision of vowel element of Class 9 OC *-yi-* → *-y'-*
ukuyifumana →u'y'fumana [ukuyifumana]
ukuyi-attainer → u'y'attainer (ukuyi-attainer]
sayincokola → say'ncokola [sayincokola]
endiyibona →endiy'bona [endiyibona]
ndiyikhumbulayo →ndiy'khumbulayo [ndiyikhumbulayo]
siyayigcina→ say'gcina

f) Elision of V of 1st person OC
-ndi- → ***-nd'-*** Iyandiphosa→ iyand'phosa

g) Elision of V of 1st person plural OC/Class 7 OC *-si-* → *s'-*
esithanda→ es'thanda
Bayasithanda→ bayas'thanda
Esindikhusela→ esind'khusela

h) Elision of vowel element of Class 10/8/reflexive OC *-zi-* → *-z'-*
awuziboni→ awuz'boni

azibeke→ az'beke
Uzimisele→ uz'misele
Sizinikwa→ siz'nikwa
ndizifotile→ ndiz'fotile
mazibonwe→
maz'bonwe
endingazithandiyo→ endingaz'thandiyo
ndiyazithandela→ ndiyaz'thandela

5.2.8 Elision of CV of neg. identificative cop. formative *ayi-* → *a'-*

Ayiyonto→ ayonto [a~~yi-~~y-o-nto → ayonto

5.2.9 Elision of final vowels

a) Elision of FV of the verb

ndiyakwazi ukulasta→ nd'yakwaz'ulasta [ndiyakwaz~~i-~~ ~~uk~~ulasta] ndiqonda ukuba→ ndiqond'uba [ndiqond~~a-~~ ~~uku~~ba] andinokukwazi → andinokwaz' [andinokwaz~~i~~]
ukuxhoma → 'xhom'
(~~uku~~xhom~~a~~] ucinga ukuba→
ucing'ba [ucing~~a uku~~ba]
ndicele uImi→ ndicel'uImi
sifika eYunivesithi→ sifik'eYunivesithi [sifik~~a~~ eYunivesithi] qinisa apha→ qinis'apha
ndiqhele ukwenza→
ndiqhel'ukwenza nditshaya
intsnagu→ nditshay'intsangu
andifuni→ and'fun'
needa imali→ need'imali
wenza i-art→ wenz'i-art
ndimamele nomculo→ ndimamel'nomculo
ndandiqala ufacebook→ ndandiqal'ufacebook
wandicrayonisha ebusweni→
wandicrayonish'ebusweni ebenxibe iiscrubs→
ebenxib'iiscrubs
ubize igama elithile→
ubiz'igama elithile nditsho
uthando→ nditsh'uthando
ndifuna→ ndifun'
uthatha umphefumlo→ uthath'umphefumlo
makudede … kuvele → makuded'… kuvel'

ndifuna amagama anencasa→ ndifun'amagam'anencasa
andithandi→ andithand'
ndifuna amagama→ ndifun'amagama
bavumelana→ bavumelan'
uqonde ukuba→ uqond'ba

b) Elision of FV of the noun and assimilation

abantu abatsha→ abantw'abatsha [abantu abatsha → abantw'abatsha]
Abantu ababini→
abantw'ababini
Abantu abaninzi→
abantw'abaninzi

c) Elision of FV of the noun

ngexesha elinye→
xesh'elinye amehlo
ayazula→
amehl'ayazula
amanzi omlambo→
amanz'omlambo
amagama anenyani→
amagam'anenyani
yikaka apha→ yikak'apha
lendoda engenamali→ lendod'engenamali
ubhuti Xola→ ubhut'Xola
Note: the following are compound nouns, the elision occuring in the first segment of the compound
umahamba ehlala→
umahamb'ehlala silahla
umlenze→ silahl'umlenze
indawo edume→ indaw'edume

d) Elision of FV of discourse marker

kaloku→ kalok'

e) Elision of FV of adverb of time

ngoku→ ngok'

f) Elision of FV of the noun when preceding augmentative suffix *-kazi*

umlungukazi→ umlung'kazi
womlungukazi→ womlung'kazi
lomlungukazi→ lomlung'kazi

zomlungukazi→ zomlung'kazi

g) Elision of FV of adjective

mninzi umsebenzi→ mninz'umsebenzi

h) Elision of FV of *-khona → -khon'*

kukhona into →
khon'into
bakhona abantu→
bakhon'abantu

i) Elision of FV of the interrogative suffix *-ni*?

ukuthini-thini → u'thin' thin' [ukuthini-thini]
intoni-ntoni→ inton'nton' [ntoni-ntoni]

j) Elision of FV of the absolute pronoun base

andibinalo ixesha→
andibinal'ixesha
nawo amandla→ naw'amandla
bengenawo umongo→
bungenaw'umongo

k) Elision of FV of the presentative

nantsi intliziyo → nants'intliziyo
nalu uthando → nal'uthando

l) Elision of FV of adverb of place
apha eKapa→ aph'eKapa

m) Elision of FV of verb *-thi* when followed by passive extension
kuthiwe→ kuth'we

n) Elision of FV of the locative suffix
emalangeni asehlotyeni → emalengen'asehlotyeni

o) Elision of FV of possessive stem
yakho→ yakh'

5.2.10 Elision of *-ku-* in various formatives

a) Elision of *-ku-*in the potential formative *-nokuba → noba*

inokuba→ inoba [inokuba]
endinokuthi → endinothi
[endinokuthi]

b) Elision of *-ku-* in the conjunction *ngokuba* → *ngoba*
ngokuba → ngoba [ngo~~ku~~ba]

c) Elision of -ku- of the auxiliary *kude*
kude→ 'de

d) Elision of the *-ku-* morpheme in other contexts where *ku-* → *k'-*

i) With adverbs
kakuhle→ kak'hle [kak~~u~~hle]

ii) With locatives
kula→ k'la
kuloo nto→ k'lonto
kulaa ndlu → uba k'laa ndlu

5.2.11 Elision of vowel of *-si-* stabilizer in Participial mood → *-s-*

a) Partial elision
kusithiwa→ kus'thwa

b) Complete elision
Bezisimka→ bezi'mka

5.2.12 Elision of vowel of the identificative copulative concord
Uyi-one→ uy'one

5.2.13 Elision of the vowel of the adjective concord
ezininzi→ ez'ninzi

5.2.14 Elision of possessive concords
yinkcitha yexesha → yinkcitha'xesha
utata wekhaya → utat'ekhaya
umntwana wam → umnt'an'am
utata wam → 'tat'am
umama wam→ uma'am

5.2.15 Elision of SC 2nd person singular after *Kha-* + assimilation
khawuzithuthe→ khaw'zithuthe

5.2.16 Elision of final syllable -ya of Class 17 Noun *phaya*
phaya→ phana [pha~~ya~~ + -na]

5.3 Reduction

Ingram (1989:22) notes that phonetic reduction is prevalent in casual speech and is "motivated primarily by articulatory simplification". Ingram's research into connected speech processes in Australian English revealed that vowel reduction in function words (grammatical morphemes) were the most common. While my research shows vowel reduction in several different environments, including with content words, the function morphemes of the future tense in Xhosa frequently occur in their reduced form.

5.3.1 Reduction of future tense morphemes

Louw and Jubase (1978:183) discuss the future in Xhosa by way referring to the auxiliary *-za* which the note undergoes various 'verkortings' (contractions). They give by way of example a continuum of the contractions, concluding with *-zo-* form: *Ndiza kuhamba* (I will go) > *ndiza**wu**hamba* > *ndizohamba*. Oosthuysen, (2016:202-203) mentions the existence of various future formatives in Xhosa, including - *za ku-,* often contracted to -***zawu***- in speech and the remote future formatives *-ya ku-* contracted to *-o-* as in *Ndobona* (I'll see).

a) Reduction of the positive future formatives *-za + ku-* → *-zo-*

Kuza kuba njani → kuzoba njani [kuz~~a ku-~~**o**-ba njani]
uzokukhusela

b) Reduction of the negative future formatives *-zi + ku-* → *-zu-*

ayizi kusebenza → ay'zusebenza [ayiz~~i k~~usebenza] (see also truncation of the negative SC ayi → ay')

c) Reduction of the future formative *-ku-*: replacement with *-wu-* → *-w-*
Ndiza kufa → ndizaw'fa (ndiza ~~ku~~fa → ndizawufa → ndizaw~~u~~fa]

5.3.2 Reduction of *kukho* (there is) and *akukho* (there isn't)

a) Reduction of *kukho* → *kukh'* → *kukhw'*
kukho indlela → kukhw'indlela

b) Reduction of akukho → a'kho

akukho mntu → a'khomntu [a~~ku~~kho
mntu]

akukho nto → a'khonto [a~~ku~~kho nto]

akukho mnandi → ak'homnandi [a~~ku~~kho mnandi]

c) Reduction of *akukho* → *akhw-*

akukho nto ibitheni → ak'hontw'ibitheni [a~~ku~~kho nt~~o~~[+w-] ibitheni]

5.4 Massive reduction

Johnson (2004:no page number) notes that massive reduction occurs when "whole syllables are lost and/or a large proportion of the phones in the form are changed".

5.4.1 Massive reduction of syllables of nouns

a) Massive reduction of the noun *iminyaka* (years) in expressing age
Wayeneminyaka eyi-4 → wayena-4

b) Massive reduction of noun *indawo* (place) to just -w-
akukho ndawo apho → akukho ndawo apho akukh'wapho [akukho ndawo apho]

c)Massive reduction of noun *into* (thing) to just -*nt*-
akukho nto ibitheni → akhont'wibitheni [akukho nto[+w-] ibitheni]

d) Massive reduction of VCV of Class 10 NP to just C after demonstrative
Ezaa zinto → ezaa 'nto

e) Massive reduction of noun + possessive
mntu wasekhaya → mntase
Truncation of noun FV and possessive wa-
Truncation of final noun root -khaya-

5.4.2 Massive reduction of auxiliaries

usuka + ube → usube → sube [~~usuka~~ ube]
ndinga ndingasuka → ngaske [~~ndi~~nga ~~ndingasuka~~]
uvela + usuke → veske → vese [~~ku~~vel~~a kusuka~~ k~~ube~~]

5.4.3 Massive reduction of discourse markers

uyabona → uyabo' and uyabona → 'yabo'

[5] A similar kind of noun reduction can be found in an example not in my data set but common in speech: *cankwendlela* reduced from *ecaleni kwendlela* (at the side of the road)

uyazi → ‘ýaz’[6]

5.4.4 Massive reduction of SC1st person singular

ndiza kuthini → n’zothin’ [n~~diza ku~~thini à n’z~~o~~thin]
ndicela→ n’cela [n~~di~~cela]
ndahlala e’… → ‘hlal’e [~~nda~~hlala~~ e-~~]

5.4.5 Massive reduction of identificative copulative

ayizozinto → a’zo’nto

5.4.6 Massive reduction of *kucacile ukuba* (it is clear that)

kucacile ukuba → caba [~~ku~~caci~~le uku~~ba]

5.4.7 Massive reduction at the clausal level

Yiza ubone → izobona [~~y~~iz~~a u~~bon~~e~~]

Note the following elisions *izobona* =
Elision of initial -y-
Final vowel a of yiza changes to o [assimilating to the -o- in bona]
Elision of initial vowel u- in ubone
Final subjunctive mood vowel e changes to a

5.4.8 Variation in massive reduction: the example *mhlawumbi* (maybe)

mhlawumbi →mhlambi
mhlawumbi → hlambi (further truncation of initial m)
mhlawumbi →mhlambe

5.5 Discussion – statistics: highest vs lowest occurrences

In this section, I provide a table listing the forms of elision and reduction from the statically highest to the lowest occurrences and then follow that with a discussion on relevant linguistic and sociolinguistic factors necessary to consider.

6 Also common is just -***va*** for *Uyeva*? (Do you hear?)

5.5.1 Table of Productive Phonological Contexts

In the table below I list the most productive phonological contexts for elision and reduction starting from those that exhibited the most instances to those that had the least.

Table 9: Statistical occurrences of reduction: highest to lowest

The frequency of speech reductions seen across many data sources is compiled in this table and is arranged from highest to lowest.

Elision of final vowels	59
Elision in Subject and Object Concords	52
Elision in the Infinitive	38
Elision of the Clause Introducer "that"→ *ukuba*	16
Elison of 2nd Vowel of the Noun prefix	7
Elision of -ku- in Potential Formative and Conjunctions	7
Reduction of *kukho* and *akukho*	6
Elision of Possessive Concords	6
Reduction of syllables of nouns	6
Elision of -ku- morpheme	4
Elision of the Initial Vowel of the Noun Prefix	4
Reduction of Future Tense morphemes	4
Massive reduction of Discourse Markers	3
Massive reduction of Adverb *mhlawumbi*	3
Massive reduction of 1st person singular SC – *ndi-*	3
Massive reduction with Auxiliaries	2
Elision of Participial Stabilizer	2
Elision of Vowels of Copulative Concords	2
Elision of Vowel of Adjective Concord	1
Elision of SC 2nd person singular after Kha-	1
Elision of Stabilizer -*ya* with *phaya*	1
Massive reduction of Noun + Possessive	1
Massive reduction of *kucacile ukuba*	1
Massive reduction at the Clausal level	1

5.6 Reduced forms – relevance to 2nd language learners' comprehension

I have not been able to find any academic discussions on the comprehension problems encountered by 2nd language learners of Xhosa, but from my time as a tutor in the School of Languages and Literatures at the University of Cape Town where there is a Xhosa 2nd language stream, I was aware that students really battled with understanding the natural speech of 1st language Xhosa-speakers.

To add to my academic knowledge, and in the absence of studies focussing on 2nd language learners of Bantu languages, I consulted general studies that focus on

listening challenges experienced by 2nd language learners of English. In this regard Flowerdew and Miller (2005: 33) note that when standard English is taught, descriptions of the language are based on an "idealized model derived from single- word or short-sentence citation forms enunciated with great care and precision".

The fact that actual speakers, of any language, seldom enunciate with "great care and precision" is precisely why learners struggle to accurately hear what ordinary first-language speakers are saying in everyday conversation. Flowerdew and Miller point out the fact that when people speak unselfconsciously "sounds run into one another ... or may be reduced or left out" (2005:33).

It is precisely because of this natural phenomenon of "sounds running into each other" that I undertook this study and why I decided to develop a set of the most used elided and reduced forms in spoken Xhosa.

It is clear from the statistics in Table 9 that one can anticipate that in spoken Xhosa a high degree of elision of final vowels can be found in all parts of speech. This phenomenon is frequently observed by scholars of Bantu languages (Rialland et al, 2015; Casali, 1997), and even recently Ström (2022:106) observed with her recordings of naturally occurring Xhosa speech "an important indication of end-of-utterance is the devoicing of the last vowel, to a whisper or making it **completely inaudible**" (my emphasis).

The next highest incident of elision is evident in Subject and Object concords with most elisions occurring with the V element of the CV structures of these concords. Also observed was the complete deletion of the SC where the SC was a vowel only.

Elision in the infinitive was the third most frequently observed incidence of elision in my data set. The most common type of elision in this set was *uku-* → *u-*.

The contracted form of *ukuba* (that) to just '*ba* was the fourth most common area of elision found in my data set and is clearly one that would confuse 2nd language students who have to contend with the fact that the stem ***-ba*** has two full pages of different glosses in *The Greater Dictionary of isiXhosa Vol. 1* (Tshabe and Shoba, 2006:61-63). To develop a meaningful intervention aimed at helping 2nd language learners develop their awareness of the most reduced forms including explanations of elisions in the final vowel, SCs and OCS and infinitive with. However other elisions that occurred less frequently and that warrant inclusion in a learning to listen intervention would be elision of the vowel of the noun prefix and elision of possessive concords, reduction of *kukho*

(there is) and *akukho* (there is not) and the contracted forms of the future tense.

Finally, although they did not occur statistically significantly in my data set, I think it is necessary that learners are introduced to some commonly occurring massively reduced discourse markers such as '*va* (from *uyeva*? 'do you hear/understand?'), '*yazi* (from *uyazi* 'you know') '*yabo* (from *uyabona* 'you see*'*). Discourse markers are important communicative markers for second language learners since they can be used to organise discussions, convey speaker intentions, and promote consistency in discourse (Alami, 2015:1). They can also provide important insights into changing language practices and social interactions and their reduced form can indicate changes in communicative norms and cultural dynamics.

Bearing in mind it is my aim to use the research data to develop a pilot listening intervention strategy with 2nd language learners of Xhosa. This is in line with recent scholarship on listening comprehension (LC) which indicates that it (LC) is "a key component of language acquisition and an important foundation for success in language ... programs" (Vandergrift & Baker 2015: 391).

5.7 Sociolinguistic factors: urban young vs rural middle-aged

Code-switching and truncation

Research on code-switching (alternating languages in speech) by 1st language Nguni-language speakers is well documented (see Calteaux, 1994; Finlayson, 1993; Finlayson and Slabbert, 1995; Finlayson, Calteaux and Myers-Scotton, 1998; Gxilishe, 1992; Kamwangamalo, 1989; Simango, 2015; 2021) but none of these studies have concentrated on how code-switching impacts lexical and syllabic truncation and clipping. My initial findings suggest that the older, rural, monolingual Xhosa-speaker tends to speak at a slower rate with less clipping, truncation than the young, urban bilingual Xhosa-speaker but this initial finding will have to form part of a more focused follow up study.

Why more urban bilingual youth data than rural, monolingual older data?

This study was conducted to help 2nd language learners of Xhosa understand the conversations of 1st language Xhosa-speakers. As 2nd language learners are studying in an urban environment the Xhosa-speakers they interact with most of the time, are urban bilinguals. It is for this reason that the bulk of my data collection was aimed at truncation in the speech of urban, bilingual Xhosa-speaking youth as this cohort would include the most natural interlocutors for our 2nd language students. These students have indicated that they interact with Xhosa-speakers on an equal footing in restaurants (where both groups work as waitrons), in lectures, at residences and in clubs and bars. Students have indicated that although they do try to speak with older, rural Xhosa-speakers they are reluctant to appear condescending or patronizing with this sociolinguistic group and prefer to interact with peers on an equal footing.

To obtain the most natural speech data I specified that my urban participants should be bilingual, youth between the ages of 18 and 25. The participants are female because most research into urban youth language practices has focussed on young male demographic, for example tsotsitaal, which interestingly shows evidence of extensive clipping.

Because the study's aim was to collect as many examples of reduced forms occurring in natural dialogue I concentrated on the younger, urban, female demographic, of which I am a member, being aware that we tend to be less self- conscious about "correctness" when we speak and because we are accustomed to recording and taping ourselves for social-media, while older people tend to adapt their speech behaviours to more idealized versions if they are aware that they are being recorded.

My research into speech styles has also revealed that first-language speakers generally tend to speak faster as they age, peaking at 45 years and then after that age the speaking rate decreases (Jacewicz et al. 2010:846). As my own demographic fell neatly in the middle I thought it appropriate that I trawl it for data that I could elicit naturally, but at the same time I felt it necessary to include data from one rural, middle-aged (55-year-old) first-language Xhosa-speaker. This was in order to establish what kind of reductions are consistent across age-groups. The data revealed evidence of far greater elision and reduction in the speech of the younger, urban demographic but obviously further studies will necessitate greater data sets from rural counterparts.

Scholarship has, however, revealed that compared to their rural counterparts, young, urban Xhosa-speakers are exposed to greater linguistic flexibility and creativity compared to their rural counterparts, and exhibit a significantly higher frequency for lexical reduction and elision (Deumert,2013; Mesthrie and Hurst, 2013).

This difference in linguistic behaviour between urban and rural areas is consistent with larger sociolinguistic research that emphasise how language use is influenced by urban contexts, which reflect diverse socio-cultural dynamics and communication norms. These discoveries deepen our knowledge of linguistic diversity in various geographic and demographic contexts and clarify the complex influences of social environment on speech patterns.

5.8 Conclusion

The data laid out in this chapter is the first of its kind that will be made available to 2nd language learners of Xhosa. Further data sources will provide additional information on the reduction of sounds in spoken Xhosa but I believe this data set establishes an initial inventory of reduced words with which 2nd language learners and their teachers can work to improve their listening and comprehension skills. In the next chapter I show how even a very brief introduction to, and explanation of, reduction in Xhosa speech can help 2nd language learners to identify words (which otherwise might have seen foreign to them) more easily.

CHAPTER SIX: A LISTENING INTERVENTION

6.1 Introduction

In generating speech, learners control the scope and difficulty of utterances. The listener, however, must be prepared to encounter and decode unfamiliar messages. (Wipf, 1984:345)

During tutorials, my UCT students frequently tell me that speaking Xhosa is not the hardest aspect of learning the language for them. Rather, in real-time discussions, they have a far tougher trouble understanding what Xhosa first-language speakers are saying to them. Many of them use vivid language to describe their experiences, stating that when they don't understand what is being said, they "go blank," "feel panic," or even sense an overwhelming desire to "just run away." The speed and fluency of native speakers exacerbate this challenge, making spoken Xhosa seem undecipherable to learners. *Zekelela, ndisafunda isiXhosa*" (Slow down, I am still learning Xhosa) is the phrase that these students most frequently ask to learn. This plea reflects both their need to establish a meaningful connection with Xhosa speakers and the emotional and psychological difficulties they encounter.

The most driven and committed pupils frequently take the initiative to seek guidance on how to enhance their listening comprehension abilities. Although they understand that developing this ability is essential to their advancement, they frequently become upset because the otherwise well-organised syllabus does not specifically place a high priority on listening. While there are some listening tools in the syllabus, such song lyrics, YouTube videos, and voice notes from WhatsApp that use natural speech patterns, there is no systematic teaching on how to listen well or how to interpret meaning from speech that is new. Because of this, students are frequently left to handle these resources on their own, which can be discouraging and overwhelming.

Because of this, I concentrate on the value of listening as a skill and the scholarly discussion around its development in language learners in this chapter. For students learning Xhosa as a second or additional language, this conversation is especially important. I also give a summary of the particular language elements of spoken Xhosa that present difficulties for students. The data gathered from first language speakers, which identified and classified the types of reduced forms common in everyday speech, is the basis for this analysis. These reductions, which include contraction, elision, and

vowel shortening, can excessively change the structure of words and phrases, making it more difficult for second language students to spot and comprehend them. It is crucial for both students and teachers to comprehend these trends to create efficient learning strategies.

As part of a brief, focused intervention, I created a listening test to help students overcome these difficulties and enhance their capacity to decipher reduced forms in spoken Xhosa. In this intervention, methods for identifying and deciphering elided speech types were explicitly taught. During the listening test, students had to listen to recorded dialogues and fill in the blanks with words from a transcript. Natural conversational speech that had the kinds of reductions and elisions I found in my data was included in these recordings. Students were given the opportunity to practise using their newly acquired listening skills in a controlled yet genuine setting by matching the test to speech patterns found in everyday life.

This chapter provides a detailed analysis and presentation of the intervention's outcomes. The intervention identified facets of elision and reduction that remained difficult for the pupils in addition to highlighting the areas in which they made progress. For instance, pupils found it difficult to identify deleted syllables and shorter verb forms, which are prevalent in spoken Xhosa. I was able to provide specific suggestions for improving listening training in next versions of the syllabus by recognising these issue areas.

Lastly, I carried out a listening survey to learn more about how students perceived their listening difficulties. The purpose of this survey was to determine the main listening and comprehension concerns of pupils. Recurring themes emerged from their comments, such as concern of misinterpreting important information in talks, anxiety over not being able to keep up with fast speaking, and trouble differentiating words in quick sequences. These results highlight how paramount it is to offer listening assistance that is systematic in second language classes, to boost self-esteem and tackle nervousness in L2 learners when communication with native speakers as well as to enhance comprehension but also to boost. This chapter offers Xhosa second language learners' theoretical understandings and useful solutions to improving their abilities to listen. It provides a foundation for further research and curricular development, guaranteeing that listening is now an integral component of students' linguistic development rather than a facet of

language acquisition that is not given much attention.

6.2 Academic discussion on developing listening skills

Słowik (2017) and Lightfoot (2016) draw attention to significant factors in teaching listening comprehension that are relevant to the difficulties that Xhosa 2nd language learners encounter in differentiating between spoken and written forms of the language. Slowik (2017:145) is of the opinion that the bottom-up approach, which emphasises a decoding process of listening, has been neglected in favour of encouraging learners to be aware of the general context of the utterance and to use their "background knowledge to predict content". This approach often results in students incorrectly predicting what is being said and thus confusing the speaker's meaning with their own preconceived ideas of what kind of utterance would have been appropriate to them in the context. A personal example of this is a senior student recently was asked to listen to a sound clip of natural Xhosa in which the speaker was encouraging people to get out of bed even though the weather was icy cold and get to work. The Xhosa-speaker's[7] short exhortation included reference to going to work but instead of hearing "uyothi *Môre* boss!" (and go and say *Hello boss*) the learner heard "*uyoja* ..." (and go and roast) and then the student did not hear the Afrikaans at all. When questioned the student confessed that she was not expecting the Afrikaans and kept on thinking that a braai outside was being suggested. The full clip[1] was:

> ***I know kuyabanda, kodwa wawuthe ufuna umsebenzi, andithi? Khaba ezo ngubo, mntasekhaya, uhlambe wambath'ucoat,***
> ***Ufake upolo-neck, ufake iskafu, ufake iibhutsi, uyothi "Môre boss!"***
> ***Uthe wena ufuna umsebenzi wena, andithi? Please man, vukani guys, vukani, vukani, vukani.***
> ***Sivukile ke thina, sigodola sinjalo but … oh vukani please.***
>
> I know it is cold, but you did say you want work, not so?

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7 https://www.tiktok.com/@sinolwaziapril/video/7389149453157993733?q=sinolwazi%20april%20vukani&t=1726839789719

> Kick off those blankets fam and wash and put on a coat, and put on a polo-neck and put on a scarf and put on boots and go and say, "Hello boss!"
>
> You said you want work, not so? Please man, wake up guys, wake up, wake up, wake up.
>
> We have woken up; we are cold we are like that but … oh please wake up.

If the student had specifically been taught to listen out for borrowed words in Xhosa code-switching utterances, and to familiarize him/herself with their pronunciation when incorporated into Xhosa she might have been able to decode "***More boss!"***. The student also heard *uyothi* (and go and say) being pronounced as *uyoja*, but if an intervention at recognizing fast speech /ty/ approximates to /j/, she might have had a better chance at deciphering that aspect of the extract. This however was a senior student, and so the kind of fast-speech utterances that I am mentioning here will not be relevant for the more junior students, although the general principle of targeted interventions is relevant.

In this regard, Slowik (2017:146) argues students will benefit from being taught to listen out for the way in which speakers "tend to cut corners in the way they form sounds" and to notice "the way in which words become reduced when they occur within a larger group". According to Slowik (2017:147) students can benefit from interventions that help them note "changes at the level of the phoneme" which will help them "decode meaning". Brown (2011) also argues that the things speakers do with words when they are uttering them in natural speech, like eliding them, changing their sounds (as was the case for the Xhosa pronunciation of the Afrikaans word ***Môre*** mentioned above) sometimes make them unrecognizable.

Lightfoot (2016:25) also brings the discussion round to the fact that teaching listening skills can also help students pronounce the target language better. Lightfoot notes that in the 2nd language German classroom focus on spoken varieties is important if students are to avoid sounding "artificial, stilted and unnatural" - an observation that has direct relevance to the Xhosa 2nd language learners at UCT who often excel at the grammar but who find it difficult to conduct simple Xhosa sentences in the oral section of the course, with the external examiner sometimes struggling to understand their "English" pronunciations of Xhosa words. Likewise, the students exhibit signs of miscomprehension when listening to the

external examiner who avoids being too formal but rather tries to engage with the students using a natural Xhosa lexicon and phraseology. More modern courses for the learning of Bantu languages as foreign or 2nd languages include not only colloquial dialogue, but actual recorded dialogue in the language (see McGrath and Marten's *Colloquial Swahili*, 2015). McGrath and Marten (2015:7) advise students that "The best way to practise pronunciation is to listen to the Swahili recorded on the audio material, or to listen to Swahili speakers."

Lightfoot (2016:25) also makes the important point that in the 2nd language classroom there is always a mismatch between forms of the spoken language which "tend to be relatively shorter and produced more rapidly than those of written language". Lightfoot (2016:26) goes on to argue that learners should get some instruction in understanding spoken German and be able to engage in natural conversations appropriately. The kind of instruction that Lightfoot (2016:29) advocates is one that helps students to recognize elision in the spoken language "and the contexts in which that may occur".

Lightfoot (2016: 29) advocates for the inclusion of actual spoken language characteristics in the classroom. Through the exposure to natural patterns of spoken language, such as the reduction of sounds, second language learners can be taught strategies to decode elision specifically as well as improve their overall listening comprehension. To this end I now highlight the most elided forms evident in my data of spoken Xhosa and indicate how these were incorporated into a targeted intervention.

The following results not only demonstrate how elision is a natural strategy used by native Xhosa speakers to facilitate communication, but they also draw attention to possible difficulties for second language (L2) learners. Native speakers of Xhosa may fill in the gaps left by missing sounds by using context and shared linguistic knowledge since the processes involved in these reductions are firmly embedded in the language's phonological structure.

It can be very difficult for L2 learners to comprehend and assimilate these simplified versions, particularly for those who are just beginning to learn the language. Learners who are still learning the language's fundamental vocabulary and grammatical structures might not be able to effortlessly access the dependence on

context and mutual comprehension that native speakers take for granted. Thus, it is essential to comprehend the phonological processes of elision and reduction to enhance listening comprehension and enable more fluid communication for students.

6.3 The most common elided forms in the data

In analysing the most common forms of elision in Xhosa, the following patterns emerge:

1. Elision of the SC, where SC is CV (33 elided forms)
2. Elision of final vowels (27 elided forms)
3. Elision of the CV element of the infinitive *ukuba* (16 elided forms)
4. Elision of the full vcv form of *ukuba* (10 elided forms)
5. Elision of the FV of the noun (10 elided forms)

The frequency of specific morphological and phonological reductions in spoken Xhosa is demonstrated by these patterns. Since these forms represent how native speakers naturally compress speech for efficiency, understanding them is crucial for language learners. Even if the patterns are common, it is important to take into account less common but no less relevant cases of reduction, especially in discourse markers.

Examples of large reductions in discourse markers (e.g. *yabo* for *uyabona* “you see” and *yazi* for *uyazi* “you know”) would be very helpful and should be included in the student intervention, even though they are not included in the above list because of their statistically low frequency. Even though they might not be as common as the other elision patterns, these reduced forms are essential for maintaining the fine nuances of ordinary, colloquial Xhosa. Discourse markers are frequently greatly diminished in everyday speech, showing fluidity and informal conversational patterns. By include them in the intervention, students would be better equipped to communicate in a natural and appropriate manner by developing a greater awareness of the delicate and nuanced components of spoken Xhosa.

Additionally, this approach improves students' listening comprehension and confidence in conversational situations by bridging the gap between formal language training and everyday language use. For example, teaching students about elision patterns in everyday language helps them anticipate reductions and comprehend rapid-fire speech. This method fosters familiarity with the cadence and flow of natural conversations, which goes beyond grammar and vocabulary and is crucial for developing language fluency.

In summary, it is crucial to incorporate elements of real-world spoken language, like elision patterns and diminished discourse indicators, into second language instruction. It bridges the gap between formal education and real-world communication, enhances students' listening comprehension abilities, and helps them comprehend everyday discussions. By matching education to real-world language use, this method not only increases the effectiveness of language learning but also increases student engagement and prepares them to confidently and fluently navigate social and academic situations.

6.4. Presentation of test

This section contains the listening test that was made for the students after the most frequently used truncated and elided forms in spoken Xhosa were identified. The purpose of the test is to assess the students' comprehension of these forms in a conversational setting.

The test is administered to one group of students after they have received a focused intervention aimed at teaching them to listen for reduction and elision in spoken language. This intervention consists of guided practice sessions, examples of truncated forms, and explanations of how syllables and morphemes are typically reduced in Xhosa. The intervention helps these students better identify the reduced forms on the test by acquainting them with these patterns.

In contrast, the second group does not receive any prior assistance before taking the test. There is no prior instruction or training provided to these kids on how to recognise or listen for reduced forms. Rather, they tackle the problem using just what they already know about Xhosa. This group gets the same focussed intervention as the first group after finishing the test. To determine whether the intervention considerably enhances their capacity to identify reduced and elided forms, they are then retested.

It is crucial to consider the more general problem of helping second language learners improve their listening abilities before getting into the intricacies of the test's creation. Understanding the meaning of individual words is only one aspect of listening; another is identifying patterns of sound reduction, elision, and assimilation that are present in natural speech. Since these reductions are essential to fluent Xhosa communication, it is imperative that learners develop their auditory perception and processing skills. Exposure to real-life conversational circumstances, practice with authentic materials, and explicit teaching are all necessary for the development of these skills.

6.5. Listening problems

Field (2008) quoted in Slowik (2017:146) highlights the issue of 1st language speakers producing sounds in such a way “as to make articulation easier” and, critical for this study, further emphasises the fact that in natural speech “words become reduced when they occur within a larger group” (Slowik, 2017:146). It is therefore critical for learners to be made aware of reduction in the speech of the language they are learning. As Slowik (2017: 147) observes:

> As utterances are often produced under the pressure of time, the speakers tend to “cut corners” of the words and phrases so that they are more comfortable and faster to produce, at the same time anticipating the sounds which are following. As a result, less experienced listeners find it difficult to make up for either the changed or lost sounds, especially if they are not used to decoding connected speech.

These listening difficulties (ones which our own 2nd language Xhosa learners frequently also report to us) suggest that the conclusion that leading researchers in the field of language learning have agreed upon: and that is that listening skills need to be explicitly **taught** (Field, 1998; 2003; Nunan, 2002).

In addition to being a sound tactic, this might play a significant role in second language programs. During each student's unique language learning journey, teachers can no longer only hope that students will "pick up" these abilities on the fly. Even if listening to native speakers is still crucial for language acquisition, whether through face-to-face communication or apps like TikTok and WhatsApp Voice notes, exposure alone is not enough. To guarantee that students acquire excellent listening skills, structured support and direction are required. To teach students to listen accurately and with intent,

scaffolding is especially important.

This entails teaching skills clearly and dissecting the procedures into manageable steps. Decoding elision is one of these crucial procedures, which I will go over in the following part. For students who frequently have trouble identifying reduced forms, elision—the removal of sounds in related speech— presents difficulties. Teachers can enable students to better understand native speech patterns and enhance their overall listening ability by providing them with the means to interpret elision. Careful preparation is necessary for this kind of education, which includes the application of specialised listening exercises, repetition opportunities, and pattern-recognition-focused tactics. Directly addressing elision can aid in closing the gap between students' present proficiency and the requirements of everyday communication.

6.6 Teaching learners to decode elision

For students who have trouble hearing what native speakers are saying, "elision, which is the loss of... sounds taking place mainly at word boundaries", is a significant issue according to Slowik (2017: 147). Many spoken languages naturally undergo elision, which frequently produces simplified forms that are challenging for non-native speakers to recognise. For second-language learners who have not received enough exposure to these simplified forms in formal education or real-world contacts, this difficulty is much more severe.

Since native speakers usually omit syllables and morphemes in informal speech, elision is a major barrier to listening comprehension while learning Xhosa as a second language. Elision is still a major issue for second-language learners of Xhosa because it changes the phonological structure of words, which makes it more difficult for learners to decode and comprehend speech in real-time. Other listening challenges include rapid speech, unfamiliar vocabulary, and distinctive prosodic patterns.

I made the decision to use a significant amount of elision in both my listening test and pre-test intervention to directly address this issue. By assisting students in identifying typical elision patterns in spoken Xhosa, the intervention sought to enhance their comprehension abilities. I aimed to close the gap between the formal, unambiguous pronunciations that students might acquire in the classroom and the organic, flowing speech patterns of native speakers by concentrating on this listening challenge.

Elision gives information on a learner's general listening proficiency in addition to testing their capacity to recognise and comprehend reduced forms. Thus, by incorporating elision into the test and the intervention, I was able to evaluate the efficacy of focused instruction while simultaneously providing students with an opportunity to interact with real-world language use.

6.7. Selection of students

The University of Cape Town's SLL1102S Xhosa Communication IB students were thought to be the best candidates for the listening test and the intervention. SLL1101F, a 12-week intense introductory first-semester course had been successfully completed by these students. They learnt the fundamentals of Xhosa language, vocabulary, and communication in this foundational course (see the course outline and screenshots of their electronic page in Appendix 1.7).

At the time that the test was administered, these students were already in the fourth week of the second semester SLL1102S course, which builds on their previous knowledge, when they were asked to take part in the study. To give students a greater knowledge of the language, the SLL1102S course focusses on improving their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities in isiXhosa. They were therefore a suitable group to evaluate how a syllable reduction and elision intervention could improve their ability to understand real isiXhosa speech.

6.8 Administering the test intervention

Recruiting the participants

A small group of six students in the SLL1102S course who were matched equally were chosen for the study. Since all these pupils had achieved first-class passes on prior exams, their outstanding academic performance was the basis for their selection. Their regular attendance in class had also been recorded in a register, confirming that they were dependable and very dedicated students. As a fundamental component of the study's design, it was imperative that the students exhibit a comparable degree of listening skill ability.

The lecturer regularly used active listening in class exercises to make sure that everyone in the group had the same listening skills. The instructor often involved the students in activities that developed and evaluated their listening abilities, even though the course material did not explicitly include targeted comprehension exercises. This made it possible to evaluate each student's listening proficiency in a more casual but efficient manner.

The group was as well-rounded and appropriate for the study's objectives as possible thanks to the selection procedure and the continuous evaluation of the students' listening skills through frequent classroom interactions. The objective was to assemble a group of people with similar listening skills so that the effectiveness of the intervention could be meaningfully assessed.

Background to course participants had been studying

The course is taught using a variety of grammatical units, including the distant past tense, adjectives, and question words pertaining to age and prior experiences. Some of the subjects covered in these theme modules include "My details" and "My past experiences." Students are regularly asked to speak in class and during tutorials throughout the course, actively utilising the new grammatical forms that were covered in the grammar lectures and incorporating previously learnt material.

This guarantees that learners practise both new and old ideas in a nurturing setting. Sometimes, lecturers play films of Xhosa speakers having casual conversations with one another. The purpose of these movies is to improve the students' listening comprehension and expose them to real-world language usage. One weekly lesson is devoted exclusively

to vocabulary development, with an emphasis on growing the students' word banks for better communication.

To ensure that they can apply these principles effectively, students must use the newly learnt grammar and vocabulary in real-world situations during tutorials. Students can enhance their overall Xhosa language competency by participating in both planned sessions and unstructured, conversational practice. This will strengthen their grasp of the grammar and their capacity to apply it effectively in everyday contexts. With this method, pupils are guaranteed a well-rounded education and the ability to speak and write Xhosa with confidence.

Preparations for test intervention

Prior to the test

To avoid any possible absenteeism or anxiety that would result from learning about the assessment beforehand, students were not told about the intervention or the test in advance. Students received enough information about the test's goals, purpose, and the background research that went into its creation (without revealing any specifics as to the precise nature of activities they would be required to perform) on the day of the intervention and listening test. They were also questioned about whether they found it difficult to understand spoken Xhosa in social or educational contexts.

The students' responses were nearly uniform, with most acknowledging that they had trouble comprehending spoken Xhosa, especially when it was delivered quickly or informally. Interest was piqued by this understanding of their difficulties, as six students expressed a special excitement about the prospect of conducting research that would result in a focused intervention meant to enhance their listening skills.

Following an invitation to take part in the intervention, these six students were asked to fill out consent forms. They received guarantees of anonymity and the privacy of their personal data throughout the process, guaranteeing that their involvement would not have an impact on their academic standing or relationships with teachers. The students were eager to participate because they thought the intervention would help them become more proficient in Xhosa listening comprehension, which would help them communicate in their mother tongue and do better academically.

Prior to the test – Group A (+ intervention) and Group B (- intervention)

This six-person group was split up into two smaller groups, Group A and Group B, each consisting of three people. To ensure that any discrepancies in performance could be ascribed to the intervention rather than different degrees of proficiency, each group was matched identically in terms of the language abilities they demonstrated. Group B was to finish the test first, then the intervention, and then another round of the test to evaluate if the intervention improved their performance. Group A was chosen to get the intervention **before** the listening test. This strategy made it possible to compare the two groups and evaluated the intervention's efficacy.

I led Group A to a different location that had all the supplies needed for the intervention. Students in Group B, however, were housed at a different location and continued to be supervised by the primary lecturer for the course. This split made ensuring that each group's preparation and intervention processes did not overlap.

Students in Group A were given the intervention, which concentrated on how Xhosa people decrease syllables and morphemes in their spoken language, prior to taking the listening exam. A handout that described and provided examples of the most popular kinds of clipped forms made up the intervention. These variants featured phoneme and syllable reductions that are less common in formal or academic settings but frequently occur in ordinary spoken Xhosa. I took more time to go over the handout with the students, making sure they understood each example completely and answering any doubts or questions they might have had about the reductions.

I carefully walked the students through the content throughout the roughly 30- minute intervention. The intention was to introduce students to the idea of reduced forms while emphasising how casual speech frequently uses contraction and elision. Students in Group A were required to use their improved comprehension of these procedures by the end of the session when taking the listening test.

Before taking the listening test for the first time, Group B, on the other hand, got no help. After getting the identical handout as Group A, their second test would reveal how the intervention affected their capacity to recognise reduced shapes.

Administering the test

Group A

Following the intervention, students in Group A were given a handout that included a brief, partially transcribed dialogue with blanks for them to fill in. Two Xhosa first-language speakers carried on the conversation at a normal tempo. The students were told to pay close attention to the entire exchange and, using their handout, fill in the blanks as best they could, taking note of any possible reductions or omissions they might have heard. As the 30-second sound clip played, the students were given the chance to write down any words they might recognise, filling in the blanks using their understanding of spoken Xhosa and listening abilities. Enhancing their capacity to identify and record elided speech patterns was the main goal.

Group B

Group B, on the other hand, underwent testing at a different location without any prior instruction or information sheet regarding common elisions in spoken Xhosa. These students were instructed to listen to the same conversation and use their comprehension of the spoken material to fill in the blanks. They had to listen to the conversation and write down any words that were left out. Following their first try, the teacher gathered their finished handouts, which may have included some words that were missing or wrong because they were not familiar with the speech's specific elisions.

Group B was then given a handout that included examples to help illustrate the most frequently omitted forms in spoken Xhosa. They were requested to retake the test after reviewing the content. To determine how well the intervention improved their capacity to recognise and transcribe elided speech, the lecturer divided these tests into two groups, Group B: Test 1 (before intervention) and Test 2 (after intervention).

After the test

Students from Group A and Group B were permitted to leave their respective venues after a brief discussion about the advantages of the intervention. During the discussion, students had the chance to share their views about the test and consider their experiences. Regardless of their group, every student gave excellent feedback, saying that the listening test was beneficial and pertinent to their learning requirements. Since the intervention directly addressed the reduction and elision patterns in the Xhosa language, an area they had previously found difficult, many students expressed their appreciation

for its targeted approach.

Several students also said that the exam improved their listening abilities, particularly in identifying elided forms, which was a major goal of the intervention. They admitted that the activity increased their awareness of the ways in which reduced forms appear in ordinary conversation, which may improve their comprehension of spoken Xhosa in practical contexts. The students also made it clear that they would welcome more focused interventions of this kind in the future.

They believed that more sessions on useful language skills would increase their general fluency in Xhosa as well as their listening comprehension. In conclusion, the students conveyed a great desire for further learning and development in this area and were excited about the chance to take part in the intervention.

In the next section I present the results of the test taken by Group A and Group B.

6.9 Test results

In the table below (Table 10) I list the test results for each group according to whether it was the 1st or 2nd attempt and include the average scores (percentages) and the range of those scores.

The findings of a listening test that evaluated participants' perception and interpretation of reduced forms in spontaneous speech are shown in this table.

Table 10: Listening test results

Group	Test Attempt	Average score	Range of scores
Group A	1st Attempt	62%	50% -70%
Group B	1st Attempt	38%	20% - 40%
Group B	2nd Attempt	76%	70% - 90%

6.10 Test results observations

To discuss the test results meaningfully, below I show the dialogue from which the test was derived and the actual test with the missing words.

Figure 1: Dialogue from which listening test derived

A: *Heyi tshomi, uS'nako ucing'ba s'yajola.*

B: '*Yazi, nyhani tshomi? Ndithemb'u'ba akadlalli ngawe, 'yabo.*

A: *And'fihl'nto.*

B: *But uyak'thanda tshomi. Seriyas.*

A: [sighs] But anyway, *mas'hambe mntsase – ndifun'u'goduka.*

Figure 2: Cloze gap listening test

As you listen to the audio fill in the missing words taken from a dialogue in which two friends are chatting about the one friend's boyfriend, Sinako, and his proposition to the friend. It does not matter if you do not immediately understand the dialogue, just write down what you hear. I will play each utterance 4 times. Please don't worry if you can't hear what is being said, even if you write down a bit of it that would be great. If you have to leave it blank that is also perfectly alright!

A: Heyi tshomi, 1) _____ 2) _____.3) _____

B. 4) _____, nyhani tshomi? Ndithemb' 5) _____ akadlali ngawe 6)_____.

A: 7) _____

B: But 8) _____ tshomi. Seriyas.

A: [sighs] But anyway, 9) _____mntase – ndifun'10) _____.

Group A (tested after intervention)

In this section I provide:

a) Key problem areas highlighted by the results – bullet-pointing the elided/clipped processes that the student struggled to produce on hearing the recording (including non-clipped words that also appeared problematic).
b) Required clipped forms in table format with each student's response entered via a x for incorrect and √ for the correct form provided

Key problem areas discussed in terms of the question number

Student 1:

1) Missed the name *Sinako* because the speaker clipped the *u-* of *uSinako*

7) Did not hear the negative Subject Concord marker *a-* so wrote *ndifihlinto* not ***a****ndifihli* nto

8) Did not hear the Object Concord -***ku***- for 2nd person singular in *uya**ku**thanda*, and just wrote *uyathanda*

10) Heard *koduka* instead of ***g****oduka*

Student 2:

2) Gave wrong name, Oshawo

3) Wrote *bayajola* not *siyajola*

5) merged ba and ka– wrote ***baka****dlali* merging the clipped clause introducer *ukuba* with the negative subject concord for Class 1/3rd person singular *aka*- to form the incorrect ***baka***- instead of ***aka-***

8) Did not hear the Object Concord -***ku***- for 2nd person singular in *uya**ku**thanda*, and just wrote *uyathanda*

9) The student heard *masambe* as *masam*... was able to reproduce some of the clipped form but could not hear the final syllable of the root verb for "go" -*hamb*-.

Student 3:

3) Could not fill in the missing word

4) Could not fill in the missing word

5) Tried to write down the word after *u'ba* although it was already there - *akadlali* - and wrote ***ha****hlali* instead of *akadlali*]

7) Did not hear the negative Subject Concord marker ***a-*** so wrote *ndifihlinto* not ***a****ndifihli nto*

8) Did not hear the Object Concord -***ku***- for 2nd person singular in *uya**ku**thanda*, and just wrote *uyathanda*

9) The student interpreted *masambe* as masa...*ni* – but missed the root verb -*hamb*-.

GROUP B (Group that did not receive any intervention prior to listening test)
Key problem areas discussed in terms of the question number.

Student 1:

1) Heard *Sinalo* not *Sinako*

2) Could not fill in the missing word.

3) Could not fill in the missing word.

4) Could not fill in the missing word.

5) Could not fill in the missing word.

6) Correctly filled in *'yabo.*

7) Could not fill in the missing word.

8) Did not hear the Object Concord ***-ku-*** for 2nd person singular in *uya**ku**thanda*, and just wrote *uyathanda*

9) As with other students in Group A the student could only hear a portion of *masambe* → *masam*... could not hear the final syllable of the verb *-hamb-*

10) Did not hear the Initial Vowel *u-* of the infinitive *uku-* so just wrote *-goduka* instead of *u'goduka*

Student 2:

1) Was able to write down the first part of the name *Sinako* only - just wrote *Sina*

2) Could not fill in the missing word.
3) Could not fill in the missing word.
4) Could not fill in the missing word.
5) Could not fill in the missing word.
6) Could not fill in the missing word.

7) Couldn't hear negative marker ***a-*** so wrote *ndifihlinto* instead of *andifihli nto*

8) Did not hear the Object Concord ***-ku-*** for 2nd person singular in *uya**ku**thanda,* and just wrote *uyathanda*

9) Could not fill in the missing word

10) Did not hear the Initial Vowel ***u-*** of the infinitive *uku-* so just wrote *-goduka* instead of *u'goduka.*

Student 3:

1) Wrote *Usnayo* instead of *USinako.*

3) Could not fill in the missing word.

4) Could not fill in the missing word.

5) Could not fill in the missing word.

6) Correctly filled in *uyabo.*

7) Could not fill in the missing word.

8) Correctly filled in *uyak'thanda.*

9) Correctly filled in *masambe.*

10) Wrote *ndiyagodula* instead of *u'goduka.*

Table 11: Post-intervention results: Group A

Group A (students who completed test after intervention): Tabulated results

Group A (after intervention)	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
'Sinako	x	x	x
siyajola	√	bayajola	x
'yazi (uyazi)	√	√	√
u'ba (ukuba) (occurred twice) in (2) and (5)	√	x	x
'yabo (uyabona)	√	√	√
Andifihl' into	x	x	x
Uyak'thanda (uyakuthanda)	x	x	x
Mas'ambe (masihambe)	√	x	x
U/goduka (ukugoduka)	x	√	√

Table 12: Pre-intervention results: Group B
Group B (students who completed test before intervention): Tabulated results

Group B (before intervention)	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
'Sinako	x	x	x
siyajola	x	x	√
'yazi (uyazi)	x	√	x
u'ba (ukuba) (x 2)	x	x	x
'yabo (uyabona)	√	√	√
Andifihl' into	x	x	x
Uyak'thanda (uyakuthanda)	x	x	x
Mas'ambe (masihambe)	x	x	√
U'goduka (ukugoduka)	√	√	x

GROUP B PEFORMANCE AFTER INTERVENTION

Group B was given the opportunity of doing the test again, AFTER the instructor gave it the same intervention that Group A had had (e.g. notes and short discussion). The specific missing words in this test were deliberately not referred to. The greatly improved results after this intervention would suggest that a) listening to the recording again and b) having the intervention both contributed to the improved score. A limitation of this test could be the additional chance to listen to the recording but the big percentage improvement suggests that the intervention made a significant difference.

Student 1:

1) Correctly filled in *US'nako*
2) Correctly filled in *ucing'ba*
3) Correctly filled in *s'yajola*
4) Correctly filled in *'yazi*
5) Correctly filled in *'ba*

6) Correctly filled in ‘yabo

7) Correctly filled in *and’fihlinto*

8) Correctly filled in *uyak’thanda*

9) Got masambe

10) Did not hear the Initial Vowel *u-* of the infinitive *uku-* so just wrote *-goduka* instead of *u’goduka*

Student 2:

1) Correctly filled in *US’nako*
2) Did not hear *ucing’ba*
3) Filled in *uyajola* and not *siyajola*
4) Filled in *andiyazi* instead of ‘*yazi*
5) Correctly filled in *u’ba*
6) Correctly filled in ‘*yabo*
7) Did not hear the negative Subject Concord marker ***a-*** so wrote *ndifihlinto*
8) Did not hear the Object Concord ***-ku-*** for 2nd person singular in *uya**ku**thanda*, and just wrote *uyathanda*
9) Correctly heard *masambe*
10) Did not hear the Initial Vowel *u-* of the infinitive *uku-* so just wrote *-goduka* instead of *u’goduka*

Student 3:

1) Correctly filled in *USinako*
2) Correctly filled in *u’ba*
3) Did not hear *s’yajola*
4) Heard *yazi*
5) Did not hear *u’ba*
6) Heard *uyabo*
7) Did not hear the negative Subject Concord marker ***a-*** so wrote *ndifihlinto* not ***a****ndifihli nto*
8) Did not hear the Object Concord ***-ku-*** for 2nd person singular in *uya**ku**thanda*, and just wrote *uyathanda*
9) Correctly filled in *masambe*
10) Correctly filled in *ukugoduka*

Table 13: Post-intervention results: Group B

Group B (test conducted after intervention): Tabulated results

Group B (after intervention)	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
‘Sinako	√	√	√
siyajola	√	x	x
‘yazi (uyazi)	√	x	√
‘uba (ukuba) (x2)	√	√	x
‘yabo (uyabona)	√	√	√
Andifihl’ into	√	x	x
Uyak’thanda (uyakuthanda)	√	x	x
Masambe (masihambe)	√	√	√
Ugoduka (ukugoduka)	√	√	√

6.11 Test results discussion.

The listening test results shed light on several critical listening challenges that both Group A and Group B experienced. These areas of difficulty provide insight into the problems encountered by Xhosa second-language learners when adjusting their listening to shortened forms and elisions.

6.11.1 Omission of initial vowels

Vowel reduction or elision is a key feature of Xhosa phonology, especially in fast- paced or informal speech circumstances. For all groups, the most frequent problem is the loss of the first vowel in terms such as "*andifihlinto*" and "*ugoduka*."

- **Group A**: Students continued to struggle with this elision pattern even after obtaining previous intervention. For example, "*andifihlinto*" has an initial negative marker a- (*ndi*- I vs *andi*- I am not) that both Students 1 and 2 missed. This implies that absorbing the function of initial vowels and their tendency to get swallowed in rapid speech needs more practice.

- **Group B**: They committed the same errors on their first attempt. But following the intervention, students like 1 and 2 made improvements. This suggests that practice to listen out for reduced forms in Xhosa speech can be worthwhile for 2nd language learners of the language.

This common challenge highlights the inherent complexity of vowel elision in Bantu languages like Xhosa, where prefixes and words with vowel initials are essential to meaning. Regardless of intervention, the data indicates that second-language learners struggle to completely understand or recognise these reduced forms without extended focused exercises.

6.11.2 Omission of object concord –*ku*- (you) in *uyak'thanda*

In "*uyakuthanda*," all groups regularly omitted the morpheme for the Object Concord 2nd person singular ***-ku-***, writing just "*uyathanda*". In group A, even after the intervention, all three students omitted –***ku-*** as did all students in Group B before the intervention. It is significant, however, that with Group B students after the intervention, only two students out of three omitted this morpheme.

This morpheme was left out because fast speech reduces syllable count. The learners may not be hearing the subtle inclusion of object morphemes like –***ku***- (see Chapter Five on data presentation), which are frequently shortened or omitted in colloquial speech, because they are concentrating on the more prominent components of the word.

Not hearing the object concord for the second person (you singular) -***ku***- reduced to just -***k***- implies that students are having difficulty not only with vowel elision but also with identifying grammatical morphemes that are reduced or shortened in everyday speech. Omitting such morphemes could result in misunderstandings because they contain significant grammatical functions in Xhosa. This suggests that teaching and intervention materials should pay more attention to this area.

6.11.3 Partial Identification of Words and Morphemes

Both groups frequently showed limited understanding of words, often recognizing only parts of elided forms. For instance, hearing only "*mas*" instead of "*masambe*" was an error made by both Group A and Group B students. It is very likely that if the speaker had not elided the vowel of the first person plural Subject Concord from ***si-*** to ***s-*** and had retained the consonant /h/ of the verb ***hamba*** it would have been easier for the 2nd

language speaker to recognize the word.

These similarities between the problems experienced by students in both groups show that when reduced to natural speech, students may struggle with multisyllabic or morphologically complicated words. Particularly when listening to rapid speech, it's likely that students will overlook or fail to notice the less noticeable word endings in favour of the more prominent portions of the word, like the first syllable.

6.11.4 Improvement after intervention

According to the data, Group B significantly improved following the intervention, going from an average score of 38% on the first try to 76% on the second. This improvement shows that learners benefit greatly from explicit teaching in identifying elided forms. While learners can make rapid progress with systematic instruction, some elision patterns are more difficult to understand and take more practice, as seen by the persistent errors in certain areas (such as the loss of initial vowels and morphemes).

However, Group A, who benefitted from receiving the intervention before the test, did better right away (62% average), and we can safely assume this was because of the prior intervention since the groups of students were equally matched in terms of their overall grasp of their language and their specific exposure to listening to the language. Their mistake patterns, however, were comparable to those of Group B, suggesting that even with instruction, some phonological reductions are still challenging for all students.

6.11.5 Discussion

The two groups' commonalities indicate that Xhosa second-language learners consistently struggle with elision and reduction patterns, especially when it comes to partial word identification, morpheme reduction (e.g., the failure to hear the object concord for 2nd person singular *-ku-*), and initial vowel deletion. The persistence of some error types (particularly in morpheme omission and subject concord recognition) indicates regions that may need more in-depth instruction or concentrated practice, even when tailored interventions can enhance learner performance.

6.12 Listening survey with Xhosa second-language students

In August of 2024, students in the SLL1102S course, Xhosa Communication IB, were invited to complete a short survey on the role of listening in learning Xhosa as a second language. These students had completed a semester of Xhosa in SLL1101F and were now into their fourth week of the 12-week semester. There are 31 registered students for the course but after repeated reminders and requests that they take the short survey, only eight students eventually did. We can assume then that since many of the students registered for SLL1102S are students who speak Sotho and Tswana that they find the course material relatively easy and do not struggle with listening and comprehension because many of their friends are Xhosa- speakers and therefore these Sotho/Tswana students would be reaping the benefit of their daily interactions with L1 speakers. We established (by way of a show of hands) that the eight students who **did** complete the survey were those students who have either English or Afrikaans as a 1st language which would suggest that they have a greater interest in targeted listening development tasks being added to the course.

6.12.1 Survey questions.

The three survey questions were:

1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is NEVER and 5 is ALWAYS rate the frequency of your listening to Xhosa outside of the classroom.
2. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT and 5 is VERY IMPORTANT rate how important you think it is to get specific listening skills and exercises inside the classroom.
3. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is NOT AT ALL INTERESTED and 5 is VERY INTERESTED rate your interest in getting a compulsory listening activity in which you have to listen to one dialogue a week where speakers use natural, colloquial Xhosa, and you receive a transcript of that dialogue.

6.12.2 Results of survey

Here I give a statistical break-down of the results.

The first survey question was aimed at establishing the extent to which students listen to Xhosa outside of the classroom.

Question 1: On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is NEVER and 5 is ALWAYS rate the frequency of your listening to Xhosa outside of the classroom.

Most respondents (62.5%) rated their frequency of listening to Xhosa outside of the classroom as a 3 while a smaller portion, 25%, rated it as a 4, indicating they listen to Xhosa more often than the average.

Only 12.5% rated their frequency as a 2, showing a lower engagement with the language outside formal settings. The results suggest that most of the students engage with Xhosa to some extent outside of the classroom, but not consistently. There is a moderate level of exposure to Xhosa beyond the classroom, which suggests potential for improvement, particularly in promoting more frequent listening habits.

The need for regular and structured exposure to listening activities for language proficiency is emphasised by Vandergrift (2007:193). Even while students understand the value of listening, many do not practise listening outside of the classroom, according to survey results. There may be room for improvement given the discrepancy between the idea of how important listening is and how it is really practised. Structured listening exercises can greatly improve students' competency both within and outside of the classroom (Vandergrift, 2007: 195). Increasing the number of listening activities assigned as homework or extracurricular activities may provide students with the chance to reinforce classroom-based learning through regular practice. Once students are able to comprehend more, it is likely that they will be encouraged to interact more with Xhosa-speakers outside of the classroom thus increasing their confidence and exposure to the language.

The survey also highlights the cognitive challenges that students have while comprehending natural speech. According to Goh's research (2000:58), many learners find it difficult to master the shortened forms and elisions that are frequent in colloquial Xhosa. Goh (2000) describes the mental pressure that students encounter when attempting to comprehend connected speech. In addition to having trouble identifying words individually, learners frequently struggle to understand how words are shortened or omitted from fast speech. Students gain from receiving explicit instruction in identifying these phonological traits because it helps them absorb natural speech more efficiently and enhances their listening comprehension (Goh, 2000: 60).

The second survey question was aimed at discovering whether students felt that targeting listening activities inside of the classroom would be beneficial.

Question 2: On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT and 5 is VERY IMPORTANT rate how important you think it is to get specific **listening skills and exercises inside the classroom.**

62.5% of respondents rated the importance of listening skills and exercises inside the classroom as a 5, indicating that they find it very important.

25% rated it as a 4, while 12.5% rated it as a 3.

The responses to this question suggest that most students value listening skills and in-class exercises highly, showing a clear recognition of the importance of developing listening abilities within the structured environment of the classroom. This emphasizes the need for targeted listening activities as part of the curriculum.

The third survey question homed in on the type of language that the classroom listening activity would contain.

Question 3: On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is NOT AT ALL INTERESTED and 5 is VERY INTERESTED rate your interest in getting a compulsory listening activity in which you have to listen to one dialogue a week where speakers use natural, colloquial Xhosa, and you receive a transcript of that dialogue.

62.5% of respondents showed strong interest, rating their interest as a 5, in participating in a compulsory listening activity where they would have to listen to a colloquial Xhosa dialogue once a week.

25% rated their interest as a 4, and 12.5% rated it as a 3.

According to the survey, students would value listening exercises that emphasise informal Xhosa. It can be more difficult for second language learners to understand colloquial speech since it frequently varies greatly from formal or textbook forms of the language. Understanding colloquial speech, which frequently uses reductions and informal terms, is essential for Xhosa second language learners to be able to communicate effectively. More real-world listening resources, including recordings of native speakers speaking ordinary language at a natural pace, might be incorporated into the curriculum to give students important exposure to the kinds of speech patterns they would probably encounter outside of the classroom.

The majority of students are very interested in engaging with colloquial Xhosa through structured listening activities. This suggests that introducing regular

listening exercises containing natural, conversational Xhosa would be well-received and likely beneficial for enhancing students' listening skills.

6.13 Conclusion

Five students consistently chose the same answers to all three survey questions, demonstrating that while an attempt has been made to interact with Xhosa outside of the classroom, these students believe they require more focused listening interventions.

Goh (2000: 64) emphasises the significance of metacognitive techniques like planning, self-monitoring, and listening process evaluation. According to the survey results, students would gain from organised learning methods, as shown by their enthusiasm for required listening exercises. Mandatory listening activities could offer a supported setting where students can practise listening and think back on their experience, enhancing their confidence and listening comprehension skills. These interventions could encourage students to speak more naturally, mimicing the style of the first-language speakers. Goh (2000: 66) highlights even more how difficult it is for students to speak quickly, particularly when speaking in restricted forms or with elisions. This problem is universal to all languages since reduced forms are more widespread in everyday conversational language than in the formal or prepared speech that is usually included in language-learning resources.

Vandergrift (2007: 195) emphasises the necessity of assistance in creating listening techniques that improve students' ability to comprehend spoken language. The survey's findings show that students would like to hear more about listening skills in general and colloquial Xhosa in particular. According to Vandergrift's research, learners can greatly increase their listening comprehension by receiving explicit strategy instruction, which teaches them how to infer information, predict meaning from context, and concentrate on essential words. These techniques might be added to the required listening assignments that the survey participants recommended, giving students the tools they need for both classroom listening assignments and language use in everyday situations.

Learners frequently have difficulties when transferring from classroom language to language use in real-world situations. Students are usually exposed to carefully planned conversations or other materials in the classroom, which may not accurately reflect the casual, fast-paced style of actual speech. The survey's findings indicate that students are conscious of this gap and are seeking solutions. To help students become more

accustomed to the reduced forms that comprise everyday speech in Xhosa, this study encourages the use of extra real-world listening resources in the classroom, such as transcripts of impromptu or unprepared conversations between native speakers. The survey's overall findings demonstrate the strong need for more structured listening exercises in the Xhosa language curriculum for second language learners, especially those that emphasise informal communication and language use in everyday situations. Compulsory listening activities could equip students with the skills and techniques needed to enhance their listening comprehension, especially with shortened forms. The significance of organised, strategy-based listening training is emphasised by both Vandergrift (2007) and Goh (2000). This would help students acquire the abilities necessary for successful communication in everyday situations. The use of real materials reinforces the notion that for students to completely develop their listening skills, they must be exposed to more informal speech. Providing focused listening teaching and addressing the cognitive difficulties that learners encounter would greatly improve the Xhosa language curriculum for second language learners and promote better learning outcomes.

It is evident from examining the survey data that the students who did answer (second-language learners of Xhosa at UCT who do not speak a cognate language) believe listening to be an essential skill for learning a second language, which is consistent with previous studies. According to Vandergrift (2007: 91), listening constitutes most of the communication in real-world situations and is therefore fundamental to language acquisition. Many survey participants recognised the value of listening in their Xhosa-language learning, which is line with a large body of research findings. One of the hardest language skills to master is listening, especially when it comes to natural speech, which might include rapid, simplified forms, and elisions.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

Research into 2nd language teaching and learning consistently refers to problems students encounter when trying to decipher what first language speakers are saying, particularly when they use colloquial speech and speak rapidly. As someone who has taught Xhosa to 2nd language students, I noticed that I had first-hand experience of my students struggling to grasp even the simplest sentences uttered in Xhosa. This was not from a lack of relevant materials or good grammar teaching and lively dialogues for them to read in class but rather from the absence of a targeted listening component to the course that the lecturer and course designer recognized was a gap that needed to be filled. However, to develop a targeted listening intervention for students, it was first necessary for me to develop a set of guiding questions to answer to be able to scaffold a meaningful intervention informed by research focussing on reduced, clipped and elided forms of speech in colloquial Xhosa.

Thus, in this MA research thesis, I set out to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common reduced (truncated), clipped and elided forms of Xhosa words in modern poetry and contemporary Xhosa speech as well as the pholonogical processes at play?
2. What are the pedagogical approaches to teaching reduced forms to L2 learners?

3. What sociolinguistic factors are relevant when discussing reduced, clipped and elided forms in Xhosa?

To summarize my answers to each of these questions I provide the following answers:

7.2 Commonly reduced forms in Xhosa

It is clear from the statistics in Table 9 that in spoken Xhosa a high degree of elision of final vowels can be found in all parts of speech (see 5.2.9).

The next highest incident of elision is evident in Subject and Object concords (SCs and OCS see 5.2.7) with most elisions occurring with the V element of the CV structures of these concords. Also observed was the complete deletion of the SC where the SC was a vowel only.

Elision in the infinitive (see 5.2.5) was the third most frequently observed incidence of elision in my data set. The most common type of elision in this set was *uku-* → *u-*.

The contracted form of *ukuba* (that) to just '*ba* (see 5.2.6) was the fourth most common area of elision found in my data set.

Other elisions that occurred less frequently and that warrant inclusion in a learning to listen intervention would be elision of the vowel of the noun prefix and elision of possessive concords, reduction of *kukho* (there is) and *akukho* (there is not) and the contracted forms of the future tense.

Although not as widespread as the elisions discussed above, massively reduced discourse markers such as '*va* (from *uyeva*? 'do you hear/understand?'), '*yazi* (from *uyazi* 'you know') '*yabo* (from *uyabona* 'you see*'*) were encountered and should be seen as significant.

With 59 reported instances, the most common omission in my data set was the final vowel. This result emphasises how speakers naturally reduce their speech, especially in informal, fast-paced conversations. As is typical in many languages,

the removal of terminal vowels both expedites communication and lessens articulation effort (Casali, 1997: 494).

52 instances of the elision of Subject and Object Concords followed the elision of final vowels. Because concords are crucial for indicating grammatical agreement between subjects, objects, and verbs, this reduction is noteworthy. Their frequent omission from daily speech implies that communication effectiveness takes precedence over rigorous adherence to grammatical rules. This phenomenon provides support to the notion that speakers fill up any communication gaps by using shared understanding and contextual signals (Baghrahi, Shariati & Tajadini, 2014: 265). The language is more fluid and quicker to generate when these concords are reduced, yet listeners may still easily understand what is being said. The study's 38 instances of infinitive omission highlight the tendency of linguistic form simplification. Usually denoted by the prefix "*uku*-," infinitives were commonly abbreviated to just "u'-." This reduction is an obvious illustration of how speakers simplify their language to improve communication effectiveness. The propensity to emphasise deletion, especially in informal and intimate interactions where meaning can frequently be deduced without the need for full grammatical structures, is reflected in the removal of the entire infinitive form (Abdullayev, 2023: 121).

The inclination to delete terms like "*ukuba*" in natural conversations demonstrates how flexible spoken language is and how easily speakers may adjust to the tempo of a discussion (Crystal, 2008: 107). The deletion of the Clause Introducer "*ukuba*," which was noticed 16 times, reveals yet another area where spoken Xhosa is declining or evolving. Informal and fast paced speech frequently omits this structure, which usually introduces clauses or indicates subordination. This reduction demonstrates how, even when specific grammatical parts are omitted, speakers still mostly rely on context and prior knowledge to comprehend the intended message.

Overall, the study's results provide important new information on the dynamics of spoken Xhosa by demonstrating that elision is a communicative instrument that promotes more effective and fluid interactions in addition to being a linguistic economy. The regularity of these reductions demonstrates how speakers modify their language to meet the needs of speed, and context.

Furthermore, these tendencies can be compared with patterns in other languages where elision is used as a tactic to save time as well as to communicate effectively

in speech. Second language learners come across reductions in other languages such as English and French. For instance, contractions ("can't" for "cannot"). Vowel elisions are common in French, particularly in spoken language, where the speaker's speed and the surrounding phonemes determine which syllables or sounds are omitted. These illustrations demonstrate how phonological reduction occurs naturally in all languages and is a means of improving fluency and streamlining communication (Koster, 1987:10).

Knowing how these processes are used differently in other languages could improve L2 instruction by giving students comparative methods for dealing with phonological reductions. For instance, Xhosa second languages learners who are also familiar with languages with reductions can find it simpler to make comparisons, like Xhosa's reduction of final vowels to comparable elisions in English, which are spoken in rapid speech. By using similar ideas across languages, learners may be able to decipher reduced speech forms with the help of this comparative understanding.

Therefore, studying elision in Xhosa offers a better understanding of how phonological processes change in response to external communicative demands as well as internal linguistic structures. The information emphasises how flexible language is and how it can change to meet the needs of daily communication for 1st language speakers but how this can pose serious challenges for 2nd language learners of the language.

7.3 Pedagogical approaches for teaching reduced forms.

A focused pedagogical approach is needed to address the difficulties second language learners go through when learning reduced, elided and clipped forms in Xhosa. This strategy should not only focus on the normal ways of formal language structures in second language learning. It should include a full approach to language acquisition. Second language learners can be taught be taught the following methods to help them understand the intricacies of reduced speech forms:

Exposure to genuine, everyday instances of the language is one of the best methods for acquainting students with reduced forms in spoken Xhosa. Audio and video resources, such as recordings of native speakers having informal conversations, radio programs, podcasts, or movies, can be used to do this.

Students can hear first-hand how reductions and elisions are used in various settings by listening to these materials. Additionally, learners can start to understand the connection between the reduced forms and the meaning they express when they hear these forms in context. In addition to knowing how reductions aid communication, learners will have a more organic sense of the rhythm and flow of spoken Xhosa because of being exposed to casual speech.

Additionally, language instructors might plan listening comprehension activities that concentrate on reduced forms. In these tasks, learners are required to recognise and evaluate reductions in conversations or monologues that intentionally incorporate elided or reduced forms. Learners will become more accustomed to these forms over time, improving their comprehension of spoken Xhosa in everyday situations.

The listening test I conducted (see 6.8 to 6.11) sheds important light on how interventions of this kind might improve L2 acquisition since it was clear that those students who had been informed of how to listen for truncation were better able to make out elided forms in the dialogue by correctly filling in the missing words on a sheet more often than those who had not received the intervention.

It is crucial to create targeted listening practice sessions that emphasise these phonological processes because spoken Xhosa is characterised by quick elision and reduction. Materials that highlight reduced forms, such as terminal vowel elision, Subject and Object Concord reductions, and infinitive contractions, may be used in these practice sessions. These recordings can be listened to more than once by learners, with the first listening emphasising overall comprehension and the subsequent listening delving deeper into the reductions.

To urge pupils to emulate the reduced forms, teachers might also incorporate guided listening exercises. Through this activity, students can enhance their pronunciation and speaking fluency while also developing an ear for reductions. Instead of viewing naturalistic reductions as oddities or exceptions, students can start to see them as a normal and essential component of spoken Xhosa.

Interactive speaking exercises are essential for assisting students in producing reduced forms in their own speech, in addition to listening exercises. Students can practise using reduced forms in real-time communication through role-plays, classroom discussions, and virtual conversations. These exercises can be made to promote informal speech

patterns, in which students are urged to talk rapidly and naturally, imitating the reduction processes they have heard in examples from native speakers.

Students can take part in speed-based speaking exercises, for instance, in which they are required to have quick, concise conversations about subjects they are already familiar with. Teachers should stress the value of fluidity above precise grammar in these exercises, urging students to use shared knowledge and context to communicate clearly. In addition to improving students' spoken fluency, this method teaches them how to employ abbreviated forms in casual settings.

Teaching L2 learners how context affects their comprehension and interpretation of reduced forms is crucial. When using abbreviated forms, teachers can assist students fill in the blanks by guiding them to focus on contextual cues including body language, intonation, and situational aspects. Learners will be better able to deduce meaning from conversations even when certain grammatical components are missing if they comprehend the significance of context.

When a subject concord is omitted from a sentence, for instance, a student can infer the subject of the phrase from the context and surrounding words. In a similar vein, learners can use the verb that results from reducing the infinitive prefix "*uku*-" to "*u*- " to deduce its whole meaning. L2 learners can improve their linguistic intuition and their ability to comprehend casual speech by incorporating lessons that emphasise context-based listening and interpretation.

For students to be able to produce reduced forms in their speech, pronunciation instruction is essential in addition to listening and comprehension exercises. To mimic native pronunciation, teachers might provide students clear instructions on how to shorten words and omit syllables. Through spoken drills and activities, learners can practise eliding subject concords, simplifying infinitive forms, and lowering final vowels.

Accuracy and fluency must be balanced since students may be reluctant to use fewer forms in their speech if they are afraid of making a mistake. Since fluency and naturalness are important communication objectives, teachers should foster an atmosphere where students feel free to experiment with reductions. Students can become more at ease with utilising reduced forms in their spoken Xhosa by practicing pronunciation activities that emphasise flow and speed over rigorous adherence to formal norms.

Enhancing learners' comprehension and production of natural, fluent spoken Xhosa

requires integrating reduced forms into L2 teaching methods. Teachers can assist students in developing the abilities required to negotiate the complexity of informal speech by emphasising exposure to real-world materials, organised listening practice, interactive communication activities, and pronunciation exercises. Furthermore, learners will gain a better understanding of how reductions and elisions function to promote effective communication if they are contextualised within the broader framework of communicative competence. Learners can overcome the difficulties presented by shortened forms using these pedagogical strategies, which will eventually increase their spoken Xhosa fluency and comprehension.

A thorough manual covering the various forms of clipping, reduction, and elision frequently employed in ordinary Xhosa speech is desperately needed. Such a guide would describe the underlying morphological and phonological processes in addition to documenting these forms. Learners can improve their comprehension and self-assurance in real-world interactions by mastering these strategies, which will enable them to predict and interpret reduced forms.

This guide should be enhanced with exercises that teach students to listen for and identify syllabic reduction in a variety of circumstances to make it useful and actionable. Exercises could, for instance, entail detecting reduced forms, practicing their reconstruction, and listening to audio samples of native speakers. Such exercises are in line with studies that highlight how crucial listening for meaning is to learn a second language (Rubin, 1994; Baghrahi et al., 2014; Benmezal and Bensemmane, 2022). Interpreting reduced or elided forms within the larger context of communication is an important part of listening comprehension, which goes beyond simply hearing words.

7.4 Sociolinguistic factors relevant to reduced forms.

7.4.1 Young Urban bilingual vs Middle-aged, rural monolingual

As my oral data relied on WhatsApp voice notes of young urban bilinguals and rural middle-aged monolinguals as well as casual conversations of young bilinguals it is important for me to highlight some key influencing factors.

In my data analysis chapter, it was evident from the data that digital communication

patterns and the need for quick, casual encounters have a significant impact on the language choices of young, urban Xhosa-speaking bilinguals who commonly use abbreviated forms and abbreviations to combine Xhosa and English in their voice notes on WhatsApp. This illustrates how at ease they are with both languages and how voice note communication is informal. The data supports Deumert and Masinyana's (2008:119) results about the function of bilingualism in digital environments, where speakers mix languages according to convenience and expressiveness. The similar pattern can also be seen in the study of Hurst and Mesthrie (2003:10), who contend that code-switching among young, urban bilinguals is a means of engaging with social groups or keeping up with cultural trends in addition to being a communication tool. It appears that code-switching encourages clipping in the 1st language as speakers strive for greater syllabic economy in their utterances.

The trend of bilingualism in urban areas is further highlighted by the data from spontaneous conversations. In my recorded discussion with young, urban bilinguals it was clear that they frequently and quickly move between languages during face- to-face conversations. In multilingual settings, this smooth code-switching is a sign of linguistic proficiency and social comfort, supporting research by Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) that suggests informal communication, like voice notes or in-person interactions, promotes quick language changes (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008:10). The reduced, elided and clipped forms found in such exchanges are used to express the informal and effective communication style that young people in urban environments tend to adopt.

However, a middle-aged bilingual living in a rural area (see 4.3.4 WhatsApp voice note: middle-aged, rural) exhibits quite a different language usage pattern. Code- switching is less common, and far fewer borrowed words are used. In addition, there are far fewer instances of reduction although there is some elision. Given that rural areas may be less exposed to the multilingual contexts that define urban centres, this more constant use of one language implies a more traditional communication style that is affected by social and geographic variables (Androutsopoulos, 2006:425). Additionally, the speech is more professional and uses fewer abbreviations or shortened forms than those of young, urban bilinguals. This might be because of the increased focus on communication that is clear and respectful, particularly in rural areas where formal encounters may still be more prevalent.

Notwithstanding these variations, it is evident that technology—specifically voice

messages—has given both the young urban-bilingual and the middle-aged rural monolingual speaker greater flexibility in preserving social connections. The middle- aged, rural woman's use of WhatsApp reflects trends in mobile language choices as reported by Deumert and Masinyana (2008), who point out that mobile phones have become essential for communication in both urban and rural contexts, though they may be used in less performative and more functional ways in rural areas (Deumert & Masinyana, 2008:122).

Overall, there are notable distinctions between middle-aged, rural bilinguals and young, urban bilinguals in terms of language use and digital platform usage. The use of code-switching shortened forms, and informal language by young, urban bilinguals reflects their fast-paced, casual, and highly contextual interaction with digital platforms. However, the middle-aged rural near monolingual continues to use a more formal, singular-language approach, suggesting that geography and age have an impact on how language is modified for digital communication.

When examining language use in modern communication, this study emphasises the significance of taking sociolinguistic characteristics like age, location, and digital media style into account. It also emphasises how digital platforms, such as TikTok and WhatsApp, offer fresh venues for social engagement, language invention, and identity negotiation. How these trends change as communication becomes more digitalised in both rural and urban settings could be the subject of future studies.

A focused pedagogical approach is needed to address the difficulties L2 learners encounter when learning reduced forms in Xhosa. This method should go beyond the conventional emphasis on formal language structures and integrate a more comprehensive approach to language acquisition. It is advised that L2 learners be taught the following techniques to help them understand the intricacies of reduced speech forms:

Exposure to genuine, everyday instances of the language is one of the best methods for acquainting students with reduced forms in spoken Xhosa. Audio and video resources, such as recordings of native speakers having informal conversations, radio programs, podcasts, or movies, can be used to do this. Students can hear first-hand how reductions and elisions are used in various settings by listening to these materials. Additionally, learners can start to understand the connection between the reduced forms and the

meaning they express when they hear these forms in context. In addition to knowing how reductions aid communication, learners will have a more organic sense of the rhythm and flow of spoken Xhosa because of being exposed to casual speech.

Additionally, language instructors might plan listening comprehension activities that concentrate on reduced forms. In these tasks, learners are required to recognise and evaluate reductions in conversations or monologues that intentionally incorporate elided or reduced forms. Learners will become more accustomed to these forms over time, improving their comprehension of spoken Xhosa in everyday situations.

It is crucial to create targeted listening practice sessions that emphasise these phonological processes because spoken Xhosa is characterised by quick elision and reduction. Materials that highlight reduced forms, such as terminal vowel elision, Subject and Object Concord reductions, and infinitive contractions, may be used in these practice sessions. These recordings can be listened to more than once by learners, with the first listening emphasising overall comprehension and the subsequent listening delving deeper into the reductions.

To urge pupils to emulate the reduced forms, teachers might also incorporate guided listening exercises. Through this activity, students can enhance their pronunciation and speaking fluency while also developing an ear for reductions. Instead of viewing naturalistic reductions as oddities or exceptions, students can start to see them as a normal and essential component of spoken Xhosa.

Interactive speaking exercises are essential for assisting students in producing reduced forms in their own speech, in addition to listening exercises. Students can practise using reduced forms in real-time communication through role-plays, classroom discussions, and virtual conversations. These exercises can be made to promote informal speech patterns, in which students are urged to talk rapidly and naturally, imitating the reduction processes they have heard in examples from native speakers.

Students can take part in speed-based speaking exercises, for instance, in which they are required to have quick, concise conversations about subjects they are already familiar with. Teachers should stress the value of fluidity above precise grammar in these exercises, urging students to use shared knowledge and context to communicate clearly. In addition to improving students' spoken fluency, this method teaches them how to employ abbreviated forms in casual settings.

Teaching L2 learners how context affects their comprehension and interpretation of reduced forms is crucial. When using abbreviated forms, teachers can assist students fill in the blanks by guiding them to focus on contextual cues including body language, intonation, and situational aspects. Learners will be better able to deduce meaning from conversations even when certain grammatical components are missing if they comprehend the significance of context.

When a subject concord is omitted from a sentence, for instance, a student can infer the subject of the phrase from the context and surrounding words. In a similar vein, learners can use the verb that results from reducing the infinitive prefix *uku-* to *u-* to deduce its whole meaning. L2 learners can improve their linguistic intuition and their ability to comprehend casual speech by incorporating lessons that emphasise context-based listening and interpretation.

For students to be able to produce reduced forms in their speech, pronunciation instruction is essential in addition to listening and comprehension exercises. To mimic native pronunciation, teachers might provide students clear instructions on how to shorten words and omit syllables. Through spoken drills and activities, learners can practise eliding subject concords, simplifying infinitive forms, and lowering final vowels.

Accuracy and fluency must be balanced since students may be reluctant to use fewer forms in their speech if they are afraid of making a mistake. Since fluency and naturalness are important communication objectives, teachers should foster an atmosphere where students feel free to experiment with reductions. Students can become more at ease with utilising reduced forms in their spoken Xhosa by practicing pronunciation activities that emphasise flow and speed over rigorous adherence to formal norms.

Enhancing learners' comprehension and production of natural, fluent spoken Xhosa requires integrating reduced forms into L2 teaching methods. Teachers can assist students in developing the abilities required to negotiate the complexity of informal speech by emphasising exposure to real-world materials, organised listening practice, interactive communication activities, and pronunciation exercises. Furthermore, learners will gain a better understanding of how reductions and elisions function to promote effective communication if they are contextualised within the broader framework of communicative competence. Learners can overcome the difficulties presented by shortened forms using these pedagogical strategies, which will eventually increase their spoken Xhosa fluency and comprehension.

7.4.2. Language reduction in contemporary popular music

Language reduction techniques and cultural, social, and creative influences clearly cross when examining the written truncations in the well-known South African songs *Ndikuthandile* by Vusi Nova and *Amagama* by Nathi Mankayi. These songs reflect the linguistic traditions of the performers' communities as well as contain multiple examples of reduction, elision, and clipping, all of which enhance the lyrics' rhythm, emotional depth, and accessibility. The songs' linguistic structures show how language in music is an essential component of the larger cultural and social experience rather than just a means of communication.

Ndikuthandile demonstrates how spoken language is condensed to fit the musical rhythm while retaining meaning clarity through truncations like "*nants'intliziyo*" for "*nantsi intliziyo"* (here is the heart) and "*nal'uthando*" for "*nalu uthando*" (here is love). Other forms include "*ndiyaz' thandela*" for "*ndiyazithandela*" (I just love to) and "*nditsh'uthando*" for "*nditsho uthando*" (I mean love). In addition to fulfilling the practical purpose of fitting the lyrics within the musical metre, this reduction is in line with casual spoken speech, which is a prevalent aspect of South African urban vernaculars. Similar to this, the *Amagama* truncations "*makuded*' *ubumnyama*" (let the darkness be gone) and "*ndiyak'thanda*" (I love you) further demonstrate how artists communicate with their audience through casual speech patterns. These reductions are essential to the songs' emotional and lyrical expression, aiding in the relatable communication of cultural and personal experiences.

These linguistic variants demonstrate the wider social and cultural impacts on language use in music from a sociolinguistic standpoint. According to Engh and Kennedy (2020:67), cultural views and experiences frequently influence and are reflected in music language, with reductions such as those seen in song lyrics serving as a window into the sociocultural identities of both the performers and their listeners. The abbreviated forms' informality grounds the songs in the community's lived experiences and fosters a feeling of intimacy between the performer and the audience. These forms show the mobility of ordinary speech in South Africa, where several languages and dialects coexist. They are derived from a rich linguistic legacy that combines African languages with urban vernaculars.

Music is multimodal, combining language and music to create meaning. The song's rhythm and flow are maintained by the phonological reductions, which also make line transitions more seamless and heighten the lyrics' emotional impact. The performers can focus more on the song's emotional core by using simpler language, so that the listener can understand and relate much better. In modern music, artists favour directness to make songs reach a wider audience.

Ndikuthandile and *Amagama's* language elements of reduction, elision, and clipping are not only creative decisions, but social and cultural ones. Through connecting with the experiences of culture and identities of the South African audience, the tactics highlight the deep emotional resonance of the music, accessibility and uniqueness. Through looking at this from a sociolinguistic lens, we can better capture how language in music can both show and change cultural ideas and serve an important purpose around artistic expression.

7.4.3. Lexical truncation in poetry

The poetry anthology's (*Ilifa* by Athambile Masola) use of truncations illustrates the complex relationship between oral tradition, language efficiency, and the sociocultural context of language use. These abbreviated forms, such "de" for "*kude*" (meaning "until") and "*ngas'ke*" for "*ndinga ndingasuka*" (meaning "I wish"), demonstrate a language economy that favours conciseness and convenience of use. This simplified speech is consistent with the idea that language at most times, changes to suit the communication needs of the speaker, especially in casual and personal settings (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007:49). In this way, the anthology's truncations point to a cultural desire for effectiveness and fluidity, which is typical in oral traditions where communication speed and rhythm are crucial.

Furthermore, the existence of these truncations emphasises how important African oral literature is. Language is naturally flexible in oral cultures, and its use is heavily influenced by the social and contextual demands of the speakers (Finnegan, 1992: 14). Even in written form, truncations like "*s'thandwa*" for "*sithandwa*" (meaning "beloved one") and "*akhont'wibitheni*" for "*akukho nto ibitheni*" (meaning "there's nothing, anyway") preserve the spontaneity and rhythm of spoken language. This points to a merging of written and oral traditions, where oral speech form is maintained even as writing takes over. The truncations serve as indicators of a cultural legacy that honours oral communication and shows how it still shapes contemporary writing practices.

The truncations provide insight into the coexistence of orality and literacy when analysing their intersection. According to Ong (1982:77), orality and literacy are different but related, with orality stressing speech's flexibility and fluidity. This anthology's truncations, like "*mas'ambe*" for "*masihambe*" ('let us go') and "*yinkcitha'xesha*" for "*yinkcitha yexesha*" ('it is a waste of time'), reflect the flexibility seen in oral forms, where language is frequently modified for convenience of communication. These truncations demonstrate that spoken language rules can nevertheless influence written language, despite literacy being frequently linked to standardised and fixed forms. This demonstrates how orality continues to have an impact even in written texts and shows how poetry's use of language reflects a larger cultural context.

These truncations have important sociolinguistic ramifications. A pattern of informality is suggested by the frequent usage of abbreviated forms such as "*u'ba*" (five occurrences) and *de* (two occurrences), which may indicate a familiar relationship between the speaker and their audience. Thus, truncation can be viewed as a type of social signalling, where the employment of truncated forms may indicate closeness, familiarity, or communal solidarity. The formal language standards that are frequently enforced by colonial or state systems are also challenged by these shortened forms, which can be seen as a kind of linguistic resistance. These truncations can be seen as a reclaiming of cultural and linguistic autonomy, and language reconstitution is a kind of resistance to external linguistic dominance, according to Makoni and Pennycook (2007:51).

The poet confirms cultural identity and resistance through these textual reductions plus forms as an addition to simplifying language for efficiency. Language is flexible and can change to meet the social and communication demands of those who use it. By integrating the written and spoken forms serves as a reminder of such. These truncations show how oral traditions still influence modern linguistic practices by retaining the informality and adaptability of spoken language in written poetry.

7.5. Limitations of the study

The study has some limitations, namely external application, testing settings, and sample size. First off, because there were just six participants in the second language test, the study's results might not be broadly applicable. To guarantee that the findings of listening research represent a wider variety of learners, Flowerdew & Miller (2005:246) emphasise that individual differences in language proficiency and prior knowledge should be

considered.

Furthermore, the participants' eight-month exposure to a largely academic Xhosa beginner course may have decreased their capacity to recognise subtle elision patterns evident in speech, which could distort the findings.

Additionally, the study's external application may be diminished because the controlled testing environment might not accurately represent listening conditions in the actual world. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012:1404), it is challenging to evaluate how students might understand reduction in unplanned discussions since artificial testing environments frequently fall short of accurately simulating the complexity of natural listening tasks.

The results of the study might therefore not accurately reflect how students interact with reduced forms in natural speech. Individual variables, such as variances in dialect familiarity and listening skills, also pose a problem because Flowerdew and Miller (2005:247) stress the importance of considering these aspects to up the dependability of results.

These limitations imply that although the study offers insightful information about Xhosa elision comprehension among second language learners, the interpretation of the results should be done so cautiously, and that extra research is needed to improve the results' generalisability and practical applicability.

7.6. Future Research Directions

The connection between age at which a 2nd language is learnt and listening comprehension scores would be an important research project that could throw light on the extent to which listening skills can be formally taught. On the effects of age on second language acquisition, David Singleton (2005:11) points out that older learners tend to rely on conscious learning procedures, whereas younger learners usually have an advantage in obtaining native-like pronunciation and fluency. According to the "critical period" idea, phonological results improve with earlier exposure.

Research on the effects of ageing on Xhosa people's perception and production of reduced forms can benefit from Singleton's findings. While older students may find it more difficult to use these phonological reductions, younger students may be more adept at recognising and utilising elided forms, indicating the need for focused treatments.

Poplack (1980:582) divides code-switching into various categories and highlights how the demand for communication ease during language changeover affects phonological processes like elision and clipping.

The effects of code-switching on the use of reduced forms, including elision and clipping, particularly in fluid multilingual situations, should be investigated in research on bilingual Xhosa speakers. Reductions may be necessary to promote more seamless language transfers because of how simple it is to communicate in these situations.

In her comparison of computational methods for processing the complicated morphology of Zulu, Bosch (2005:220) draws attention to the difficulties in modelling reductions such as vowel reduction, elision, and clipping.

Bosch's work can be adapted for the creation of computer models, allowing for the automatic identification of reduced, elided and clipped forms. This could help analyse morphological reductions in Xhosa across different linguistic settings and enhance applications such as speech recognition.

These studies offer a few ideas for further investigation into the phonological reductions in Xhosa. It is possible to investigate how age affects the capacity to recognise and employ elided forms in Xhosa by looking at age-related variations in second language learning (Singleton, 2005:11). Code-switching can be stud (Poplack, 1980:582) to learn how multilingualism affects Xhosa reduction processes.

Finally, elision and clipping in Xhosa could be automated using computational methods (Bosch, 2005:220), providing fresh perspectives on these phonological processes and advancing language technologies.

APPENDIX

In the appendix attached, I present the full texts (written and oral) with the truncated elements highlighted.

1.1 Data from WhatsApp voice notes

VN001 TRANSCRIPTION

00:00:02 – Uhm, ya, ulasta, ku, **kumaintaina** i-

relationship. 00:00:06 – Kukwazi **ukugcina**.

00:00:08 – **U-sustainer** i-relationship yakho for **ixesh'elide**.

00:00:11 – And obviously **iskakhulu s'thetha** nge relationships ezi monogamous.

00:00:13 – Ezi between **abantw'ababini** abavumeleneyo **ba** okay **s'yajola**.

00:00:20 – ulasta kuba le relationship yethu **say'gcina**, iyaqhubeka, **ay'pheli** anytime soon.

00:00:29 – And I think definitely like uhm i-

attainable. 00:00:35 – But yi**mpend'lo** e-easy

leyokuthi i-attainable.

00:00:40: - **Impend'lo** enzima **ngeyoba** kunzima **u-attainer** no **maintaine**r i-monogamy kuthi like as **abant'wabatsha**.

00:00:48 – **Yabo** cause **sifik'eyunivesithi** sibona **abant'wabaninzi**, siba exposed to i- ideas ezintsha, **sifun'uzama** zonke **ngexesh'elinye**

00:01:00 – Ixesha lincinci for ukwazi ukwenza izinto ezininzi

ngexesh'elinye. 00:01:06 – **Amehl'ayazula** so **mninz'umsebenzi** woyi

maintainer.

00:01:13 – And **abant'wabaninzi** abanazo i-equipment **ngok'cinga** kwam **woyimaintainer**.

00:01:20 – **Abant'wabaninzi** baya failer **u-communicator**

effectively. 00:01:22 – **Abant'wabaninzi** uhm abana emotional

intelligence.

00:01:26 – **Abant'wabaninzi** uhm yah.

00:01:32 – **Abant'wabaninzi** basene trauma **ez'ninzi** futhi ezi attached, bane abandonment issues.

00:01:38 – Bane traumas ezi attached to uba close emntwini especially kwi context ye relationship.

00:01:43: So, i-answer e-simple, yah, i-attainable but kunzima **uy'attainer** and **abant'wabaninzi** baya failer like ezo equipments zidingekayo **zoyi attainer**

abanazo. 00:01:54 – And **as'khuli siz'nikwa** ezo equipments.

00:01:57 – Iwes eye emotional intelligence ne effective communication **azonto es'khul**e si incentivizwa **ba** ekse **qinis'apha**, **yazi** uthetha kanje.

00:02:06 – But once ufike kwi relationship ngoku sibadalana kufuneka ezi zinto ube sowunazo already.

00:02:12 – So, nantso indlela **endiy'bona** ngayo, endi feela ngayo.

00:02:15 – And I think ndiyalasta for the most part.

00:02:18 – But also, obviously nam ndi-strugglishile **u-finder** i-emotional intelligence.

00:02:25 – Especially cause I'm a guy as well and i-guys **az'kho** incentivised to be emotional beings at all.

00:02:33 – So ndistrugglishile **uyi finder** but not that ndiyi findile ingxaki is being with people that I feel are not there yet **yabo**.

00:02:42 – Like abantu kwabona abakakwazi **u-communicator**. Abakakwazi **uthin thin**.

00:02:45 – And **ay'zusebenza** if like **uy'one** umntu **k'le** relationship olapho and then the other party is not ready.

VN002 TRANSCRIPTION

00:00:05 – Hey, uxolo chomi. I hope you're doing well. Uxolo for the delayed uhm voice note. Bendi, yeah, occupied nge weekend.

00:00:15 – But yeah, I have a few minutes to spare.

00:00:19 – So, here goes.

00:00:20 – Uhm, ukulasta, wow what an interesting topic.

00:00:26 – I think mntase, it's very subjective, so I'll just say what I think.

00:00:34 – Obviously I'm open to the discussios, I don't know, debate, discourse, whatever. I'm open to anything.

00:00:47 – I think it's a very interesting and relevant uhm topic, for i-age group yethu especially during these times.

00:00:57 – But anyways, I think **uk'lasta** chomi, uhm, I think the biggest contributor of **ulasta**.

00:01:06 – Uhm, people, okay. I think it will be subjective and also just tying with izinto that people usually say mostly on social media and stuff.

00:01:14 – Bathi **bana** you have to ubekezele mntase in a relationship like **bengathi** ezinye izinto **awuz'boni**.

00:01:24 – Like zisenzeka like **bengathi uba** blind like ubeyi mfama to other things that are happening in your relationship.

00:01:30 – Just for the sake of **ba** uthi ndi-clocker i-one year, two years, three years,

four years, whatever it is.

00:01:38 – But I also think **uk'lasta** maan chomi is also just falling in love with umntu and laying out i-intentions zakho on the table and naye **az'beke** i-intentions zakhe on the table. And if those intentions align, they align.

00:01:58 – And then also just falling in love with someone who'll hold you accountable nawe hold them accountable.

00:02:05 – Xa ingathi umntu is sidestepping on what they said umfake elaynini.

00:02:11 – Hopefully that person will listen, and reciprocation is a very big thing in a relationship for **ba** ilaste.

00:02:24 – I think **uba** nalanto **yoba** I want to do this for my partner naye abene ngqondo **ey'one** like I also wanna do.

00:02:35 – Like it's also sort of like i-competition. I wanna do like, I want to outdo my partner in terms of **umphatha kak'hle**.

00:02:43 – So, I think, that's also another thing.

00:02: 46 – And also like if ungumntu , you tired of the streets, you just wanna settle down.

00:02:53 – I think if your head is in the right space that could also contribute to i-relationship lasting.

00:03:00 – Uhm, yeah or if you like just want something long-term like life partnership okanye umtshato, you'll put in the work, you'll put in the effort and just commit ilaste i- relationship.

00:03:16 – But I think the biggest one, very controversial one is the whole thing of ukunyamezela or ukubekezela.

00:03:26 – Being a bekezelaring. Yho how do I say this word. That word, chomi. Queen.

00:03:36 – But ke mna I will not participate in that but ke I think lonto, people tend to fall for yona and it works.

00:03:48 – But ke at what cost cause ukwi relationship that's toxic, unhealthy and deep down you're not happy but you just wanna count iminyaka ehambayo.

00:03:57 – So that's just my two cents. Lemme know chomi if I've answered this question adequately but yah that's just my two cents.

00:04:08 – Thanks, bye.

VN003 TRANSCRIPTION

00:00:04 – And I'm sorry for i-voice note ende but I just thought about other things ezimbalwa just to add.

00:00:08 – Uhm. I think also nalanto **yoba** who do you attract, chomi.

00:00:14 – I think also nayo it does factor in like, largely, because if like u-attracta umntu and then unalanto **ba** twin flame yakho in a way **ba** you guys are very similar, you guys have shared similar interests.

00:00:32 – Sometimes, lento does uhm contribute to i-relationship lasting.

00:00:39 – Like you attract someone with the same energy as you and ke i-energy is very broad.

00:00:44 – I think just similar interests or even like you guys having similar sexual desires.

00:00:53 – You guys are willing to explore certain things that can also like make a relationship last.

00:00:57 – Or if you're someone who believes in astrology **uqond'ba** ndiyi water sign so I'm gonna go for water signs.

00:01:09 – Sometimes a relationship can last because ke of ezo beliefs.

00:01:11 - Sorry, ndine mask **eb'sweni**.

00:01:14 – Uhm or what else. Or just setting your standards very high ke and then I don't know, attracting people that meet your standard.

00:01:23 – Or not even setting the high. Just having a standard and just attracting people that align with your standard.

00:01:32 – I guess that could also contribute to i-relationship that's gonna last.

00:01:38 – Uhm, because in a way, **unalant'ba**, I got what I deserve or what I

deserved. 00:01:45 – Uhm, yeah, that's pretty much it, chomi.

00:01:51 – I hope this is helpful. Lemme know.

VN004 TRANSCRIPTION

00:00:05 – Hi **mntase**, uhm, once again, thank you so much for including me in your study.

00:00:07 – I think lencoko is so relatable to so many people.

00:00:14 – Uhm, to answer your first question **ba** what I do I define as or what is umlasto.

00:00:20 – Uhm, ndingathi maybe umlasto is literally a lasting in a long-term relationship. That means **mhlambi** being exclusive to just your partner.

00:00:36 – Okanye **uba** deeply in umjolo like xa **kus'thwa** uzojola then ujole lanto i- serious **sube** unomlasto phakathi because you are clearly committed to this thing. More than just, you know, eza hook up okanye as umntu ozoba busy naye ecaleni.

00:00:55 – So, yeah, that's how I'll define umlasto, uhm.

00:01:01 – Maybe it can also include abantu who have been on and off like a long period of time **mhlambi** like over **ixesh'elide** then **mhlambi** umntu angazibiza umlasto lowo although naleyo is a bit contestable but yeah that's what I would call umlasto.

00:01:18 – Someone who is uhm exclusively with i-partner yakher for **ixesh'elide**.

00:01:25 – **Mhlambi** ndingade ndide ndithi **ixesh'elide** ngu nyaka, you know, I

don't think
funek'ibe iminyaka.

00:01:29 – It can just be unyaka.

00:01:31 – **Uba** ukulo mjolo for unyaka and **uz'misele** and nguwe wedwa kuye lomntu lo ujola naye and naye lomntu nguye yedwa kuwe then I can call that umlasto.

VN005 TRANSCRIPTION

00:00:01 – To answer your second question **ba** is umlasto attainable.

00:00:06 – Uhm, I think it's a very polarized opinion but my side of it is uyakwazi as umntu ulasta.

00:00:16 – You actually can. It's actually attainable **uba** in a long-lasting relationship, to be able to maintain a long-term relationship.

00:00:26 – Especially if lomntu ubusy naye is on the same page as you like nithethe ngalento **ba** okay sizoba busy mos apha so **ncela** sibe on the same page.

00:00:35 – Naye ke ngomu lomntu makes it easier or possible to make the relationship attainable or long-lasting relationship attainable.

00:00:43 – Uhm and even though like the noise outside says yho ha.a sana, it's a myth, it's fake, **akhomntu ufanel'ba** ukwi relationship exclusively.

00:00:55 – Or like i-soulmate **ay'kho** one like **ezanto**. They may be true nyani ke **mhlambi** zingayinyani equally as **ba** nale yomlasto o-attainable iyinyani.

00:01:06 – So, yeah, I think it is. I think it is an attainable uhm thing like long-lasting relationship.

00:01:13 – Uyakwazi **uy'fumana**, **bakhon'abantu** abanazo, **bakhon'abantu** who are in long term relationships.

00:01:15 – Ba happy futhi qha you know, I don't think it's maybe the most spoken about thing. **Ayonto say'ncokola** oko leyo.

00:01:25 – So yah, I think it can be attained uhm i-long-term umlasto.

VN006 TRANSCRIPTION

00:00:01 – And to answer your last question,

heeeeh. 00:00:05 – **Sis'wam** ubuza izinto ezi

personal.

00:00:12 – Ingaba ndiyalasta nah mna.

00:00:14 – Well, mntase. I'll speak from a very present perspective for myself ba yah ndingathi **ndyakwaz'ulasta**.

00:00:22 – Uhm because, you know, I've been in a relationship for almost two years ngoku masithi it's a year and a half.

00:00:27 – And if you can take that description of umlasto **bendik'xelele k'qala ba** you know, umlasto **mhlambi** is quantified by a years' worth of dating then I think ndifikile **k'la** umlasto category.

00:00:43 – So yah, I think **nd'yalasta** shem. When I look at other pursuits that I've had before, I do think **nd'yalasta** wethu.

00:00:56 – Actually no, **mas'ngathethi** nge **nto** za before because I actually think bendingalasti because yah maan. Like abantu **xabek'qhela** kakubi, you don't need to be taking those things, you know, into your life

00:01:10 – Ube ukwazi uphuma **k'lonto**.

00:01:12 – So yeah, if ukweso stage somlasto which I am right now, it's easy for me to say **nd'yalasta**.

00:01:19 – But ngelaxesha bendingalasti, yho genge, bendingalasti shem. Bendingalasti so maybe let's just call it something that's seasonal or when it's your time, it's your time or when it's your lover, it's your lover.

00:01:33 – So uzoyazi so yeah I think, I think ndiyalasta mna.

1.2 Data from Focus Group Interview

# of Participants: 4

Site: Rondebosch, Cape Town

Date of Interview: 06/04/2024

Language/s used: English and Xhosa

Participant 1

Igama lam ngu E.M. Nam **nd'khulele** eKapa. What I remember wethu being a child was **bana**, I was very active in terms of **bana** like working out. But not like **bana** gym, gym, gym. But like **utatam hlambi** in the morning, since **bana** ebe trainer i-soccer team ye- girls. I was very much a daddy's girl, whatever he did, **bend'hamba** naye. And then ke ngoku no mama ebephangela long hours. Only child from **umamam** and then ku **tatam**, I am the first born, **nzothin** nah. First born in terms of **bana** couple of months.

Participant 2

Mna **ndingu** C. Nam **nd'khulele aph'eKapa**. Ndandi nervous going from Delft to etown **qond'ba** okay. **Kuzoba** njani and stuff..

Participant 3

When i was around three years, I moved to eStrand. **'Hlale** Strand no makhulu wam. **Ndahlal'eStrand** ne sister **z'ka mamam** then **mamam** wa mover to eMtata **yabo**. Izinto **ndand'thand'uzenza, ndand'thand'udlal'ipoppy huis**. Ndingu mntu **othand'uba** out of i-reality. **Ingaske** (inaudable ndinoshishin'am???? 6:47). **Umamam** waye around ke that time. Then ndamova again from eLower Crossroads to eMfuleni so **andinokwazi kuconnetha** ii-experiences zam eHigh

School because ndand- confused ndandimova from this place to that ndingenatshomi and stuff

Ewe inzima ngendlela abantu bethuka ????[7:00] ngayo like abantu baseStrand ba??? Ngenye indlela … abantu baseCrossroads ba pha [7:34] ahead of so bacenge ngenye indlela

Akhomnandi [7:52]

Participant 4

Mna ndingu O igama lam and then surname ndingu C. Andinode ndithi **nd'yakhumbula** because I was young. Akhonto [8:42] ndinothi ndikhumbula because I was here. Number one, it's the weather. **Send'tsho**, eMtata uba **k'yatshisa**, **k'yatshisa. Uba k'yabanda, k'yabanda**. Aph it's like **k'yatshis'ekseni**. **Mhlamb'abantu**. Especially xa ebona **ba** unguMxhosa. Akhona lamagama **uqond'ba** I think everyone knows. [10:26] And then **ubiz'** igama elithile …

Participant 1

They have to accept **ba** use Kapa, you have to know **is'Xhosa**. People are always saying Cape Town people are not nice **qond'ba** where? You from Joburg, **fike** eKapa, anibulisani **qond'ba** okay sure.

Participant 2

I don't even know what happens like serious serious kwenzeka ntoni like **and'yaz**. But I just know **ba** there's obviously differences.

Participant 4

Ingxaki **iyand'phosa**. **Mhlamb'** umntu uyamazi but **iyand'phosa**.

Participant 4

Ibiyi cousin yam **send'tsho khona** omnye u-cousin wam, **mhlambi s'yalingana, sas'qala udibana**. Nguye umntu **ofan'ba** undibonisa around. **As'khulelanga** endaweni ey'1.

[17:51] **Uneento azenzayo nento**

Participant 3

Ku mentionwa izinto like indlu **yes'bane**, **inton-nton.**

Participant 1

Bekumnandi maan like **nzothin'**. Majority of the time, **uba k'landlu yes'bane**.

Participant 2

We just chill, **hlale** nje. **Andibinal'ixesha** to go out **yabo**.

Participant 1

When i go out, I try **ba hlambi** lunch. Mna shem **and'fu'uxoka**; **iinto** ezibu dates.

Participant 4

Sometimes go out with friends as in **hlambi** ke. Ngoku **ndand'fika,** met abantu aba different.

Participant 3

Mna **ndiqhel'ukwenz'into** e-illegal. Xa ndi free, **nd'tshay'intsango**. **Bend'cing'ba ay'kho** (inaudiable). Bend'tshilo mos nd'yathand'uzona out kwi reality.

Participant 1

Nd'yathand'ujima. As I said **bana** working out no**tatam**.

Participant 2

And then xa **nd'fika** in varsity **qond'ba nton** lena, **and'fun'funda** lento mna.

Participant 4

Bend'thand'ubhala iz'cripts.

Participant 3

Ndiye ndathenga nam for **ba** nam ndimane ndisenza.

Participant 2

I am on social media but **and'kho** active.

Participant 4

Nzoposta today **qond'ba**.

Participant 1

Maz'bonwe zonke.

Participant 3

I do (have social media). But nam **and'kho** active.

Participant 1

It was my friend's birthday, saya out. **Bes'banintsi**. And then ibingu mlungu **qond'ba** haibo. Bathi **mand'ngayeki** shem.

Participant 4

Send'tsho like.

Participant 3

Bane support and **bayas'thanda**. Wasiposta kuFacebook wathi **bana and'tshomani** namamenemene.

Participant 2

People are requesting **ba** bangene kula live.

Participant 1

Qond'ba haibo njani.

1.3 Data from Xhosa rural elderly speaker

Yho sisi. Ubumkhulu loo moya. Kwasa

ndihleli. Yho sisi. That wind was big. Dawn

came me still up. **Ngengomso ndandisozela**

apha emini

The next day I was still drowsy here in the day

phofu andozeli ukuba ndisozela nalapha emini usekhona umoya,

But I am not drowsy, if I am drowsy even in the day when there is STILL a wind

izindlu bezimka

The houses were departing/blowing away

sizibona uyijongile imkile indlu yomntu.

We see them you see a house of a person having departed [blown away]

Abanye abantu ... ukhona ubhuti ebekhe[who built/ebakhe] ifouroom wezitena ngeeblocks, wathi

Some people ... there is this guy who built a four-room of bricks with blocks and said

senditsho kwiirow ... iirow ezimbini axhome uphahla ... dilika yonke into yemka.

I am saying already [I mean to say] ... in two rows and he had hung the roof ... Collapse everything went

Amatanki, tanki lanqengqeleka pha kwenye ilali pha kulaa lali yoVusomzi …

The tanks, the tank rolled over there to the other village to that village of Vusomzi …

ndilijongile ndalibona lehla layoqabela emlanjeni ... ndikuxelele ... Ubumbi loo moya …

I saw it, I saw it go down and cross the river ... I tell you ... that wind was terrible

inoba senditsho zange uphinde ubone umoya ongakaya …

I mean you would never have again seen a wind so big

bendihleli ubusuku bonke …

I was sitting the whole night

ndiqond'uba ... heyi ... andisoyiki ... apha endlini

Understanding that .....I am so frightened [note a negative for a positive] here in the house

ke kaloku kukho ihoki, ebiyenziwe nguAvuzwa …

There is a hok which had been made by Avuzwa

inezinki ucing'ba iye yaphula iya kuphuncuka labhayibhayi izinki ebusuku …

It had zinc sheets and it broke and ??? the zinc in the night

into yokuthi qhwaa!

Something going crash!

Andoyika ndafuna nokroba ndiqond'u'ba ndiyoyika.

So frightened I wanted to peep realizing that I am afraid

Kumhlophe phofu umoya wena akunyamanga kodwa apha ngaphakathi kumnyama

It was white/clear the wind .... you see ....it isn't dark but here inside it is dark

... kodwa umoya ubumbi kangaka …

But the wind was so bad

eh usicinyelwe ngumbane kuphuncuke izinki kwenye indlu beku???

Our electricity went off and one of the zincs of the other house broke off .... [phuncuka – break off from something]

Uphahla ... izinki ingaphezulu kwentambo yegesi ... kulaa pali inde yegesi ... lahlala pha ... lizokhululwa nguEskom..... senditsho ubumbi loo moya

The roof ... the zinc on top of the gas cord ... on that long gas pole ... it landed up there ... it will be taken off by Eskom ... as I was saying the wind was very bad

... **besiqonda ukuba hayi siyagwetywa sizofela kwezi zindlu**

We understood that no we will be judged we are going to die in these houses

... kwasa imini yonke nangoLwesihlanu oko kubhudla ngoLwesine …

It swas morning and the whole day even on Friday all the time blowing since Thursday

wemka ngoku umbane ... hawu, hayi ke ... NgoLwesihlanu uyabhudla umoya …

The electricity left ... no man ... on Friday the wind is blowing

siyaqala ukuphumla namhlanje ... oko kubhudla …

The first time we rested was today ... all the time blowing …

kwade kwafika uEskom ukulungisa ... kwade kwabhetere eze uEskom sinesithukuthezi sokungabi nafoni ...

Eventually Eskom arrived to fisx... at last it was better that Eskom came we were lonely from not having a phone

akulayiti nasendlini ...silayita

amakhandlela ... no light even in the

house ... we light candles **whooo ... mna**

bendincedwa yigesi ...

whoo .. I was helped by gas

ndazithengela iges stove ... ndinegas apha kulaantika etankeni

I had bought myself a gase stove ... I have gas here at that whatyoumacall it at the tank

... ndipheka ngayo ... bunzima sisi ... kodwa ke sibulela uEskom ude wafika ke wasilungisa noko akho mitshenshi

I cook with it ... it is difficult sisi ... but we are grateful to Eskom for eventually pitching up and fixing us even though there is no ???

1.4. Data from Tik Tok Video

TIKTOK VIDEO TRANSCRIPTION (reduced forms highlighted in yellow)

Guys I cannot be the only one sana. Ndifun' u'buza u'bana, sonke apha emhlabeni sinazo *ii-phobia?*

Hopefully ndiyibiza *right guys*

ndingumXhosa. Apha emhlabeni sonke

sinazo?

Okanye *is it just me*? *Like*, okanye abanye abantu ababinazo nje, abanye abantu *u-life* wabo bayaqhubeka nje, nje kakuhle.
Guys, sinazo sonke izinto esizoyikayo uqonde uba 'yabona le into *if* ndingayibona andinokwazi [andinako ukwazi] u'lala, andinobakho right.

Guys mna *I feel* eyam i-*phobia is very stupid because most people* bayayithanda *and I*… ha.a sana.. *I'm still trying to understand* ubana yintoni le ibingaka *because* mna *I cannot to save my life.*

Guys mna ndiyoyika ikati. Ndiyayoyika ikati, *guys* ndiyayoyika ikati *to the extent that if* ndikhe ndayibona andikwazi nokuyigxotha ngokwam.

I remember this other time, kwangena ikati apha eyadini *and* ukungena kwayo le kati apha eyadini *guys* yayingafuni u'phuma.

Oh, ndandisekhaya ngoko *not* apha, *not* apha, ndandisahlala ekhaya ngoko.

I *think* u-Imi *was*… inoba wayena-*4* [wayeneminyaka emine/eyi-4] okanye *5* u-Imi.
Guys, ndaziva ndicel' u-Imi u'bana Imi, ndicel' uyigxothe sana, ndicel' uyigxothe ngokwakho le kati *because* andikwazi noyijonga *guys* andinawo namehlo wokuba ndithi ndiyayijonga.
But kukho abantu *that survive with* iikati *like* abazithandayo abazi*treat'* ingathi ngabantwana.

I remember e-Eastern Cape, utat'omkhulu wam wayesaphila ngoko, utata kamama wam. Ndafika kulomam'am kukho ikati *and I was like* ndiyahamba sana, ndiya kulotata'm because kulomam'am nalotat'am mos ngabaseMount Frere mos bayi-2.

Ndithe ndiyahamba *because* kalok' sana andizokwazi ukuhlala apha i-*whole day* yonke kube kukho ikati ndizaw'fa.

Utat'omkhulu wam kwanyanzeleka uba sana leya kati ayibhijele nge-*plastic* andazi… andisakhumbuli ukuba leya *plastic* kwakuyantoni kodwa wayi-*wrap*-ishela ngento utat'omkhulu wam leya kati wayihambisa wayisa kwenye ilali.

Ndik'xelela ukuba *the following day* mna ikati yaphina? Yaba lapha!

Ize njani ibibotshiwe? *But anyway* ke asikho lapho. Utat'omkhulu wam ebephila lo *life* e-*wrap*-ishela iphind' iphindiswe qho! *Because* kalok' sana andizokwazi ukuhlala,

andizokwazi uku… *like* andikwazi *guys*.

Nangoku apha, ndithe xa ndiphuma apha phandle, caba *i-gate* yalapha endlini ayivalwanga. *So* ndiphuma apha phandle ke ngoku ndiya emotweni kuOlwethu. Hayibo nantsi ikati indilandela *guys*! Oko ndingabhubhanga! Hhe! Oko ndingafanga sana, 'yeva!

Like, yikati, yikati *but guys* oko ndingabhubhanga!

Guys nina nenza njani ukuze nikwazi ukuba *lik*e… ni…ni… ningayoyiki ikati? Yintoni okanye yintoni mhlabe mna le ndinayo. Wakhe wathi, wakhe wathi umam'am *this other time* ukuba yoh ha.a sana *i-funny* into yokoyika kwakho ikati inoba [inokuba] uyathakatha.

Guys andiyazi, inoba sana. Hayi nam ndi… ndikule… ndikule nto kamam'am uba inoba sana ikhona into nje endi-*busy* yiyo. *Because guys* andi… 'yabona ngoko ndibone leya
kati, izoba ngathi ihamba apha… yabona uba ndilele apha ebhedini, izoba ngathi ihamba lapha phantsi, qho kufuneka ndizame u'lala ndizomane ndiba nale *image* yalaa kati ndiyibonileyo, andikwazi *guys*.

I-normal na bethuna into yokoyika ikati? Ayikho *guys* enye into endiyoyikayo – 'yabona inyoka? Hayi andiyoyiki. Bakhona abantu abathi bayoyika inyoka hayi mna andiyoyiki
inyoka. Isele? Hayi, hayi andiloyiki isele. Zintoni ezinye izinto ezi… iimpuku? Andizoyiki mna ndi-*right like*, *with* impuku.

But, ungandixeleli ngekati uyandibulala. Yoh! *Guys* ndiyayoyika mna ikati *shame*. Andikwazi tu u-*survivor*, andikwazi tu.

Kukho *this other time* ekhaya ngona ndisahlala ekhaya kwangena ikati erumini kamama. Yangena ikati erumini kamama yahlala phantsi kwebhedi uyeva?! Umama wazoyibona le kati xa eyolala. Asiyazi le kati ukuba ibingene nini phantsi kwebhedi, ibingene njani. Iyoh! *Guys*, khange ndilale ekhaya ngaloo mini leyo. Ndayolala ebhulokweni lasekhaya, zindlu [zizindlu], mos zindlu eziyi-3. Ndayolala kulo tshom' yam e-*next door* kwasekhaya.
Ndathi andizokwazi sana *because* ndizothi… andizokwazi ulala *because* ndizothi ngoko ndileleyo ndibe naleya *picture* yalaa kati. Ingathi ndizoyibona, ingathi iza kuphuma kwalapho endlini, ewe ikhutshiwe *but* yhu! Ha.a sana umzimba wam uvese

[uveske??] uhambe uvese woyike ngenxa yoba ndibone ikati *guys* yoh ha.a ndiyayoyika sana ikati.

Andinayo enye into endinothi [endinokuthi] ndiyayoyika ngaphandle kwekati apha emhlabeni. *Give me* inyoka, hayi ndizok'bambela inyoka mna, isele, icikilishi, zonke nje ezaa nto [zinto] ezi-*funny*, impuku, zonke ezinto ezi-*funny* ezoyikwa ngabantu mna andizoyiki ndi-*right* mna. Andoyiki ne-*pit bull* sana mna, *like*, 'yabona uba kungabekwa ikati apha, kubekwe *i-pit bull* apha kuthwa mandikhethe, yoh ndingakhetha i-*pit bull* sana *because* yoh ha.a ndiyayoyika sana ikati ha! Ndiyayoyika *guys*.

Data from *Ilifa* by Athambile Masola

Inene Ndidanile -pg 17

Ndide→ **'de**

Izaziso- pg22

Ingasuke→ **inga'ske→ngas'ke**

Wakrazulwa- pg 23

Akhonto ibitheni→ **Akhont'wibitheni**

Nawo Amandla→ **Naw'awamandla**

Coconut- pg 26

Khawuzithuthe→ **Khaw'zithuthe**

Incoko-pg 32

Tata wekhaya→ **tat'ekhaya**

Yinkcitha

yexesha→**yinkcitha'xesha**

Masikhe→ **Ma'khe**

Ukunyamalaliswa- pg 34

Kuthiwe→ **Kuth'we**

Izwi elidala- pg 38

Mntwana wam→ **mntan'am**

Indebe yam iyaphalala- pg 45

Ndide→ **'de**

Iinyembezi ii- pg 46

Zisisipili→ **zisis'pili**

Imvuselelo- pg 50

Into yokuba→ **into'kuba**

Intliziyo- pg 53

Ngokuba→ **ngo'ba**

Izandla- pg 56

Amanzi omlambo→ **amanz'omlambo**

Uya kuphuma→ **uyo'phuma**

S'thandwa *x4 sam (sithandwa)- pg 59*

Uthando- pg

60 Uyevha→

‘va Yiza→

‘iza (?)

Masihambe→ **Mas’ambe**

x2 Ebusuku→ **eb’suku**

Yizokubona→ **‘izobona**

Ingasuke→ ingas’ke→

ngas’ke

Ikaka- pg64

Bhuti Xola→ **bhut’Xola**

Yikaka apha→

yikak’apha x3 Ukuba→

u’ba

Ngoobani aba- pg 67

Akukho apho→ **Akukhw’apho x2**

Umahamba ehlala→ **umahamb’ehlala**

Bungenawo umongo→

bungenaw’umongo

Edolophini- pg 68

Indawo edume izwe lonke→ **indaw’edume x3**

Silahla umlenze→ **silahl’umlenze**

***Umlung'kazi** (umlungukazi) - pg 70*

Womlungukazi→ **womlung'kazi**

Lomlungukazi→ **lomlung'kazi x2**

Zomlungukazi→ **zomlung'kazi**

Apha- pg 75

Ukuba→ **u'ba x5**

1.6 Data from contemporary song lyrics

Song 1: Ndikuthandile by Vusi Nova

*Thatha, **nants'intliziyo** yam* (Take here is my heart)
1 *Thatha **nal'uthando** lolwakho* (Take here is love – it is yours)
2 *Thatha nants'intliziyo yam* (Take here is my heart)

3 *Zuyiphathe njengeqanda* (Handle it like an egg)
4 ***S'thandwa**, andenzi ngabom* (Beloved, I am not doing it intentionally)
5 ***Ndiyaz'thandela** apha kuwe* (I am in love with you)
6 *Heeybo andenzi ngabom yooh, ndicel'* (I am not doing it intentionally, please)

7 *Ndikuthandile **standwa** sam* (I have loved you beloved)
8 *Ngentliziyo yami yonke* (With all my heart)
9 ***Nditsh'uthando** endinalo* (The love I have)
10 *Soze luphele* (Will never cease) x2

11 *Indlela ondithanda ngayo* (The way you love me)
12 ***Kukhw'indlela** ondibamba ngayo* (Also the way you hold me)
13 *Baby indlela ondijonga ngayo* (Baby the way you look at me)
14 *Baby iyandigqiba yeah* (Baby it finishes me)
15 ***S'thandwa** andenzi ngabom yeah* (Beloved I am not doing it intentionally)
16 *Andiphathwa naziintloni* (I am not even shy)
17 *Xa **ndifun'ukubamba, ndifun'ukukuthanda*** (When I want to hold you; I want to love you)
18 ***Ngaske** lingatshoni* (Wish [the sun] not to set)

19 *Ndikuthandile* (I have loved you)
20 ***S'thandwa** sam* (my beloved)

21 *Ngentliziyo yami yonke* (With all my heart)
22 ***Nditsh'uthando*** *endinalo* (I mean the love I have)
23 *Soze luphele* (Will never end)

24 ***Uthath'umphefumlo*** *wam* (You have taken my soul)
25 **'*thulisile***, *ebusuku nemini* (quieten to me during the day and night)
26 *ndiphupha ngawe* (I dream about you) (X2)

27 *Ndikuthandile* (I have loved you)
28 (*Ndikuthandile*) (I have loved you)
29 ***S'thandwa*** *sam ngentliziyo yami yonke* (Babe with all my heart)
30 ***Nditsh'uthando*** *(nditsh'uthando)* (I mean the love)
31 *Endinalo* (that I have)
32 *Soze luphele* (Will never end)

Song 2: Amagama by Nathi Mankayi

1 ***Makuded' ubumnyama kuvel' ukukhanya e'ndleleni*** *zam* (Let the dark give way to light on my paths)

2 *Ndiyayazi ilizwi* ***lendod' engenamali*** *alivakali* (I know the voice of a man without money is very silent)
3 *Ndiyakuthanda ntombazana* (I love you girl)
4 *Ndiyakuthanda manyan nyani* (I really love you)
5 *Andazi ndenze kanjani* (I don't know what to do)

6 *Ndiyakuthanda ntombazana* (I love you girl)
7 *Mna ndiyakuthanda manyan nyani* (I really love you)
8 *Andazi ndenze kanjani* (I don't know what I should do)

9 *Ngamagama*, oh (They are words, oh)
10 *Ndiphelelwa ngamagama, hayi* (I have run out of words, no)
11 *Ndiyakuthanda ntombazana* (I love you girl)
12 ***Ndiyakthanda*** *manyan nyani* (I really love you)
13 *Andazi ndenze kanjani* (I don't know what I should do)

14 *Ndiyakuthanda ntombazana* (I love you girl)
15 *Mna* ***ndiyakthanda*** *manyan nyani* (I really, really love you)
16 *Andazi ndenze kanjani* (I don't know what to do)
17 *Ndiyakuthanda ntombazana* (I love you girl)
18 *Mna ndiyakuthanda manyani nyani* (I really, really love you)
19 *Ndiphelelwa ngamagama, hayi* (I have run out of words, no) (x4)
20 *Amagama, amagama, amagama* (Words, words, words) (x3)

21 *Usistofu sam samalahle* ***esind'khusel' ezingqeleni*** *zobusika* (You are my coal heater, that protects me from cold winters)
22 *Usisambulela sam* ***selang' esindikhusel' emalangen' asehlotyeni*** (You are my umbrella that protects me from the summer suns)

23 *Uligungqu lam letshokolethi, limnandi njengeTofoluks* (You are my chocolate sweet, as tasty as Toff-o-luxe)
24 *Andazi ndenze njani* (I don't know how I should do it)
25 ***Ndifun' amagama*** *anenyani* (I want honest words)
26 ***Ndifun' amagam' anencasa*** (I want tasty words)
27 ***Ndifun' amagama*** *anothando* (I want words of love)
28 ***Ndifun' amagama*** *anamandla* (I want powerful words)
29 ***Ndifun' amagama*** *anothando* (I want words of love)
30 ***'Smakad' uzokukhusela*** *phakathi kwezaqhwithela* (Strong one you will protect [me] from obstacles)
31 *Phakathi kwezaphuselane* (Amongst immature young men)

32 *Ngqu mhakho ndiyakuthanda mna* (I pledge I love you)
33 *Ngqu mhakho uyandichaza mna* (I pledge, you complete me)
34 *Ngqu mhakho ndiyakuthanda mna* (I pledge I love you)

35 *Amagama, amagama*, (Words, words)
36 *Ndiphelelwa ngamagama* (I have run out of words)(x8)
37 *Amagama, amagama, amagama* (Words, words, words)
38 *Ndiphelelwa ngamagama* (I have run out of words) (x4)

40 ***Amagam' anenyani*** (Real words)
41 ***Amagam' anencasa*** (Words with taste)
42 *Ndiphelelwa ngamagama* (I have run out of words)
43

1.7 SLL1102S Course Outline and Screenshot of course page

Course Description

SLL1102S XHOSA COMMUNICATION 1B is a Xhosa course designed to teach students basic Xhosa vocabulary and grammar as well as to help them continue to develop the communication skills they developed in SLL1101F XHOSA COMMUNICATION IA.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

Conduct simple conversations in basic

Xhosa Ask and answer simple questions

in basic Xhosa Work with the grammar

of the language

Translate simple sentences from English into Xhosa and vice

versa Course Expectations

You can expect your lecturer/s to:

Engage with you in lectures about the course material on Amathuba

Lead you through the building blocks of the language in a systematic and friendly manner

Respond to your questions about the language via email and in lectures

We can expect you to:

Read the course material for the week on

Amathuba Attend your weekly tutorial

Do all the activities on Amathuba and check your answers against the

memos Attend lectures (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday)

Attempt to complete non-compulsory vocabulary quizzes and practice quizzes on Amathuba

Complete compulsory online quizzes

Your tutor can expect you to:

Prepare for the tutorial by going to lectures and working through the course

material Go through the weekly tutorial worksheet before the tutorial

Learn the vocabulary for the week and prepare sentences using the new

words Listen to spoken Xhosa and try to speak simple sentences yourself

You can expect your tutor to:

Engage with you using simple Xhosa sentences and

phrases Check that you understood the work on the

tutorial worksheet Answer questions relating to work

covered in lectures

Help with any queries re tutorial worksheet

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance at tutorials is compulsory. A tutorial register will be taken and your attendance recorded on Gradebook. You are expected to attend at least 80% of all tutorials. If you arrive later than 10 minutes after the tutorial has started you will be marked absent.

Missed online quiz: if you miss a quiz you will be scored 0%

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism: if there is evidence that you cheated while doing the online quiz you will be subject to a University disciplinary procedure

Sick notes/Excuse notes: must be handed in no later than 48 hours after the missed quiz or tutorial. Email these notes to our administrator, Ms Liziwe Futuse, at: liziwe.futuse@uct.ac.za

Course Schedule

Please note: Compulsory Assessment Quizzes will always cover the work completed in the previous weeks. Assessment Quizzes are compulsory.

Vocab Quizzes on Amathuba are optional but we strongly recommend you do them.

Tutorials sheets are also available on Amathuba. Please download and try to do them before your tutorial.

Week 11-13 will be used for exam revision.

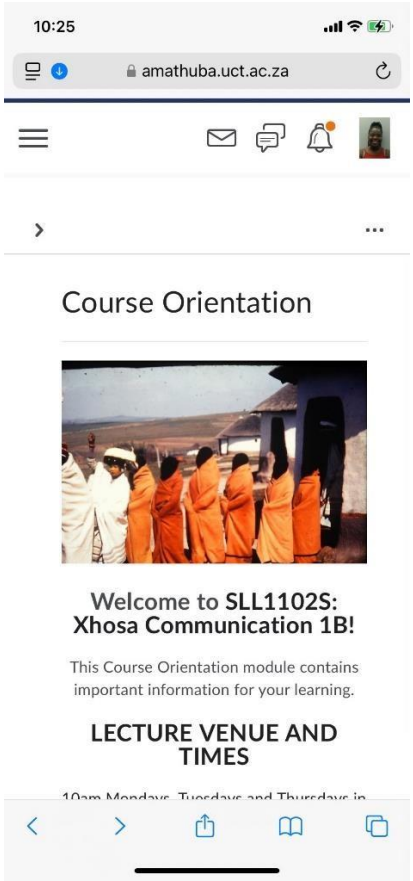
Week	Topic	Activities and Quizzes
1 (22nd July)	Asking "How many?"	Exercises, Vocab Quiz 1, Tut 00
2 (29th July)	Asking "How many?"	**Assessment Quiz 1: Amathuba (2nd Aug)** Tut 01
3 (5th Aug)	Using adjectives	Exercises, Vocab Quiz 2,Tut 02
4 (12th Aug)	Using adjectives	**Assessment Quiz 2: Amathuba (16th Aug)** Tut 03
5 (19th Aug)	Using Descriptive Copulatives (Is/am/are + adjectives, e.g. She **is** tall)	Exercises, Vocab Quiz 3, Tut 04
6 (26th Aug)	Using Descriptive Copulatives (Is/am/are + adjectives, e.g. She **is** tall)	**Assessment Quiz 3: Amathuba (30th Aug)** Tut 05

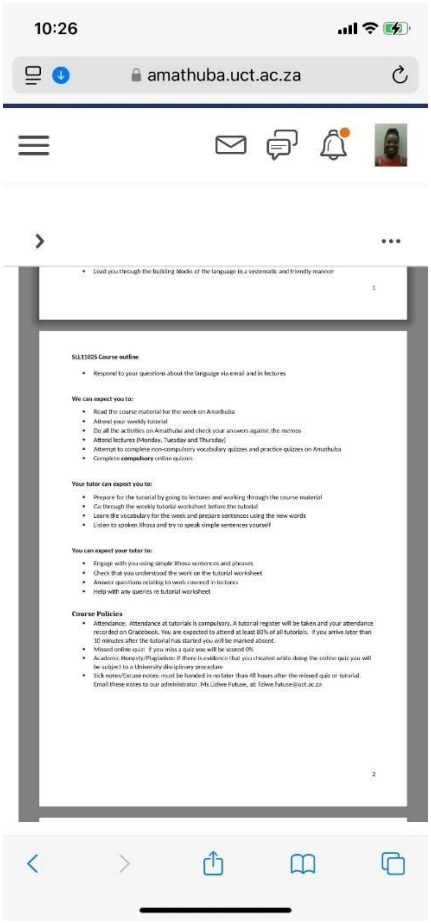
7 (9th Sept)	Talking about age, asking for numbers, the Remote Past Tense	Exercises, Vocab Quiz 4, Tut 06
8 (16th Sept)	Talking about age, asking for numbers, the Remote Past Tense	**Assessment Quiz 4: Amathuba (20th Sept)** Tut 07

9 (23rd Sept)	Possessive pronouns	Exercises, Vocab Quiz 5, Tut 08
10 (30th Sept)	Possessive pronouns	**Assessment Quiz 5: Amathuba (4 th Oct)**
11 (7th Oct)	REVISION	Revision exercises
12 (14th Oct)	REVISION	**Assessment Quiz 6: Amathuba (18th Oct)**

Grading

Each online quiz counts 5.83% (5.83 x 6 quizzes = 35%) Oral exam counts 15%; Final written exam counts 50%

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amathuba.uct.ac.za
• Lead you through the building blocks of the language in a systematic and friendly manner
1
SLL1502S Course outline
• Respond to your questions about the language via email and in lectures
We can expect you to:
• Read the course material for the week on Amathuba
• Attend your weekly tutorial
• Do all the activities on Amathuba and check your answers against the memos
• Attend lectures (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday)
• Attempt to complete non-compulsory vocabulary quizzes and practice quizzes on Amathuba
• Complete compulsory online quizzes
Your tutor can expect you to:
• Prepare for the tutorial by going to lectures and working through the course material
• Go through the weekly tutorial worksheet before the tutorial
• Learn the vocabulary for the week and prepare sentences using the new words
• Listen to spoken Xhosa and try to speak simple sentences yourself
You can expect your tutor to:
• Engage with you using simple Xhosa sentences and phrases
• Check that you understood the work on the tutorial worksheet
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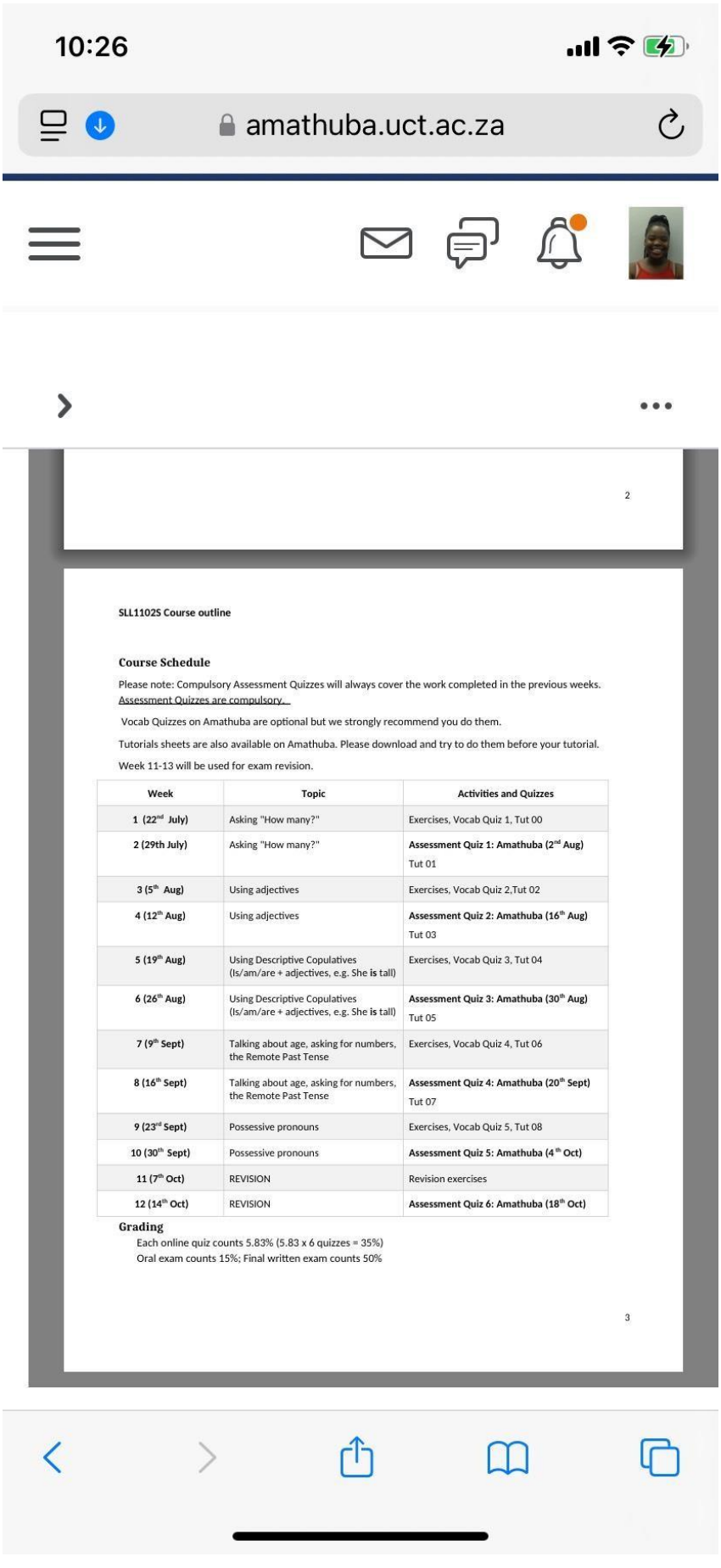

SLL1102S Course outline

Course Schedule

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