

**Discourses of language acquisition and identity in
the life histories of four white South African men,
fluent in isiXhosa**

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Thesis Presented for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Department of Education

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

February 2012

Revised, June 2012

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Abstract

Discourses of language acquisition and identity in the life histories of four white South African men, fluent in isiXhosa

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A post-structuralist framework (Foucault, 1976; Weedon, 1997) is used to explore language acquisition and identity construction in the life histories of four multilingual white South African men, who became fluent in the African language of isiXhosa in the racially-divided world of Apartheid South Africa, at a time when law and policy made fluency in an African language unusual for whites. Theories used within the 'social turn' in Second Language Acquisition (Block, 2003; Norton, 2000), as well as the social learning theory of Lave and Wenger (1991), support an exploration of how the men acquired this language on the farms in the Eastern Cape where they spent their early years. The identity implications of the men's multilingualism are examined using post-colonial studies of race, 'whiteness' and hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Frankenberg, 1993; Hall, 1992a).

The study was undertaken using Life History methodology (Hatch & Wisniewsky, 1995) and biographic interviewing methods developed within the Social Sciences (Wengraf, 2001). Post-structuralist discourse analysis (Wetherell & Potter, 1992), together with aspects of narrative analysis (Brockmeier, 2000), were used to analyse the data. The study makes a contribution to research into naturalistic language acquisition, using theories from the 'social turn', and analysing a bilingual context in which language, power, race and identity interact in unique ways. The findings endorse the importance of a post-structuralist framing for the Communities of Practice model (Wenger, 1998), and show that participation in target-language communities requires investment by learners in identities which ameliorate the inequities of power relations. The study shows that isiXhosa can become linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) for white South Africans, depending on context and the isiXhosa register they use. It demonstrates that Apartheid discourse ascribes to the men an identity which is indisputably white, but that early experiences shared with isiXhosa-speakers shape their lives and form a potentially antihegemonic facet of their identities.

Acknowledgements

In thanking those who have made this PhD dissertation possible, I start with those who were my 'co-authors'. To 'George', 'Riaan', 'Brendon' and 'Ernie', it is difficult to thank you enough, for the time you gave to my project and the generosity and openness with which you shared your stories. I hope that you will forgive my audacity in analysing them as I have; it's a sensitive matter to analyse someone else's story, especially when topics such as language and race, so closely linked in South Africa, are in focus. My analysis probably says more about me than it does about you. I will always remember with great pleasure the time spent with you, and wish you all the best. Thank you so much; without you, there would be no thesis. To Carolyn McKinney, my supervisor, you have guided me so skilfully in the direction of appropriate theories and readings, encouraged me and been excited about my data, given me just the right amount of support, always required a high standard of me, and been a good friend. I owe you so much, and have learned a great deal from you.

Going further back, my friend Sarah Murray, my first mentor in the SLA field, gave me early encouragement in this research, and referred me to Carolyn as a supervisor. My thanks go to her and also to TALK, a project in some ways inspired by Sarah. Thanks especially to Jabu, Judy and Vusi, with whom I shared the language learning experiences which gave rise to this research. Thanks to the staff and post-graduate students of the Applied English Language Studies Department at the University of the Witwatersrand for their support and encouragement, to Jeff Peires, who was always willing to share with me his wealth of knowledge about Eastern Cape history, and to John Allwood, for friendship and Appendix 10. My colleagues from the Faculty of Education at Fort Hare deserve very special mention. Our Dean, Xoliswa Mtose, gave me much encouragement, and Mmeli Macanda, Pinkie Mdaka, Ali Kganedi, Colleen Shaughnessy, Zelda Vye and others willingly helped carry my load when I was on study leave. Thanks to Lorraine Lawrence, my editor, for friendship and her loving attention to detail. To other supportive friends, too many to mention, thank you so much.

Most of all, love and thanks to my dearest husband, Hannes, whose patience and encouragement have buttressed all my efforts, and who pushed me to make extra sacrifices to finish it off, thus bringing his sacrifices to an end!

Abbreviations

ANC African National Congress

BNIM Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method

CoP Community of Practice

IIO Input-Interaction-Output (a model of Second Language Acquisition)

FIFA Federation Internationale de Football Association

LAMP Language Acquisition Made Practical

LFE Lingua Franca English

LS Language Socialization

PAC Pan African Congress

SADF South African Defence Force

SCT Sociocultural Theory

SLA Second Language Acquisition

TALK Transfer of African Language Knowledge

TB Tuberculosis

TESOL Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

UDF United Democratic Front

UFS University of the Free State

USA United States of America

ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

Introduction

This study explores discourses on language acquisition and identity in the life histories of four 'white'¹ bilingual² men, fluent in the African language of isiXhosa, as well as in English and Afrikaans, the official languages of South Africa during Apartheid. The men were born and brought up in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa (see Map 1, p. 14), and still live and work in the region. This first chapter presents the aims and research questions which are explored in the research, and presents a rationale for the study. It argues that on farms in the province, relationships of some intimacy link people across the sharp racial³ and power divides characteristic of colonial and Apartheid South Africa, enabling language competencies unusual among white South Africans to develop. This makes the men's context a unique and highly generative one for studies of language acquisition and post-colonial identities. The chapter also gives some background to my interest in the questions which drive the study, and describes in some detail relevant aspects of the socio-historical context of the participants.

Autobiography of the question⁴

The roots of this study lie in my own quest, particularly during the Apartheid era and the early days of the post-1994 democracy, to learn an African language, in an attempt to close the gap between my experience as a white South African and the world of experience of my fellow-citizens who speak African languages.

This quest reached its peak in 1989, during my stay in Johannesburg, when I established an organization called TALK (Transfer of African Language Knowledge). For six or seven years I used the approach to language learning it promoted⁵ to begin learning Setswana⁶, later trying to

¹ While I insert quotation marks round the word 'whiteness' to refer to 'whiteness' studies, I do not use quotes around the words 'race', 'white' or 'black'.

² I use the word 'bilingual' interchangeably with the word 'multilingual'.

³ I use the word 'race', without quotation marks (see footnote 1), to refer to a social construction which is nevertheless a powerful category of social organization in SA with very real material effects.

⁴ This phrase was first used by Miller (1995), who asks students to think about the 'autobiography of their question' – their personal reasons for undertaking the research – as a way in to a research project.

⁵ The approach, applicable to the learning of any language, was derived from the missionary language learning approach presented in the book *Language Acquisition Made Practical (LAMP)*, (Brewster & Brewster, 1976).

⁶ Setswana is one of the three South African Bantu languages falling into the Sotho group of languages. IsiZulu and isiXhosa both fall into the Nguni group of Bantu languages, and are closely related to each other.

move towards fluency in isiZulu, a language I had tried to learn, in different ways and at different times, since my under-graduate days. TALK promoted the learning of African languages through interaction with mother-tongue speakers, using a method based on the work of Larson & Smalley (1972), and suggesting Schumann's Acculturation theory (1978), an approach which in some ways foreshadows current approaches to language acquisition and learning through participation which emphasize the importance of access to conversations (e.g. Norton, 2000) and engagement in a community (e.g. Wenger, 1998). The TALK organization saw language learning as a path to reconciliation between black and white South Africans, and a way of building, among language learners and language 'helpers'⁷, a more inclusive South African identity.

Schumann's theories suggest that in order to learn a language, one has to become part of the 'culture'⁸ of that language, thus becoming bi-cultural as well as bilingual. A number of TALK's learners (including myself) found the process of learning language and 'culture' from the speakers quite a life-changing experience: one which shifted attitudes, even paradigms. Some also found it almost impossibly challenging, given the nature of South African society, at that time just starting to move out of the Apartheid structures. It set up considerable tension and ambivalence, being an exciting and personal process which often pulled in the opposite direction from the demands of personal and working life.

As I followed the process, I began to feel that nothing short of total immersion in an isiZulu-speaking community, over quite a considerable period, was going to result in fluency for me, in spite of the fact that my commitment was considerable, that I had a fairly strong background in the grammatical structures of the language (isiZulu), and had spent much of my working life involved with African people in educational institutions and projects. This kind of immersion was for me, in the end, too much to ask. 'Reality', in the form of marriage⁹ and the need to earn a living, won out over my quest for fluency in an African language.

⁷ In TALK courses, each learner had a partner, known as a 'language helper', who was their primary language informant, this relationship ideally leading to wider contacts in the target language community. The course showed the pairs how to work together so that the learner could learn the language and culture.

⁸ I am aware that the term 'culture' is open to a number of interpretations and that the relationship between language and 'culture' is a very complex one. Both language and 'culture' adapt and change in new contexts, cultural identity is not always dependent on language for its continuity (Canagarajah, forthcoming), and one language (e.g. English) can carry a variety of 'cultures.'

⁹ I married at the age of 51, in early 1998.

Moving to the Eastern Cape in the late 1990s to take up a post at the University of Fort Hare, I was struck by the number of white people whom I overheard speaking what I termed 'fluent' isiXhosa. I was not in a position to judge how fluent they were, but, as I had recently put a lot of energy into my own language learning, I was impressed - by their accents, by their ease with the language, and by the fact that they appeared to be addressing people in respectful and culturally sensitive ways. I assumed that most of them must have learned the language in childhood and found myself asking questions about how this acquisition took place, and about their levels of fluency and 'bi-culturalism'. I wondered whether their bilingualism set up tension and ambivalence in their lives, and how it affected their sense of identity and the way they related to the isiXhosa-speaking people around them.

Later, another question arose. I had encountered a perception that farmers who spoke the languages of their workers were often racist, and that they made false assumptions and assertions about how much they knew about 'the natives'¹⁰. I was curious about this. How could this be, when our assumption in TALK had been that learning a language was a route out of racist views and practices to better understanding?

As these questions were of great interest to me personally, and I thought that answers to them could throw light on issues of language acquisition for white South Africans like me who wanted to learn an African language, and also on the building of a more inclusive South African identity, I decided to carry out research into them. Now that I have gained insight into the significant and complex relationship between identity and language acquisition, highlighted by recent research literature, I realise that this research also offered me a way of pursuing a sense of coherence within my own identity, which I experienced as multiple and conflicting.

Before looking more explicitly at the aims and rationale of the research, I look back in history for more detail on the participants' socio-historical background and context.

Socio-historical context¹¹

The research is based on the life histories of four bilingual men who grew up on farms in the Eastern Cape (see Map 1, below) during Apartheid, and are now adults in the democratic

¹⁰ A commonly used way of referring to black people, especially in the first half of the 20th century, this term is seen as pejorative.

¹¹ A time-line of the events of Eastern Cape history can be found in Appendix 1.

dispensation which began in 1994. The oldest, like me, was born around the time that the National Party took power in 1948, while the other three were born in the 1960s, when the implementation of the Apartheid policy was getting into its stride (See Appendix 2).

Map 1: Eastern Cape, South Africa, present day



Map drawn by E.K. Botha (2012).

In setting out the socio-historical context of these stories, I draw on seminal works on the History of the Eastern Cape (Crampton, 2004; Mostert, 1992; Peires, 1981: 1989) and South Africa (Giliomee, 2003; Sparks, 1991; Terreblanche, 2002), augmenting these with more specific information from other sources. I also draw on novels and biographical works (Brodrick, 2009; Gregory, with Graham, 2005; Johnson, 2006; Poland, 1993; Thomas, 2007) which give further detail about the history and insight into atmosphere and mood. They also give personal and emotional responses to the times, often by multilingual white people. I do not go into detail about the more recent Apartheid history, which is well known, but go back to the time of the first settlers in the Eastern Cape, who were initially all farmers. I look at the history of the

groups of settlers from whom the men are descended, the groups of indigenous people with whom the settlers interacted, and the background to inter-group relations in the area. This means looking at the wars and power struggles in which the participants' forebears participated, at patterns of land occupation and possession, and at labour relations and conditions on farms. Significantly too, in terms of the research, it means looking at language issues and multilingualism in the region, historically and in the present.

AmaXhosa

At the time when the European 'voyages of discovery' were rounding the tip of Africa, a number of tribes of the Nguni group lived on its South Eastern seaboard (Crampton, 2004; Peires, 1981). They grew some crops, but cattle formed the social, spiritual and economic basis of their society. Around the 16th century¹², a number of fairly diverse groups and fragmentary clans united around a charismatic chief called Tshawe, and became known as the *amaXhosa* (Peires, 1981, pp. 15ff.). Descendants of Tshawe's adherents still live in the Eastern Cape, (and in many urban areas, especially around Cape Town), but the term 'Xhosa'¹³ is now often used to refer loosely to all the groups coming from the Eastern Cape region who speak a language related to *isiXhosa*, an Nguni dialect which was written down by missionaries in the 19th century, thus becoming 'standard' *isiXhosa*.

In the 18th century, a struggle over succession resulted in the division of the *amaXhosa* into two, one half (the *amaGcaleka*) settling North East of the Kei River, the other, (the *amaRharhabe*) settling South West of the Kei (see Map 2, overleaf). Some clans moved across the Fish River, into what become known as the *Zuurveld* (sour grassland), and beyond (Peires, 1981, p. 56). The territory of the *amaRharhabe* (Ngqika and his regent Ndlambe)¹⁴, between the Kei and the Fish

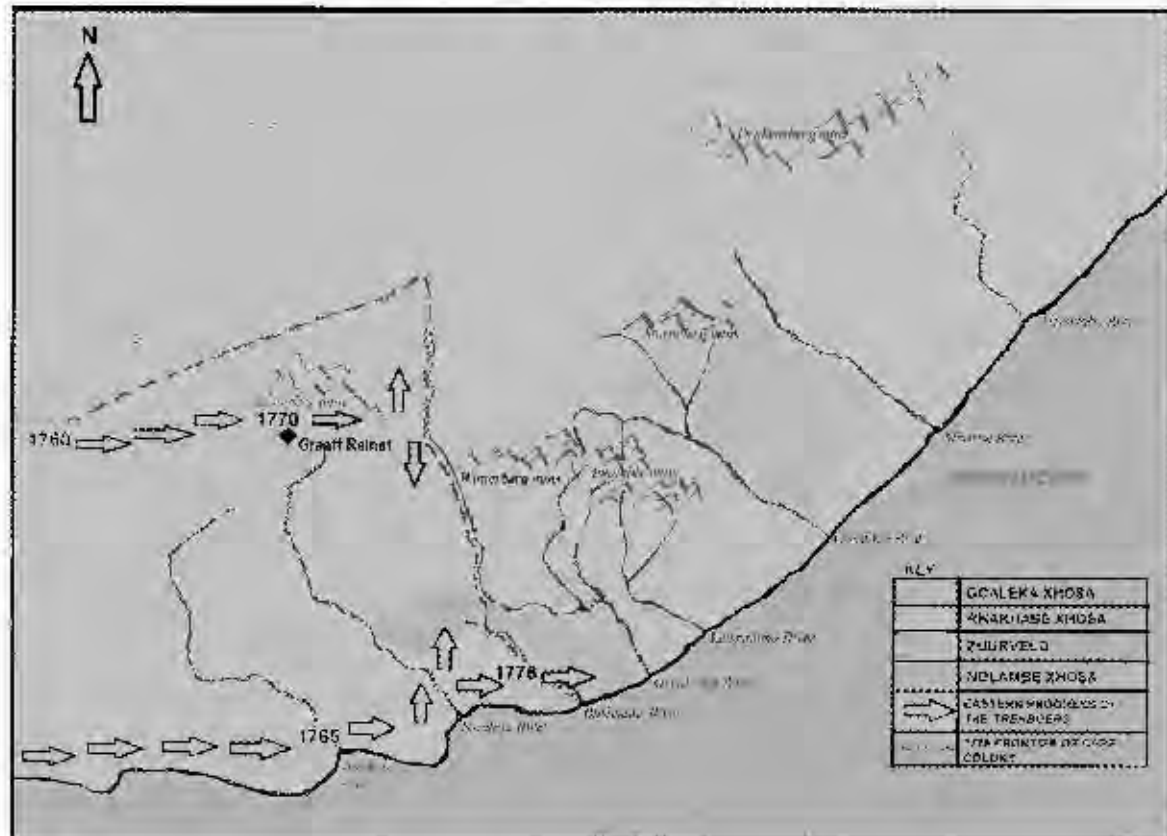
¹² Peires maintains that 'The story of Tshawe cannot be dated' (1981, p. 17), although attempts have been made to do this.

¹³ The word *Xhosa* is a stem, to which various prefixes are added (*umXhosa*: Xhosa person; *amaXhosa*: Xhosa people; *isiXhosa*: Xhosa language). When speaking English, the stem is often used loosely to refer to either a person/people or the language. When speaking *isiXhosa*, the term never appears without a prefix. In this dissertation, there are times when the term *Xhosa* is used (as in common English usage) without a prefix, although when the language is referred to (except in quotations), the word *isiXhosa* is always used.

¹⁴ The son of Gcaleka was Hintsá; the son of Hintsá Sarhili. The chiefs of this Eastern branch were always acknowledged as paramount chiefs of all the *amaXhosa*. The son of Rharhabe was Ngqika, who competed for power with his regent, Ndlambe. Ngqika's successor was Sandile, whose brother Maqoma also wielded much power.

rivers and further South West, was to become a cauldron of war as settlers of European origin moved into the area, seeking land and colonial dominion over the indigenous inhabitants.

Map 2: amaXhosa and Trekboers, 18th Century



Map drawn by E.K. Botha, acknowledgements to Wilson and Thompson (1969, p. 77) and Lubke et al (1988, p. 395).

Settlers

Forebears of the four participants in this study are found in all of the main groups of early settlers to the Eastern Cape: Portuguese sailors, shipwrecked on the coast from as early as 1550 (Crampton, 2004), Dutch *trekboers* (traveling farmers), and British and German settlers.

The *trekboers* were descendants of Dutch, French and German settlers at the Cape, who moved gradually further and further from the constraints of the Dutch colonial government, seeking more grazing for their cattle. Map 2 shows that the paths taken by the *trekboers* led some eventually to areas west of the Great Fish river, some also moving into the *Zuurveld*, between the Bushman's and the Great Fish rivers (Lubke, et al, 1988, p. 395). Mostert (1992, pp. 165ff.)

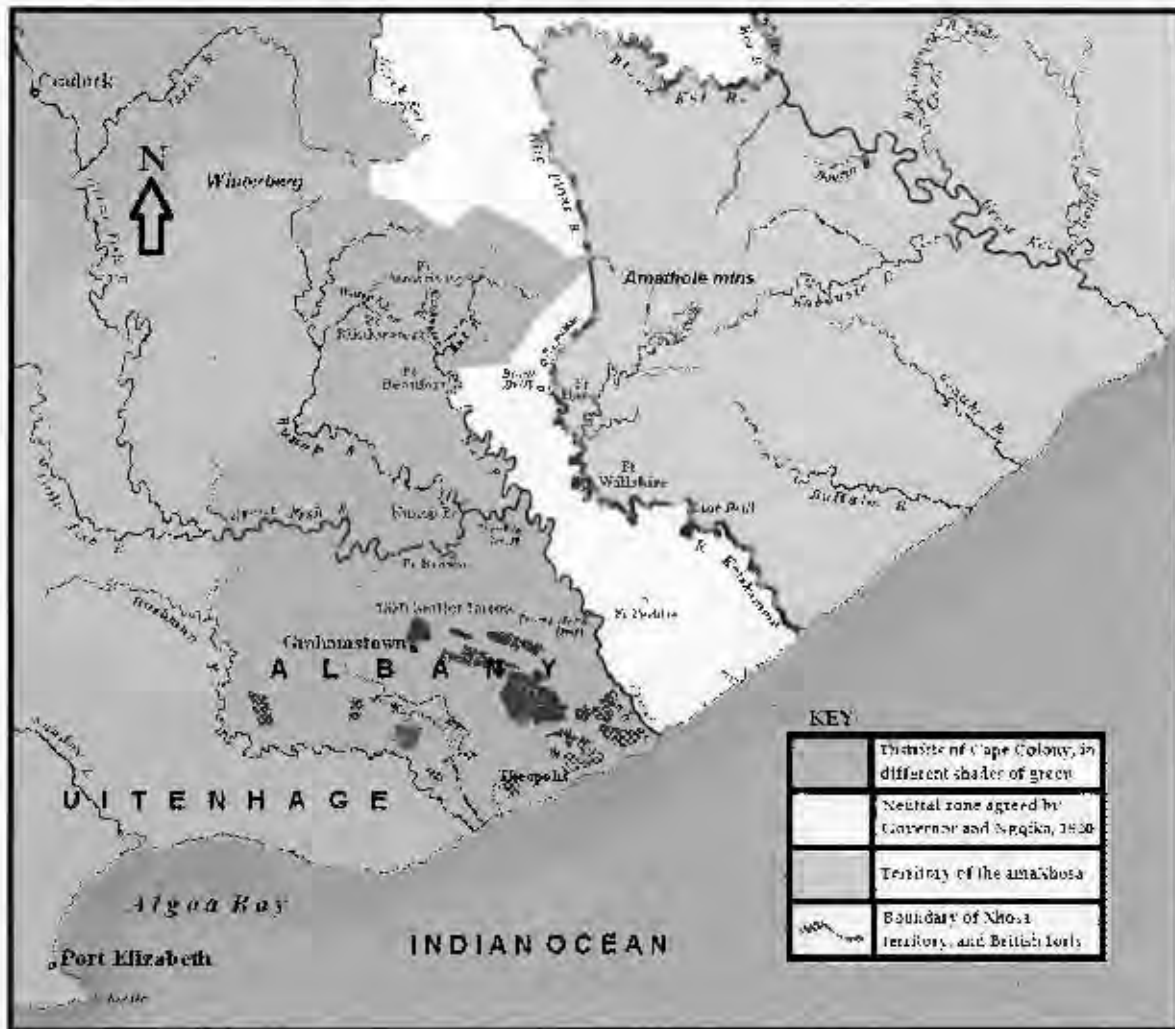
describes graphically the restless lifestyle of the physically powerful *trekboers*, removed from the cultivated lifestyle of the Cape, beholden only to themselves and God, living and dying by their guns, and dependent on the Cape only for ammunition. In the period between the late 1820s and 1845, *trekboers*, motivated by a complex of reasons, most of which were related to dislike of British domination and policies making them feel like aliens in what they regarded as their own land, moved out of the Eastern Cape in great numbers, seeking self-determination beyond the Orange River¹⁵. Particular grievances were the change from the loan farm system to freehold title, and the emancipation of slaves and granting of equality before the law to Khoi¹⁶ and amaXhosa (Terreblanche, 2002, p. 220; Giliomee, 2003, p. 144ff, 161). Some *trekboers* remained in the Eastern Cape, and their descendants still live in the region.

The British, who ruled the Cape from 1806 onwards, recruited 5 000 Britons, representative of all social strata of British life, to be settled in 1820 on farms in the *Zuurveld* area, renamed Albany (Sparks, 1991, p. 59) (see Map 3, overleaf). The purpose of this settlement, not revealed to the settlers themselves at the time, was that they form a buffer against inroads of the amaXhosa from across the Fish River, the then designated boundary of the Colony. British settlers continued to immigrate to the Eastern Cape, a number in the early days coming as missionaries, preaching the Christian gospel to the Khoi and the amaXhosa. Sparks (1991) calls the 1820 immigration scheme, which gave each settler 100 acres, 'an agricultural absurdity in the South African environment' (p. 58). After farming disasters during their first three years, including drought, blight, rust, locusts and floods, many settlers abandoned their allotments and moved to Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, to form the backbone of commercial development in South Africa. Those who remained on the land enlarged their plots by taking over the abandoned ones, and turned to cattle ranching and later sheep farming. This put them in direct competition with the amaXhosa for cattle, and constituted the beginning of commercial agriculture in South Africa. While many 1820 descendants moved far from the Eastern Cape, some still live on farms in areas where they were originally settled.

¹⁵ This movement of people became known as 'The Great Trek', and the *trekboers* who moved out known as the *Voortrekkers* (the ones who moved forward).

¹⁶ The Khoi were a nomadic pastoral people (see section on Relationships between settlers and indigenous peoples).

Map 3: British Settlers, 1820



Map adapted from Wikipedia.org (2007) by E.K. Botha (2012).

Almost 40 years after the arrival of the '1820 settlers', when eight Frontier Wars had been fought between colonial powers and the amaXhosa, and the boundary of the colony had been shifted to the Kei River, the new British Governor, Sir George Grey, settled military veterans from the British German Legion in the area stretching inland from East London (Tankard, 2009), and from 1858 onwards, recruited German peasants to augment this group and provide wives for the soldiers (See Map 4, p. 24). These settlers (about 3 400 in total), mostly poor peasant folk with no resources of their own, were given very small farms (20 acres at one pound an acre) and little government support (Schuch & Vernon, 1996; Brodrick, 2009). In spite of severe hardships, most of the German peasants persevered on the land, though some settled in town, taking up trades such as blacksmithing and wagon-making. Many became productive

agriculturalists, able to make a living for themselves, and a significant number of the descendants of the original German settlers are still farming in the area, or occupy other professional and commercial positions in the 'Border'¹⁷ area.

Relationships between settlers and indigenous peoples

The *trekboers'* progress into the hinterland from the Cape was characterized by fierce on-going battles against the San¹⁸ (hunter-gatherers), over cattle, and the Khoi (wandering pastoralists), who were sometimes their allies, or served in colonial commandos against the San. This enabled the trekboers to conquer the interior of the Cape colony (Penn, 2005; Terreblanche, 2002, p. 166). Many Khoi were attached, voluntarily or by force, to Boer families as servants, *inboekelinge* (serfs)¹⁹ (Terreblanche, 2002, p. 11), 'clients'²⁰, or even farming partners. In the early 18th century, the *trekboers* learned how to farm sheep and cattle in harsh, dry conditions from the Khoi (Terreblanche, 2002, p. 166), the Khoi learning from them the skills of shooting and horse-riding, as well as the *trekboer's* language (a form of Dutch). Khoi servants were thus often able to act as interpreters when the Dutch encountered new groups of people. *Trekboers* became notorious for their harsh treatment of Khoi servants, often similar to the way slaves were treated in the Cape colony, except that the Khoi 'violently resisted their enslavement' (Terreblanche, 2002, p. 168). Attempts to bring *trekboers* to justice for this by British authorities and philanthropists were an important cause of the Great Trek (1836). Terreblanche (2002, p. 165) describes the relationship between trekboers and Khoisan as 'changeable, dynamic and complex'. Mostert (1992) comments that conventional views of the trekboers' racial attitudes obscure the

bizarre, fundamental ambivalence that operated within trekboer society. The trekboer not only turned to Khoikhoi women for cohabiting partners, but he often raised large families by them. He was,

¹⁷ Vernon (personal email communication with S. Victor, 23 July, 2011) maintains that 'Border' was never a term used in cartography, but is a term that has been used to refer to the Frontier region since at least 1866.

¹⁸ The San and the Khoi were indigenous groups who occupied vast regions of what became the Cape colony, the San being hunter-gatherers and the Khoi wandering pastoralists. Battles with the trekboers, together with the activities of the amaXhosa, resulted in the virtual extermination of the San, and the end of the Khoi as a separate group.

¹⁹ Terreblanche (2002, p. 11) explains that Khoisan children were indentured to trekker households, and a system of compulsory or indentured labour (*inboekelingskap*), sometimes called *lyfeienskap*, or serfdom, introduced by Lord Caledon, applied to almost all Khoisan from 1809-1828.

²⁰ The clientship tradition, practiced among the Nguni and the Boers, allowed someone poor and landless to work for a patron, and build up his herd while enjoying that patron's protection. Once he could manage independently, he could leave. Trouble began when clients were forced to stay on as serfs (Peires, 1981, p. 40).

besides, wholly adaptable to Khoikhoi society, and could shift easily between his own and theirs if circumstances required (p. 175, 176).

Reports also indicate that in the areas west of the Fish where the *trekboers* settled, they soon began to live 'almost mixed together with the Kafirs²¹' (Mostert, 1992, p. 226). Most of the Boers soon became fluent in isiXhosa, the language of the people amongst whom they found themselves.

The British settlers, by contrast, had very little contact with the amaXhosa initially; they were not allowed to employ the indigenous people as labourers (Mostert, 1992, p. 541), and a series of forts had been set up along the Fish River, to prevent the amaXhosa from coming into the colony. The settlers had little idea about prior interactions between the British administration and the amaXhosa people, which had given rise to fierce anger and resentment, so for many British settlers, the Fifth Frontier War, one of their earliest close encounters with the amaXhosa, was a shocking and unexpected experience. Mostert's (1992) description of the attack on Christmas Eve, 1834, reflects the colonists' construction of the event:

'[They] saw the surrounding hillsides livid with menace, ablaze with the massed red bodies²² that suddenly gathered there, and then liquid with scarlet movement as the whistling war-cry descended: a terrible sound, chilling in its undeviating and unmistakable purpose (p. 666).

The amaXhosa overwhelmed all white settlements, killing the men, burning and destroying houses and other property, and driving off thousands of cattle. 'Their raging desire was to drive the British back into the sea' (Mostert, 1992, p. 676). This war, which 'swept away the toil of fourteen years in a matter of hours' (Butler and Benyon, 1974, p. 259) had a brutalizing effect on the British settlers. According to Sparks (1991), it '... poisoned the racial attitudes of those settlers, deepening the ambivalences they had brought with them from "home"' (p. 62). While Britons believed strongly in democracy, they also believed they were racially superior; although British evangelical humanitarians pursued a liberal agenda, the English settlers facing the challenge of survival on a war-torn frontier had no time for humanitarianism. The war set up a burning hatred between the settlers and the philanthropists of the London Missionary Society,

²¹ This term, which became extremely offensive in later times, was initially used universally to refer to the Nguni people of the Eastern Cape. It originates with Arab traders, and means 'non-believer' (in Islam).

²² In war regalia, the amaXhosa smeared their bodies with red ochre.

who promoted the cause of the indigenous peoples to the British government, resulting in equal rights legislation.

The German settlers, on the other hand, arrived on the frontier in the wake of eight Frontier Wars and the episode known as the Cattle Killing (see p. 23), all of which had left the amaXhosa hugely depleted in terms of numbers and morale. The stated aim of the then Governor George Grey's policies, unlike that of his predecessors, was to encourage the 'civilised' co-existence of black and white in the Cape Colony (Tankard, 2009). German settlers lived in close proximity to the amaXhosa and amaMfengu²³ people and they wrestled side by side with hardship and poverty. Schuch and Vernon (1996, p. 44) say, 'The early settlers learned many ways of coping with their often hostile environment from their Xhosa neighbours. The days of employing black people on the farms and in the homes only came later.' They also comment that 'many of the German children brought up in the Eastern Cape in the early days were trilingual and spoke Xhosa fluently' (Schuch and Vernon, 1996, p. 46).

Struggles for power and territory

Trekboers and the amaXhosa had very similar lifestyles and priorities and were soon in conflict over grazing land, the *trekboers* sometimes joining forces with one clan against another. The First Frontier War (1779), triggered by the shooting of a Xhosa man by a trekboer called Prinsloo, cost the boers 21,000 head of cattle (Gillomee, 2003, p. 70). The Second (1792) began with a Boer alliance with Ndlambe which aimed to expel a smaller group from the *Zuurveld*. For the *trekboers*, it led to the loss of some 50,000 head of cattle and their homes in the *Zuurveld*, almost all of which were burned down. This caused most to leave the *Zuurveld* altogether, and engage in counter-raids to recover their stock (Gillomee, 2003, p. 71).

Once the British were established in a dominant position in the Cape, they engaged in a massive military operation driving \pm 20 000 amaXhosa out of the *Zuurveld* and across the Fish River. This, the Fourth Frontier War²⁴ (1811), was a ruthless affair, involving not only killing without mercy, but seizing thousands of cattle and burning and trampling fields of ripe corn and vegetables

²³ These were groups who had been driven south from the area now called KwaZulu-Natal by the disruptions around the wars of Shaka. They had formed an alliance with the British, embracing the Christian religion, and fighting on the British side in the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Frontier Wars. In return for this, they were allocated certain tracts of land (Mostert, 1992, p. 606; pp. 719-723).

²⁴ The third was an unsuccessful affair conducted by the British in 1803, during the First British occupation of the Cape (Peires, 1981, pp. 57, 58)

(Peires, 1981, pp. 65-66). This was the beginning of a series of increasingly violent wars over territory between the British and the amaXhosa: the Fifth Frontier War (that of Nxele²⁵, 1819), the Sixth Frontier War (that of Hintsá, 1834-1835), the Seventh Frontier War (that of the Axe, 1845-1847) (Peires, 1981) and the Eighth Frontier War (that of Mlanjeni²⁶, 1850-1853) (Peires, 1989).

Peires (1981) explains that:

Total war was a new and shattering experience for the Xhosa. Wars between Xhosa chiefs or with their African and Khoi neighbours were rarely bloody... The purpose of war was not the destruction of productive resources, but their acquisition and absorption. The havoc wrought by the Colonial forces was not only cruel but incomprehensible. Instead of being subjected to the victors and incorporated into their society ... the Xhosa were rejected and expelled... (p. 74)

Each of the wars was longer, harder and more ruthless and bloody than the one before, and in each of them the settlers were conscripted to fight. After the Sixth Frontier War, many of the Boer commandos had moved out, and were no longer available to fight, but British settlers continued to be conscripted, fighting together with reinforcements brought out from Britain, while German settlers participated in the Ninth Frontier War, side by side with Mfengu and British troops, against the amaXhosa (Brodrick, 2009, pp. 308ff.). Conscription of white men has been a way of life in almost every generation since then: in 1899, for the Anglo-Boer War, in 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 for the World Wars. From 1957 onwards, white men were conscripted for ever-increasing periods, to fight on the country's borders, against 'the Communist threat', and in the 1980s these conscripts had to do duty in the urban townships of South Africa, which were aflame with resistance struggles against the Apartheid government.

While British farmers experienced setbacks as a result of the Frontier Wars, they were only temporary. The wool trade was very profitable, and the war offered prospects of new grants of land (Sparks, 1990, p. 65). The business community of Grahamstown also profited enormously from the war, a factor which probably played no small role in later fomentation of war.

The amaXhosa held out by retreating into the Waterkloof and Amathole mountains, and fighting in the Fish River bush, introducing the British to guerrilla warfare. The British responded with a

²⁵ Nxele was a 'war doctor': a diviner who had been influenced by Christian thought, but returned to traditional spirituality and led the amaXhosa in the attack on Grahamstown in 1819 (Peires, 1981, pp. 66-74).

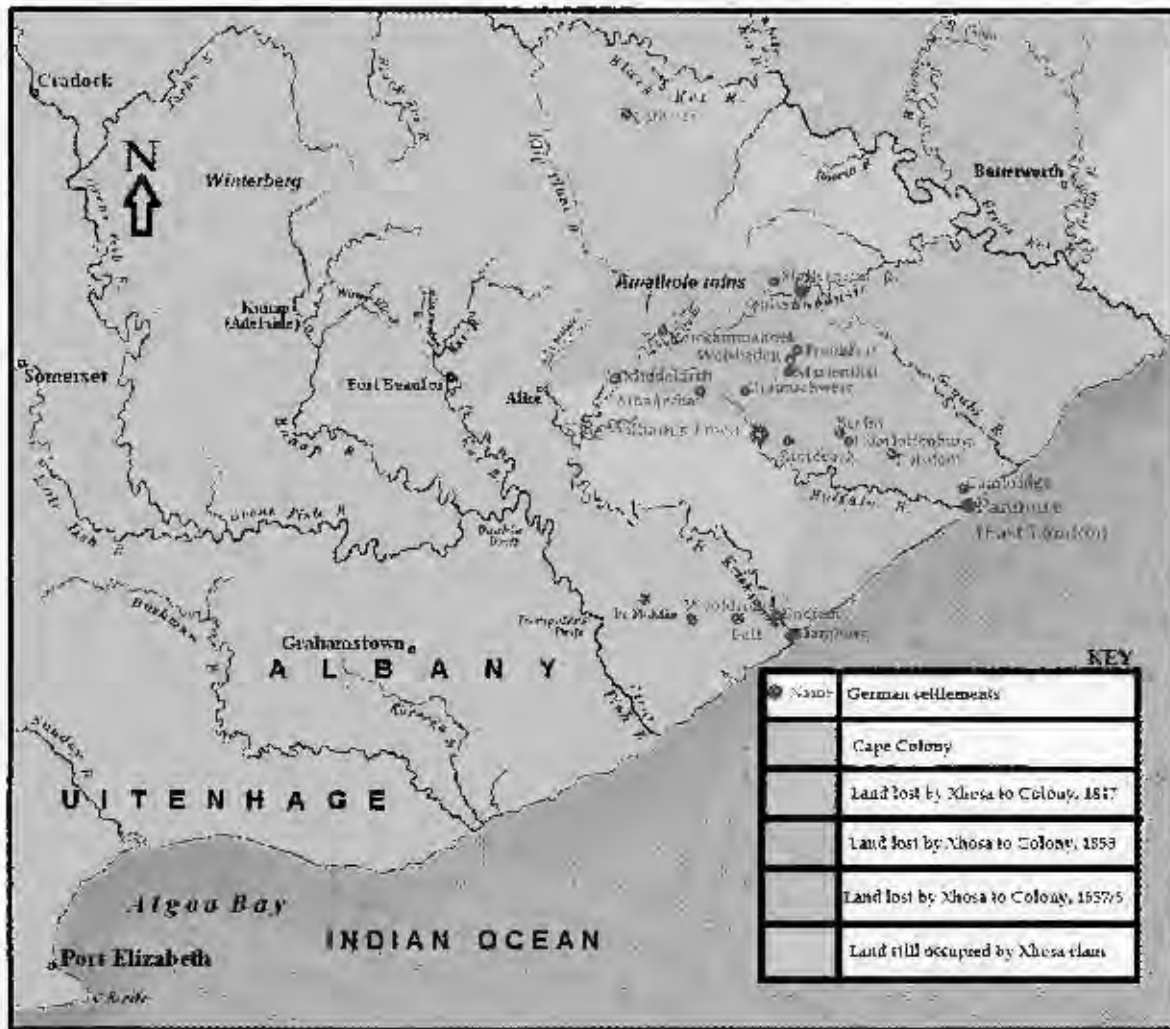
²⁶ Mlanjeni was also a diviner, who preached to the amaXhosa that they should abandon witchcraft and purify themselves so that the British could be defeated (Peires, 1989, pp. 1ff).

'scorched earth policy', burning the homes and crops of the amaXhosa so that they were eventually starved into submission. Peires, (1989), describing the War of Mlanjeni, speaks of 'the progressive dehumanization of both sides' (p. 22); 'Settler volunteers marched about with the word "extermination" written on their hats' (p. 25). Peires quotes Lakeman who 'referred to members of his volunteer corps as "brutally cruel ... killing without mercy ... young as well as old, even braining little children"' (p. 25). These experiences hardened racial attitudes on both sides.

It was estimated that 1 400 British troops and 16 000 of the amaXhosa had died by the end of the Eighth Frontier War. Deprived of cattle and land, defeated in war, their customs under threat, poverty-stricken and starving, the despairing amaXhosa turned their hopes to the supernatural (Peires, 1989). A young girl called Nongqawuse claimed to have met two strangers at the mouth of the Gxara River, who instructed the amaXhosa to kill all their cattle, to stop cultivation, to abandon witchcraft, and to build new cattle kraals and grain pits. If they did this, the dead would arise, together with new herds of cattle, and the whites, the amaMfengu and unbelievers (those who did not believe the prophecy) would be driven into the sea. Although there were conflicting views among the amaXhosa, there were vast numbers of people who obeyed the prophecy, both East and West of the Kei. Starvation and death on a massive scale followed²⁷. George Grey used this disaster to further his plans, recruiting ± 25 000 desperate Xhosa people as labourers in the colony west of the Fish River, and clearing the few remaining Xhosa people off the lands of three chiefs who had believed the prophecies, making space for the settlement of German peasants (See Map 4, below). More land was also cleared for amaMfengu people in the South West regions of the Transkei. In the Ninth and final Frontier War (1877-1878), the British, assisted by Mfengu levies and German settlers (Brodrick, 2009), killed Sandile, chief of the Rharhabe Xhosa, and finally subjugated the people of Sarhili, paramount chief of the amaXhosa, and leader of the Gcaleka Xhosa, East of the Kei (Mostert, 1992, p. 1252). This opened the way for the extension of the Cape Colony up to the border of Natal.

²⁷ Peires (1989, p. 288) reports that by 1858, the black population of British Kaffraria (West of the Kei) had dropped from 105 000 to 27 500, through death and migration, and estimates that 40 000 of the amaXhosa East of the Kei had died (Peires, 1989, p. 288).

Map 4: German settlements on land lost by amaXhosa, 1858



Map adapted from Wikipedia.org (2007) by E.K. Botha (2012), acknowledgements to Lubke, et al (1988, p. 403) and Peires (1989, p. 320).

By this time, almost all of the amaXhosa had been driven over the Kei River, making the Transkei²⁸ very congested. Most of this Transkei territory was kept as a 'Native Reserve', governed through a system of magistrates, and functioning as a labour pool (Saunders, 1974, pp. 193-194). Some areas were designated for white farming, for example, the corridor incorporating Maclear, Indwe and Elliot, initially designed to link the white areas of the Cape Colony with Natal (see Map 5, p. 29).

²⁸ The Transkei is the area North-East of the Kei River, and South of the then colony of Natal

Farm labour, white-owned agricultural land and segregation

The wars of conquest had deprived the amaXhosa of enormous tracts of land (see Map 4), and opened up most of this land for white commercial agriculture. Terreblanche (2002) explains 'the special relationship between power, land, and labour' in South Africa thus:

The colonial powers and white colonists [enriched themselves] in mainly three ways: firstly, by creating political and economic structures that put them in a privileged and entrenched position *vis-à-vis* the indigenous population groups; secondly, by depriving indigenous people of land, surface water, and cattle; and thirdly, by reducing slaves and indigenous people to different forms of unfree and exploitable labour. These three threads have run ominously through South Africa's modern history, from the mid-17th until the late 20th century (pp. 5-6).

I now explore further the way the amaXhosa were deprived of land and turned into unfree labourers on farms.

While many Boer serfs, clients and farm labourers were Khoi²⁹ (see earlier discussion), Peires (1981, pp. 118-119) indicates that Xhosa servants and 'clients' among the Boers are mentioned as early as 1777. Most of these worked voluntarily for the farmers, the men herding livestock and the women doing household and garden chores. Most served a year at a time and were paid in beads, iron and brass wire, which they could exchange for cattle back home. They suffered less abuse at the hands of the Boers than the Khoi, because it was easy for them to defect, taking Boer cattle with them. Peires (1981, pp. 118-119) asserts that the use of Xhosa labour was consistently opposed by early colonial governments, who tried repeatedly to expel all Xhosa across the Fish River. Attempts were never completely successful because of the high demand for labour in the colony. When sheep farming began to be successful among British settlers, farmers' need for labour was such that they often allowed labourers to live on the farms with their families and cattle. So 'squattening' and 'tenant farming' began. Terreblanche (2002) describes how, a few days before Ordinance 50 was passed, in 1828, granting equality before the law, and to the Khoisan "the liberty to take their labour to the best market" (p. 188), another ordinance was passed allowing Eastern Cape farmers to employ Xhosas, if they took out passes to do so. Xhosas thus became a labour force which was unfree and had to carry passes; this was to remain the case for 150 years (p. 192).

²⁹ Terreblanche (2002, p. 11) identifies this group as the second and third of eight unfree labour patterns in South Africa, the first being slaves.

George Grey's policies of 'civilised' co-existence in the second half of the 19th century meant that he supported mission schools and hospitals, and extended the equal rights policies of the Cape government into the area between the Fish and the Kei Rivers, previously under military rule. As a result, agriculture developed by leaps and bounds in this area between 1857 and 1900. Large farms in the Kei Road and Komga area (see Map 1, p. 11) were made available to English and Dutch farmers on a quit-rent system. The greater availability of land, and the work of mission schools, led to the rise of black peasant farmers, mostly mission educated, some of whom bought land, and others of whom practiced share-cropping with white farmers. By 1898 the small-scale German peasant farmers were losing ground to this rising group (Webb, 1993, pp. 70-74). While Grey's policies favoured 'blacks' who had opted for 'civilized' ways, the infamous Masters and Servants' Act, serving also as a vagrancy act, was passed in 1856. This required employees to commit to 5-year labour contracts and required labourers who deserted or broke their contract to be severely punished (Terreblanche, 2002, p. 200).

When Rhodes became Prime Minister in 1895, he brought in new policies designed to limit African agricultural land holdings in order to ensure an adequate supply of labour for the mines (Mostert, 1992, p. 1265). There followed a programme of subsidies and grants to promote the commercialization of white agriculture (Terreblanche, 2002, p. 259) as well as a series of Acts designed to protect white agriculture and labour and force 'blacks' off the land and into the labour force, culminating after union in the Land Act (1913). Wilson (1977), in his introduction to a selection from papers presented at a 1976 conference³⁰ on farm labour, cites Rich³¹, who called this Land Act the 'turning point in black-white relations on the land,' and asserted that 'it was the modernizing sectors of settler agriculture who saw the elimination of African squatting as essential to the achievement of ... capital-intensive farming' (p. 21). It was on the foundation of the Land Act that a political alliance between the white commercial farmers and the English-speaking business elite, and the 'ultra-exploitative system of racial capitalism' were built (Terreblanche, 2002, p. 261).

The Land Act evicted all black people who were living on white farms except those employed as labourers, and prohibited 'blacks' from buying land outside 'Scheduled Areas' (less than 10% of

³⁰ Conference of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU), at the University of Cape Town, in September 1976.

³¹ An unpublished contributor to the conference: Paul Rich, African farming and the 1913 Land Act.

South Africa)³². It put an end to tenant farming and sharecropping on white-owned land, resulting in the proletarianization of numerous small farmers, white and black (Terreblanche, 2002, p. 265). Black tenants and squatters had the option of handing over their stock to the farmer and accepting employment on the farm, or eviction. It also prevented farm workers from leaving their work on farms without a permit. All of this meant that farm labourers were increasingly vulnerable and disempowered, trapped on farms and dependent on the farmer for their livelihood, something which intensified during the Apartheid era.

Wilson et al (1977, pp. 11-12) cite Antrobus' research³³ which gave the average wage for a farm worker in 1976 as R128 per annum cash, which, together with rations, a bonus, clothing, medical care and housing was worth an average of R567 per annum. The poverty datum line in 1977 was R1236 per annum³⁴. Labourers worked from 11 ½ hours a day in summer to 8 hours on average in midwinter, over a 5 ½ day week. 71% of farmers built houses for their labourers; less than 10% provided toilets; 1/3 of labourer families had access to running water and 60% of farmers allowed retired workers to continue living on the farm. Plaut and Levy's research³⁵, cited by Wilson et al (1977, p. 28), showed that African children living on white farms only had access to schooling if the farmer was prompted by a 'paternalistic sense of responsibility' to start a school on his farm. 30% of African farm children had access to such primary schools in 1972, secondary schooling being virtually unattainable. Many farmers feared that educated youths would leave farms, and mistrusted schooling as a qualification for employment (Wilson et al, 1977, p. 28).

It could be argued, then, that the roots of segregation and racial capitalism in South Africa lay in the quest of white governments for white control over agricultural land and a pool of black labour for industry. The 1913 Land Act initiated a massive migration of evicted 'blacks' off the farms and to the towns; later, the Apartheid government, in implementing its 'homelands' policy, sent many of these people back to the rural areas. In the 1960s, people living in 'black

³² Later, further 'Released Areas' added slightly to this land (Bergh & Visagie, 1985, p. 65).

³³ Unpublished paper delivered at the SALDRU conference: D.G. Antrobus, Farm labour in the Eastern Cape, 1950-1973.

³⁴ A survey of earnings in the non-Agricultural sector (mostly urban areas), carried out by the Economics Division of the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut, Pretoria, in 1976, gave the following average earnings per annum (excluding earnings in kind): Whites: R5 867; Coloured (mixed race): R1895; Asiatics: R2367; African: R1269 (SAIRR, 1978, p. 206).

³⁵ Timothy Plaut, Farm schools for African and coloured children in South Africa; Brian Levy, Farm schools in South Africa, an empirical study (both unpublished papers presented at SALDRU conference)

spots' - farms or missions surrounded by white-owned land - were bought out or expropriated; tenant farmers were expelled from white farms, where full-time labour was enforced; Africans were 'endorsed out' of towns, all to be relocated to bleak resettlement areas in the middle of 'homelands'.

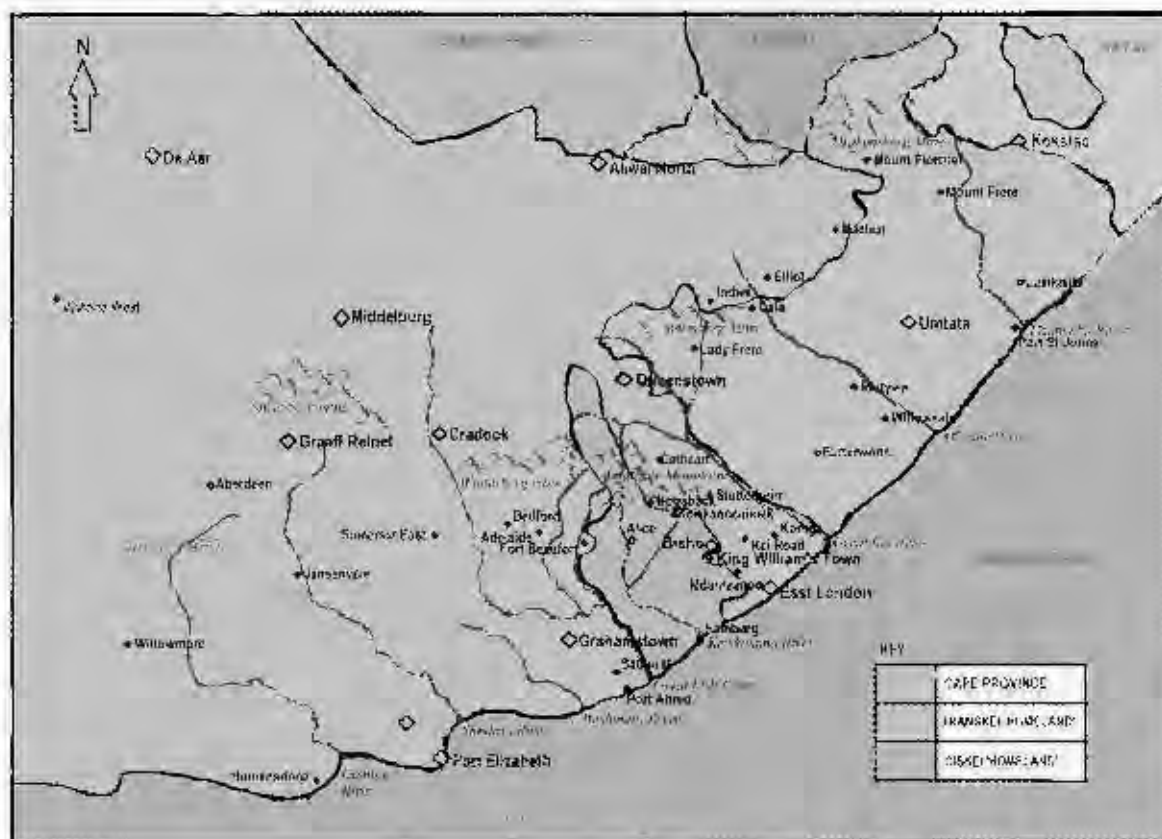
1963 saw the passing of the Self-government Act, to culminate, in 1976, in the 'independence' of the Transkei (see Map 5, overleaf), an illusory independence only recognized in South Africa. The definition of citizenship in the Transkei excluded whites and coloureds. All 'Scheduled and Released areas' were handed over to be administered by the Transkei Government and most towns were zoned black. Certain areas were retained as part of white South Africa: Port St Johns, Elliot, Maclear and Matatiele, and a white corridor between Transkei and Ciskei. Only Transkei citizens could acquire land in Transkei. This resulted, in 1967, in an exodus of whites from Transkei towns and trading stations³⁶. Many of these white families, traders, farmers and village dwellers, had a tradition of speaking isiXhosa as well as English and / or Afrikaans (Broster, 2009, pp. 432 - 439).

Tribal authorities were also established in the Ciskei³⁷ (see Map 5, overleaf), made up of some of the old tribal lands of the Rharhabe Xhosa (SAIRR, 1969, pp. 145-146). Between 1965 and 1990, nearly half a million people were 'dumped' in this labour pool (Sparks, 1991, p. 203). Plans for the 'consolidation' of the Ciskei (and the Transkei) were passed by parliament in 1975 (Bergh & Visagie, 1985, p.66). These involved the expropriation of a large number of white-owned farms, among which were many of those which had been allocated to German settlers in the mid-1800s.

³⁶ 126 trading stations were bought by the Xhosa Development Corporation in 1968 (SAIRR, 1968, p. 139.)

³⁷ Two Xhosa 'homelands' were established by the Nationalist government, mirroring the division into Rharhabe and Gcaleka houses of the amaXhosa, and reinforcing the old dividing line of the Kei River, along which a 'white corridor' divided the two 'black' territories.

Map 5: Transkei und Ciskei territories, 1980s



Map drawn by E.K. Botha (2012), acknowledgements to Bergh & Visagie (1985, pp. 68-69).

In 1987, at the time when progressive Afrikaners were initiating conversations with the ANC, a military coup in the Transkei³⁸ installed Major-General Bantu Holomisa as leader of the territory. Following a protest march on Umtata by 10 000 workers, he abolished many of the old labour laws, granted trade unions freedom to organize, lifted the state of emergency, released large numbers of political prisoners, unbanned the ANC and PAC, and allowed the armed wings of the ANC and PAC relative freedom to operate in the territory (Cherry and Bank, 1993, pp. 25-26). While levels of political violence were low within the Transkei during Holomisa's regime, there were instances of violence in nearby white farming areas, involving stock theft and arson. Some saw this as evidence of politically motivated land hunger (Cherry and Bank, 1993, p. 29).

³⁸ A similar coup took place a few years later in the Ciskei, where the new leader Dupa Gqozo initially also introduced liberal measures but later clamped down on ANC activity and let loose his troops to 'fire on an ANC invasion'.

In the new post-1994 democratic dispensation, there are no longer designated areas for race³⁹ population groups, although 'tribal lands', where land is held by the chief, who allocates plots to the people, still have the same system of land tenure. It is clear that the land question is key to the reversal of power relations. The Restitution of Land Rights Act (1994) was passed, providing for land claims based on the 'willing buyer, willing seller' principle (Henrard, 2002, p. 33). For white farmers, this has meant that their situation has become somewhat more precarious, particularly as 'subsidies and soft loans were ended [and] imports were liberalized' (Johnson, 2005, p. 226). As far as farm workers are concerned, an act has been passed which regulates the conditions and circumstances under which people may be evicted from farm land. Roodt (2007) has studied the livelihood possibilities of a group of farm workers in the Eastern Cape, showing that for these, 'the poorest and most vulnerable people in the country' (p. 8), it is difficult to negotiate the rights assured in this act without a good lawyer, and that there are a number of hidden benefits to remaining on farms, and penalties related to a move to the townships, where they would simply join the ranks of the unemployed. What this underlines is that '[t]hese laws created to protect farm dwellers were not calculated to break the power of the rural elite created by colonialism and Apartheid. They simply seek to improve the relations within the context of semi-feudal relations' (Mngqitama, 2001, p. 4). Mngqitama (2001) maintains that change in the lot of these powerless people cannot take place within a system based on the 'logic ... of the market', and that the resolution of the land question has to become 'the prerogative of the ... landless people themselves' (p. 17).

Language Issues and Multilingualism

From 1652, when a refreshment station was set up by the Dutch East India Company at the Cape, Dutch was the language of the settlement, and a form of Dutch, later to become the basis for the Afrikaans language, became the language of slaves and servants in the homes of the settlers. Khoi servants and clients who knew this language acted as interpreters when the settlers met new groups, and many of the *trekboers* became fluent in isiXhosa as they lived among the people of the Eastern Cape (Mostert, 1992).

³⁹ I use the word 'race' to refer to a social construction which is nevertheless a powerful category of social organization in SA with very real material effects.

Even during the early days of British rule, Dutch was still dominant. However, 1820 settler complaints to the British government about conditions on the frontier set in motion a commission of inquiry, one result of which was that all legislative and administrative processes, which up until then had been carried out in Dutch, began to be Anglicized (Giliomee, 2003, p. 197). By 1840, English was the only medium of instruction in schools, and a compulsory qualification for a job in the Civil Service. This was one of the causes of the *Great Trek* (1836), which took the Afrikaners out of reach of the British until the discovery of gold and diamonds, after which a similar English-oriented language policy was imposed (Sparks, 1990, p. 128).

The resentment caused by this led to an insistence by the Afrikaner Nationalist governments, post-1948, on the promotion of Afrikaans, and of 'bilingual'⁴⁰ education. Making an assumption that African people would also like to promote their own languages and use them as media of instruction, they introduced mother-tongue instruction in African schools up to the eighth year of study, after which pupils were to be taught half of their subjects through English and half through Afrikaans. This policy was perceived as a strategy for preventing African people from progressing, and the implementation of the 'half Afrikaans' medium in secondary schools was to spark the Soweto uprisings of June 1976, which spread across the country (Christie, 1991).

In white schools during colonial and Apartheid times, the learning of African languages as additional languages was not promoted, even in areas such as the Eastern Cape, where isiXhosa was so widely spoken⁴¹. Since the government's aim was segregation of black and white in every possible way, it was not seen as useful for white people to know an African language. In some Eastern Cape schools, isiXhosa was taught as a third language, usually only for a short period, and mostly at primary level.

It is clear, however, that white farmers, traders, and people who lived in rural villages in the Eastern Cape, in contrast with the vast majority of the white population, often developed familiarity with and even fluency in isiXhosa. For missionaries, it was a priority, and they wrote the language down and translated the Bible and other devotional books into the language. The children of missionaries often became government agents and magistrates, interacting on a day to day basis with speakers of isiXhosa around administrative and legal issues (Broster, 2009, p.

⁴⁰ At that time, the term 'bilingual' in South Africa referred to bilingualism in English and Afrikaans.

⁴¹ According to the 2001 Census, 83.4% of people in the Eastern Cape are isiXhosa-speaking (South Africa.info, 2011)

427). Kaschula (1989, p. 100) refers to this as “an age-old communicative process which began to develop in the early eighteen hundreds.” He maintains that this process became more widespread after the Cattle Killing, when many destitute amaXhosa people sought work on white farms in the colony. This process has continued until the present day in some environments, the tradition of speaking isiXhosa often being passed down from white parents to their children (Botha, 2007, pp. 6-7).

In the democratic dispensation, South Africa has eleven official languages (English, Afrikaans, and nine indigenous African languages), and the policy for schools is one of additive multilingualism (S.A. Government, 1997). This policy is more symbolic than practical, however. In practice, English is becoming more dominant in every sphere of life, influenced by global and technological trends, and most parents aspire to send their children to a previously white, English-medium school, where there is seldom any teaching of an African language beyond the ‘second additional language’⁴² level. Black and white children have the opportunity to develop friendships at these schools, and little is known about how much learning of African languages by white children takes place within such friendships. However, English appears to be the language of choice and of status in most multilingual situations.

Prominent white Eastern Cape multilinguals, in history and literature

It seems obvious that, in a situation where many people did not understand one another’s languages, communication must have been a problem, and there are hints in historical accounts that this was indeed the case. Mostert (1992) says of a meeting between Somerset, Governor of the Cape and the chief Ngqika which took place in 1819:

At the meeting Somerset spoke in English to Stockenstrom and he, in turn, spoke in Dutch to a third interpreter, a man of mixed slave-Xhosa ancestry known as Hermanus Matroos... Stockenstrom was brought up in Graaff Reinet but, unlike [the] frontier Boers ..., he did not speak Xhosa; from that time to the late twentieth century, no leading white political figure⁴³ in South Africa ever did! In spite of his central role in the proceedings, Stockenstrom was to remain confused about what finally passed to Ngqika when he was told to surrender his territory (p. 507).

⁴² Languages are taught at three levels: Home language (assumption that the learner comes to school familiar with the language); first additional language (assumption that the learner does not know the language when entering school, but probably needs it as a Medium of Instruction later on); Second Additional Language: The aim of teaching here is basic communicative competence, and the assumption is that the learner does not know the language before coming to school.

⁴³ Mostert clearly did not regard Charles Brownlee (see p.34) as a ‘leading white political figure’.

In the early days, *trekboers* and people of mixed ancestry (see above) often acted as interpreters. This section takes a brief look at the lives of some white bilinguals and 'language brokers' in history and literature.

In 1803, when the Dutch were governing the Cape, Governor Jansens visited the frontier in an attempt to understand the situation. His group met chiefs in the Zuurveld, and across the Fish River. The *trekboer* Coenraad de Buys acted as interpreter at his meeting with Ngqika. Mostert (1992) describes de Buys' role at this meeting thus:

On this occasion de Buys could afford to be proud of his unique position. He held them all in his hands. He was the only one there with complete idiomatic fluency in both Xhosa and Dutch, a master of the subtleties of each, and, as important, he understood the objectives, fears and confusions of both sides as no one else probably could. The Dutch needed him for this job of interpretation but ... got very little out of him about his relations with the Xhosa; and, as de Buys well understood, once this job was done, like all previous Cape governments, they wanted to see him removed from Xhosaland (p. 331).

Mostert (1992, p. 238) gives some detail about de Buys, a legend in his own time. He had a harem of wives and concubines, none of them white, one of his wives being the mother of Ngqika, who was huge in physical frame as well as political influence. Another was of mixed blood, Boer and Khoi⁴⁴, and a third a member of the Thembu tribe. De Buys' progeny formed an extensive racially-mixed clan.

De Buys played many and varied roles on the frontier. In early years, he conducted raids across the Fish River and seized Xhosa cattle, treating with ruthless cruelty those who retaliated. He lived for a considerable time in Ngqika's kraal, where he acted as adviser and confidante to the young king at the beginning of his reign. He was, in many ways, the ultimate Afrikaner *trekboer*: physically massive and tough; adapted to the local life and the frontier environment; individualistic and rebellious against all authority. In the 1820s, as racial attitudes hardened, and society in the Eastern Cape became intolerant of his 'cunning, sly, brutal and ambiguous' ways (Mostert, 1991, p. 239), he trekked with his clan towards the northern Transvaal. It is not known how he died, but his many descendants, known as the *Buysvolk* (the Buys nation) still live there on farms to this day.

⁴⁴ A person of mixed Boer and Khoi ancestry was known as a 'bastaard' at the time.

de Buys and characters in *Shades* and *The Native Commissioner*. While the lives of my participants have not achieved the prominence of these historical figures, traces of the same influences and trends can be detected in their stories.

I will now focus on the aims of my research, as well as its significance.

Research aims and research questions

My aim in carrying out the research is to explore how four white men, all of whom are fluent in isiXhosa as well as English and Afrikaans, learned, or acquired, isiXhosa, how they construct their identities, and how their identity construction relates to and interacts with their acquisition and knowledge of isiXhosa. I do this through an analysis of the discourses in their life histories.

My research questions are:

- *What enabled these white men to acquire, develop and maintain fluency in isiXhosa?*
- *How do identity construction and isiXhosa acquisition and competence interrelate in their life histories?*
- *How does this study contribute to understandings of language, power, identity and change in settings of societal multilingualism such as South Africa?*

Explanation and rationale

I will now make explicit my reasons for focusing on white bilingual men, and show how this research makes a unique contribution to current debates about language acquisition and identity. The biographical 'lead in' to this chapter explains why I am focusing on white individuals, and why I entered with a high degree of subjectivity into the research project, seeking to gain, as a by-product of carrying out the research, a greater sense of coherence within my own identity.

Research has given little attention, up to now, to the linguistic competences of white South Africans who speak indigenous African languages, or to their identity construction. The situation of this group of people is unique in that their bilingualism developed in a society where 'races' and speakers of different languages were deliberately kept in legislatively separated silos. As we

have seen, the only kind of bilingualism which was officially sanctioned and encouraged (even enforced) during their childhood years was bilingualism in the two official languages of Apartheid South Africa: English and Afrikaans. All pupils in all schools were required to learn these languages, while the other nine or more indigenous languages of the country were only taught in schools specifically dedicated to the teaching of so-called 'mother-tongue speakers' of a specific language, who lived in a geographical space allocated to that language group. Teaching of African languages in white schools was rare, and where it occurred only the basics were taught, and lessons stopped after a couple of years. Few white people tried to learn African languages, either formally or informally, and few of those who tried moved beyond basic knowledge into a level which could be called 'fluency', my experience being a case in point.

While segregation is no longer legislated in South Africa, 'races' and language groups often still maintain a considerable degree of separation socially. Where races do mix, the language of communication is usually English. Multilingualism is written into education policy; however, there is little promotion of the learning of African languages, and most language learning takes place in the direction of improving English proficiency. While the number of white people taking on the learning of an African language may have increased⁴⁶, it is still true that they often do not move beyond the basics to a level where they use the language in everyday communication.

In this kind of situation, it is clearly interesting that there are a number of white people in the Eastern Cape who are fluent in an indigenous African language (isiXhosa), and that this fluency often seems to go along with fluency in English and Afrikaans as well. What makes this a particularly interesting multilingual situation for research into language acquisition and socialization, linked with issues of identity and power, is not only the socio-political situation described above, but the fact that this situation is different from many of the kinds of multilingual situations researched thus far.

Comparisons and contrasts with other bilingual situations

In contrast to the more established SLA research on immigrants to Britain, USA, Canada and Europe, who need to learn the local language, with identity implications (see Block, 2007a, pp.

⁴⁶ It is not clear that this is so, in fact. Some universities report a decline in numbers taking African languages. It is now becoming compulsory, however, for teacher trainees at universities to take a module in an African language, if they do not know one already.

75 ff.), my participants learned isiXhosa at home, as part of their routine lives. They had full access, on the farm, to a community where isiXhosa, and later Afrikaans, or English, was used, and they were part of this community, and had power within it, by virtue of their whiteness, and their parents' ownership of the farm. This is in stark contrast to the situation of immigrants to European and English-speaking countries such as Canada and the USA, who often struggle for access, and for the 'right to speak' and 'to be heard' (e.g. Norton, 2000).

The situation of my participants also differs from that of students on 'study abroad' programmes, also commonly researched (see Block, 2007a, pp. 145 ff.), where European or American students spend a year or more staying in a country where the language they are learning is commonly spoken. The participants in my research spent their childhood years in the situation where they were learning the language, and were not simply visiting for a year or two. They were children, growing up into the language community, not young adults, who already had learned and were comfortable with another language.

My participants have quite a lot in common with children in classical bilingual situations, where mother and father are speakers of different languages, or where two official languages are used in different situations, probably for different purposes (separate silos) and in fairly 'standard' ways. Most of the men in my study speak of two 'mothers' or two sets of parents, one set speaking only isiXhosa, while the other set is bilingual. They are exposed to a world where different languages are used in different, very separate situations, and for different purposes. Their competence is in different, separate languages, each of which they speak in fairly 'standard' ways (though it has not been possible for me to verify this adequately).

Their situation is different from multilingual situations in India, parts of Africa, urban township settings in SA, and others, where people with a number of different 'mother tongues' or dialects are thrown together, and have to make meaning (see Canagarajah, 2007). My participants grew up with two languages, usually used in distinct domains, and learned a third through later, or sometimes parallel, experiences. While there is evidence that most have a mind-set which is disposed to making meaning, and therefore to learning new languages, they have command of three separate languages, and are not using interaction strategies in the presence of numerous languages and dialects.

Their situation also differs from post-colonial situations where members of colonized, or previously colonized, groups need to learn the 'colonial' language in order to move on in 'modern society'. Black South Africans learning English are in this situation. While the situation of my participants is post-colonial, they are members of the 'colonial' grouping, and by virtue of this are still in positions of power. Unusually, they learn the language of the disempowered: of the oppressed (or previously oppressed) group. Their multilingualism is also unusual in the light of the fact that the norm for middle-class South Africans, particularly white ones, is monolingualism or 'bilingualism'⁴⁷, whereas multilingualism⁴⁸ is more often a feature of life among members of sub-elite classes. This tends to be true internationally as well.

And finally, my participants' situation is very different from that of students learning language in second or foreign language classroom situations. Their learning definitely takes place in naturalistic, rather than classroom settings. Firth and Wagner (1997) have put out a call for research to move out of the classroom environment, and to examine language acquisition and use in natural settings. The present research could be seen as a response to that call, in that my participants learned and use language in natural communicative contexts, within a broader society dominated by racialized and unequal power structures, negotiating meaning through multiple identities as they exercise multilingual competence across a range of contexts.

Previous research in the area and the contribution of this study

It seems that very little research has been done on language skills and acquisition processes of English/Afrikaans and isiXhosa bilinguals in the Eastern Cape, or on identity factors relating to this. Russell Kaschula (1989) carried out a study on the communicative competence in isiXhosa of white farmers in a north-eastern Cape community, and David Gough (1996) researched special features of the English used by white isiXhosa-English bilingual men in the Albany district of the Eastern Cape, which included code-switching with isiXhosa and, to a lesser extent, Afrikaans. Gough's study explored, among other things, the identity the farmers wished to communicate. Jonathan Marshall (1996) analysed (morpho-syntactically) the second-language variety of isiXhosa spoken by Eastern Cape farmers in his Linguistics Honours (4th Year University) research report, discussing the historical background and socio-psychological factors

⁴⁷ In the Apartheid sense (English and Afrikaans).

⁴⁸ Here used to refer to the use of more than two languages, often used in Canagarajah's (2007) sense, to negotiate meaning.

affecting the acquisition process in his introductory chapters. A part of this research was also published in a volume of working papers of the University of Reading (Marshall, 1997). I have carried out a small exploratory research project seeking to profile the bilingualism of a specific group of white Eastern Cape speakers of isiXhosa (Botha, 2007).

Work done more broadly, in South Africa and elsewhere, on language, power and identity, bilingualism, language acquisition and socialization, using post-structuralist frameworks, and within the 'socio-cultural turn' is reviewed in Chapter 2.

As I have argued above, this research opens up a new area in terms of South African research on white bilinguals (English / Afrikaans and isiXhosa), since this group is unusual in a number of respects, when compared to bilingual research participants studied in other contexts. It makes a contribution to studies of language acquisition through participation and socialization in naturalistic settings, as encouraged by Firth and Wagner (1997), also contributing to studies using the identity approach to language acquisition as characterised by Norton and McKinney (2011), which foregrounds unequal relations of power that are structurally enforced and supported. In using the Community of Practice (CoP) model of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998) within a post-structuralist framework, it also extends the usefulness of the CoP model for studies of identity and language learning. In addition, the study makes a contribution to a growing corpus of discourse studies of white identity, internationally and in South Africa, (Dyer, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; Durrheim and Dixon, 2005; Steyn, 2001; Wetherell and Potter, 1992), as well as to the study of language in settings of societal multilingualism (Canagarajah, 2007, 2010), Finally, it represents an example of research that gives attention to 'differential privilege' (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 436), an area of identity and language learning studies which has been identified as needing more 'sustained attention' (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 436). Although the study is primarily an intellectual project, I believe that the research findings also have relevance for more practical projects related to language learning and the building of a broader South African identity.

Overview of the thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and literature review

I discuss the post-structuralist theories of identity and social approaches to language acquisition / socialization which I have used in analysing the narrative discourse of my participants, against a background of literature in these fields which examines similar themes and uses similar theories.

Chapter 3 Research methodology and methods

I describe the methodological approaches which I used, explain the process of selecting participants and gathering and analysing my data, and introduce the research participants.

Chapter 4: Identity and language acquisition in childhood narratives

This chapter is the first of three which present and analyse data. It examines the childhood years in the four narratives, looking for evidence of how the boys learned isiXhosa, and the relationships and contexts within which the learning took place. It studies the identity implications of this learning, and of the transitions the boys had to make into the new environment of the school.

Chapter 5: Identity and language maintenance and development in narratives describing rites of passage and working life

This chapter analyses parts of the four narratives which tell of rites of passage into adulthood and adult working life, examining the discourse for evidence of identity shifts, conflicts and language development which take place as the men move into different contexts.

Chapter 6: Identity across spaces: white discourse and hybrid space

In this chapter, I explore how the four men position themselves and construct their identities as they move across the spaces, geographical, political, social and personal, of the Apartheid and post-Apartheid worlds which form the backgrounds of their stories

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In the conclusion, I draw together the threads of the three data analysis chapters in order to answer my research questions and highlight the contribution to knowledge represented by the research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and literature review

Introduction

In this chapter I outline the theoretical framework upon which I have based my research, looking also at relevant literature and research on similar themes in related fields and contexts. What initially sparked my interest in the study was the question of how the four white men's isiXhosa competence affects their sense of identity: their feeling of 'who they are' and how they are positioned (Davies and Harre, 1990) in the Eastern Cape context. This context, with its strong contrasts of lifestyle and values, and deep divides of power, wealth and race, as well as my participants' multilingualism, drew me to post-structuralist theories of identity as multiple, shifting according to context (Foucault, 1975; 1976; Weedon, 1997; 2004), and to post-colonial studies of race and hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1992a; 1992b; 1996; 2000). These theories, which see identity as constructed by discourse, also enabled me to make sense of the men's life histories, the narrative discourse which constitutes my data. It led me to analytical studies of 'white discourses' coming from the post-colonial and discursive psychology traditions (Durrheim and Dixon, 2005; Frankenberg, 1993; Steyn, 2001; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Bakhtin's work (1981) on heteroglossia and carnival suggested ways of understanding some of the paradox and complexity implicit in some of the stories, and Bourdieu's (1991) concepts of linguistic and cultural capital threw light on the power dynamics inherent in their multilingualism.

A second interest of mine was the process of my participants' isiXhosa acquisition. As the language acquisition process described by the men in their stories is a naturalistic one, taking place within Eastern Cape contexts (most notably farms), I was drawn to more recent trends in Second Language Acquisition and related theory which place emphasis on language learning as a social rather than a cognitive process, linked with identity and taking place within power-laden contexts (Block, 2003; 2007a; Norton, 1997; 2000; 2001; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Norton-Peirce, 1995; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Watson-Gegeo, 2004). In looking at the way in which the four men acquired and developed language competence and associated skills, practices and identities, I made extensive use of the concept of situated learning in Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

In the more detailed discussion of these theoretical positions which follows:

- I begin by discussing the post-structuralist approach to identity, also showing how I have used concepts from theorists such as Bakhtin and Bourdieu, not explicitly post-structuralist, to augment these theories. I then move on to look at work in the related field of post-colonialism: work analysing discourses on race, and studies of space and hybridity.
- The second part of my discussion presents the theories of language acquisition which I have used. I show the relevance to my research of concepts from the somewhat disparate schools of thought which together have come to represent what Block (2003) calls 'the social turn' in Second Language Acquisition. I focus on researchers such as Norton (1997; 2000; 2001), who takes up an explicitly post-structuralist position on power and identity, and Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), who are not post-structuralists, but expound a social approach to learning which has strong identity implications. Possible tensions between post-structuralist and non-post-structuralist approaches are addressed.

Post-structuralist theories of identity⁴⁹

Post-structuralism theorises the relationship between language and subjectivity, on the one hand, and social organization and power, on the other. This has made it a useful paradigm to use in this study, as the context of my multilingual participants is one impacted upon and infused with oppressive forms of power and extreme differentials between societal groups, as we have seen in Chapter 1.

Post-structuralism challenges and moves beyond Structural Linguistics (de Saussure, 1960), incorporating aspects of Marxist theory (Althusser, 1971; 1990); Psychoanalysis (Freud, 1975, 1977, 1997 and Lacan, 1949; 1966); Deconstruction (Derrida, 2007) and Foucault's work on discourse and power (1975, 1976).

⁴⁹ The terms 'identity' and 'subjectivity' are used in different ways by different authors. Weedon (1997; 2004), for instance, uses 'subjectivity', associating 'identity' with the essentialized liberal humanist concept of a unified, coherent individual identity. Hall (1992a; 1992b; 1996) uses the terms somewhat interchangeably, and Canagarajah (2004, p. 267,268) makes the following distinction: 'our historically defined *identities* (such as race, ethnicity, and nationality) ... and ideological *subjectivity* (i.e. our positioning according to discourses ... which embody values according to the dominant ideologies in the society)'. I use the terms interchangeably, but adhere to different authors' preferences when referring to their work. I try to be explicit when a particular form or aspect of identity is being referred to.

Homi Bhabha (1994, p. 4) interprets the prefix 'post' in post-structuralism (as well as in post-modernism and post-colonialism) as referring not to 'sequentiality' (after), or to 'polarity (anti), but to an insistent 'gesture to the beyond, [embodying a] restless and revisionary energy'. The post-structuralist assertion that subjectivity and identity are constructed through language is built on and goes beyond the structural linguistics of de Saussure, whose insight, described by Weedon (1997) was that

language, far from reflecting an already given social reality, constitutes social reality for us...Different languages and different discourses within the same language divide up the world and give it meaning in ways which cannot be reduced to one another through translation or by an appeal to universally shared concepts reflecting a fixed reality (p. 22).

De Saussure insisted that each language is a pre-given fixed abstract system, made up of chains of signs (each consisting of a 'signifier' and a 'signified'). Post-structuralists reject this, speaking instead of 'signifiers in which the signified is never fixed once and for all, but is constantly *deferred*' (Weedon, 1997, p. 23). The concept of *deferral* derives from the Deconstructionist theories of Jacques Derrida, who pointed to the inherent instability of meaning, which "aims for closure (identity), but is constantly disrupted" by difference and deferral (Hall: 1992a, p. 288, referring to Derrida, 1981).

This instability means, for post-structuralists, that individual subjectivity is a site of struggle. In contrast to the liberal humanist conception of the fixed, unique and coherent self, the post-structuralist self is multiple and multidimensional. Bhavnani and Phoenix (1994) indicate that each individual

is both located in, and opts for, a number of differing, and at times, conflictual, identities, depending on the social, political, economic and ideological aspects of their situation: 'identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space...between a number of intersecting discourses' (Hall, 1991:10). This concept of identity thus precludes the notion of an authentic, a true or a 'real self'. Rather, it may be a place from which an individual can express multiple and often contradictory aspects of ourselves (p.9).

Although identity is fragmented, the 'illusion' of coherent identity is necessary for acting in the world (Weedon, 1997, p. 102). According to Weedon (2004, p. 21), 'identity is central to the desire to be a "knowing subject", in control of meaning'. Narrative is one of the techniques individuals use as they seek to give meaning and coherence to their lives, and construct an

identity for themselves. This paradoxical relationship between fluid and multiple identity and coherent identities constructed through narrative is summarized by Hall (1992a) as follows:

The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent 'self...contradictory identities, pulling in different directions. ... If we feel we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or 'narrative of the self' about ourselves (p. 277).

While rejecting the "coherent 'self'", Hall acknowledges that a coherent *sense of self* has an existential reality which helps us to 'sleep at night' (Hall, 1992a, pp. 144-145). Eakin (1994, p. 94), in similar vein, writes that the autobiographer 'recognises continuous identity not only as a fiction of memory, but also as an existential fact, necessary for our psychological survival amid the flux of existence'. This construction of coherence, then, could be seen as a project at which we work, negotiating between available options and making choices about the subjective positions we adopt. In analysing my participants' narratives (and thinking about my own), I look at how they work to construct coherence out of the different facets of their lives, the different identities adopted at specific times and places, for specific purposes, within a world divided firmly into black and white, as well as other polarities, e.g. home and school, home and work.

Blommaert (2005, p. 205) distinguishes between "'achieved" or "inhabited" group identity and "ascribed" categorical identities'. While there is some room for us to exercise agency at each particular moment, making choices as to which of the multiplicity of available identities we wish to 'inhabit', or which of many discourses we want to take up, certain aspects of our identity are more negotiable than others. Ascribed identities sometimes 'other' us in ways we might not necessarily have chosen, but we can 'assume them – or reject them - by behaviours we adopt in daily life (performativity) and by identification or counter-identification with a group or individual' (Weedon, 2004, p. 21). The range of identities available is restricted, however, 'usually on the basis of discourses of class, gender and race' (Weedon, 2004, p. 7). Certain identities are 'exclusive to and policed by' groups who have power (Weedon, 2004, p. 7). Within the heavily policed environment of Apartheid South Africa, racial identities were rigidly and legally 'ascribed'; current efforts to redress the inequalities of the past are also based on racial identities. I look for areas of my participants' lives in which they exercise agency in choosing or rejecting particular identities, through identification or through investment in certain registers or behaviours.

Identity and ambivalence

There are moments of dilemma and challenge in the lives of most individuals (Block, 2007a, p. 22 calls them 'critical experiences') where the identity options available seem incompatible with one's existing sense of self, or where one is faced with impossible choices - and yet forced to make a choice. This causes unbearable ambivalence. Baumann (1991, p. 1) asserts that ambivalence is a 'language-specific disorder', explaining that 'through its naming/classifying function' (Baumann, 1991, p. 1), language helps us to sustain order in our world, 'so that one can rely on past successes as guides for future ones'. One experiences ambivalence when one does not know how to name or classify an experience. According to Baumann (1991), as modern people, we wage endless war against ambivalence and contingency, and do this by using language (a key aspect of discourse).

Faced with ambivalence, one has no choice but to try to resolve it. One may be forced to adapt to and live with one of the seemingly impossible options, or in extremity be driven to suicide or madness. In struggling for survival in an incoherent situation, one often does manage to shift into another more comfortable 'space' in which one can live out a new or 'hybrid' identity; perhaps live a more contingent existence. We have seen examples of white bilinguals in ambivalent situations in Chapter 1, and I search in my participants' narratives for similar experiences of ambivalence.

Identity and discourse

In examining my participants' life histories, I am analysing narrative discourse, mentioned earlier as a significant context for constructing coherence in lives and identities. Pennycook (1994, p. 32) defines discourses as 'relationships of power/knowledge that are embedded in social relations and practices ... ways of meaning that are both reflected and produced in our use of language and the formation of our subjectivities'. He reminds us that 'to engage in the social practice of language use is always to act situated within some discourse' (Pennycook, 1994, p. 32). This builds on Foucault, who calls discourses 'tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations' (Foucault, 1976, p. 101). These force relations are multiple and unstable, taking on specific forms in different contexts and at different moments, and operate on the basis of categorizations such as race, class, gender, religion, etc. Foucault saw discourse as a structuring principle in society, which is made up of numerous competing discursive fields, each

discourse offering a preferred form of subjectivity, but thereby implying 'other subject positions and the possibility of reversal' (Weedon, 1997, p. 106). Discourse goes beyond language per se, extending to all semiotic systems, activities, practices, performances and ways of being through which we express ourselves in a context (Blommaert, 2005, p. 3). Kress (1985) explains that

In the colonisation of areas of social life, discourses attempt to reconcile contradictions, mismatches, disjunctions and discontinuities within that domain by making that which is social seem natural and that which is problematic seem obvious. ... The accounts provided within one discourse become not only unchallenged, but unchallengeable, as 'common sense'. If the domination ... by a discourse is successful, ... it allows no room for thought; the social will have been turned into the natural. At that stage it is impossible to conceive of alternative modes of thought, or else [they] will seem bizarre, outlandish, unnatural (p. 10).

In accepting 'ascribed' identities, or in exercising our options with regard to available identities, we adopt particular discourses, which express specific ideological views of experience. In the same way, by using a particular discourse we take up a particular identity position. Language, then, is a key tool in the negotiation of aspects of our identities, enabling individuals with multiple linguistic repertoires, such as the participants in my research, to enact or downplay different subject positions when strategically appropriate.

Through our choices of languages, dialects ... we create certain social positions for ourselves and simultaneously position others in particular ways. Through what we say and do, we place ourselves and are placed by others in positions that influence our identities (Toohey, et al, 2006, p. 627).

I seek out conceptions of what is 'natural' or 'common sense' in my participants' discourses, taking these as indications of their ideologies⁵⁰ and of subjectivities which they seek to construct in different situations.

South African researchers, exploring issues of language and identity in educational institutions, desegregated in terms of race and language since the democratic government took power in 1994, have explored instances of identity construction in multilingual settings. Using post-structuralist conceptions of identity, they have shown how students use the language varieties at their disposal to position themselves in relation to others in their worlds (e.g. Bangeni & Kapp, 2007; Dyers, 2004; Kamwangamalu, 2001, 2004; Leibowitz, et al, 2005; Makubalo, 2007; McKinney, 2007a, 2007b; Nongogo, 2007; Ramsey-Brijball, 2004).

⁵⁰ I take the position that ideologies are implicit in discourse. They are normalised patterns of thought and behaviour, reinforced by and reinforcing power relations in society. (See Blommaert, 2005, p. 158ff.)

In my study, which is very specifically about language and identity, I look at how the multilingualism of my participants, particularly their ability to speak and understand isiXhosa, impacts on their identity construction. Every study of identity using a post-structuralist framework focuses on language as a primary component of discourse, and discourse as the medium through which identity is constructed. Any study which uses narrative or life history as data, as mine does, is also analysing language (a key component of discourse). Because I am not fluent in isiXhosa myself, and therefore do not have access to my participants' isiXhosa discourse, I am restricted to analysing my participants' discourse in English about their lives. This means that I am examining their constructions of identity in their talk about their multilingualism rather than their actual practices of multilingualism. I am interested in their discourse about language, and also in their discourse more broadly, as it is a window onto their identity construction.

Identity and power relations within society

As stated above, subjectivities and identities, in the post-structuralist view, are embedded in power relations. Foucault (1975, 1976), seminal within post-structuralist theory, views relations between subjects within and across discourses as structured by power. He sees power as multiple, heterogeneous and omnipresent, as well as unbalanced and unstable, always shifting and being redistributed as the flux of relations within society changes in balance (Foucault, 1976, pp. 92 – 102). As splits and tendencies arise within this restless sea of power relations, certain forces converge and others diverge, forming systems of politics and war, which change into one another periodically. The state, the law, the church, etc., should not be seen as the source of power, according to Foucault (1976, p. 92). These 'major dominations' emerge from and are sustained by a multiplicity of local 'force relations' (p. 92), and in turn seek to 'arrest ... movement' (p. 93) within these force relations, inherent in families, institutions, and relations of economics, knowledge and sex, etc. Just as power is everywhere immanent, so is resistance. The existence of power 'depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance' (p. 95). More often than not,

One is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remoulding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds (p. 96).

In this description we see how consistent this multiple and contested view of power is with the post-structuralist view of multiple and conflicted identity, and the experience of ambivalence we discussed earlier. In his discussion of sexuality, Foucault writes of how 'power-knowledge' is exercised through the 'surveillance' of 'parents, nurses, servants, educators ... , all attentive to the least manifestation of his sex' (Foucault, 1976, p. 98). I look for similar 'surveillance' of the identity development of the boys in my stories, in terms of their racial and language identifications, and also for the ebb and flow of relations of power and resistance, for instance between the boys and their parents, the boys and their schools, and between black and white people in the stories. I am interested in finding ways in which such relations shift with time as the men mature and political situations change, and will note how such shifts are reflected in modifications in their discourse, signalling different identity choices.

Bakhtin on heteroglossia and carnival

While most of Bakhtin's writings (1965, 1981, 1984, 1986) pre-date post-structuralism, his concepts and theories live comfortably alongside those of the post-structuralists, and I have found some of them useful in looking at my data.

Heteroglossia

Bakhtin (1981) uses the word 'heteroglossia' to refer to the multiplicity of discourses / 'languages' in the world:

All languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically. As such they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people. (p. 115)

A vital concept of Bakhtin is embodied in the word 'dialogically'. Voloshinov⁵¹ (1929, p. 59) insists that the generation of meaning takes place in the present moment, in responsive interaction between at least two social beings, and is also a link in a chain of dialogue extending through history, and constituting "the continuity of human consciousness". Utterances within

⁵¹ There is a controversy around the authorship of a number of writings by Medvedev and Voloshinov, both of whom died in the 1930s. They were part of a group of academics which included Bakhtin, and some maintain that work signed by them was largely the work of Bakhtin. However, the works can be looked at as a whole, as they were definitely products of the same school of thought.

the dialogue, according to Bakhtin (1986, p. 60) reflect the 'specific conditions and goals [of] various areas of human activity', and each sphere in which language is used develops a particular 'speech genre' (which I see as similar to a specific 'discourse').

Language is always double-voiced, according to Bakhtin (1981):

The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent.... Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions: it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others (p. 77).

Dialogical relationships permeate language at every level. They 'can permeate within the utterance, even inside the individual word, as long as two voices collide within it dialogically' (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 184). Bakhtin explains that these dialogical relationships can exist between dialects and language styles as well, and even towards and between words and utterances of our own. A person's 'self', or identity, is generated through such dialogue (Morris, 1994, p. 5). The different languages and ideologies of multilinguals like my participants will dialogue within them, sometimes conflictually, contributing to the construction of their identities.

Bakhtin maintains that heteroglossia works against the monologic views of society which dominant social groups attempt to impose, creating 'the conditions for the possibility of a free consciousness' (Morris, 1994, p. 15, 16). In my participants' lives, these white men's ability to speak what South Africans might call 'a black language' (i.e. a language characteristically seen to be spoken only by black people) can undermine dominant views and practices, and could open up unexpected possibilities. I examine the narratives for such instances.

Carnival and folkloric time

In his analysis of the work of Rabelais, Bakhtin (1981) describes its folkloric bases in a 'pre-class, agricultural stage in the development of human society' (p.206) in which, he says, 'life is one' (p. 209), and there is not yet any stratification into social classes, any distinction between public and private, or sublimation of elements such as sex. Rabelais recreates such a world and links it with the present in his work, which features grotesque and fantastic descriptions of the human body and its functions, and, most significantly, laughter. Bakhtin (1981) maintains that laughter is the one thing which could not be deformed, falsified or sublimated, as other aspects of the folkloric life were as stratification took place (p. 236). Laughter still has the capacity for the

'radical destruction of all false verbal and ideological shells that had distorted and kept separate...' (p. 237). Laughter can take things down from their 'high' contexts, and laugh separations 'out of existence' (p. 240).

Folkloric time was re-enacted in the carnival festivities of medieval times when 'a second world and a second life outside officialdom' was created, 'a world in which all medieval people participated ... during a given time of the year' (Bakhtin, 1965, p. 6). During this time, all hierarchies and norms of decency were suspended; all truth and authority became relative. Carnival laughter was ambivalent: gay and at the same time mocking. Scott (1990), who finds Bakhtin's interpretation of carnival too idealistic, emphasizes the carnival as a 'site of antihegemonic discourse' (p. 122). He points out that while carnival disorder is usually 'disorder within the rules' (p. 177), carnival has also been linked to revolt in a number of instances (p. 179). These concepts enable me to analyse episodes in the narratives where colonial and Apartheid hierarchies seem to have been suspended⁵².

Bourdieu on linguistic and cultural capital

Bourdieu (1991), also not explicitly post-structuralist, has provided me with useful ways of looking at language and power, which complement those of the post-structuralists.

Bourdieu explains how *legitimate language*, corresponding often to the official or standard language of a certain group, is developed through a process of a struggle for *symbolic power* between users of different language varieties. Command of this *legitimate language* then becomes linked to one's value – on the labour market and in society, and thus to one's identity. 'All linguistic practices are measured against the legitimate practices, i.e. the practices of those who are dominant' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 53).

Linguistic exchange ... is ... an economic exchange which is established within a particular symbolic relation of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market), and which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit. In other words, utterances are not only signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also *signs of wealth...signs of authority...* (p. 66).

The value of each utterance is determined in each specific situation by the relationship of power between the participants in the interchange, and may have different value on different markets.

⁵² See discussion of hybrid space later.

'[T]he whole social structure is present in each interaction (and thereby in the discourse uttered)' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 67). An utterance becomes an effective speech act when spoken by someone who, by virtue of the cultural or linguistic capital she or he possesses, has the right to speak and the right to impose reception.

Bourdieu (1991, pp. 68 ff.) gives an example from the province of Bearn in South-West France, which demonstrates this. He tells of a mayor of Pau who addressed the audience at a ceremony in honour of a Bearnais poet in Bearnais, the dialect of the area. French was perceived to be the appropriate language for such formal occasions, and his addressing the people in their mother tongue was seen as a 'thoughtful gesture' (p. 68). This 'symbolic negation of the [accepted linguistic] hierarchy' (p. 68) was possible because all the people present understood the hierarchy, and the differentials between the speaker and the audience. By this 'strategy of condescension', the mayor profited, being praised for the "'good quality Bearnais" coming from the mouth of the legitimate speaker of the legitimate language' (p. 68).

A white person, endowed with the power of her whiteness, and of her ability to speak the status language of English (or Afrikaans), speaking isiXhosa to a black audience, could be viewed in a similar way, depending on the situation, and her positioning in relation to the audience. I will examine the stories for situations where the men's ability to speak isiXhosa augments or diminishes their power, and analyse how this relates to the power with which they are still imbued by virtue of their whiteness. The market determines the price of our discourse, and before we speak, we anticipate the sanctions of the market and censor ourselves in what we say and how we say it in order to ensure positive reception, and thus assert our power. I will also focus on the degree of awareness my participants demonstrate of the possible sanctions of the fluctuating markets they deal with when speaking isiXhosa in different situations and to different people, and how they make choices in terms of the language register that they use, on that basis.

Voice and audibility

Blommaert (2005) refers to the kind of positive reception mentioned above as *voice*: 'the way in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so' (p. 4). Echoing Bourdieu, he explains that this depends upon the linguistic resources they have at their disposal, and also upon *orders of indexicality*: the connections between the linguistic signs one uses and the

contexts in which one is using them. For example, a person speaking isiXhosa in the Southern States of the USA will probably have no voice, because there is unlikely to be the capacity for reception of isiXhosa within that context. Miller (2004) examines issues of voice related to race in certain British schools, showing how immigrants are often 'inaudible' because of their language repertoires, accents and social identity. Weedon (2004, p. 13-17) discusses ways in which our bodies are central to identity, and particularly to how other people define us. We do not always 'look what we are', and this can also affect our audibility. For instance, South Africans do not expect isiXhosa to be spoken by someone who is white in appearance. I will take note of such instances in the men's stories.

Post-colonialism: Discourses on race

Identity race and 'whiteness'

Weedon (2004, p. 21) comments that 'in defining their own sense of identity, individuals also tend to fix the identity of others, working within long-established binary modes of thinking', e.g. male/female; physical/intellectual; rational/intuitive; black/white. In this study of white South African men, I am interested in how the men position themselves in a society highly polarized with regard to race, often linked to language.

Theorists such as Bhabha (1994), Fanon (2000), Frankenberg (1993), Pennycook (1998) and Said (2003) argue that contemporary concepts of race are largely derivative from colonial constructs of the white Self over against the non-white – sometimes lesser, and sometimes better - Other, developed by colonialists to explain the differences they found between themselves and the colonized, and to maintain their position of dominance over them.

During the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, Europeans developed definitions of different 'races' in terms of mental and physical characteristics and later supported these with 'scientific' evidence of differing brain sizes, etc. Darwinian evolutionary theories allowed such views of genetically-based inferiority to be elaborated (See Pennycook, 1998).

The 'liberation' of colonial countries and the advent of a culture of human rights and liberalism necessitated a rejection of such essentialized biological views of race, and led to the rise of the American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, which developed in the mid-1960s into

the Black Power / Black Consciousness movement, and later spread to Britain and the diaspora, as well as to Africa itself. This movement included people from all backgrounds finding themselves the target of racism, and aimed to achieve political unity in the struggle against racism, and its concomitant marginalization of black experience and representation of it in stereotypical ways. Hall (1992b) argues that although this black unity may have had usefulness as a political tool, it actually reinforces a 'language of binary oppositions' (p. 253).

One response to 'black consciousness' has been recent 'whiteness' studies (Dyer, 1988; Frankenberg, 1993; Steyn, 2001). While Frankenberg (1993) grants that these studies run a similar risk to that of black consciousness, of reifying 'whiteness' and encouraging a binary view of society, she claims that to name 'whiteness' means 'to assign everyone a place in the relations of racism' (pp. 6-7). She points out that in the past, because 'whiteness' has been constructed as normative, it has usually been the identities of 'Other' subjects (as defined in colonial discourses) which have been the focus of interest for researchers and scholars. Like Pennycook (1998), she also emphasises that 'Colonization also occasioned the reformulation of European selves ... [T]he Western self and the non-Western other are co-constructed as discursive products...' (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 17)

Frankenberg (1993), in her study of white women in the USA, notes that many of her participants do not feel that they have a culture. 'Whiteness', in terms of culture, is the 'unmarked' category, the normative empty background against which other 'bounded' cultures are seen. By becoming an 'empty' culture, 'whiteness' becomes dominant over 'Other' bounded cultures. Dyer (1988, p. 45) writes, 'This property of 'whiteness', to be everything and nothing, is the source of its representational power'. Blommaert (2005) notes, in similar vein, that 'the bourgeoisie, is a neutral, unmarked, self-evident centre' (p. 160), and capitalism often seen as normative, amongst 'isms' (ideologies with a capital 'I'). 'Whiteness' is usually linked to capitalist bourgeois culture and ideology. My participants experience the benefits of being constructed as, and constructing themselves as, 'normative', and therefore powerful, in all of these senses.

Colonial and post-colonial discourse on race

In analysing the ways in which my four participants position and define themselves in their narrative discourse, I found it useful to identify discourses about race which could be seen as

normative or typical in some way. Below I review analyses and descriptions of such discourses in the literature.

Essentialist racist discourse: 'the white master-narrative'

In an analysis of colonial discourses, Pennycook (1998, p. 2) argues that 'The practice of colonialism produced ways of thinking, saying and doing that permeated back into the cultures and discourses of the colonial nations' and has lasting effects in present times. He lists and describes (pp. 55 – 65) how colonialists constructed the colonized as empty: inhabiting 'empty' land, and being undeveloped - lacking history, culture, religion and intelligence. They constructed themselves as cultured and the colonized as natural; themselves as industrious and the colonized as indolent; themselves as clean where the colonized were dirty; themselves as adult and the colonized as children (childlikeness meant the colonized were innocent and unspoilt; childishness that they were irrational and immature). They constructed themselves as masculine and the colonized as feminine; the rational man, reared in the British public school system, penetrated and assumed authority. He took pride in his physical strength and prowess, and rejected all that could be construed as feminine. Colonial men often enacted this chauvinism by engaging extensively in sexual relationships with the colonized.

In spite of this objectification of 'the Other', the duality of colonial racist discourse implies the necessity of the Other to the Self, the inextricable involvement of colonizer and colonized. The dichotomies described above show, on the one hand, rejection of and revulsion towards the colonized; on the other hand, envy and attraction. As Hall (2000) writes, drawing on concepts from Lacan (1966):

...the structure of identification is always constructed through ambivalence... through splitting... between that which one is, and that which is the other. The attempt to expel the other to the other side of the universe is always compounded by the relationships of love and desire. ...This is the Other that belongs inside me. ...This is the self as it is inscribed in the gaze of the Other. (p. 146)

Thus he encapsulates the conflicted nature of colonial notions of race: as we define ourselves in relation to the Other, distancing ourselves from the Other, the Other is a part of us, which we long to acknowledge and embrace. This kind of attraction is exemplified by Dyer (1988, p. 54) where he discusses the film *Jezebel*, in which black people are portrayed as having more 'life' than whites, something which the white heroine of the film wishes to identify with, but which

her society censures. I will look for such identification and distancing in the narratives of my participants.

Alternative discourses on race

While racist conceptions and discourses permeate almost every aspect of public and private life (in South Africa, at least), discourse which is overtly racist, particularly in a pejorative and essentialist way, is commonly regarded as unacceptable nowadays. However, this kind of discourse is still widely used and continues to form the basis for many of the discourses on race which now replace it, in South Africa, as in other former colonies, as well as metropolitan centres.

On the one hand, colonial discourse has been replaced by assertions of 'sameness' which avoid speaking of race, or of differences in power which are still racialized. Statements about 'sameness', made in public, often overlay or imply fundamental beliefs in racial difference, which may be reflected more overtly in utterances made in private. Frankenberg (1993) calls this 'color-and power-evasive' discourse. An example of this discourse, very widely used by many white people in South Africa today, would be an assertion that 'I am not a racist', side by side with laments about 'how filthy the streets are since 1994⁵³'. The comments carry an unstated suggestion that black people are the cause of the dirt, in spite of assertions of non-racism.

Often closely allied to the 'color-and-power evasive' discourse, are new explicitly stated beliefs in difference, often based not so much on race, as on 'culture' and ethnicity (including language), which I call 'culturalist racist discourse'. '[M]anifestations of race are coded in a language that aims to circumvent accusations of racism....coded in terms of "difference" and "culture"' (Back & Solomos, 2000, p.20). These take a variety of forms, and arise out of a number of different impulses. Gilroy saw 'multiculturalist and antiracist' policies and projects in Britain as colluding with this new racism, which he viewed as '[located] in the core of politics, (Gilroy, 1987, cited in Gilroy, 1992, p. 52).

Wetherell and Potter (1992), discursive social psychologists, analyse white discourse in their study of racism in New Zealand, and Durrheim and Dixon (2001; 2005) and Dixon and Reicher

⁵³ 1994 marked the beginning of the democratic dispensation in South Africa.

(1997), discussed below, use a similar analytical approach to study white discourse in South Africa. Bonna-Silva (2000; 2002) has also done work on what she calls 'the new race-talk': colour-blind discourse. Steyn (2001), in her post-colonial study "*Whiteness just isn't what it used to be*": white identity in a changing South Africa, has done a fairly extensive analysis of the discourse of white South Africans under the democratic post-1994 dispensation, and identified five 'narratives' of white identity in the discourse of her participants. A number of other studies use discourse analysis to study race perceptions and identity of South Africans (many of them white) in the democratic dispensation (e.g. Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011; Gaganakis, 2004; McKinney, 2003, 2007a, 2007b; 2010; Painter, 2005; Painter & Baldwin, 2004; Robus & Macleod, 2006; Van Ommen & Painter, 2005). In my analysis, I will make use of some of the 'white discourses' on race described above: essentialized racist discourse, 'colour-and-power-evasive discourse', culturalist racist discourse, as well as the 'narratives' of white identity described by Steyn (2001).

Identity in time and space

The concept that identity is constructed within power relations in society and societal groups implies that it is situated in time and space. Blommaert (2005, p. 136) reminds us that all instances of discourse are *on* history and *from* history, and Voloshinov⁵⁴ (1929, p. 59) shows how dialogic relations existing within language form links in a chain going back through human history. The lives of my four participants are rooted in a historical situation, and inexorably shaped by it. Narratives, such as those which comprise the data of this study, present a sequence of events in time, and narrative time sequence differs in a number of ways from chronological time sequence, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Blommaert (2005) says that 'space provides a framework in which meaningful social relationships and events can be anchored and against which a sense of community can be developed' (p. 221). He says that 'centering institutions' (a term borrowed from Silverstein, 1998, p.404), 'impose the 'doxa' in a particular group ... and generate indexicalities to which others have to orient' in order to have voice: to have significance and be heard. 'Centering institutions' are 'organized in "regimes" of ownership and control' (Blommaert, 2005, p. 74), which govern inclusion and exclusion, and are characterized by particular discourses. Each

⁵⁴ Of the Bakhtin school

'centering institution' occupies and develops ownership of its own 'space', sometimes literal (geographical) as well as figurative, and there are many spaces within spaces and spaces overlapping with other spaces. Spaces have boundaries which include and exclude, some in more uncompromising ways than others, but people have multi-membership of a number of groups and often participate across boundaries (Wenger, 1998, p. 105).

Colonial and post-colonial space is demarcated into black and white space, and this is true in an especially literal sense in Apartheid South Africa, where black communities who lived in places surrounded by white-owned land were forcibly removed to 'homelands', part of the attempt made to deprive all blacks of citizenship within white South Africa. 'One might say that Apartheid ... was all about ensuring that people kept to their proper places' (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p. 34). I examine the spaces in which the four men in my study spend time, and from which they speak, constrained as they are in many ways by the divisions of Apartheid space.

Boundary demarcation

Those in power in a colonial or post-colonial context are pre-occupied with demarcating boundaries, and balancing association and differentiation. Frankenberg (1993) discusses these extensively in her analysis of white women's discourse, analysing observations made by her participants about geographical boundaries to white and black areas (not perhaps legislated, but nevertheless observed), and talk of boundaries in conversations about interracial sexuality and sexual relationships. The concept of boundaries is, of course, also prominent in the Eastern Cape context, and I will analyse ways in which boundaries feature in the narratives of my participants, as well as other themes identified by Frankenberg, and discussed above. Durrheim and Dixon's (2001; 2005) analysis of discourse around South African beach de-segregation, and the similar study of Dixon and Reicher (1997) focusing on white reactions to the relocation of a squatter camp, also revolve around the issues of boundaries. When the rigid legal boundaries of Apartheid are lifted, white South Africans⁵⁵ still demarcate areas for themselves, retreat from spaces which appear to be becoming predominantly black, and tend to experience desegregation as a violation of boundaries and an invasion of their territory. Desegregation is

⁵⁵ This may also be true of black South Africans, although they are not so much the focus of these studies, and do not come from a past where their 'territory' was protected. Rather, it was violated.

experienced as loss: loss of place-identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000) and loss of home (Steyn, 2001, p. 156). Some of these themes also surface in my participants' stories.

Brokering

A strong focus of recent literature on language brokering is the experiences of the children of immigrants who translate for their parents, and assist them in adjusting to and relating to the culture and lifestyle of the 'host nation' (e.g. Tse, 1996; Weisskirch, 2006; Hall & Sham, 2007). It looks at the responsibility and power this gives them, which is both onerous and a source of pride, but which sets them apart from children who do not have such responsibilities. While the four men's situation is different from that of immigrant children, the stories often portray them in brokering roles, both in childhood and adulthood, usually with peers. I will explore the nature and identity implications of this, in the lives of the four boys/men.

Ethnicity of the margins: hybridity and 'third space'

A number of writers, most of them drawing on post-colonial theory, study identities which are multiple, marginal or 'hybrid', in terms of race, ethnicity or group membership, specifically within the post-colonial context. These have helped me to look at the situation of my participants, whose language competences give them multiple and marginal membership of racial groups within racially divided South Africa.

In his discussion of 'new ethnicities', Hall (1992b, p. 254) discussed various cultural productions, suggesting that a new phase was then beginning⁵⁶, characterized by 'the recognition of the immense diversity and differentiation of the historical and cultural experiences of black subjects'. He pointed out that race, and 'blackness' intersect with a number of other identities, such as gender, class, culture, language and sexual orientation, and that 'a positive conception of the ethnicity of the margins, of the periphery' was arising, '... a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position...' (p. 258).

Hall's work on cultural productions highlights identity formations which are 'the products of the new diasporas created by the post-colonial migrations' (Hall, 1992a, p. 310). These diasporas

⁵⁶ This was so at the time of publication, 1992.

have 'translated' (translate meaning 'bear across') certain people forever from their homelands, though they retain links with those places of origin and their traditions.

They must learn to inhabit at least two identities, to speak two cultural languages, to translate and negotiate between them. Cultures of hybridity are one of the distinctly novel types of identity reproduced in the era of late-modernity, and there are more and more examples of them to be discovered (p. 310).

Hall indicates that this kind of "hybridity" and syncretism - the fusion between different cultural traditions' is seen by some as a source of creative power, but by others as having dangers, attached to the "double consciousness" and relativism it implies' (p. 310). Bhabha (1994) quotes Rushdie who 'remind[s] us in *The Satanic Verses* that the truest eye may now belong to the migrant's double vision' (p.5). He says of post-colonial identity,

...we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion...

These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood - singular or communal - that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself.

It is in the interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of difference - that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. (pp. 1-2).

This quote encapsulates some of the reasons why I was interested in the experience of white multilinguals who could speak isiXhosa: I was fascinated by the possibilities in their lives of 'new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration'; the possibility for negotiation of 'the idea of society' and of 'nationness' in South Africa (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 1-2). Doran (2004) researched the language practices of French youths who speak a dialect called Verlan, through which they challenge the dominant discourses and create for themselves a third space of the kind Bhabha refers to here. Hinnenkamp (2003) has conducted a similar study of adolescents of Turkish background in Germany, who use mixed language varieties of Turkish and German, appropriating a semantic space where their language constitutes a counter-discourse.

My participants could also be seen as 'translated', descendants of settlers in colonies where they are outnumbered by local indigenous peoples, but maintain ties to the culture of their origin (English, Afrikaans or German). I will look in their stories for the fruits of that 'translation':

instances where their hybridity is seen as dangerous, and occasions when it is a source of creative power. Bhabha's concept of 'the third space' and Hall's work on hybridity can be linked with a kind of space identified by Bourdieu, within private, as opposed to public life, where 'laws of price formation... are suspended' (1991, p. 71), becoming valid again once the participants re-enter formal markets. I also link it, in my analysis, with Bakhtin's (1981) 'second world' of carnival, elaborated above. The study examines my participants' stories to detect instances where their background and linguistic competences give them access to such 'third' or hybrid spaces.

The 'social turn' in Second Language Acquisition

Having looked at post-structuralist and post-colonial theories and studies of discourse and identity which I have found relevant in interpreting my data, I now turn to the theories of language acquisition which I have found appropriate: those which come from the 'social turn' in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Block, 2003). These studies note the failure of mainstream approaches to 'capture the complex relationship between relations of power, identity and language learning' (Norton, 1995, p. 17). In this section, I motivate my choice of this paradigm rather than that of the 'mainstream' in Second Language Acquisition, and describe approaches I have used, as well as other relevant studies.

Mainstream Second Language Acquisition studies have tended to see the acquisition process as one where the individual learner used strategies to deal with input (see Ellis, 1994; Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985) and interaction in the target language, in order to be able to produce output (the Input-Interaction-Output model). They have put forward theories such as acculturation, social and psychological distance (Schumann, 1978), and accommodation (Giles and Byrne, 1982) to explain the process of second language acquisition, and to throw light on why some learners are more effective than others. They look at the role played in effective language acquisition and learning by aptitude, by affective factors such as attitudes, (Spolsky, 1989) anxiety (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991), and motivation (Dornyei, 2003; Gardner & Lambert, 1959); by personality factors such as extroversion / introversion, and field dependence / field independence, and by individual differences such as age, gender, social class and ethnic identity (Altman, 1980; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Skehan, 1989).

I have found this 'mainstream' or Input-Interaction-Output (IIO) model (Ellis, 1994) of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) inappropriate for the purposes of my analysis. While I do not doubt that language learning involves cognitive processes working on interactive language 'input' and 'output', facilitated or constrained by 'affective' and other contextual and personality factors, the data that I am examining offers much more insight into the social context of learning than into cognitive processes. The emphases of SLA theories which, up until recently, have constituted the 'mainstream' also do not speak to certain vital features of the unique situation which I am examining (see description and discussion in Chapter 1).

The first of these vital features is that of the chronological order in which my participants have learned their languages. As Canagarajah (2007) points out, in multilingual communities 'people develop simultaneous childhood multilingualism, making it difficult to say which language comes first' (p. 929). This is true of my participants. The word 'second' in Second Language Acquisition implies that each person has a 'first' language, and then learns another.

Secondly, much of language acquisition theory has been based on a false assumption that most 'normal' people are monolingual, and that multilingualism is exceptional. This ignores the vast number of socio-cultural communicative situations across the world where meaning and identity are negotiated (Block, 2003, p. 74-81) using and mixing multiple varieties of language, in communities of prolific 'heteroglossia' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 115). I do not have data on how much my participants mix codes, but their stories make it clear that they are multilingual and that they operate within a multilingual context, shifting in and out of languages as they find it appropriate.

Thirdly, SLA has, up until very recent times, been seen predominantly as an individual cognitive process taking place in institutional settings, rather than a social process taking place in naturalistic settings, such as those within which my participants acquired isiXhosa. Writers such as Canagarajah (2007) show that SLA studies have neglected numerous naturalistic settings where language is learned as it is used, through collective activity in a social context. Canagarajah (2007) questions the individual nature of naturalistic language learning in his review of the informal development of lingua franca English (LFE) saying that 'LFE makes sense only as an intersubjective construction' (p.921). Writers such as Firth and Wagner (1997) have called for research to move out of the classroom environment, and to examine language

acquisition and use in natural and multilingual (especially non-Western) communities, contributing towards the 'evolution of a holistic, biosocial SLA' (p. 296). I intend, in this study, to make a contribution to such a body of research.

Finally and most importantly, mainstream SLA theories have placed little or no emphasis on issues of social identity and power, as stated above (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton and Toohey, 2001; Norton and McKinney, 2011). Relations of power are clearly key in the Eastern Cape farming context, as has been shown in Chapter 1. Issues of identity are related to power, as shown in the foregoing discussion, and identity is a key interest of this study.

As the multilingual language learning situation I am considering is a naturalistic social process, and takes place within sharply defined relations of power, I have chosen to use language learning theories and appropriate general learning theories from the 'social turn', which emphasize language learning as participation and socialization, involving identity, within relations of power (e.g. Atkinson, 2011; Block, 2003; 2007a; Canagarajah, 2007; Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004; Menard-Warwick, 2005; Norton, 1997; 2000; 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Pavlenko & Norton, 2006; Toohey, 2000; Watson-Gegeo, 2004.) While Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) are not part of the SLA field of study, and do not emphasize the power dimension, their social learning theories have been utilized by researchers within the 'social turn' of SLA (Morita, 2004; Norton, 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Pavlenko and Norton, 2006; Toohey, 2000; Toohey et al, 2006), and I have used them extensively in my study. I have found that the concept of situated learning through peripheral participation in Communities of Practice (CoP) (Wenger, 1998) speaks clearly to the process of learning within the context of the farm, described in the men's narratives, and is also relevant to the men's continued process of language learning and maintenance as they move into adulthood and the work environment. My research, like that of the contributors to Barton & Tusting (2005), who set out to critique and develop the CoP model within the linguistic field, has necessitated the insertion of a much stronger focus on inequitable power relations into the paradigm.

A number of overviews of the 'social turn' in SLA have been written, some focused on the issue of identity in language acquisition. Perhaps the most comprehensive are David Block's two volumes, *The social turn in Second Language Acquisition* (2003), and *Second language identities*

(2007). The first of these gives a history of SLA as a discipline, examining its key assumptions and motivating for an approach which sees SLA as socially situated in historical and political contexts. The more recent work gives an overview of post-structuralist approaches to identity and considerations of identity in SLA theory in the past. It then looks at identity in three SLA contexts: adult immigrants; foreign language students in the classroom, and students in study abroad programmes. The two publications also give comprehensive reviews of research and studies in the field, including Block's own on the identity construction of an EFL student in Spain.

Other overviews and justifications for the 'social turn' include those by Firth and Wagner (1997); Kramsch and Whiteside (2007), who argue for an 'ecological' approach; Larsen-Freeman (2007) who argues the relevance of chaos-complexity theory as a larger frame within which the cognitive and social approaches to SLA can be contained; Sford (1998), who also argues for retaining both cognitivist and social approaches]; Swain and Deters (2007), and Zeungler and Miller (2006). Cummins and Davison (2006) and Ricento (2005) write on identity in language learning, Ricento offering quite an extensive review of work done. Kramsch (2002) has edited a useful volume entitled *Language acquisition and language socialization: ecological perspectives*. Lantolf (2000) has edited a volume entitled *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*, in addition to other articles (e.g. Lantolf, 2006). Atkinson's (2011) recent edited collection brings together work by key contributors to the field.

The article by Firth and Wagner (1997) in the *Modern Language Journal* (reprinted in 2007 and elaborated by the same authors), sparked off a spirited debate, some supportive of Firth and Wagner's contentions, and adding to them (e.g. Block, 2007b; Canagarajah, 2007; Firth & Wagner, 1998; 2007; Lantolf & Johnson, 2007; Liddicoat, 1997; Rampton, 1997) and others rejecting or resisting them (e.g. Gass, 1998; Gregg, 2006; Kasper, 1997; Long, 1997; Poulisse, 1997). Most critiques of social approaches to SLA research contend that 'the object of inquiry' in SLA is 'in large part an internal, mental process: the acquisition of new (linguistic) knowledge' (Long, 1997, p. 319), and factors which affect this psycholinguistic process. In other words, they see these new studies as outside the field, and in some cases unscientific, and based on incorrect assumptions about what cognitive science is about (Gregg, 2006). These critiques re-emphasize the essentially cognitive nature of much 'mainstream' SLA research. It is important to note, however, that there is a great deal of support for broadening the field in the directions

taken by the 'social turn', and that even critics acknowledge 'that there is room for a more sociolinguistically oriented approach to SLA' (Poulisse, 1997, p. 327).

Language learning as socialization / participation

The 'social turn' sees language acquisition as occurring through socialization or participation, and draws on a number of disciplines outside of Applied Linguistics to enrich understandings of how languages are learned. These theories are not committed to a Chomskyan concept of a dedicated language faculty or 'universal grammar' within the brain, but either challenge (Watson-Gegeo, 2004, p. 333) or leave this question open, focusing on learning as a social activity, closely identified with use, or practice, and linked with identity.

Norton/ Norton Peirce

Norton (1997, 2000, 2001) is a key theorist in SLA who finds mainstream, cognitive constructs inadequate (see also Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton & McKinney, 2011; Norton and Toohey, 2001; 2011; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pavlenko and Norton, 2006). Her studies are pioneering, drawing on feminist post-structuralist theory, and bringing a more complex understanding of identity and power to the centre of focus in SLA. She supports Spolsky's (1989, pp. 166ff.) argument that 'extensive exposure to the target language, in relevant kinds and amounts, and the opportunity to practise the target language are essential for second language learning' (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 14), but rejects Naiman et al's (1978) assumption that the amount of contact learners have with target language speakers is a function of their motivation. She points out that affective factors are often 'socially constructed in inequitable relations of power' (p. 12). Power relations affect learners' 'voice', expanding or limiting the 'right to speak' and be heard in 'target language' communities, and can 'enable or constrain the range of identities that language learners can negotiate ...' (Norton, 1997, p. 412).

Departing from the concept of motivation, Norton introduces that of 'investment', relating this term to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital'. She argues that second language learners have an 'investment' in learning the target language, believing that they will gain something (material or otherwise) through knowing it. '[T]he notion of investment ... [signals] the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it' (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p. 312). Learners may invest

in the language itself, in certain varieties of it, or in their 'own social identity, which changes across time and space' (Norton, 1997, p. 411). At certain stages in the learning process, learners will weigh up the costs of the investment against the benefits that it is likely to bring them, in certain cases withdrawing from the enterprise completely.

The men in my study certainly have a relationship to isiXhosa which is 'socially and historically constructed' (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p. 312), one which goes back through time, and is fraught with contradictory identities, such as 'friend' and 'privileged white superior'. In analysing their stories, I will use Norton's concepts to explore ways in which they manage these contradictions and ambivalences through investing in particular language registers, roles and identities.

Sociocultural theory and language socialization

Important influences on the social turn in SLA have been sociocultural theories of learning, based on the writings of Vygotsky (e.g. see Lantolf, 2000, 2006), ethnographic language socialization studies originally based in the discipline of Anthropology (e.g. Duff & Talmy, 2011; Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986; Watson-Gegeo, 2004), and the model of situated learning, or learning as participation (see Lave and Wenger, 1991; Morita, 2004; Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2001; Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000; Toohey, 2000; Toohey & Manyak, 2006; Wenger, 1998).

Sociocultural theory (SCT) combines the cognitive and the communicative aspects of language learning and use, maintaining that transformation of a person's innate capacities takes place through sociocultural mediation, by means of a variety of cultural artefacts, most important of which is language; 'SCT – L2 research ... places mediation, either by other or self, at the core of development and use' (Lantolf, 2011, p. 24). When a person has achieved a command of the 'mediational means', he / she becomes capable of more complex activity and thought. Language, for instance, gives people control of their own mental activity (Zuengler and Miller, 2006, p.39). This links with a distinction between learning, defined as what a learner can do with assistance from another within the Zone of Proximal Development⁵⁷, and development: that which can be done independently, once the learner has appropriated and internalized the assistance and the mediational means (Lantolf, 2006, p.698). In looking at the childhood

⁵⁷ The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is defined as the difference between what learners can do on their own and what they can do with assistance from a more experienced and more accomplished 'other'.

activities and relationships of the four boys in my study, I look for evidence of the kind of sociocultural mediation and cultural artefacts mentioned within this theory, although I do not use SCT for the purpose of detailed analysis of the data.

Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000), like De Courtevron (2003), Kinginger, (2004), Pavlenko (2001) and Xuemei (2007), examine autobiographies of bilingual writers, 'all of whom learned their second language as adults' (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000, p. 161). They describe second language learning as 'a struggle for participation' (p. 155), identifying phases of loss and reconstruction of identities which the immigrant writers go through as they 'translate' themselves into the environment of their new country, which is dominated by a new language. I will make use of these phases in looking at accounts of shifts which require my participants to 'translate' themselves into new environments, at particular stages of their lives. Duff & Talmy (2011, p. 98) summarize the '(second) language socialization [LS] perspective', by asserting that 'social interaction with more proficient members of a particular community centrally mediates the development of both communicative competence and knowledge of the values, practices, identities, ideologies and stances of that community'. Watson-Gegeo (2004) emphasizes, that this is a process in which the learners are active agents, and that the activities in which language learners engage are always by their very nature political, and their contexts multidimensional and complex (pp. 339-340). '[C]ontemporary LS theory,' she says, 'is concerned with participation in communities of practice and learning, more specifically the learning process which Lave and Wenger (1991) called legitimate peripheral participation' (p. 341).

Situated learning within Communities of Practice (CoPs)

People working in many different contexts have found the CoP model appealing and useful, and it has been used in many different areas, and in a number of ways. Some have criticized the theory and identified its limitations, suggesting adaptations and expansions to it. In presenting the theory, I will mention some of these, particularly as they relate to my project.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), all learning is situated, and is part of social practice, which takes place in communities of practitioners (p. 29), or 'communities of practice'. The definition of Community of Practice is somewhat fluid and ambiguous across works explicating and applying this theory, something which has been criticized. Barton & Tusting (2005) call

Wenger's (1998) concepts 'slippery and elusive', but Cox, (2005)⁵⁸, while criticizing certain ambiguities in the definition of a CoP, notes that this ambiguity could also be a source of the 'longevity and fecundity of the concept' (p. 549). Wenger's (1998) definition of a Community of Practice (CoP) is:

'a joint enterprise' characterized by 'dense relations of mutual engagement, organized around what the people are there to do', and a 'shared repertoire' (pp. 73-74), including 'routines, words ... ways of doing things ... symbols... discourse ... as well as the styles by which they express their forms of membership and their identities as members' (p. 83).

I choose to use the word 'community' more broadly, including in it Blommaert's (2005, p. 74) 'centering institutions', mentioned earlier, Wenger's 'communities of practice' (CoPs), institutions such as schools, universities and the military, as well as reified imagined communities such as 'isiXhosa-speakers', 'white English-speakers', 'white Afrikaans-speakers', and 'white South Africans', as conceptualized by the architects of Apartheid. In my analysis, I use the term Community of Practice, or CoP, where the type of community referred to fits well, according to my judgement, with Wenger's description above. Otherwise, I use the more general term 'community'. Communities in which the four men in my study participated as children were the family, the farm and the school and local groupings of the broader abstract 'communities' of white and black South Africans. The farm, as the men describe it, fits well into Wenger's Community of Practice definition (above), as will be shown later. As far as the school is concerned, the classroom curriculum is irrelevant to 'situated learning' as defined in the CoP model; the practices being acquired in schools are those of 'schooled adults' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 97). As they moved into adulthood, my participants became part of a number of new communities, such as universities, the military, their own families, nuclear and extended, and recreational and workplace CoPs. According to Wenger (1998, p. 126), CoPs often belong to bigger 'Constellations of Practice', all involved in similar practices (e.g. Eastern Cape farms). He also emphasizes that most people belong to a number of CoPs simultaneously, and that certain people take on 'broker' roles, communicating and interpreting between the members of one

⁵⁸ Cox (2005) makes a comparison of the use of key terms across four works: Lave and Wenger (1991); Wenger (1998) as well as Brown and Duguid (1991) and Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002). In the latter two works the model is applied in organizational learning and management contexts. Cox shows that terms such as community, learning, power and conflict, change, formality/informality, diversity and level are used differently across these works, as the theory / model is applied in different contexts. He is critical of this ambiguity, but also acknowledges that it could be a strength of sorts.

CoP and those of another. I will analyse accounts of language brokering in which the four men are involved.

Situated learning takes place, according to the CoP model, through legitimate peripheral participation in Communities of Practice. This consists of 'modified forms of participation that are structured to give newcomers access' to the practice of the community, which is an 'on-going social interactional process' (Wenger 1998, p. 100-102), involving 'the whole person, both acting and knowing at once' (p. 47). This process does not stop or change for the newcomers; they participate with old-timers in a version of the on-going practice. What legitimizes the newcomer's participation can be a number of things, e.g. birth, or sponsorship, or some kind of application and screening process. Access to legitimate participation in the community of amaXhosa men, for instance, is through an initiation ritual. Access to legitimate participation in a farm CoP is through ownership of the farm, appointment as a farm worker, marriage to the farmer or a farm worker, or being a child of the farmer or a farm worker, as my participants and their playmates were. Access to legitimate participation in a white school during the Apartheid years in South Africa was by virtue of age and skin colour.

One's identity as a legitimate peripheral participant enables access to learning. Without access, there is no participation; without participation, there is no learning; what newcomers learn is their practice; learning is doing. Peripherality and marginality are seen as distinct in Wenger's work (1998). While neither constitutes full participation, peripherality assumes an 'in-bound trajectory' which everybody construes as including 'full participation in its future', whereas marginality 'closes the future' (p. 166), even when it continues for a long time. An example of a marginal position is that of women who seek equal opportunity but in certain communities are constantly pushed back into 'identities of non-participation' (p. 167). I explore the men's access to participation, as well as their peripherality and marginality, at different stages of their lives. As Lave and Wenger (1991) say, 'learning implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person ... learning involves the construction of identities ... identity, knowing and social membership entail one another' (p. 53). Wenger (1998) maintains that identity, formed through playing a role and becoming a member who is familiar with the community's repertoires, is a form of competence (p. 153).

As far as language is concerned, Wenger suggests that the central process involved in practice is the negotiation of meaning, something which 'may involve language, but is not limited to it' (Wenger, 1998, p. 53). Lave and Wenger (1991) connect language with 'legitimacy of participation' rather than with 'knowledge transmission'. One has to learn to 'talk within' a practice, not to 'talk about' it (p. 109). One needs to learn to talk in order to gain access to participation and then learn how full participants talk, as well as how they 'walk, work and conduct their lives' (p. 95). Tusting (2005, p. 45), comments that 'almost all mutual engagement involves language, to a greater or lesser extent'. She believes that the role of language is inadequately acknowledged, conceptualised and analysed in the CoP theory and suggests that critical social linguistics could offer useful ways of doing this, thus extending the theory. Keating (2005, p. 109) also challenges the 'peripheral role that language and discourse play in this social approach to learning'. She criticizes the fact that Wenger presents discourse as a resource, and language as a repertoire (Wenger, 1998, p. 129), rather than seeing discourse and language as an integral part of social practice.

CoPs function in order to reproduce themselves, and also to transform themselves, according to Wenger (1988, p. 90). Newcomers participate together with old-timers, and move towards full participation, thus replacing old-timers and reproducing the CoP. In this sense, CoPs are conservative, making sure that what has been done in the past continues into the future, and that skills and repertoires are passed from one generation to the next. However, it is also possible for innovation and transformation to take place within practices, through interaction and conflict between newcomers and old-timers, and also when participants in one CoP carry skills and practices across to other CoPs in which they are also engaged, thereby introducing new practices or changing old ones. I will look for instances where my participants conserve and reproduce practices and values from the farm CoP, and also instances where innovation takes place through conflict or when they move with their practices, values and language repertoires into contexts beyond the farm.

According to Wenger (1998), people participate in communities primarily through engagement, but can also participate through imagination and alignment (pp. 173-187). We can participate in imagined communities, and take on identities as members, through reading, writing and other creative and artistic activity, or through projecting hopes and dreams of membership of a community in the future. We can also participate through alignment in a community which is

too large and broadly dispersed for direct engagement (e.g. the Free Market Foundation, or the Endangered Wild Life Trust), through aligning ourselves with its ideals and goals.

Norton (2001) (also Kanno & Norton, 2003; Pavlenko and Norton, 2006) makes use of Wenger's (1998) concepts of participation (and non-participation) in communities, both actual and imagined, relating Wenger's model to Anderson's (1991) term 'imagined communities', first used to describe nations, 'because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (p. 6). These concepts are used by Norton and associates to enhance understanding of 'how learners' affiliation with imagined communities ... affect[s] their learning trajectories' (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p. 242). Norton (2001) uses the concept to explain why adult immigrant learners withdraw from their English classes. Kinginger (2004) discusses the case of Alice, an American girl who reconstructs her identity in French, as a consequence of constructing an idealized France as her 'imagined community'. I look in the men's stories for instances of engagement in communities beyond the farm through imagination and alignment, and how this relates to their lives and their language learning trajectories.

The issue of power, closely linked with identity, is something which is inadequately developed in the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998). The CoP model of learning can be seen, particularly in Lave and Wenger (1991), as a development of the notion of apprenticeship. The authors examine a number of 'apprenticeship' situations: midwives in Mexico; tailors in West Africa; butchers in Britain, and alcoholics within 'Alcoholics Anonymous'. They comment that the reputation of the apprenticeship system has been tarnished by its association with feudal relationships in Europe (p. 62) and with situations where exploitation of apprentices was rife, noting that 'relations of power exist in every concrete case' (p. 64), some more exploitative and some more egalitarian. According to Wenger (1998), the relationships in a community are not always harmonious, but may include 'pleasure and pain, amassment and deprivation, ease and struggle ...' (p. 77) and CoPs can be 'the locus of resistance to oppression and the locus of the reproduction of its conditions' (p. 85). Apart from this, he makes little reference to the power relationships which are implicit in every CoP, failing to keep a promise made in Lave and Wenger (1991) to include 'unequal relations of power ... more systematically in [the] analysis' (p. 42). Cox (2005, p. 529) says that power and the potential for conflict within communities and beyond are inadequately incorporated in the CoP theory, and calls this a 'critical failing'. Keating

(2005, p. 43) observes that Wenger's model does not 'seek explicitly to understand and challenge the role of discourse in perpetuating broader relations in contemporary society ... particularly relations of inequality'. She also critiques the Wenger model as a 'fairly static' model of communities, offering little insight into the inherent instability of social practice, and 'broader processes of social change' (Keating, 2005, pp. 44-45). Barton & Hamilton (2005, p. 14) make the vital point that 'framings provided by theories of language, literacy, discourse and power [such as those on which this study is based] are central to understanding the dynamics of Communities of Practice, but they are not made explicit in Wenger's formulations'. My chosen theoretical orientation has provided this essential framing for the CoP model, an appropriate one for many aspects of this study. Roles and identities are strongly linked to issues of institutional power in the post-colonial and Apartheid context in South Africa, and specifically in the farm CoP, which is in many ways feudal, and conservative. This means that Wenger's useful theoretical model, inadequately developed in these essential ways, needs to be underpinned by post-structuralist conceptions of power, discourse and identity.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have justified the choice of a post-structuralist framework (Foucault, 1975; 1976; Weedon, 1997; 2004) for the examination of identity within the narratives of my four participants. I have described post-structuralism as a theory which sees identity as multiple and conflicted, constructed through discourse within unequal relations of power. I have shown how a post-structuralist framework therefore has productive potential for analysing the situation of my participants, whose society is fragmented on the basis of race, power and wealth into polarized groups, but who have language repertoires which can facilitate communication across societal divisions. Post-structuralists recognize narrative as one of the tools which people use to attempt to create coherence in their lives and identities amidst the flux of existence (Hall, 1992a); I therefore examine the men's narrative discourse for indications of how they construct their identities and search for coherence as they live out their lives in Eastern Cape society, which they experience through the multiple lenses of their languages.

I then described how I use related theories from post-colonial studies of race and hybridity, such as those of Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1992a; 1992b; 2000), augmented by Bakhtin's work⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Not post-colonial

(1981), to look at how my participants position themselves with respect to the black and white spaces of their Apartheid context. I use post-colonial and post-structuralist studies of discourses on race and 'whiteness' to give insight into the discourses of my participants, whose narratives relating to their isiXhosa competence deal extensively with experiences and thoughts concerning relationships with isiXhosa-speaking people, and therefore relate to race.

The second part of the chapter explained my choice of the theories and approaches characterized as 'the social turn' in Second Language Acquisition (Block, 2003) to explore the process of language acquisition described by my participants. I opted for theories of situated learning and language learning and identity because the data which I gathered addressed the social setting within which the men learned isiXhosa rather than their cognitive language learning processes. I found 'mainstream' approaches to SLA inappropriate to my task because they focus primarily on the cognitive processes of second language learning in classroom settings and tend to assume a monolingual 'norm'. In contrast, the four men in my study have no clear 'first' language, learned language in naturalistic settings, and experience multilingualism as 'the norm'. Importantly, I chose theories from the 'social turn' because they have strong links to post-structuralism, focusing on power and identity, factors which are clearly important in this context and relevant to this study, but which receive little emphasis within the 'mainstream' paradigm. I describe how I will use Norton's (1997, 2000, 2001, 2011) theoretical approach, which elucidates ways in which identity and power relations in society constrain or enable language learning in particular contexts, to analyse situations in which my participants use agency to invest (or disinvest) in particular identities and language registers which facilitate participation in particular communities.

I also described in some detail ways in which I will use the model of situated learning in Communities of Practice explicated by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998). I justified my choice of this theory by pointing out that the farms where my participants grew up conform in many ways to Wenger's description of CoPs. I will make use of Wenger's distinction between marginality and peripherality, his insights into the conservative and innovative aspects of CoPs, and the three modes of belonging which Wenger describes - engagement, imagination and alignment - to illuminate my participants' positioning in relation to communities in which they participate, and ways in which the men's backgrounds and language competences affect their lives. I have highlighted the fact that Wenger is not post-structuralist and places little emphasis

on power, noting that this tension within my overall theoretical framework has been addressed by inserting Wenger's model into the overall post-structuralist framework, which emphasises dimensions of power and discourse.

The next chapter describes the methodology that I adopted to carry out the research, and gives an introduction to the four participants, as well as myself.

Chapter 3: Methodology and introduction to the participants

Introduction

In this chapter I give a rationale for my choice of Life History methodology, giving a brief overview of the field and positioning myself within it with respect to the theoretical approach as well as data collection and analysis systems. I then give an account of the process of the research, describing the selection of participants, interview procedures and the interviewer-interviewee relationship, transcription conventions, ethical considerations, and the methods and process of the analysis of the data. Finally, I introduce each of the participants, within their socio-political and historical context. The table in **Appendix 2** aligns the participants' lives more precisely with historical events through which they lived.

Methodology

Life History methodology and rationale

The field of Life History research (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Hatch & Wisniewsky, 1995; Tierney, 1993, 2000) is a complex one, closely related to and overlapping with the fields of Biography and Autobiography studies (e.g. Brockmeier, 2000; Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001; Freeman, M, 1998; 2001; Pavlenko, 2007), within the more general areas of Oral History (e.g. Portelli, 1991) and Narrative research (e.g. Bruner, 2001; 2002; Clandenin & Connelly, 2000; Cortazzi, 1993; Gee, 1991, 1997; Labov, 1972; Linde, 1993; Ochs, 1997; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Riessman, 1993; Schiffren, D, 1996).

As Barkhuizen (2011, p. 2) says, 'what is meant by narrative and narrative research is far from agreed upon'. Narrative research can be informed by a number of different theoretical positions, such as Phenomenology (e.g. Clough, 2002; Ricoeur, 1980), and Dialogism (Bakhtin, 1986; Duranti, 1986), but Life History research itself often (though not invariably) makes use of a post-modernist/post-structuralist framework (e.g. Pavlenko, 2007; Tierney, 1993). Narrative methods are used within a variety of disciplines, such as History, the Social Sciences (Education, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology), Cultural and Literary studies, and for diverse purposes, e.g. the collection of historical data, therapy and the study of identity. Sociological, Sociolinguistic, Psychological, Literary, and Anthropological (all described in Cortazzi, 1993)

approaches to the analysis of narrative data can be adopted, as well as post-structuralist discourse analysis, such as that used in Discursive Psychology studies (e.g. Wetherell and Potter, 1992; Durrheim and Dixon, 2000).

Goodson and Sikes (2001) explain that a life story is an individual's account of his or her lived experience over time, and that this becomes a life history when located in the processes and power-dynamics of its socio-historical context. Life History research acknowledges that the relationship between individual lives and this socio-historical and political context is crucial. This is why Life History research itself (as opposed to other forms of narrative research which are located within a variety of paradigms) is often associated with post-structuralism, and concerned with relationships between language, subjectivity, social organization and power. It is, then, an appropriate methodological framework for my study, which examines the lives of the four participants within the polarized and power-laden socio-political and historical context of South Africa's Eastern Cape Province, analysing contexts in which they acquired isiXhosa and ways in which their context, their subjectivity and their isiXhosa competence impact upon one another.

Personal narrative is one of the techniques individuals use to construct coherence in the midst of the ambivalence created by multiple and fluid subject identities, both ascribed and assumed, pulling them in different directions. I examine the dialogic discourse which links the past to the present in my participants' accounts (Bakhtin, 1981), in order to identify ways in which they position themselves and other actors in their narratives (Davies and Harre, 1990), in their attempts to create coherence and identity, as well as ways in which they acquire the isiXhosa language. As I do this, I link aspects of the data to the theory outlined in Chapter 2.

In eliciting the stories, I use biographic interviewing methods developed primarily within the Social Sciences (Wengraf, 2001). In analysing the data, I rely mostly on post-structuralist discourse analysis, often used in discursive psychology studies (e.g. Durrheim and Dixon, 2000; Wetherell and Potter, 1992), examining the ideological views of experience expressed in the 'common sense' views of 'truth' constructed in their stories (Kress, 1985, p. 10). 'Whiteness' studies and discursive psychology (Durrheim and Dixon, 2005; Frankenberg, 1993; Steyn, 2001; Wetherell and Potter, 1992) have provided me with frameworks and precedents for examining the stories for discourses related specifically to race and 'whiteness'.

Conducting the research

Sample

My four participants were part of a group of respondents to an earlier piece of survey-type research, where I worked with a 'snowball' sample⁶⁰ of 24 white people fluent in isiXhosa in the 'Border' area⁶¹ of the Eastern Cape, 71% of whom were men (Botha, 2007). I decided to focus only on men, and chose those who, in the earlier research, had judged themselves to have 'very good' or 'excellent' oral competence in isiXhosa. I introduced variation by choosing men from varying social class and occupational groups, determined largely by their education; two of the men have a tertiary education, and the other two do not.

Trustworthiness and ethical Concerns

It is a commonly held view that concepts such as reliability, validity, causality and generalizability are problematic, or need to be re-interpreted, in Narrative and Life History research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.184; Elliott, 2005, p. 22; Hatch & Wisniewsky, 1995, pp. 6-8; Lieblich et al, 1998, pp. 172-173). Lincoln (cited in Hatch & Wisniewsky, 1995, pp. 6-8) asserts that these concepts 'are simply not in the same universe' as narrative research. Within a post-structuralist paradigm, where 'truth' is not unitary, but shifting and multiple, constructed through discourse moment by moment, in different contexts, and between different players, this is certainly true. If the four participants were interviewed in another context, by another researcher, the outcomes would certainly not be the same, even if they covered similar ground. And although there are common themes in all four men's narratives, and the stories suggest commonalities in the experience of boys growing up on farms in this context, 'valid' generalizations cannot be made from them about multilingual white men in the Eastern Cape who have isiXhosa competence.

Suggesting alternative concepts which are at the heart of determining quality in narrative research, Lincoln maintains that '...mutual respect, on-going relationships, and trust are some of the basic commitments of this kind of research posture' (Hatch & Wisniewsky, 1995, p.7). Hatch and Wisniewsky (1995, p.7) emphasise truth telling, fairness, commitment and justice, as

⁶⁰ I began my research by asking people I knew who had fluency in isiXhosa if they would respond to my questionnaire. I then expanded my sample by asking the initial respondents to refer me to others.

⁶¹ See page 19.

important principles for the narrative researcher and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasise 'on-going reflection', which they call 'wakefulness' (p.184). These have all been important in my research process, which began with my efforts to establish a relationship of trust and mutual respect with the participants, and continued as I tried to record their stories as faithfully as possible, and craft an analysis which had an authentic and traceable connection both with the participants' words and intentions (as far as I could determine them), and with the interpretive paradigms which I had chosen.

In acknowledging my serious responsibility towards each of the men who told me his story, I negotiated carefully with the four participants, before embarking on the interviews, being as open as possible about all aspects of the research process and purpose. I shared with them the nature and aims of the research, and the intended form of the final product (a doctoral dissertation, and possible journal articles). I made it clear how much of their time I would need, what kind of information I would like them to share with me, and that they were free to withdraw from the process at any stage, if they wished. I made sure that the confidentiality of the process was clarified from the start, together with their consent to record their stories on a dictaphone. We agreed that I would show them transcripts of the first two interviews once they were complete, giving them time to scrutinize them before the third interview, so that they could comment, correct or add to what they had said. I also promised to give them access to the final product. I discussed the nature of 'the research bargain, making it clear that I hoped to gain my doctorate and some research articles from the research, but that that in terms of research practice and procedures, I could offer them no material rewards for telling their story, though they might well enjoy the process and gain insights from it. I offered to cover any costs that they might incur by attending the interviews (e.g. travelling costs), and did this in one case.

An information sheet and consent forms (Appendices 3 and 4) formalised these agreements. These and other documents, as well as descriptions of the proposed research process, were scrutinized and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand, where I was registered for the first two years of my studies, and were adapted to satisfy the requirements of the Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town, when I moved my registration, following my supervisor, in 2009.

I kept an audit trail of the research process, and filed all documentation, as well as the recordings made. I did my best to maintain good relationships and communication with all the participants, something which was not difficult, as I found all of them very congenial, and was fascinated by their stories.

Researcher as participant

While I referred very little to my own story in interviewing the four men, I acknowledge that, as Wengraf (2001, p. 106) says, my “personal reality” and social identity combine[d] to be the “instrument” with which I carried out the interview research. The men’s stories and the way they told them were affected by my purposes, the way I elicited their stories and responded to them, by our relationship, and also by the context within which they were told (Lieblich et al, 1998, p. 8). The narratives which my participants told me, a white English-speaking South African woman descended from Christian missionaries, who works at an academic institution, is married to a man with an Afrikaner background, and grew up in a rural KwaZulu-Natal village, must have differed in many subtle, and maybe not so subtle, ways from the narratives they would have told someone else, in another circumstance. In Barkhuizen’s (2011, p. 3) words, ‘I was not merely passively listening to the ... participants’ stories, I was actively involved in constructing them’. The men and I were co-authors of the stories (Duranti, 1986).

Goodson & Sikes (2001) point to the importance of the researcher’s being the sort of person that others want to talk to, and recommend Rogerian person-centred skills as helpful: ‘listen, reflect back, ask questions which encourage further reflection and [be] non-judgemental’ (p. 26). Wengraf (2001), who outlines procedures for what he calls a Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method (BNIM), recommends that after the initial question has been posed, the interviewer limits responses to ‘facilitative noises and non-verbal support’ (p. 113). He indicates that behind this lies the Gestalt principle, ‘which requires the spontaneous pattern of the speaker to complete itself fully and so be fully exposed for analysis’ (Wengraf, 2001, p. 113).

While I attempted to follow this advice in the interviews, hoping to create an empathic environment where the participants felt free to express themselves fully, it is clearly problematic to think that, as interviewer, one does not influence outcomes. Conscious of this, Ruth Frankenberg (1993) deliberately adopted a much more engaged approach in her research with white women in North America:

Rather than maintaining the traditionally distant, apparently objective, and so-called blank-faced research persona, I positioned myself as explicitly involved in the questions, at times sharing with interviewees either information about my own life or elements of my own analysis of racism as it developed through the research process (p. 30).

Goodson and Sikes debate this practice of qualitative researchers 'writing themselves into' their research' (2001, p. 35), (or talking themselves into it, as Frankenberg did), some claiming that it enhances rigour by making possible biases explicit. In an attempt to do this, I wrote up my own 'life history', using a similar framework to that which I asked my participants to follow. I also tried to interrogate, as Wengraf (2001, p. 94) recommends, my 'own prejudices, stereotypes, phantasies, hopes and fears, ideological and emotional desires and purposes', and recorded some of these, as well as observations about my 'conscious and unconscious interest in the field' (Wengraf, 2001, p. 94) in a journal, which I kept somewhat sporadically. This process played an important clarifying role, 'creating a space in which the data of the research project [could] take issue with' (Wengraf, 2001, p. 94) my own half-conscious purposes, desires and assumptions.

Although I opted for the person-centred approach in the interviews, rather than inserting myself and my views as Frankenberg did, I am conscious that there were moments where my attitudes and feelings came across somewhat more explicitly than I had planned. I identified quite strongly with some of the experiences and feelings which the men recounted at times, and could not resist, on occasion, expressing strong agreement or even starting to narrate a parallel experience. In spite of my intentions of retaining an impartial stance, there were clearly occasions when I showed support for the participants' views, and I may, on occasion, have conveyed a sense of disapproval. I have tried to keep track of this in my analysis, and have included myself in the introductions to the participants (see end of this chapter), in order to make explicit the importance of my role, and some of the discourses and ideologies which I am inevitably embroiled in, by my positioning in South African society.

Interview process

I attempted to make sure that the time and space in which the interviews were held allowed for undisturbed interaction between us in a quiet and congenial environment. In some cases, the participants came to my home, where I used my husband's office, or our lounge. Where this was not possible I arranged for the use of other facilities for my interviews. For one interview,

we met in the participant's own workplace. Though there were, in this interview, one or two interruptions, they did not seem to interfere with the flow of the narrative in any serious way.

In interviewing the participants, I followed, with one or two deviations, Wengraf's (2001) three-interview structure (p. 113 ff.). This system 'minimizes (for as long as possible) the interviewer's concerns ... to allow the fullest possible expression of the concerns, the systems of value and significance, the life-world, of the interviewee' (Wengraf, 2001, p. 69). In the first session, the researcher poses one well-formulated 'narrative-seeking question', and listens to and records the narrative with the minimal responses described above. Directly after this first interview, the researcher makes self-debriefing notes, 'free-associating' and writing down all that she remembers of the session, including content, feeling and process, noting also her own responses, things which were striking or issues she would like to know more about. This is done after all three interviews; it serves a practical purpose if the tape is lost or the recorder does not work, but also serves as an initial re-ordering of the material and a way to record non-linguistic data. The researcher reviews these notes, the recording, or a transcript, (if it can be prepared in time), and highlights topics or themes. She prepares questions on these topics which are designed to elicit narrative. These are the questions used in the second session. No question is raised about a topic not spoken of in the first session, and the questions are in the same sequence as the initial narrative; this is to ensure, once again, that the researcher remains in the frame of reference of the interviewee. The researcher once again takes up a Rogerian non-directive counselling pose, allowing silences and mirroring strong emotions, if they are expressed. Session three is more directed; it may include 'story-eliciting' questions similar to those used in Session 2, but may also include more direct questions, even some unrelated to the narrative, reflecting the interviewer's concerns and research questions.

Before the beginning of the interviews, I had an initial meeting with each participant in order to describe and explain the research process to them. All of them were willing to sign the contract and three of the four did so almost immediately, although I gave them the option of taking it away and thinking about it before signing. I asked the participants to commit to 3 meetings (1 ½ – 2 hours each)⁶². The time would be exceeded, or the number of interviews increased, only at their request, should they feel that there were important aspects of their stories which they had

⁶² In fact, most of the interviews lasted less than an hour, and none exceeded an hour and a half.

omitted and still wished to tell me. I also gave them the option of giving me additional information in written form. Brendon gave me some of his writing, but none of the others took me up on this. The Wengraf framework was implemented as follows:

Interview 1 (see Appendix 5 for the interview template I began with): I asked the participants to give me an overview of their lives, focusing on milestones such as starting school, moving house, starting a new job, employment history, etc., and relating it particularly to their ability to speak isiXhosa. I told them that I would record this on a dictaphone. I said that I would not interrupt them, except to clarify details, but I might ask a couple of additional questions once they were finished.

Once they had outlined their life story, I asked them to describe in some detail (paint a picture of) the situation within which they became speakers of isiXhosa: the environment, the people and relationships with them, the kinds of activities and experiences they engaged in, and what it was like for them. I said, once again, that I would not interrupt them, except to clarify details, but I might ask a couple of additional questions once they were finished.

At the end of this meeting, I reminded them of the nature of the next interview (see below). Immediately after Session 1, I wrote a 'self-debriefing', following Wengraf's model (2001, pp. 137-138).

Interview 2: In this interview I asked participants to focus on a few key incidents / experiences, involving the use or understanding of isiXhosa, which stood out in their memories, and/or which affected or changed them and their feelings about life and the world around them. This could include experiences which they saw as positive as well as experiences which they saw as negative. I asked them to tell these as stories, as vividly as possible, while I recorded them on a dictaphone. I said that I would not interrupt them, except to clarify details, but I would probably ask a couple of additional questions once they had finished. Examples of questions which I had initially thought might be useful are given in the interview schedule in Appendix 5.

Most participants found my request to relate key incidents quite difficult to respond to. I therefore went on to ask them to expand on certain aspects of their original story related in Interview 1. In doing this, I followed Wengraf's advice (2001, p. 120), ensuring that every question asked was a 'story-eliciting' one, that all questions arose out of the participant's

original narrative, and that they were in the same sequence as the original narrative. Interview schedules for the four second interviews are attached in Appendix 6. I was interested to see that a number of the original questions which I had planned were in fact reflected in the 'story-eliciting' questions arising out of their initial narrative.

After the second interview, I once again followed the 'self-debriefing' process.

Interview 3: The third meeting took place once the transcription of the first two interviews was complete, and the participants had had a chance to read them through. At this meeting, they had a chance to respond to what they had read in the transcripts, and to correct, clarify or add to their story, any important elements which they felt they had left out, or ways in which their perceptions had changed since the previous meeting. They also had a chance to reflect on their story and the experience of telling it within the context of the interviews, and its meaning for them. I also took the opportunity of asking more 'story-eliciting' type questions, this time basing them on Interview 2, but also asked a couple of other questions unrelated to their stories and related more directly to my research questions. Most of these were questions from my original list which had not come up in the questions based on the stories. In conclusion, I asked them a question relating quite directly to how they saw themselves (See Appendices 5 and 7).

Once this interview was complete, I thanked them sincerely for their part in the research, and we parted – quite reluctantly on my part, for I felt that quite a bond had developed between me and each of these four men who had shared their stories so generously with me. I promised to let them know once the thesis was completed. I followed the 'self-debriefing' process once again, after the third interview.

Once I began the data analysis process, I realised that a theme which occurred in all the other interviews, namely military service, did not feature in George's story. I therefore asked if he would come and see me for a fourth short interview, when I asked him about this.

The interviews with George were initially carried out as a pilot, and once it became apparent that the process worked, these transcripts formed part of the data for the research itself. The interviewing process extended over a period of two years, from December 2007 until November 2009, and the additional interview with George took place in early 2011. Transcription took

place as soon as possible after each interview, and analysis was on-going, parallel with the interviewing process, as well as after all the interviews were completed.

Transcription⁶³

In transcribing my data, I retained most of the conventions of written language, such as punctuation and paragraphing, in order to make the transcription of spoken language into writing more readable, and to convey my understanding of the spoken words.

Commas and full-stops, etc., are used as usual to indicate pauses and inflections in written discourse.

Paragraphs are numbered to facilitate reference to particular parts of the extract.

Additional conventions used in transcribing the spoken data are as follows:

//	Indicates overlapping speech
<u>Underlining</u>	Shows word stressed
Re:ally	Colon (one, or more than one) shows a lengthened sound
[pause]	used to indicate a noticeable but untimed pause, longer than 2 seconds
-	Used to indicate a short untimed pause or break in speech
[raises hand] [inaudible]	square brackets used for transcriber's comments, mainly to include additional significant information, for example the physical movements or gestures of participants.
<i>Laughs</i>	laughter indicated in italics
<i>Mens</i> (people)	Italics indicate a word spoken in Afrikaans or isiXhosa with an English translation in brackets. This is sometimes placed in a footnote, where an extract of the transcript appears in the text of the dissertation.
(...)	Parts of data omitted

⁶³ This system has been adapted from McKinney (2003)

{kids}	indicates a word which has replaced the original word, perhaps because the original word was not clear, or to protect the identity of the participant
Name:	indicates the name of speaker
xx(Liz: Mm)xx	Minimal responses are included in brackets in the main speaker's texts

Methods of analysis

As indicated above, my participants' life stories were the starting point for analysing the way they constructed their identities and examining how the acquisition and use of isiXhosa and the men's sense of identity interacted with one another. In doing this, I made use of the theory presented in Chapter 2, as well as post-structuralist discourse analysis, and some concepts from narrative analysis.

Post-structuralist discourse analysis

I found that discursive psychology and post-colonial studies (referred to in this study as post-structuralist discourse analysis) had more to offer me in terms of appropriate ways of analysing this discourse than did narrative research. Wetherell and Potter (1992, pp. 94-95) use this system of analysis in analysing discourses on race. Attempting to clarify what is meant by 'construction' in the context of an analysis of discourse, they refer to the post-structuralist interest in 'the way forms of talk and writing give an effect of realism', and show what is 'normal' or 'common sense' for the speaker or writer. This became a very strong focus of my discourse analysis.

Wetherell and Potter (1992) explain that the 'realism' in certain forms of talk is developed through familiarity, over time, and that a particular discourse is often designed to undermine another competing discourse, 'against some absent Other' (Wetherell and Potter, 1992, pp. 95-96). This is specifically so, of course, with racist discourse. As the Eastern Cape context, past and present, has been dominated by issues of race, and the stories were focused on the men's fluency in isiXhosa, and the kinds of relationship this enabled, my interest and much of the

men's discourse related in some way to race. This meant that Wetherell and Potter's work (1992) and other work on 'white discourse' was useful in my analysis. Frankenberg, (1993), Steyn, (2001), and Durrheim and Dixon, (2005) identify types of discourse which are typical in the conversation and narratives of white people, Frankenberg's study focusing on white women in the USA, and the other writers focusing on white South Africans, post-Apartheid. In Chapter 2 I have described three dominant white racist discourses: 'the white master-narrative', which shows forms of essentialized racism; 'colour-and-power evasive' discourse, and the associated 'culturalist racist' discourse; and 'race-cognizant' discourse (Frankenberg's terms). I have extended these categories to describe certain kinds of white discourse which I have identified in my data and elaborate on these in Chapter 5.

In describing the features of 'colour-blind' or 'colour-and-power evasive' discourse, Durrheim and Dixon (2005) identify particular stylistic features: 'ambivalence and the use of denials, and the disclaimer' (p. 124); 'equivocal' expressions, 'peppered with conditional and limiting terms and qualifiers'. Stereotypes are softened by being 'expressed in a covert or implicit manner ... not explicitly tied to race' (p. 128). There is 'support for the principle of desegregation but concern for the way in which it is implemented' (p. 129), or about practicalities. This allows people to seem non-racist while being opposed to integration. Wetherell and Potter (1992) note similar inconsistencies: shifts between arguments based on principle and those based on practice, between liberal and conservative values (p. 92). I examined the data for features such as these.

Narrative analysis

While I did not make use of many of the diverse tools of narrative analysis, I did use Labov's (1972, p. 363) structural model of narrative, according to which a narrative usually has six elements: Abstract; Orientation; Complicating Action; Evaluation; Resolution and Coda. Elliott (2005, p. 43) points out that the evaluation is the part which demonstrates what meaning events have for the narrator; what the point of the story is. This model therefore assisted me in identifying key sections of the narrative.

I also made use of the concept of narrative time. Ricoeur (1980) describes how narrative activity inverts natural time order, bringing past and present together, because the recollection of the story is governed by its way of ending. Narrators, 'interested in projecting an image' rather than

constructing history, 'shape' their stories in different ways (Portelli, 1991, pp. 64-70), often moving from past to present and back again in cyclic or spiral fashion (Freeman, 1998, p. 42), creating cyclical, and sometimes linear or fragmentary time-lines (Brockmeier, 2000, p. 53). I identify and discuss this kind of phenomenon in the stories of two of the participants.

Analysis process

I will now summarize the process I used to analyse the data, giving examples of some of the stages in the process. These stages were not always distinct, and I moved back and forth between them.

Stage 1: When I began my analysis, and throughout my reading of the transcripts, I had a number of fairly general questions in mind, arising out of my research questions:

- How do the men see themselves, in relation to their society, and particularly in relation to isiXhosa speakers and their communications with them?
- How is the construction of their subjectivity impacted upon by their ability to understand and speak with isiXhosa speakers, and the situations in which they do this?
- What are the recurring themes and discourses in different individual stories?
- How does the narrative reflect change over time in themes and discourses, as the individual passed through formative life changes and experiences, and as the socio-political situation changed?
- How do these individuals incorporate into their identities contradictions and ambivalence resulting from the "different cultures, histories, traditions and social attitudes" (Kaschula, 1989, p. 104) and power relations which underpin the languages they use?
- How did they learn / acquire isiXhosa? What were the circumstances which facilitated this process?
- Do their stories throw light on what it means, for the person, to be a South African? Does their isiXhosa competence affect their level of commitment to the Eastern Cape / South Africa?
- Are there implications for the learning of African languages and for nation-building generally in South Africa today?

Stage 2: I divided the transcript into numbered sections and made an initial coding, using Labov's model (1972, p. 363). Sections involving evaluation became the main focus of my attention.

Stage 3: I looked for recurring themes in the participants' stories, and for themes which occurred across the stories (e.g. friendship with isiXhosa speakers; respect; initiation; playing the middle man; changing sense of self; separation). Like Wetherell & Potter (1992, p. 100), I searched for themes arising from: 'the concerns which had stimulated the study in the first place...; the powerful and vivid experience of interviewing ... and from reading the individual transcripts'. I tried to read as openly as possible, feeling towards themes as I went over the recordings and transcripts again and again.

Stage 4: Following post-structuralist discourse analysis, I searched the narrative for indications of what was 'normal', 'natural' or 'common-sense' (as well as what is 'abnormal' and senseless) for the person.

An extract from my annotated transcript of an interview with Riaan, where he speaks of the separation from his black friends when he went to school, illustrates Stages 2 - 4:

Section no.	Labov codes	Transcript	Comments / Themes
47	OCE	No, no it wasn't // ja, it wasn't nice, especially at the end of weekends, or the end of school holidays. (Liz: Mm) Remember we didn't go to the same schools, (Liz: Sure) so it was a – You played now the whole holiday, or long weekend, or whatever, and now you had to split up again. But it didn't affect us because we knew we would get together again. (Liz: Mm) So it wasn't – it didn't affect – me that much. (Liz: Mm) It didn't really – it wasn't – it wasn't a big matter. (Liz: Mm) It was usual, life was normal; //life was (Liz: ja //you learned to take it for granted // that that was the way it was) Ja. // That's the way it was, ja. That was the system and we didn't know about another system. (Liz: No. There was a system that because you were white you went off in another direction.) Ja, I went off to the school in town, and my friends went to the farm school. (Liz: Mm)	<p><i>Separation</i></p> <p>Two sides to this answer: acknowledgement that it was not nice, but also that it was 'normal' to them. This was the way life was.</p>

48	CE	<p>But I often went – because the holidays (Liz: Mm) – didn't necessarily co-incide, I often went to school with them. (Liz: Mm, mm, mm) Or even just play-time, or something like that. 'Cause the farm school wasn't far from where we stayed. (Liz: Ja) Otherwise I would have been alone on the farm. (Liz: Ja) So I was there. (Liz: Yes <i>both laugh</i>) And vice versa too. (Liz: Ja?) My friends came to come and play with me – Mlungisi and them came to come and play with me – during school time – when when their school was on and I was on leave or vice versa. (Liz: Mm) We tried to play and so on. It was like normal times.</p>	<p>Another kind of 'normal' – the days when they played together and worked together. They tried to 'normalize' things by being together as much and as often as possible.</p>
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Stage 5: I looked in the stories for links with my theoretical framework: for references to power relationships between the people and groups in their stories; for features of white discourses in their stories; for references to the 'languages' of their heteroglossia; for contexts and processes which led to language acquisition; for indications of space and boundaries; for ways in which the men constructed themselves and others - people and behaviours they identified with and distanced themselves from, references to strong influences in their lives, principles they claimed to live by.

The following are extracts are from an early summary analysis of Brendon's narrative:

Boundaries

- The house and the verandah (childhood) (2.62)
- Family fear that he will take a black lover? (2.61)
- Visiting father with black friends (adulthood) (2.74)
- After father's death; boundary gone with his passing; he represented that boundary; other family members don't carry the same 'threat' (3)
- Learned to set up boundaries so that he doesn't get exploited. (2.88)

His life's task (seen in his discourse)

- To 'shift' from abnormal to normal
- From alienation to connectedness (1.63)
- From separate to shared spaces
- To go full circle (1.26, 30, 105; 3) / bring it together (1.27, 80, 81) / reconstruct (1.28) / recapture (1.28) / get back (1.44, 53, 54, 61) / re-position (1.49, 59) / re-invigorate / resurrect (1.51)

Power relations

- Beginning of school (especially the primary school; also the high school) (3)
- Coercion to move into Afrikaans at Primary school (3)
- Boss position (capitalistic) – delineation of work relations (something he hasn't experienced) (3)
- Subconscious coercion in terms of what language you use and when (3)
- The draft

Stage 6: I then selected data for in-depth analysis. I read and re-read the selected extracts, making notes and drafts, being sensitive not only to what the person said, but how he said it: hesitations, laughs, pauses, tone, emotion, volume, contrasts, choice of words and images.

An early draft analysis of the passage extracted from Riaan's story in the table on the previous page follows:

Normality (1)

In several places, including this one, he constructs himself as someone who is 'tough-minded'; who doesn't allow himself to be overcome by sentiment ('it didn't affect – me that much (...) it wasn't – it wasn't a big matter'); who adjusts to realities which may not be very palatable but which have to be accepted. He also presents himself as frank and honest, someone who is not going to pretend to emotions which he does not feel; he struggles a bit here to express the fact that in those days, for him, this was 'normal'; people were separated according to race. They had to adjust, and luckily for him, he always had another time of being together to look forward to.

Normality (2)

In this part of his narrative, he tells how he compensated for the separation by getting together with his friends even during school times, at times when holidays didn't co-incide. Because his parents allowed him this freedom, he could visit them at their school, and take part in the activities there. Perhaps realizing there was an imbalance in his favour here, he adds that it was reciprocal; his friends came to play with him at times. This part does not quite make sense, and he stammers a bit in telling it; perhaps because it was not completely vice versa; his friends obviously could not come to his school, though they could play at his home.

'Otherwise', he says, 'I would have been alone on the farm'. Here he gives a glimpse of the loneliness he felt when he could not be with 'Mlungisi and them', the essential isolation which had resulted in his

being entrusted to the care of this black community. Their companionship restored life to 'normality' for him; the normality of playing and working 'together'.

Stage 7: I looked for common themes across the stories, and organising principles by which I could arrange my analysis. I gradually put together frameworks for three data analysis chapters.

Stage 8: As I wrote these chapters, I moved backward and forward from theory to data, trying to refine the in-depth analysis of particular extracts, as well as the coherence of the analysis as a whole. Through this process, repeated over time, I eventually developed not only three chapters, but also a set of tentative conclusions.

Introduction to the participants

What follows is a brief introduction to each of the men whom I interviewed, outlining the main events of their lives, and giving something of the person's own assessment of himself and those who have influenced him, as well as my own personal impression of the person, in very brief terms⁶⁴. After introducing the four men, I introduce myself, in similar vein, and then make some comments on all five participants. Appendix 2 gives more specifics of the historical and political events through which the participants lived. I deal with the four men in order of age, starting with the eldest, and end with my own story. In order to preserve the anonymity of the participants, they and their friends and family members are all referred to by pseudonyms and place-names replaced with a letter (e.g. B-town).

Ernie

Ernie is the only child of his parents, and the grandson of one of the first German settlers who arrived in the Eastern Cape in 1858. He was born and grew up on the original settler farm, and married a wife of German settler heritage, as his father had before him.

Born in 1945, three years before the Nationalist party came to power, he spent his early years playing with Xhosa boys on and around the farm, and started school as a day scholar at the local village school in the year that he turned six. The languages he knew at that age were German and isiXhosa, and the school was English medium and taught Afrikaans as second language, in line with the policy of the time. Seven years later, he moved to a boys' high school in the nearby

⁶⁴ This should be seen as completely distinct from the findings of the research.

town, still travelling to school and back home every day, and keeping up his contact with the farm and his farming activities, as well as his childhood friends. One of his friends was a black boy of about his age, who could not hear or speak. He stayed with the family, having sought refuge with them from abusive relatives. From the age of 10 or 11, Ernie was a farmer in his own right, taking responsibility for his own livestock (turkeys and sheep).

In 1964, he matriculated and began work as a clerk on the South African Railways, a job which he soon settled into, enjoyed and excelled at. He continued to stay at home and involve himself with the work routines of the farm. He was conscripted for three months' basic military training at around about this time. In 1967, the family farm was expropriated for the consolidation of the Ciskei homeland. The family was paid out, and purchased another farm in the area. They were expropriated again within a space of eight years, the family being forced to move a second time, to a third farm. For a family which valued stability and continuity, as Ernie's seems to have done, this must have been a traumatic time.

In 1980, he married, and later in the same year, still living on the family farm, the couple had the first of two daughters. In 1985, his mother died, soon followed by Ernie's friend who could not hear or speak, who had been very attached to her. His father also died a couple of years later, leaving Ernie to take sole responsibility for the farm. In 1988, Ernie took ill and had a very serious operation, resulting in his being boarded. After a while, he took on light work in the retail trade, and in 1994, was appointed a section manager in a supermarket. At the time of the interviews, he was still working in this capacity, and keeping up his farm at the same time.

Ernie describes himself as a 'peace loving person, - can get on with any age - old or young, irrespective of colour' (E3:16). He singles out his late father as the most important influence in his life, particularly in terms of the model he set for him of honesty (E3:4). He strikes me as an unassuming, conscientious and helpful person, rooted in farm life, faithful to his family and to the principles he has learned from them, who tries at all times to treat all those around him with courtesy and respect.

Riaan

Riaan was born in 1962, the son of an Afrikaans-speaking father and an English-speaking mother. His mother died in child-birth, and his up-bringing was taken over by his uncle and aunt,

who lived on a farm and had children who were by that time moving into their teenage years. Riaan's care was largely placed in the hands of an isiXhosa-speaking woman who carried him on her back during his infancy, and accompanied him wherever he went while he was a small boy. From early days, he played with the children of the farmworkers, day in and day out, helping more and more with the activities of the farm together with his friends as he grew older.

In the year that he turned six, he went to school in the nearby town. After a short and unsuccessful period of boarding in the school hostel, he became a day scholar, travelling to and fro from school daily, and returning to the world of work and play on the farm every afternoon, and in weekends and holidays. In his primary school years, he was taught through the medium of English, while the high school he attended was Afrikaans-medium.

In 1980 he matriculated and began a four-year university degree in Agriculture at an Afrikaans-medium university. Directly after completing his under-graduate degree, he moved into Honours studies, and thereafter studied for and was awarded a research Masters. From the time that he completed his schooling, he, like all young white South African men, received papers calling him up for military service. Permission could be granted for deferment of the compulsory two-year period of duty in the case of young men who were engaged in university studies. Although Riaan was offered a bursary for doctoral studies abroad, permission for further deferment was not granted, and in 1986, he reported for national service, going through basic training and officer's training. Thereafter, he was seconded by the military to conduct agricultural research in the Eastern Cape pineapple industry.

In 1988, he returned to his home town and started work in Agricultural extension, initially staying at home, and doing part-time cattle farming. He married in 1991, the first of his two daughters being born in 1992 and the second in 1996. After the change of government in 1994, the Agriculture departments of the former 'homelands' of Ciskei and Transkei were incorporated into the department of the new province of the Eastern Cape. This meant a change from working with white farmers to working with black farmers. From 1999 he worked for an international rural development agency for three years before accepting a university post in another province. This move into academic life did not suit him, and he returned to the Eastern Cape to the rural agricultural development work, closely aligned with government, in which he is still engaged today.

Riaan sees himself as a man of action, rather than a thinker or a reader, even though his reflection on values and behaviour seems to signify a man who thinks deeply. He likes to keep busy, and focuses on getting things done, sometimes doing a bit of 'bulldozing' in the process, he says. He tries as much as possible, he says, to 'keep people on [his] side' (Ri3:30), applying the principle of mutual respect, but is not afraid to challenge an action or point of view. He says the people who have influenced him most in his life are his stepfather and stepmother, and the isiXhosa-speaking foreman on their farm, who drilled into him and his playmates the principle of respect. He strikes me as a man of energy and strong principles, who has worked out clear strategies for making the best of his life. He sees himself as a fortunate person, and is very attached to the Eastern Cape.

Brendon

Brendon's ancestors on his father's side immigrated with the German settlers in 1857, while his mother's family came from Scotland. The second son in the family, born in the early 1960s, he was a small boy when his family moved to a remote farm near the border of the Transkei. There he spent his childhood days with Xhosa children, his brother already being away at school.

When he was six, he was sent to the Afrikaans medium boarding school in the nearby village, and six years later, to an English-medium boarding school in a bigger town much further away. After matriculating, he started his university career, studying isiXhosa as one of his subjects. Like Riaan, he was subjected to military call-ups from the time that he left school, and had his national service deferred by enrolling for post-graduate studies: an Honours degree, a Masters, and eventually a doctorate in isiXhosa oral literature.

In 1989, when it seemed that no more deferments were possible, and call-up papers still kept coming, he sought refuge in the 'independent' Transkei, where the then leader of the 'homeland' organized a research post for him at the local university. From there, under the new political dispensation, he moved back into South Africa and held various posts in African languages departments at universities, also spending a year at an overseas university. Homesick for the Eastern Cape, he accepted a temporary post at an Eastern Cape university in 2006. He currently occupies a permanent post heading up a section at the same university.

Asked about people who had been influential in his life, he mentioned an array of different people of different races, ranging from his childhood friend and other current friends to oral poets, teachers and influential academics, also acknowledging the influence of his parents. Brendon sees himself as unconventional in his life and thinking, but driven by a desire to serve the greater good and see other people happy: 'a challenging, engaging person who thinks out of the box but is is is - unselfish in many ways'. I see him as a person of high principles and idealism, driven to restore, in his own life and more broadly, a multilingual society such as that which he tasted as a child.

George

George's forebears came from mainland Europe, long ago. He is not clear about the details of his family history, but knows that his earliest ancestor in South Africa was of Portuguese extraction (likely an early castaway). His grandfather and father both married wives of German extraction, as did George. He sees himself as belonging in the Eastern Cape, and is comfortable in a rural, small-town or farm environment.

He was born in 1968 in the Transkei, the 'baby' in a large family of 'yours, mine and ours'. He started school around the time when the Transkei 'homeland' took 'independence' from South Africa. Much of his early childhood was spent on his grandfather's farm, where he imbibed isiXhosa from the woman who sang and chatted while she carried him on her back, busy about the housework, and from her son and other '*kwedinis*⁶⁵, with whom he spent happy days playing in the *veld*⁶⁶.

After a difficult period following his parents' divorce, he accompanied his father to a small Karoo⁶⁷ town. There his middle school years, spent in an Afrikaans-medium school, left him trilingual (isiXhosa, English, and Afrikaans). In the early 1980s, he became a boarder at a technical high school, further to the north-east, where he matriculated.

George's first job was on the South African Railways. The several jobs he has had since then have made use of his technical skills as well as his trilingualism. He has worked in government

⁶⁵ *Kwedini*: Young uncircumcised boy

⁶⁶ *Veld*: South African grassland and bush

⁶⁷ The Karoo is a dry, sparsely populated area in the Western part of the Eastern Cape (See Map 1). Afrikaner farming families dominate the white population.

and municipal departments and in the private sector, mostly in practical and outdoor-oriented occupations, sometimes managing groups of workers.

George married in the early 1990s, and has fathered three sons. He sees himself as very much part of his extended family: grandparents, parents, siblings, wife and children, all of whom have some degree of fluency in isiXhosa. The greatest influence in his life has been his father, of whom he says, 'he's not only my father, he's my doctor, (Liz: Mm) he's my lawyer, (Liz: Mm) he's my best friend' (G3.79). Among black people who have influenced his life he mentions one work colleague who gave great help and support to him and his family during a tough time when George was undergoing treatment for stress (G3.94).

George describes himself as 'Very loud. Out-going. Um, Helpful (...) friendly with everybody' (G3.102). I have experienced him as a spontaneous, friendly and very obliging person, with a ready and hearty laugh. He seems to enjoy his life, revelling in pursuits such as 'fishing, hunting, (Liz: Mm) outdoors' (G3.86), introduced to him by his father and now shared with his sons.

Liz

Liz was born in 1947 in Ixopo, a village in present-day KwaZulu-Natal, near the border of the Eastern Cape. Her forebears on her father's side were Scandinavian missionaries, arriving in Zululand in 1860, while her mother's parents were Church of Scotland missionaries, coming to South Africa around 1900. An only child, Liz attended the local school where both of her parents taught. English was her mother tongue, and she learned Afrikaans at school. Family life revolved around school and church. Hers was a stable, happy childhood, and bonds of love and loyalty built up between Liz and the children of family friends who farmed in the area, as well as numerous cousins living in and around Durban. Regular visits were also paid to an uncle who was a professor at Fort Hare University, in Alice, Eastern Cape.

Enrolling at the University of Natal in 1964 with the intention of (somewhat reluctantly) following her parents' footsteps into the teaching profession, she registered to study isiZulu in first year, and practised what she had learned with their isiZulu-speaking domestic worker in weekends and holidays. She became more politically aware during these years, when academics were banned and undertook marches to protest some of the actions of the Apartheid

government. Towards the end of her years at university, her mother died of cancer, a traumatic experience for the small family.

Involvements in progressive non-racial Christian movements⁶⁸ during her final years at university influenced her in taking up a teaching post at a high school for African girls, one of the few in South Africa still run by a mission organization. This experience of living and working in a multiracial community was life-changing for her, and gave rise to a desire to bridge more of South Africa's divides. She enrolled at the University of Stellenbosch, a dominantly Afrikaans university, for an honours degree in English, and then taught at a number of other high schools for white children before once again teaching in African schools. She had another experience of living in a multiracial environment when she taught near Alice, at a time when the situation at the University of Fort Hare was liberalizing somewhat in the early 1980s. She left Alice to study the teaching of English as a second language in Britain, and when she returned to South Africa worked at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, on an English improvement project for teachers in the African township of Soweto.

In the late 1980s, a desire to move out of the teaching of English led her simultaneously in a variety of directions: studying Psychology and training in voluntary counselling, establishing the TALK project (described earlier) to promote the learning of African languages, and getting to know the man who was to become her husband. Liz and Hannes married in 1998, and in the same year moved to the Eastern Cape, where Liz took up a post at the University of Fort Hare. She has been involved in teacher education, in-service and pre-service, at that university for the last 13 years.

Comment on the introductions

There are some immediate similarities that one can notice in the four men's lives: they all grew up on farms, and in their early childhood had no siblings as companions, either because they were only children, or youngest children, older siblings having already moved off to school. They all have families with long histories in the Eastern Cape, and have chosen to stay in, or return to,

⁶⁸ The organizations with which she was involved included the University Christian Movement, a non-denominational and non-racial student organization, which was later banned; Beyers Naude's Christian Institute, established to foster reconciliation between Christians of all racial groups through dialogue; and T-group Sensitivity Training based on Rogerian encounter group methods. All these activities were ground-breaking in South Africa in that they involved Christians of all races and denominations.

the province, as their working and living place of choice. Although I selected them because of their fluency in isiXhosa, I found that all four of them are fluent in both English and Afrikaans as well. My own history relates to theirs in that I grew up an only child in a rural village and had close childhood friends who, like my participants, lived on farms. I have also had strong Eastern Cape connections throughout my life. My university career, at an English-medium university, gives me something in common with Brendon, as does my experience in Alice, which links, for me, with Brendon's time in Mthatha. My experiences with the learning of African languages, and involvements with black people, were different from theirs, but were also significant and often led me to feel marginal.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a rationale for choosing Life History research as my methodology. It has outlined the process of the research, from the choice of participants through the three meetings with them and into the transcription and analysis of the data. It has dwelt on the crucial importance of relating to the participants in a responsible way which promotes trust, of allowing their stories to determine the pace and nature of the interview sessions, and of analysing the narrative discourse by looking at what is 'natural', 'normal' and 'common sense' for the participants. I have asserted that I see myself as a participant in the research, and that my own subjective positioning has affected its outcomes. The chapter has also introduced the participants, including myself, giving an outline of key events in each person's life, something of how they see themselves, and brief personal impressions of them.

In the next chapter, I begin to present the data and my analysis of it, starting with parts of the men's stories which concern their childhood and the learning/acquisition of isiXhosa.

Chapter 4: Identity and language acquisition in childhood narratives

Introduction

In this chapter, I look at the childhood narratives of my four participants, examining them in the light of recent trends in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory and research representing a 'social turn' (Block, 2003). While a theoretical background has been given in Chapter 2, in this chapter I relate the theory more specifically to language acquisition and identity construction in my participants' context. I describe briefly certain aspects of Eastern Cape farms and characterize them as Communities of Practice (CoPs), intersecting with and incorporating other communities. I look at the potentials for language learning and identity construction portrayed in the participants' narratives of life on the farm, firstly in their very early relationships with child-minders, and then in their participation, mostly with isiXhosa-speaking peers, but also with isiXhosa-speaking adults, in the practices of the farm community and neighbouring communities. From there, I look at the move to school, the levels of disruption it caused in the life of each boy, consequent shifts in identity and language competence, and ways in which each boy worked with the ambivalence created by this major change in his life circumstances.

Theory and background

I have discussed in Chapter 2 my reasons for finding theories of language acquisition from the 'social turn' in SLA more appropriate for my purposes than those of the more mainstream 'Input-Interaction-Output' model, and have outlined the main schools of thought which I have found relevant to my study. I have also mentioned certain vital features of my participants' situation which mainstream approaches do not speak to. In this chapter, I return briefly to some of these features, arguing that my participants learned isiXhosa within the farm community, through involvement with others in work and play.

I have problematized the assumption implicit in SLA that each person has a 'first' language (Canagarajah, 2007). As indicated in my introduction to the participants, one could say that English is George and Brendon's language of inheritance (Leung et al, 1997, p. 555): the 'language tradition' into which they were born (p. 555). Similarly, German could be said to be Ernie's language of inheritance and Afrikaans Riaan's. Although all but Riaan would probably currently consider English their 'first language', only one of the participants described one of his

parents as 'English' (Riaan's mother), and one as 'Scots' (Brendon's mother). The other parents and forebears were described as being 'from Germany' and 'Portuguese'. It would perhaps be accurate to say that George, Brendon and Ernie are part of the white English-speaking community in South Africa, and Riaan of the white Afrikaans-speaking community. Their stories give every indication, however, that in their early childhood isiXhosa was their strongest language, and possibly even their language of affiliation (Leung et al, 1997, p. 555). Language affiliation has been defined as 'the attachment or identification [people] feel for a language whether or not they nominally belong to the social group customarily associated with it' (p. 555). As the boys grew to be men, we shall see how Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa all became languages of expertise, or proficiency (p. 555) in their lives.

It is clear, then, that the situation of my participants is essentially a multilingual one. I have commented that much mainstream language acquisition theory has been based on a false assumption that 'normal' people are monolingual, and that multilingualism is exceptional, ignoring numerous heteroglossic contexts where people with different languages negotiate meaning. In South African 'townships'⁶⁹, such as Soweto and Khayaletu, inhabited since Apartheid times mostly by black people from many language / ethnic groups, this happens extensively. The personal and family lives of the four participants in this research are still largely lived out within white South Africa, strongly separated from black South Africa, so there is probably less mixing of codes than there is in the township context. While each language is used in the context deemed appropriate for it, my participants move easily between the different languages they command.

I also indicated that an important short-coming of mainstream theory for this particular context is that it de-emphasizes issues of power and social identity. Roles and identities are strongly linked to issues of institutional power in the post-colonial and Apartheid context in South Africa. In the farm community, which is in many ways feudal, and conservative, roles and identities are racialized, with the white farmer being the owner and employer and the black labourers the employees, with various roles and responsibilities. Power is concentrated in the hands of the farmer by virtue of his ownership of the land, to which he has the right by virtue of his

⁶⁹ The word 'townships' is used to refer to 'suburbs' occupied exclusively by black people, created during Apartheid times on the outskirts of, or sometimes some distance away from, white towns, largely to house black workers and their families.

whiteness. Any institutional power which farm workers may have within the farm is power delegated to them by the farmer, although clearly they can and do exercise power through multiple acts of resistance and agency. Until recently, there was no path to the power position of farm ownership for a farm worker. Even now, this is very difficult, as we saw in Chapter 1. Empowerment opportunities for farm workers and their children were also in the farmer's hands: some farmers established farm schools on their farms, and allowed and sponsored farm workers' children to study beyond primary level; others did not. Where farmers struggled financially, workers shared their misery. Their dependency was (and still is, to a large extent) absolute, and unionization still difficult, even seventeen years into democracy. Brendon describes this dependency relationship:

1. I remember the old man⁷⁰ even saying to, to his son, who was my friend, saying, Look, really, you know, the only thing you need to know in life is, is to follow the instructions that the white person gives you... (B1.87)
2. I think they had very restrained lives, um, - you know they they were basically completely restrained in terms of, my parents were their world, and there there was no - no ways that they could ever part. (Liz: Sho!) That was the way it was. (B1.89)
3. But you know, all those people still live in that area, those that are - still well ... Most of them don't have jobs, you know, (Liz: Mmmm) they're still stuck on farms ... (B1.80)

Links, then, are very strong between the white family and the black people living on the farm. The fact that a farm is home as well as workplace means that everybody, old and young, male and female, is woven into the web of mutuality. Conflict and ambiguity is created by the dual nature of this mutuality: while purely farming interests, and segregationist traditions, dictate that it should be a 'functional' relationship, strong emotional ties also develop. The relative isolation of the farm, the consequent weaker links between the white family and their counterparts in white South Africa, and the reliance of the white family on the black families for many essential things, means that whites and 'blacks' on the farm often relate in ways which could be seen as very intimate – an anomaly in terms of Apartheid's grand plan, that black and white South Africans should live separate lives, in separate areas. The power structures of the broader society – socio-cultural, economic and political – constrain this intimacy in a number of ways, putting up barriers and demarcating boundaries, particularly when it comes to the freedom of the Xhosa people to move into white space, such as the homestead.

⁷⁰ The farm worker who was father to his particular friend

I have noted that Lave and Wenger (1990, p. 109) connect language with 'legitimacy of participation' in a community, rather than with 'knowledge transmission'. In the following extract from Riaan's story, he discusses the role of isiXhosa in the 'constellation of practice' (Wenger, 1998, p. 127) to which each Eastern Cape farm CoP belongs:

4. I know of very few white commercial farmers [in the border areas of the Eastern Cape] (Liz: Mm) that even today cannot speak Xhosa. (Liz: Right... ja) It is - it is - I think it's partly culture, (Liz: Yes) and I think the other part, it is - probably - necessity (Liz: Right) to communicate more efficiently, and so on. (Ri1:7)

What Riaan says suggests that on most Eastern Cape farms, legitimate participants speak isiXhosa, although the white farmers and their family members do use English or Afrikaans when speaking to most other white people. In support of this, he also describes how most white friends coming over to visit from other farms were able to join in with the play going on among the black and white children, as they understood and spoke isiXhosa. He suggests that speaking isiXhosa is part of an 'Eastern Cape farmer culture'.

I will now look at data relating to the boys' childhoods, focusing on three aspects of the participants' childhood years and their language development: isiXhosa-speaking caregivers; interaction with peers and other adults on the farm, and the move to school.

isiXhosa-speaking caregivers

Each boy was strongly influenced by isiXhosa caregivers or 'parents' in his early years. Riaan's mother died in childbirth, and he was taken on by an aunt and uncle whose children were already in their teenage years. In explaining his present attitudes towards Xhosa people and isiXhosa, Riaan says that his aunt and uncle

5. ... were to a large extent dependent with my upbringing, on those black people. (Liz: OK, ja, so you were brought up by them...) I was brought up by them, so - it's not only - the youngest little child, to keep him busy; they were largely dependent on those people. I mean, I can remember all their names, without exception. Without exception. (Ri1.112)

The implication here is that the only way his aunt and uncle could take him on as their son was if they could hand him over into the care of the black families on the farm, with whom he came to be extremely familiar. ('I can remember all their names, without exception.' Par. 5.) They were not just 'keeping him busy'; they were vital to the process of his upbringing. In speaking about his 'nanny', he says:

6. Old Nosisa. (Liz laughs) Yo, ja. No, she was like a mother to me; (Liz: Aha) she was like a mother to me, I spent a lot of time on her back⁷¹ they say, I can't remember that. (Liz: Mm) And that's all she did, she looked after me. (Liz: OK, full time) Full time she looked after me. She went, wherever we went, she went with us. (Liz: Is it?) And I - weekends away to other people, she went with us, (Liz: Ah) and so on and even to Cape Town.(Ri1.114)

This black 'mother' was in the background of his life from the moment that he was handed over into the care of his aunt and uncle. He acknowledges that he does not remember the early years, when he was carried on her back, but her constant physical presence is an indication of the influence she wielded, and of the closeness of the early relationship.

George too was taken care of, during early years spent on his grandfather's farm, by the mother of his friend Gigs, who:

7. (...) used to talk continuously, even when she was - put me on her back (Liz: Ja) to put me to sleep, (Liz: Ja) she used to sing all the time (Liz: Mm), so - ja. I think if you get spoken to all the time, (Liz: Ja) you learn {the language} very quickly. (Liz: Mm) (G2.12)

Ernie also had a nanny, maybe not as 'full time' as in the situations of George and Riaan, but also described as 'a second mother':

8. She was very good, in fact, and - it's possibly that's where I started learning Xhosa is by having her and so on and - whenever my parents went to church and so on she used to - look after me, and - she was like a - second mother to me (E2.16)

Brendon does not speak of having had a 'nanny', but speaks of his friend Sonwabo's parents as his own second parents, and describes how he was included in many events and rituals of the Xhosa people in the area. The intensity of the connection he felt with them is reflected in the fact that he has a sense that they, together with his own parents, are 'ancestors'⁷² who are 'looking after him' (par. 10) even now in his adulthood.

9. And {Sonwabo and I} used to hunt birds together, I mean I used to partake in rituals, (Liz: Ja) with him, (Liz: Mm) and with the family (B1.16)
10. Those two sets of parents, if you like, were to me like my, my, the people that initiated me into who I am, (Liz: Yes) you know, my biological parents and then Sonwabo's parents, (Liz: Yes) whom I respected very much until the day they died, (Liz: Mm, mm) um, unschooled, illiterate, (Liz: Yes) I would show her a picture, she would

⁷¹ It is the common practice in African society in South Africa for caregivers to tie babies onto their backs with a blanket when putting them to sleep, a practice which enables the caregiver to carry on moving around and doing chores while taking care of the baby.

⁷² The African belief system includes a belief that one's ancestors are still actively involved in one's life, guiding actions, warning and chastising as well as offering protection and care.

hold it upside down and say very nice, and she had absolutely no idea about words, or, anything like that, so it was a very different type of connectedness (Liz: Yes) that we had, um, and I actually think that was very special. I think if I do have ancestors those are the kinds of people that are out there looking after me, you know... (B1:85)

In describing his 'Xhosa parents', he says:

11. [The old man] had a fantastic sense of humour, he used to make us laugh, as children, you know, he was a funny person, (Liz: Ja) and, I used to like that release from my, sort of, biological parents, you know, (Liz: Ja) I didn't have to be as, together, (Liz: Ja) you know, with my Xhosa parents, (Liz: Yes) although she was very strict, Nomntu, (Liz: Mm) she would, if I did something wrong she would shout at us, (Liz: Mm) or, she would reprimand us or (Liz: Ja) she had quite a short temper (Liz: Mm) actually, (Liz: Mm) so we were scared of her (...). (B1:88)
12. Anyway, then, he - when he'd slaughter the sheep {the old man would} always make (...) quite a profound kind of joke, you know, (Liz: Mm, mm) (...) I remember him always going [*spits, gestures*] looking to the heavens, (Liz: Ah) and I think it's just his way of saying I suppose that (...) life is transitory, but it also is is precious, you know, precious at the same time. Things like that were quite meaningful to me, (Liz: Mm) I mean, taught me things, (Liz: Mm) like, it's not just about killing this sheep (B1:91).

These are the caregiver-child relationships of the mainstream first language acquisition paradigm, and of the language socialization and sociocultural models. Clearly, each child was exposed to a great deal of interactive 'input', in a positive affective environment, and there were opportunities here for sociocultural mediation, within the ZPD (e.g. par. 12, where Brendon is learning, through this old man, values associated with life and death, implicit in the slaughtering of a sheep).

These extracts give insight into a process of language socialization, where a child is being initiated into a language and culture. George and Riaan shared warm and continuous contact with women who carried them on their backs, talking and singing as they went about their daily business. Brendon says these were 'the people that initiated me into who I am' (par. 10); he shared with them in rituals, enjoyed their humour, was reprimanded by Nomntu, his friends' mother, shared in daily farm activities like the slaughtering of sheep, and absorbed the significance with which his friend's father imbued such undertakings. We have no *direct* access to the types of interaction which these caregivers engaged in, and it is possible that they were not quite the same as those that they would have engaged in with their own children. In other words, in most instances (except perhaps, in Brendon's, to some extent) they were not socializing the boys into the isiXhosa-speaking community as such, but definitely playing a vital

role in socializing the child into the farm community and its practices, including the use of isiXhosa.

While these caregivers were key influences in the men's pre-conscious years, it is the children they played with who loom largest in the men's memories of life on the farm.

isiXhosa-speaking peers and other adults

In describing their childhood on the farm, the participants paint a picture of an almost enchanted time-space, seething with life and activity, almost all of it in the company of black children (and adults, at times), and almost all of it taking place in isiXhosa. Bakhtin writes, 'During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom' (1965, p. 7). The boys experienced what could be seen as 'carnival time'; a time where Apartheid constraints on having black 'friends' and speaking black languages were, for the moment, waived. 'I didn't see colour,' says Riaan (Ri2.57), even though the discourses and ideologies of the broader society made his lifestyle as the privileged adopted son of the landowner, with his personal black caregiver, possible. Ironically, his freedom from the laws which separated black and white was an integral part of the 'white-black' owner-labourer arrangements on the farm, in the long run serving the white farmer's interests, as it taught him the language of his employees.

The descriptions which follow give pictures of a lifestyle replete with isiXhosa 'input', particularly 'peer talk', which language socialization researchers Blum-Kulka and Snow (2004, p. 291) note is 'a major site for both the development of discourse skills and the creation of childhood culture'. In speaking of apprenticeships, Lave and Wenger (1990) note that 'apprentices learn mostly in relationship with other apprentices ...' and that 'where the circulation of knowledge among peers and near-peers is possible, it spreads exceedingly rapidly and effectively' (p. 93).

As children, all the playmates are on the periphery of the farm CoP, learning its practices as they engage in play, combined, in some instances, with work, and having legitimacy of access to the practices by virtue of their birth. Each boy also describes significant interactions with adult members of the farm community, and some relate also to members of the isiXhosa-speaking community who live in areas adjacent to the farm. Playmates and adults on the farm, as well as

neighbouring isiXhosa-speakers all have a role to play in the language socialization and general socialization of the boys, into the farm CoP, and into the broader isiXhosa-speaking community. I will look at extracts from the childhood stories of each boy in turn, focusing on similarities and differences in their process of language learning / socialization and the contexts in which this took place.

Riaan: 'Yo'⁷³, that was a nice part of my life!' (Ri1:92)

Riaan's childhood experience with black companions was the most extended and undisturbed by intrusions from the white world, with Ernie's coming a close second. Both boys continued to stay at home throughout their schooling careers, and continued their relationships with playmates and their involvement in farm life after school and during weekends and holidays. Riaan's situation (a young adopted child given over to the care of the isiXhosa-speaking workers) led to what appears to have been an almost total immersion in the lifestyle of the farm children, and their parents. The description which follows, rich with life and energetic activity, was given in response to my request that he tell me more about the kinds of things he and his playmates did together. I thoroughly enjoyed and became totally involved in the description, swallowed up in the excitement of all the activities he described. This can be seen in some of my comments below, e.g. 'OK! Wonderful! Mm.' (par. 19).

13. Yo! There's nothing that we didn't do! (*both laugh*) Yooo! Yo Yo Yo, that was a nice part of my life! (Liz: Ja) We played ! We played 120%! (Liz laughs) There's nothing that we didn't play. From crayons, oh we didn't have all these (Liz: Ja) TV games and stuff like that (Liz: No) ... No we played ... with sticks and catties⁷⁴ and wire cars⁷⁵, (Liz: Ja) ... and dolosse⁷⁶, you know those little oxen that you made (Liz: Yes) of the bone of - the knee bone - (Liz: Oh ja) We played with those. We hunted mice and we hunted birds, (Liz: ah) and set traps for birds...
14. and worked, you could call it semi-play work. (Liz: Mm) Helped with the silage, (Liz: Mm, mm) and to compact the silage
15. and sang songs while we did that (Liz: Mm) and laughed and joked with each other.

⁷³ *Yo!* An expression of wonderment used by speakers of isiXhosa, similar, perhaps, to Wow!

⁷⁴ *Catties* (South African slang): Catapults; slings

⁷⁵ A common past-time, particularly among African children in South Africa, was to make cars, bicycles and other vehicles out of wire.

⁷⁶ *Dolosse* (Afrikaans): Play cattle made out of the ankle or knee bones of sheep or goats

16. And fought - (Liz: Mm) - ja, it wasn't just all hunky dory, we fought with each other and hit each other with a *kierie*⁷⁷, (Liz laughs)
17. and rode horses (Liz: Mm) and donkeys and worked with cattle and sheep (Liz: Mm) - it was our job to collect the sheep, (Liz: Mm) and the milking cows in the evenings, and (Liz: Mm) - ja, it was good days, ja and it was Xhosa! ...
18. Ja, we played soccer and we played rugby and...(Liz: Ja) traditional games - *umarabaraba*⁷⁸ ... yooo! lots of things. We hunted with the dogs. (Liz: Ja)
19. ... In the evenings - we played until - it was absolutely dark, and then - There was an elderly man on the farm, (Liz: Mm) [he thinks back and remembers his name and surname] and here, just before it now gets very dark he used to call us and tell us ... a story (Liz: OK! Wonderful! Mm). The Xhosa word for that is *intsomi*, (Liz: Right) and he used to tell us a story, sometimes if the story was too long, (Liz: Ah-ha) he had to stop and, say, carry on the next evening (Liz: Mm-hm Serial story) Serial story, ja. Yo, that was also interesting, always, to listen to those stories,
20. and then we knew, after that, now we go our separate ways and we go and sleep and (Liz: Mm, mm, mm) ...do whatever we had to do...(Liz: Mm, mm) -
21. Ja - we played. That was full-out Xhosa. (Liz laughs) There was never any other word spoken. (Ri1:92-94)

As they grew older, play was exchanged more and more for work. He and his mates sometimes worked with the span of oxen his father kept to plough in places inaccessible to more modern equipment.

22. As we got older, it was less of a play and more of a work, we were forced to work, (Liz: Mm, mm) all of us. If you didn't work, you got a hiding! (Liz: Mm, mm, both laugh. Same treatment for everybody.) Same treatment for everybody...
23. But there we had to make turns for instance to lead the oxen. (Liz: Mm) Now if you want a good hiding, that's where you get a good hiding. (Liz: Is it?) Ja... if you're not concentrating on what's happening at the back, (Liz: Ah) and you're turning too soon because remember they're not like a car that turns like that (Liz: Ja, laughs) - they turn like that - (Liz: Ah) and it's a lo:ng turn. If you turn too soon (Liz: Ja, then the) then the guy at the back can't plough or can't finish what he's busy with; (Liz: Ja) if you turn too late, then the oxen goes back into the land, (Liz: Ja) if you try to stop too soon, the oxen hit you with their horns in the back; (Liz: Ah) if you, if they hungry and tired the oxen - and you want to un - er er er - to untie them, they will go at you. You've got to - Well, you shouldn't waste time, so you got to {hang} in together, and we made turns, (Liz: Mm) and its tiring, because you've got to concentrate the whole time, and you small, you young, (Liz: Mm) if you ... walk in mud or in loose soil for more than 3 or 4 hours, you finished! (Liz: Mm) Then we make, make turns.
24. And obviously sat there ... and wait, and played while you (Liz: Mm) waiting, and so on. (Ri1:102, 104, 105)

⁷⁷ *Kierie* (Afrikaans): knob-headed stick

⁷⁸ *Umarabaraba* (isiXhosa): a 'board' game played with stones on a board drawn in the sand with a stick

It is clear that Riaan was fully engaged in the play and socialization activities of the amaXhosa children (*dolosse*, *umarabaraba*, hunting, *iintsomi* in the evening, hidings). Together, he and his friends were also involved in farm work, horse-riding, ploughing with the ox span, as well as more Western pastimes (crayons, rugby, picture books – mentioned elsewhere - that they read and looked at together, with Nosisa, when he was sick).

In spite of its western aspects, for Riaan the farm CoP was fundamentally a Xhosa milieu, and there is evidence, in his comments on traditional tales and elsewhere on special names and nicknames, that he was exposed to rich, idiomatic isiXhosa. In his story, he indicates that isiXhosa was spoken at all times, except on the rare occasion that 'townspeople' came to visit. isiXhosa was his strongest language, spoken even when white friends from farms came to play. He spoke isiXhosa even with his adoptive parents, though he knew some Afrikaans and a little English. He told later how older white people who knew him as a child would still address him in isiXhosa when they met him in the street as an adult.

The 'dense relationships of mutual engagement' (Wenger, 1998, p. 73) characteristic of CoPs are apparent in Riaan's descriptions of the children's play and work, e.g. in his description of working with the oxen (par. 25, 26). The intense interactions and negotiations which take place include 'disagreement, challenges, and competition' as 'forms of participation' (Wenger, 1998, p. 77). '[I]t wasn't just all hunky dory', says Riaan. '[W]e fought ... and hit each other ...' (par. 16)

Their activities are leavened by 'enabling engagement' (Wenger, 1998, p. 74), or what Cook (2000) and Rampton (1999), (as cited in Block, 2003, pp. 70-71) call 'ludic talk' or 'language play'. Riaan refers often to laughing, joking and singing (par. 15), all an integral part of language socialization.

In the midst of their enthusiastic play, they also had what Wenger (1998, p. 47) calls 'well-defined roles'. '[I]t was our job to collect the sheep ... and the milking cows in the evenings' (par. 17). There were clearly defined 'ways of doing things', e.g. ways of working with the oxen, bringing in the cattle in the evenings, getting ready for bedtime. There were also consequences when prescribed routines were not followed: 'If you didn't work, you got a hiding! (par. 22)' Other repertoires of CoPs (Wenger, 1989, p. 83), or cultural artefacts (in sociocultural terms) which are apparent in his description are: tools, e.g. sticks, cattles, wire cars, *dolosse* (par. 13); stories (par. 19); and, of course, language ('it was Xhosa!' par. 17; 'That was full-out Xhosa' par.

21). These powerful statements indicate that isiXhosa was synonymous with Riaan's whole way of life at that time. This is evidence for Keating's (2005, p. 109) contention that language is accorded too peripheral a role in Wenger's model of learning. Here language socialization was not happening as something separate, but was an integral part of socialization as a whole. Riaan was fully invested in the language (Norton, 1997, p. 411).

Riaan also describes what happened on the rare occasion that a white child who couldn't speak isiXhosa came to play:

25. Occasionally some townspeople came to visit on a Sunday afternoon, but (Liz: Mm) that rarely happened - then we had to adjust - even then, I had to basically - say for instance I had an English-speaking friend, or an Afrikaans-speaking - couldn't understand Xhosa, I had to play the middle man, which was sometimes a difficult situation, I had to repeat everything, I didn't have time to repeat everything. (Liz: Mm, mm)

26. And one of the two groups eventually felt left out of the game and left. (*laugh*) (Ri1.97)

Wenger (1998, pp. 103 ff.) explains how CoPs intersect and overlap with other CoPs, and have relationships with the wider world. With children who do not know isiXhosa, Riaan has to play what Wenger (1998) calls a 'brokering' role (see pars. 25, 26).

Brokers are able to make new connections across communities of practice, enable co-ordination, and – if they are good brokers – open new possibilities for meaning... The job of brokering ... involves processes of translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives...Brokering often entails ambivalent relations of multimembership... Uprootedness is an occupational hazard of brokering... Brokers must often avoid two opposite tendencies: being pulled in to become full members and being rejected as intruders. Indeed, their contributions lie precisely in being neither in nor out. (p. 110)

This extract speaks of the function of language to include and exclude. Because South African communities were (and are) so divided along race, and therefore language lines, inability to speak one of the languages associated with a particular group inevitably leads to exclusion from the 'space' of that community. Riaan was not excluded from black or white space by language, so he could choose how much language brokering he wanted to do, knowing that if he failed to do it, one group would be left out. This was a position of some responsibility and ambiguity, leaving him, in some ways 'neither in nor out' (Wenger 1989, p. 110). Riaan says that this was 'a difficult situation' (par. 22) for him. He had little patience with these children who didn't understand isiXhosa: 'I didn't have time to repeat everything' (par. 22). It seems that, at this stage, he often succumbed to one of the 'opposite tendencies' referred to above, because he says that 'one of the groups ... felt left out and left' (par. 23). His laugh at the end of this

statement may signify unease with having abandoned the one party (one suspects, possibly the white children), or glee at the predicament of the 'left out' ones; isiXhosa was the language of power in this situation, and those who did not know it were at a distinct disadvantage. Maybe it was a rueful laugh, reflecting on how unworkable it was to mediate between these different parties of active boys.

We have seen, then, that this farm conforms, in many respects, to the description of a CoP, and that Riaan and his playmates had legitimate status and full access to peripheral participation. This meant that they were able to learn the repertoires of the farm, which included the language of communication, through mutual engagement within the community. Riaan's process of learning fits in well with the CoP model; he moved more and more fully into the life of the farm as he grew up, and played his part in the reproduction of its practices.

Ernie: 'They were like my brothers' (E1.26)

Ernie's parents were both direct descendants of the German settlers who immigrated to the Eastern Cape in 1858. Ernie was an only child, born fifteen to twenty years before any of the other three participants, and his childhood friends were local 'black boys', most of whom did not live on the farm.

27. most of my friends were black boys (Liz: Yes) Our farm adjoined the Q location⁷⁹, (Liz: Ok) and that's where they came from and we used to play together (Liz: Umm, umm) and that is where I picked up my Xhosa (E1.6) (...) they were like my brothers (E1.26)
28. {when I went to school}, they still used to come to me in the afternoons and so on, when we finished homework they - we'd play together again, go help get the cattle and the sheep (Liz: Umm, umm) and feed the poultry together (...) when I was at high school and was on holiday I used to always help on the lands and all the rest, do ploughing and help milk the cattle. (E1.43, 44)
29. We used to make clay oxen (Liz: Oh, ja) play and - what else - oh, we used to get up to all sorts, we made spans of oxen and these little model wagons and clay and - (Liz: Umm, umm) and we even used to use *mielie*⁸⁰ cobs and these thorns from thorn trees and Mimosa trees and the - for horns on these cattle, and - - Yes, ja, we even used to *inspan*⁸¹ these little *toktokkies*⁸² as - (Liz: Oh, yes [both laugh]) Ja - and my dad used to have a lot of

⁷⁹ A 'location', in South African parlance, is an area that was demarcated for black people to live in, usually something like a village, and often (though not always) near, or attached to, a white town or village.

⁸⁰ *Mielie* (Afrikaans): mealie; maize

⁸¹ *Inspan* (South African, from Afrikaans): harness animals to a vehicle

⁸² *Toktokkies* (Afrikaans): dung beetles

beehives and I (Liz: Umm) always used to help him (Liz: Umm) with taking the honey out and extracting the honey and (Liz: Umm) [pause] (E1.46)

Ernie's story pictures him involved with Xhosa boys in play activities similar to those we have heard about from Riaan, using 'artefacts' and 'repertoires' such as mielie cobs, thorns, clay oxen, and *toktokkies* (par. 29). Elsewhere he mentions stick-fighting and hunting. He and his mates are also mutually engaged (Wenger, 1998, p. 83) in the 'practices' of the farm CoP. He mentions how they worked together, fetching the cattle and sheep, feeding the poultry, helping on the lands and milking the cattle (par. 28). In all of these undertakings the language used is isiXhosa.

A difference between his and Riaan's case is that these boys are neighbourhood boys, from the nearby location. The relationship between the family and the local people seems to have been close; elsewhere Ernie spends time relating the story of a black boy who could not hear or speak, who had cast himself upon the mercy of the family and adopted Ernie's parents as his own. In spite of his inability to speak, communication was clearly good between the two boys, and he and Ernie grew up side by side. In a later interview, Ernie reflects on what it was that brought them close to the surrounding Xhosa people:

30. I think mainly being on a farm we didn't have the facilities that the people had in the towns so we sort of lived almost the same, there was no electricity, there was no water laid on and that sort of thing (Liz: Umm) and I think that's one of the main things that made you feel included, you know, experiencing the same disadvantages, I should say. (E3.28)

Another difference between his situation and Riaan's is that Ernie and his friends were often involved in activities together with his father, whom he later named as the strongest influence in his life. His father's beehives are mentioned in par. 29, and elsewhere he speaks of going trout fishing together with his dad and his Xhosa friends. He and his parents conversed in isiXhosa, together with some German, which was clearly not very dominant, as it gave way later to English as the language of the home.

While Riaan, in his childhood narrative, positions himself as a boy, enjoying himself with his friends, Ernie's story shows him exhibiting adult maturity and independence from a very young age. His 'farmer' identity is a very enduring part of him, and we see him continuing with farming throughout his adult life, holding down other jobs at the same time. His story portrays him becoming involved very early in the 'practices' of the farm CoP. As I have pointed out above, he

was involved with his friends in many farm activities. Most striking of all, in the extract which follows, we see him positioning himself as a farmer even at the early age of 10 or 11, when he farmed with turkeys, and started building up a flock of sheep:

31. **Liz:** ... can you think of any kind of stories or experiences involving er, those people, those black er adult people in your life?
32. **Ernie:** Yes, there was - in fact that's how I started off - er, farming with sheep. (**Liz:** Is it?) Is through - I had about 50, 60 turkeys, and I always used to walk in the lands and the one day, I went there, and there were a whole lot limping and some lying dead and the rest of it, and I found some of these little *tsotsis*⁸³ had come across from the location, not these that I knew (**Liz:** Umm) and they killed some of these turkeys and some they took home and the rest of it ... and the one father - came and brought his son to us and his son was one of the guilty parties - and he doesn't want any ill feeling, he'll - give me a couple of young sheep (**Liz:** Ok //to replace) // **Ernie:** to replace, he says, which he did, I didn't want to take them at first, and he says no, no, it's no more than right - and then another one came along with a couple of sheep, parent of one of the other little chaps (**Liz:** Ja) and I so I started up //L: a little flock // farming with sheep, yes. [*both laugh*]... {I was} about 10, 11 years of age at the time. (E2.18-20)

In the above extract, Ernie appears to negotiate with the men from the location on equal terms. While he was a child, always subordinate to an adult in Xhosa society, he was also a white child, and black people needed to be careful to remember the 'superiority' of whites. His interaction with the adult Xhosa men is evidence of the power of being white. In spite of his youth, adult black men are deferring to him, apologizing to him for the behaviour of their sons, compensating him for his stock losses. Stock of any kind was a very valuable asset in Xhosa society, but it is apparent that these men felt that they could not afford to antagonise their white neighbours. Their insistence on 'making right', enabled him as a boy to build up quite a valuable herd, improving the assets of his white land-owning family⁸⁴. The laugh which we shared in par. 32 expressed his pride, I think, and my incredulity. I was astonished at his early entry into farming, but at that time still accepted the Xhosa men's gesture as something 'normal', showing my own identification with the discourses of inequality.

If we think of the farm as a CoP, it is clear that Ernie became a full participant at a very young age, moving into full fluency in isiXhosa through engagement in the practices of his world, where isiXhosa was the dominant language. He interacted freely with children and adults in the

⁸³ *Tsotsi* (township slang): gangster; youngster involved in criminal activities

⁸⁴ Most of his black neighbours, in contrast, would be living and grazing their cattle on commonage under the jurisdiction of the local chief.

surrounding community, drawing neighbourhood boys into the practices of the farm, and moving in and out of their world (and their community) as the boys played, fought and hunted together.

While he interacts with the broader isiXhosa speaking community, with which his family had much in common, as is shown in par. 30 above, he retains the farm community and his parents as his anchor, not becoming socialized into the Xhosa community itself to any significant extent. There are values which he learns and adopts from his friends, though, as is shown in the following extract:

33. I learnt through my little black friends when we were small how sharing they were (Liz: Yes) they would share the last mouthful of food with each other (Liz: Yes) and I learnt a lot from that (Liz: Ja, ja) how they used to share (...) Liz: (...) and would you say that you've kind of adopted that way? Ernie: Yes, yes, I think that it takes a person's selfishness away by getting that experience. (E3: 24, 26)

He is part of an age-old process whereby practices are passed down from father to son; his story has echoes of earlier times for the German settlers, when boys took on adult responsibilities at an early age, and when settlers struggled through times of hardship side by side with Xhosa and Mfengu people (see Brodrick, 2009).

George: 'I used to spend most of my time with ol' Gigs' (G1:11)

For George, like Ernie, his father is the greatest influence in his life, and he portrays himself as part of an on-going family tradition of speaking isiXhosa, handed from grandfather to father to son.

34. My Dad, he's excellent with Xhosa; he speaks it, reads it, writes it, he went to a black school. (...) He was taught what in those days was called Bantu Education! My grandfather said, there's no school, there's no money to send you to a fancy school; here's a school on the farm, you'll go to that school. And it was a black school. (Liz: Ja ja) And the Department of Education have still got a project of my Dad (Liz: Mm) that he did on the Xhosa language. (G1.102, 104)

George is very proud that all the members of his family speak isiXhosa, and that his sons are continuing the practice, one of his sons speaking it better than he or his wife does. He characterizes the register of isiXhosa that he speaks as 'kitchen Xhosa'.

35. My kids all three speak it fluently (Liz: Mm mm); that's also not from learning it, they - or learning it at school, put it that way (Liz: No, no), because they're not taking Xhosa yet at school (Liz: Ja), also just from having

friends (...) my middle one, (...) (Liz: Mm), he's about the best in Xhosa (Liz: Is he?) because he gets all the qi's and the xi's⁸⁵ and all that right (Liz laughs) which I also sometimes battle with (...) (G1.22,24)

36. um the Xhosa we speak, I think we call it what they call it - Kitchen Xhosa (Liz: Mm) - it's not the genuine, genuine - um - but we can understand it and speak it (...) I can read it, I can't write it, 'cause I don't know the alphabet. (G1.25)

This family tradition is also one of farm life, or, in the absence of a farm, of rural life and outdoor pursuits, often shared with isiXhosa-speaking people. In speaking of his parents' divorce, after which his mother got custody of him, George says:

37. (...) but in the end I managed to get through to my Mom that my Dad could give me more in life than what she could, not meaning it in a bad way, (Liz: Mm) and ja - then I - my Dad got custody of me, (Liz: Mm) which I'm very grateful for (Liz: Mm) (...) I'm trying to do the same with my boys, (Liz: Mm) give them everything that I can - (Liz: Mm) teach them fishing, hunting, - (Liz: Mm) outdoors, which I probably would never have done, if I'd lived by my Mom. (Liz: Mm - mm - mm) (G3.82,83)

The period that George spent on a farm as such was shorter than that of any of the other boys. The farm belonged to his grandfather and he only stayed there for periods, and then visited at other times. Of his stay on the farm, he says:

38. That is where I started speaking Xhosa (Liz: M-hm) because (...) all my friends were little *kwedinis*⁸⁶ (Liz: Mmm Mmm) and there was one particular guy, his name was Gigs (Liz: M-hm), and him and me were great pals (Liz: Mmm mm) and I used to spend most of my time with ol' Gigs. (Liz: Mm) (G1.10,11)

39. Gigs used to sleep in our house, when I was on the farm. He used to come and sleep in the house with me um... (G1.70)

The fact that George repeats the information about Gigs sleeping in the house probably indicates his recognition that the situation of a black boy sleeping in white people's house might be surprising to me. His story, like those of Riaan and Ernie, tells of activities such as riding horses and donkeys, hunting birds and mice, which he and Gigs cooked and ate, working with his doves, and making and playing with wire cars. An extract about these cars reflects the way the power relations of South Africa beyond the farm are mirrored in the children's world.

40. (...) I had quite a lot of wire cars, Gigs taught me how to make them (Liz: Mm), and um, ja, I was the traffic cop, as a kid, 'cause I had the traffic cop car (Liz: Ah-ha), and we had to tie it to a red car tube. We would cut it and wrap it round our wheels; that was our tyres, and if you never had a tyre on you got a two cent fine. (Liz:

⁸⁵ In isiXhosa, x, q and c are click sounds.

⁸⁶ *Kwedini* (isiXhosa), plural *amakwedini*: young uninitiated Xhosa boy/s

OK. *Laughs.*) That's how we used to make money from the other little {kids}. *Laughs.* (Liz: OK. *Laughs.*) (G1.67,68)

In this children's game, George takes on the more powerful position of the traffic cop (par. 36), while his friend, in spite of having taught him to make the cars, is in a more dependent role, and the other children are exploited. Here we see the power relations of the broader adult world echoed in the children's play; they are rehearsing future roles in the broader Apartheid society, where the white person is in control and can impose the fines on the black people. Gigs can only gain a share of that power by aligning himself with George, the white person.

In spite of the time limitations of George's period on the farm, he nevertheless seems to have learned the language within a community similar to that of the two boys already discussed, although his engagement did not go much further than the stage of play. His involvement in farm life was brought to an abrupt end by his parent's divorce, which took place when he was still in the early years of school, giving custody of him to his mother, who lived in town. A continued involvement with Xhosa people and their language went along with the identification he felt with his father and grandfather, who were (or had been) full participants and 'old-timers' on farm CoPs (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 57). One could perhaps say that George continued to belong, in his imagination (Wenger 1998, p. 175; Norton, 2001), to the farm CoP, and tried to extend the life of friendship and play which he experienced on the farm, into his adult life and the life of his family. He has a firm belief that the way to learn language is through friendship:

41. And a couple of friends of mine, they reckon that it's such a difficult language to learn (Liz: Er) and all I said to them was, well, speak it - try and speak it (Liz laughs) you know, blacks do, get a black friend and ask them to teach you, it's the easiest... (G1.28)

Brendon: 'I ... remember becoming Xhosa, in a way' (B1:12)

Brendon, like George, had one special friend in his early childhood. Being the younger of two brothers, with the elder away at school, he was on his own with the Xhosa children on the farm most of the time. Speaking of life on the remote farm that they moved to when he was five, he says:

42. that's actually where I really remember becoming Xhosa, in a way. (Liz: Mm) I remember, I used to listen to the Xhosa radio station. (Liz: Mm) I wasn't allowed to listen inside, I'd have to go outside on the veranda, [*chuckle*] (Liz laughs) (...)

43. Sonwabo, (Liz: Mm) (...) was my best friend at the age of around 4 or 5 (...) whenever I would leave our farmhouse, I would go to their house, to their hut, (Liz: Yes) and we would share meals (Liz: Uh-ha) and we used to hunt birds together and we used - we had a really intimate, close friendship (Liz: Ja) as young boys, um,
44. (...) I remember, you know, there were lots of children that died in that - (Liz: Mm) on that farm (Liz: Mmm!) that would have been his siblings, they, I would imagine died of things like diarrhoea, (Liz: Sho) (...) it was in the middle of nowhere (Liz: Ja) so the mobile clinic only came once a month. (Liz: Mm) (B1.12-15)
45. I only remember connections with Xhosa children. (Liz: Yes, yes) Um specially with Sonwabo, there were a couple of um kids, um, Vivi was the other guy and then Nongugquko, [Sonwabo's sister], was older, (...) she was in control of us, //Liz: *laughs* // Brendon: don't do that, do this, don't dare// - you know, kind of, and when we played games as well, like we also played lots of traditional games, and she'd always control everything, cause she was older, so (Liz: Mm) - and then often we'd just the guys would play, (Liz: Mm) certain things, (Liz: Mm) like, like if we were playing pretend circumcision, or whatever, (Liz: Mm) you know, then the girls wouldn't be involved in that sort of thing, so (Liz: Mm) (B1.70)
46. {The} radio became like for me, I suppose when I look back on it, sort of like a symbol, (...) And we'd take this radio to the dairy, (Liz: Mm) where it was away from everybody and we'd listen and we'd dance around the milk separator (Liz: Mm) and do whatever it was we were doing, (Liz: Mm)
47. And then of course, um, there was another boy come to play (...) from - we were sort of the last farm on the Transkei border, (Liz: Mm) so we used to go across the border to to this old man's place and we used to give him a packet of tobacco, Boxer tobacco, then he would produce his donkeys for the day, you know Sonwabo and myself and Vivi and a couple of other kids (Liz: Mm) and we'd ride around with these donkeys and then take them back at the end of the day. (B1.77,78)
48. and there was always this kind of feeling though that, my Xhosaness was something that wouldn't be accepted by my, especially by my late mother. (Liz: Ja) (...) (Liz: Ja) I mean you know, little things like why would I have to wear shoes, for example. Things that I couldn't understand, (Liz laughs) because none of my friends wore shoes. And why would I have to wear short pants when my friends never wore short pants like on Christmas Day, it was long pants (Liz: Mm), that was just the way it was (Liz: Mm), it was uncouth to wear short pants, (Liz laughs) even though it was in the heat of summer. (Liz: Ja, ja) So I remember a whole lot of conflicting things that were going on at that time (...) (B1.17)
49. Like, we would make a traditional fire, and my mother once came in there and we were boiling milk and she absolutely flipped, I remember she, she stamped on the fire and said we were going to burn the place down, [*both laugh*] you know, I felt really sort of confused, (Liz: Ja) like, why would she be screaming like this, (Liz: Yes, yes) or if we'd go out and we'd catch field mice, you know, (Liz: Mm) that was a great pastime, (Liz: Mm) and then we'd braai⁸⁷ them, you know like, (Liz: Mm) and and I remember once she came across us and we were we were braaiing these field mice sort of by the dairy, and she was - and we tried to tell her that we'd caught some birds, but of course she could see that these things had four legs, and //they were definitely not birds// [*laugh*]//. Oh, she was absolutely aghast, you know, (Liz: Ja) and we used to do this every day, like it was normal, you know (Liz: Ja) you catch field mice, braai them and eat them, you know (B1.67, 68)

⁸⁷ *Braai*: barbecue (Afrikaans)

We see in these extracts that Brendon's childhood story includes many of the same kinds of activities as those detailed by Riaan and George, e.g. long hours of activities such as hunting birds (par. 43) and mice (par. 49), riding donkeys (par. 47), traditional games (par. 45), dancing to the radio (par. 46), together with isiXhosa-speaking children, all in isiXhosa.

We also see the older sister socializing the younger ones into the norms of the community (par. 45), teaching them what ought and ought not to be done. There is more evidence in these extracts that Brendon was being socialized into the community of isiXhosa speakers, and not just the farm CoP. He is sharing meals (par. 42), playing traditional games and 'pretend circumcision' (par. 45), and preferring the norms of his friends, such as no shoes, and long pants on Christmas Day (par. 48) to those prescribed by his mother.

The story shows that even in his early years Brendon experienced the split between the black and white communities, and was torn by conflicts set up by his mother's expectation that her son would adopt the white colonial norms, e.g. of shoes and short pants (par. 45), and that Xhosa radio should not be played in the house, but 'away from everybody' (pars. 41, 46). Brendon is experiencing 'ambivalence' (Block, 2007, p. 22) here, even at this early age, and also exercising agency in choosing the Xhosa radio and the Xhosa norms. IsiXhosa is his 'language of affiliation' (Leung et al, 1997, p. 555), and he is fully invested in it.

Brendon recounts three episodes in childhood where his mother becomes very upset by something he is involved in with his Xhosa friends. He uses very vivid terms to describe her extreme reactions: 'she absolutely flipped' (par. 49); 'she was absolutely aghast' (par 49); 'she was absolutely furious' (B1:79); 'violently, she flew into a violent rage' (B1:79). It is clear from the deep impression that these episodes made on him that he was very shocked by his mother's reactions on these occasions. They were completely unexpected, partly because he saw his mother as by nature 'a very timid person' (B1:79)⁸⁸, but also because it didn't fit in with his view of 'normality'. For him, what he was doing with Sonwabo was 'normal (...) you catch field mice, braai them and eat them' (par. 49); it was 'a great pastime' (par. 49). It seems, then, that his mother's reaction – her discourse - didn't make sense to him; it was, for him, abnormal, even 'wrong'. Block (2007a) and Baumann's (1991) descriptions of ambivalence apply here: his

⁸⁸ I felt here that my own mother, also of Scottish extraction and upbringing, and also somewhat shy, would have had much in common with her.

mother's reaction did not fit with his existing sense of how the world worked, and he was bewildered as to how to describe or classify what was happening. His mother, on the other hand, seems to have been struggling, on this isolated farm, where they had little contact with other white people, to maintain colonial norms of 'civilised' behaviour in her home, and gave way to reactions of panic and desperation when she felt she was losing the battle. 'I felt really sort of confused' (par. 49), says Brendon. In our second meeting, where we discussed these incidents again, he said, 'I still can't make sense of a lot of those things' (B2.94). The shock of these critical experiences (Block, 2007a, p. 22) left a lasting impression, and he still identifies with the 'normality' of his playtime with Sonwabo, rather than his mother's 'normality'.

Brendon's story is more nuanced and reflective, and has a more sombre tone than the other men's stories. This can be seen in his awareness of the children's deaths, and how seldom the mobile clinic visited (par. 43), as well as in other extracts, such as those below, which describe experiences with adult members of the neighbouring black community.

50. I even remember some tensions, you know (Liz: Ja) between my parents, and some of the Xhosa people (Liz: Mmm!) I remember like we had a vicious dog, for example, (Liz: Mmm!) a Boxer dog, which used to attack some of the Xhosa people (Liz: Mm), you know, and bit this one man's ear off, (Liz: Mmmmm!) and I remember something about him wrapping something around his head and then he got blood poisoning and nearly died (...) (B1:10)

51. ... a woman - who had throat cancer, - (Liz: Mm), I mean she had a gaping hole (Liz: Mmmmm!), and they obviously couldn't cure - (...) - anyway, she died of the cancer (Liz: Mm), but, I remember all the all the stuff coming out of her, you know, and she was lying in a hut dying, and then she gave me this chicken, you know, a red chicken (Liz: Mm), and then Sonwabo's father made me a little *hok*⁸⁹, you know, now and that little chicken to me was such a - (...) you know the fact that she gave me the chicken (Liz: Yes) and didn't give it to anyone else, you know, for me was, now, that I look back, (Liz: Yes) was profound (Liz: Mmmmm), you know, she was dying (Liz: Mm)(...) (B1:71,73)

In these two extracts (pars. 50, 51), we see him brought face-to-face with the deprivation, pain, poverty and death which were (and still are) so common in this remote black community.

The vividness of the pictures he paints reflect the intensity of his emotional involvement in this community of isiXhosa speakers: the joy of the dancing to the radio, away from other people who might draw him back into a white world; the horror of the dog biting off the man's ear and

⁸⁹ *Hok* (South African, from Afrikaans) Cage; hen-house

of the woman dying of cancer; and how moved and privileged he felt by the gift of a chicken from one who had so little, and was on the verge of death.

In these early years, then, Brendon seems to have been socialized into two communities simultaneously, and, from his mother's point of view at least, they were to be kept separate. While his birth parents (especially his mother) socialized him into white 'English-speaking' colonial norms, his 'Xhosa parents' and playmates socialized him into black 'isiXhosa-speaking' norms.

This is not quite the same as the picture painted by the other men, who appear to have been socialized more harmoniously into the reproduction and conservation of the farm CoP, where isiXhosa was the language of practice. There is also not so much evidence of participation in the work of the farm, in Brendon's story. These differences could be related to the 'ambivalence' he experienced as he was pushed and pulled by the black and white worlds, even in his early years. It could also be related to the fact that his intense involvement in the Xhosa world was to come to an end more abruptly and comprehensively, and at an earlier stage, than was the case with Riaan and Ernie.

We shift our attention now to the situation of the boys when they went to school, which changed things for all of them, but to different degrees.

The move to school

Particular social practices and discourses were the norm on Eastern Cape farm CoPs, and these practices constructed for those who lived in those spaces an identity as 'Eastern Cape farmers'. The men have described some of the practices of shared play and work which were normal in childhood. Also normal was the practice of sending the white children to white schools when they came to school-going age, at which time they left their black playmates behind on the farms. While the schools were different and separate CoPs, the practice of sending the white children to those schools was an integral part of the farm CoPs practice.

Martin-Jones and Heller (1996), using concepts from Bourdieu, emphasize the role of education in the production and reproduction of cultural identity and social inequality. They claim that it is particularly revealing to study this process in multilingual settings, since the 'language practices of educational institutions are bound up in the legitimization of relations of power among

ethnolinguistic groups' (p.128). The four white boys were now to be 'pulled straight'; they needed to be made aware of the 'legitimacy' of the Apartheid way of life and the 'otherness' of black people. The school would move them into white discourses, through the official languages of English and Afrikaans.

The break with the world of shared play was functional in terms of farms in white South Africa, in that it tended to change the nature of the relationship between the white boy and his black companions, socializing him into the norms of white superiority of the broader South African society. This enabled him to become part of the power structures of white South Africa and perhaps return to the farm with the identity of 'boss'. In line with this, two of the participants characterize the register of isiXhosa used on farms as 'authoritative', a language for giving orders:

1. **Riaan:** There's a huge difference between farm Xhosa, which is an authoritative [sic] (...) – 'Now you go and milk that cow' (...) and the normal conversation type of Xhosa (Ri1.46)
2. **Brendon:** ... I think I've always seen [my father] as someone who gives instructions in Xhosa, (**Liz:** Yes, yes) // **Brendon:** you know what I mean // **Liz:** It's a different kind of Xhosa (B1.83)

This is borne out by Kaschula (1988, p. 102), who says that Eastern Cape farmers are 'encouraged by the social setting to speak a rather limited, instructional type of Xhosa – no doubt to create respect for the office of employer and delineate expected role relationships'.

For each of the men I spoke to, going to school represented a major rupture in their lifestyle. They were torn away from a world of constant play, shared with black companions, and thrust into a new CoP with completely different companions and practices. The fact that companions from the farm could not be taken along meant a significant loss, in at least Brendon's case.

So how did each of the four men remember the move to school?

George: 'Nothing changed' (G1:119)

When George started school, he spoke mostly isiXhosa, and couldn't really speak English very well, so other children teased him. He was lucky to have older brothers and sisters to help him with his English, which, according to him, largely resolved his difficulties. When asked whether going to school changed his relationship with Gigs, he said:

3. ... nothing changed. I couldn't wait to get out of school, because I used to go to the farm almost on a daily basis; my grandfather only farmed, I think it was 3 or 4 k⁹⁰'s ... {out of town}, and I used to ride my horse from our house in town out to the farm on a daily basis. No, nothing ever changed between ol' Gigs and I... (G1.119)

The more serious interruption of George's lifestyle was his parents' divorce, which sent him eventually into an Afrikaans environment and an Afrikaans school, away from Xhosa people, for a number of years. During those years, he became fluent in Afrikaans.

Riaan: 'That was the system and we didn't know about another system.' (Ri2:47)

When Riaan started school, he was put into the boarding establishment, but, he says, 'that didn't work' (Ri1.17). He attributes this to two factors: that he was 'spoilt', and that he was 'not comfortable staying with Afrikaans-speaking people all the time' (Ri1.18). The sub-text here seems to be that he was used to spending a lot of his time with isiXhosa-speakers. His family took him out of the hostel and from then on he commuted daily to school, an English-medium school until Standard 5⁹¹, and after that, an Afrikaans-medium high school. This gave him fluency in both official languages. Later, he speaks of school as 'a huge disruption in our lives'.

4. I hated it. ... Shoes! Those shoes that we had to wear, and things like that, and the homework! Ooooooh! That homework was a nightmare! (Liz: Ah) My poor old stepmother; I think she did all of it. (Liz laughs) Because really, that wasn't something that was considered at all; it wasn't part of this game - (big laugh) (Ri1:99)

This passage indicates that it wasn't so much the separation from his friends that he felt as painful, but the immersion into a completely different CoP, where people were trying to impose very different practices (e.g. 'shoes' and 'homework') onto him. This was a very different 'game', with different rules, from the one on the farm, that he revelled in. When questioned further about the experience of being separated from his friends, he said,

5. No, no it wasn't ... nice, especially at the end of weekends, or the end of school holidays. (Liz: Mm.) Remember we didn't go to the same schools, (Liz: Sure) so it was a - You played now the whole holiday, or long weekend, or whatever, and now you had to split up again. But it didn't affect us because we knew we would get together again. (Liz: Mm) So it wasn't - it didn't affect - me that much. (Liz: Mm) It didn't really - it wasn't - it wasn't a big matter. (Liz: Mm) It was usual, life was normal; ... That's the way it was, ja. That was the system and we didn't know about another system. (Ri2:47)

He explains that one thing which helped them accept the separation was the knowledge that 'we would get together again' (par. 5). Riaan, like Ernie, attended school as a day scholar

⁹⁰ K (colloquial South African): kilometres

⁹¹ Year 7, the end of Primary School

throughout his school career, returning home in the afternoons, and spending weekends and almost all holidays on the farm. He told how when he arrived back home from school in the afternoons, he would often mount his horse and ride to the farm school where his friends were learning, sometimes joining in with their lessons, thus acquiring the basics of reading and writing in isiXhosa. This was a privilege that his friends had no freedom to reciprocate.

While Riaan was lucky that the school CoP and the farm CoP could continue in parallel, the mere fact that he and his mates were sent to different schools was an imposition of the dominant socio-political discourse, and meant an acceptance of the 'system' that separated them as 'normal'. Once he had made the adjustment to segregated schools, he had at his disposal two sets of routines and repertoires, - two 'identities' - and became expert in switching from one to another when appropriate. This was the way things were; it was part of 'normal' practice on the farm, and in South Africa.

Ernie: 'You can't speak Xhosa there at school' (E1:57)

Ernie's experience was similar to that of Riaan in that he was also able to continue with his life of playing and farming after school, in the afternoons, and in the holidays. He also learned the rudiments of written isiXhosa by '{getting} hold of my little friends' school books' (E2.40). For him there has been no significant break with this farming lifestyle throughout his whole life. Of going to school he had this to say:

6. - of course when I went to school I could only speak Xhosa. (Liz: Is it) and German (Liz *chuckles*) and - of course the German fell away and the Xhosa still remained and then I learnt English and Afrikaans at school, and um, my first teacher was a Mgrs. A, very strict. (Liz: Ja) and the principal was a Mr B, very nice old man (Liz: Uhah) (E1.4,5)
7. No, it was a big change and then of course the biggest change of the lot was when I came from the small school - to {high school} which is - entirely different, you know (Liz: Yes) but it took me about 6 months to get used to it and it all fell into place again.(...)
8. found it hard at the start, my very first day I didn't like school I ran away, ran home [*both laugh*] I had quite a far distance to go (Liz: You ran all the way home!) Yes! I packed up, and took my little suitcase and I was out the gate, the teachers [*both laugh*] - they had to persuade me to go back the next day. I still remember that clearly; - [*laugh*] my little navy suitcase I had. No, I didn't like it all - and - what I said is, "You can't speak Xhosa there at school - *laugh*".
9. Liz: Ja, so would you say Xhosa was your strongest language //at that time

10. // Yes, it was //at that stage, yes before I went to school, (Liz: Mm, mm) definitely - and then of course I still spoke German right until I left {my home village} and - then of course when I came to {high school} the German fell away altogether. (E1.55, 57, 58)

In spite of the initial shock which Ernie describes, mainly due to the new languages he had to use, the village school he attended was small and the teachers clearly committed to their charges. He speaks positively about them, and given his strong identification with his parents, it was probably not difficult to adjust to and, in time, identify with these adults who, in terms of the norms of the time, were 'old-timers' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 57) in his parents' community of white South Africans.

When I enquired further about why the move to high school was 'the biggest change of the lot', his responses mostly related to the much bigger size of the school, the different subjects and the emphasis on sport. It seems, though, that where changes were inevitable, Ernie was adaptable, and he says that after a while it 'all fell into place again' (par. 7). He fitted in as a 'legitimate peripheral participant' of the new CoP of 'schooled adults', and accommodated this alongside his participation in the farm.

While both schools were English medium, Ernie seems to have had no trouble in learning Afrikaans, and says 'in Matric I had a better result in Afrikaans than I did in English' (E1.60). Already possessing the facility to shift from one language repertoire to another, it seems he was able more easily to adapt to a third and a fourth. His fluency in Afrikaans was to be developed further through his working life.

Brendon: 'A bit of a schizophrenic experience' (B1:19)

Brendon was not as fortunate as Riaan and Ernie. At the age of 6, he was sent to an Afrikaans medium boarding school 45 minutes' drive away from home. He describes this as 'a bit of a schizophrenic experience' (B1:19): the children were white and Afrikaans-speaking, but most came from farms and spoke isiXhosa as well.

11. And I'd never spoken a word of Afrikaans or heard any Afrikaans, (Liz: Sho) (...) So we kind of communicating in some kind of Xhosa language thing, (Liz laughs) until obviously I had to capitulate to Afrikaans, (Liz: Ja) because it was the stronger grouping ... (B1.19)

This move to a completely different space left him feeling 'very forlorn'. He describes his earnest efforts to fix things; to create new practices in the farm community by building a school in the shared space where he and his friends had been so happy together.

12. ... it wasn't easy, (Liz: Mm) and I didn't really want to be at the school (Liz: Mm). I actually even built - I remember on weekends I started building this school, as little as I was, (Liz: Mm) because I wanted everybody to come to my school (Liz: OK!) - all my Xhosa friends - it never got a roof on it, but I do remember poles being stuck in the ground, and we were trying to like (Liz: Ja) use wattle and daub, (Liz: Ja) and of course, it all collapsed in a heap at some point. (B1.20)

This idea of creating a shared school remained, for him, an 'imagined community' throughout his growing up years, and in the post-1994 democratic dispensation it became in some way a reality for him, as I will show in Chapter 5. In childhood though, there was a sense that the children's efforts were doomed; the power structures that they were up against were too strong ('the stronger grouping' par. 11; 'of course, it all collapsed' par. 12). From his early years, Brendon experienced the white world, represented firstly by his mother, and then by his schools, as trying to press him into a mould that he did not like, and he resisted this vigorously, within himself, though he had to 'capitulate' (par. 11) as a small, powerless boy. These are the flows of force and resistance described by Foucault (1976, p.101).

Thus Brendon's identity became 'fragmented and contested' (Block, 2007b, p. 864) when he was sent to school. He is engaged in what Papastergiadis (2000, p. 170) called a 'negotiation of difference' in the 'presence of fissures, gaps and contradictions'. He could be seen, in his new school, as a migrant, trying to work out a way of belonging, through 'a constant dialogue between past and present, near and far, foreign and familiar' (Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 170). He once again experiences 'ambivalence' in this choiceless situation, and makes an attempt to resolve it by enjoying his weekends at home, and adjusting to the discourses and routines of the school community.

He finally invested in Afrikaans for the sake of survival and achievement in the new community, and by the age of 11 or 12 was 'mother-tongue fluent' (B1:23) in the language. At that stage he was sent further away, to a high school in the English public school style. This meant changing to a new language medium and a new ethos. He describes a 'shift' which had started to take place in him during primary schooling, and which now continued:

13. I don't know, like, and then my Xhosaness has always been part of me in a way, um, and that when I used to go back to the farm like on holidays and things, - I felt as though - I'd shifted, something had shifted (Liz: Mm), like I, I wasn't as [pause] as embracing somehow (Liz: Mm) - I don't know maybe I was more distant (Liz: Mm), maybe they were more distant (Liz: Mm) maybe - and I've seen it with my nephews as well (Liz: Mm) [pause], so, then I think that kind of learned behaviour when you become more conscious maybe, when you become conscious of other - 'the other' (Liz: Mmm), and that's what your family is saying and thinking and (Liz: and the broader society as well) broader society in the middle of Apartheid you know (Liz: Ja) and [inaudible] and you know I've never been able to go full circle again. (B1:26)

The institutional function of the school, the 'construction of social identities and of unequal relations of power' (Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996, p. 127) had taken its toll; a shift in his sense of himself had taken place. The way he expresses himself shows the multiple and conflicted nature of his identity: while his 'Xhosaness has always been part of' (par. 13) him, he had 'shifted' (par. 13) somehow, from shared space into white space, not only physically, but also subjectively. This shift brought with it a great sense of sadness and loss, which he has never quite overcome ('never been able to go full circle again' par. 13).

From a socio-cultural point of view, one sees the boys going through some of the stages of 'self-translation' (loss and recovery) identified by Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000, pp. 162 ff.) in the autobiographies of bilingual writers⁹², describing the experience of crossing from one language and culture to another. On entry into the white schools, they experienced some 'loss of linguistic identity'; their identities as members of the isiXhosa-speaking play culture of the farm were irrelevant in the new environment. Together with that went a 'loss of subjectivities'; we see Brendon experiencing a 'schizophrenic situation' (B1.19) and 'a shift' (B1.26) in his subjectivity.

'First language attrition' is another of the aspects of loss mentioned by Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000, p. 163). The break from the world of shared play interrupted the on-going development of isiXhosa in the young men, to one degree or another. While on the farm, the boys were not only part of a basically isiXhosa-speaking community, but were also in an ideal relationship with people who could provide a ZPD for them. Once they were at school, isiXhosa was not used as a 'mediational means' to develop higher cognitive functions. In fact, for three of them it was not used at all at school, although Riaan and Ernie (and George for a couple of years) continued to

⁹² These stages are in some ways foreshadowed by Brown's (building on Schumann's Acculturation model) stages of euphoria, culture shock, culture stress, assimilation ... and acceptance of the 'new' person that has developed (see Ricento, 2005, p. 898).

use it out of school. Brendon was an exception to this. He used isiXhosa with his Afrikaans-speaking playmates for a time, and later chose to take isiXhosa as a school subject in order to partially make up for his sense of loss. This choice could be seen as his way of exercising agency in trying to reconstruct some aspects of the community he had left behind; to create an 'imagined community' (Wenger, 1998, p. 176; Norton, 2001) where isiXhosa was still spoken. The approach to isiXhosa in his lessons was a grammatical one, however, giving him a meta-language with which to talk about the language rather than an extension of his communicative and cognitive functioning in it.

14. ...he was an Ndebele-speaking white Zimbabwean (Liz: Mm) who taught me Xhosa, all the grammatical constructions and things (Liz: Ja, ja), he taught them very well (Liz: Ja, ja, ja), I must admit, but I didn't feel like I was actually learning more about speaking the language. (B1:24)

While the 'Recovery and (re)construction phase' of Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) clearly began while the boys were at school, it is only in their adult narratives that it is seen in its fullness, when it becomes apparent that the discourses and styles of the farm and school CoPs are 'exportable', and can be used, reinterpreted and adapted in other communities and practices (Wenger, 1998, p. 129).

I have looked at the implications of the move to school, in terms of ambivalence, conflicted identity, and the development of a multifaceted identity. In terms of language learning, it is clear that the negotiation of meaning and identity through participation in a community was something which had become second nature to these boys. Canagarajah (2007) concludes that 'communication in multilingual communities involves a different mindset,' and that this 'competence does not constitute a form of knowledge, but rather, encompasses interaction strategies' (p. 929). This seems to be borne out by the fact that all four men emerged from their years at school competent in English and Afrikaans as well as isiXhosa, with Ernie also having the working knowledge of basic German he acquired as a child at home and church. However, their mastery of a third or fourth language can also be explained by the fact that all of the boys were required to enter schools with unfamiliar media of instruction and mastered these in order to become full participants in the school community, and to succeed socially and academically.

Conclusion

George, Ernie, Riaan and Brendon learned language through participation in communities: they acquired the rudiments of Afrikaans, English or German in the home, and invested in a farm-boy identity and the isiXhosa language repertoire, which enabled their immersion in the world of play and relationships with playmates on the farm and the neighbouring community of isiXhosa-speakers. Later, they had to invest in a school-boy identity, and English and Afrikaans, which enabled their successful participation at school. They had full legitimacy in home, farm and school CoPs, and were fully engaged in negotiating meaning and identity through play and through work. Participation in the school CoP was a vital part of the preparation of the boys for adult life as white men who would become 'schooled adults', part of the authority structure of society in colonial and Apartheid South Africa. Their early years of participation in the shared world of work and play with the Xhosa boys gave them a language repertoire which, in terms of Apartheid South Africa was a transgression of boundaries, but which could serve the purposes of the farm once they had been initiated into the power discourses of the dominant white world.

According to Wenger (1998), communities of practice can be 'the locus of resistance to oppression and the locus of the reproduction of its conditions' (p. 85). White schooling for the farmer's children was part of the practices of farm CoPs. Ernie, Riaan and George adjusted with little resistance to the new world of school, perhaps because they did not feel they had been forcibly separated from the childhood ethos. Brendon experienced much more ambivalence, however, and exercised as much agency as he could muster in an attempt to resist the oppression of school and transform his situation into something more similar to the farm community he had had to leave behind – now an 'imagined community' for him. He nevertheless did 'shift' subjectively, to resolve the ambivalence, into a space which made his school life more bearable, but which left him with sadness and loss in relation to his farm friends. While the other three men find themselves relatively comfortable with continuing the traditions of their forefathers, Brendon is conscious of discomfort, and has an on-going urge to move away from or transform some of these traditions.

The next chapter follows the four men into adulthood, showing how their language repertoires and identities develop and change as they move through 'rites of passage' and into their adult working lives.

Chapter 5: Identity and language maintenance and development in narratives describing rites of passage and working life

Introduction

In this chapter, I continue my exploration of ways in which issues of power and identity interact with language use in the lives of the research participants. I examine firstly parts of participants' narratives which deal with 'rites of passage' into manhood (initiation ceremonies, periods spent at university, and national service in the South African Defence Force) and the impact that participation, or non-participation, in communities represented by these experiences has on the men's sense of identity and use of isiXhosa and other language repertoires. I then look at ways in which the four men use, maintain and develop the language repertoires acquired in childhood in a range of communities in their adult working lives, and ways in which language use interacts with identity in these different contexts.

I continue to make use of the language acquisition and post-structuralist identity theories outlined in Chapters 2 and 4, expanding the repertoire of 'white discourses' described by Steyn (2001; 2004) and others. Steyn (2001), in analysing the language of her participants, identifies five 'narratives', which further sub-divide the three basic discourse types: 'essentialist racist discourse'; 'colour-blind discourse' (including 'culturalist racist discourse'); and 'race-cognizant discourse'. One, which she calls 'under African Skies', is defined as a type of discourse which is characterized by 'an honesty in talking about the past' (Steyn, 2001, p. 133), an awareness of their own whiteness and how it operates, and an attempt to enter into a 'new relationship – dialogic, appreciative, committed – with the continent that whiteness came to conquer' (Steyn, 2001, p. 145). In analysing my participants' narratives, I find evidence of this kind of discourse, particularly in the speech of Brendon when he looks over his past life from the vantage point of the post-1994 democracy. I have called this kind of discourse 'deconstructing discourse'.

I have identified a number of other forms of white discourse. While the first two can be seen as white in that they arise out of the lifestyle and value systems of white Western groups, they do not necessarily contain derogatory or negative implications or innuendos about 'the other'. One is the discourse of the 'enlightened', or liberal, academically-trained white person, who promotes education and rational attitudes to problems, and is committed to making a positive

contribution to the country. I see this as a discourse which arises very clearly from the liberal Western worldview, and which sees this worldview as having something positive to offer. I have called this 'enlightened discourse'. There is also a discourse which emphasizes the values of respect and discipline. Some might say these are values which went along with the Afrikaner Nationalist ideology; the respect side of this type of discourse is also in line with the values of many black communities. I call this 'discipline discourse'.

I have found two additional types of discourse in my data which I have called 'discourses of the margins'. These are forms of talk which seem to be typical of people who are positioned as whites but have some insight into and experience of the black life-world by virtue of their early socialization and their language repertoires. I have divided these discourses into two types. The first is 'broker discourse', in which a white person offers insight into the black life-world to those who do not speak a black language, or interprets between the two worlds; the second is 'ambivalent discourse', evidencing conflicting identities and divided loyalties. Wenger's (1998), in his description of brokering, asserts that

The job of brokering ... involves processes of translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives...Brokering often entails ambivalent relations of multi-membership (p. 110).

It is clear that my participants often find themselves in a 'brokering' position. At times, this enables them to adopt the position of 'knower', being able to explain or interpret the life world of members of one community to members of another. At other times, this involves them in positions of almost unbearable ambivalence. These two positions are captured in the terms 'broker discourse' and 'ambivalent discourse'.

I also identify one feature of narrative time in the adult stories of two of the men. Portelli (1991) explains that narrative time differs from chronological time in that the person is telling his or her story from the point of view of the present, with a particular purpose, usually to 'project an image' (p. 64). In the narratives of these men, as they describe their adult working lives, still held and shaped by the influences and experiences of their childhood, as well as by the present, and the purposes of my interviews, some (notably Riaan and Brendon) give perceptible shapes, linear and cyclical, (Brockmeier, 2000, p. 53) to their life paths, as they describe them in the narratives.

Rites of passage into manhood: The circumcision ritual⁹³

Riaan

For Riaan, the real 'disruption' (Ri1:101) of the relationships of work and play with his companions on the farm took place when they left the Eastern Cape after initiation, 'for greener pastures' (Ri1:101), and he went to university.

1. (...) how it worked in those days on the farm, the young b-boys, when they were initiated young men traditionally went off to go and seek employment on the mines for a period (Liz: Mm, OK, after initiation). After initiation. It was called joining. - And and that happened. So I went off to university and they went off to join, - Because it was right at that stage when we split up. (Liz: Mm) (Ri2:51)

He constructs this separation as something inevitable, a 'normal' part of life ('how it worked in those days'). The addition of 'in those days' indicates a recognition that in the current South African context things have changed somewhat. He uses the word 'traditionally' when speaking of 'joining', the practice of seeking work on the mines. Here he uses the word 'tradition' to refer to regular, accepted practice, rather than to Xhosa tradition, expressed, for instance, in the circumcision ritual. The practice of working for whites, and on the mines, was anything but traditional in that sense; it was forced on the amaXhosa by the loss of their land. The separation of Riaan from his friends was certainly a harsh part of the Apartheid 'tradition', or 'normality': that the young white man has the opportunity to go to university, while the 'wider world' and 'greener pastures' for his one-time playmates is migrant labour on the mines.

When I asked him how he felt about the separation, he said that 'it made me realize that we are - that we are growing up' (Ri2:51). For him, the separation was part of the shift from childhood to adulthood, childhood in this Eastern Cape farming context being something shared, and adulthood being something where black and white operated much more separately. One can see in the hesitation on the word 'b-boys' (par. 1) a carefulness about not falling into the white South African discourse which he grew up with, in which all black males were called 'boys', signalling inferiority and disrespect. For circumcised Xhosa men, their status as mature men is of crucial importance, and demands appropriate deference, so this was an especially stinging aspect of Apartheid discourse. Riaan, who has at his disposal different languages of the South African 'heteroglossia' (Bakhtin, 1981), hears himself using the word and almost censors it, but

⁹³ Young Xhosa boys traditionally go through a rite of initiation into manhood which involves circumcision, and separation from regular society for a period.

judges that at this stage it was accurate to call them 'boys'; it was after initiation that they would become men. This carefulness about choice of words and of register is common in Riaan's narrative, as we shall see later. He seems to recognize and censor the aspects of his behaviour which belong to the 'old' South Africa. So, while Riaan constructs the separation from his companions as something 'normal', he also signifies that a shift has taken place, since that time of separation from his friends, in his discourse and ideology.

Ernie

Ernie and Riaan's experiences of the initiation of their friends had something in common. Riaan 'visited' his workmates at the site of their initiation, and saw quite a lot of what was happening. Ernie was invited by the parents of the initiates to 'fire a shot' at initiation ceremonies. He discusses at some length what he sees as deterioration in standards of what is done at the ceremony.

2. Yes yes. They were very fussy those days, yes and er - they even asked me - to come fire a shot or two there which they maintained was to make men of their of their sons. (Liz: Oh, ja) Yes, I was quite often invited to come and do that. (Liz: Ja) which I did. (...) no girls, they weren't allowed to see any girls, if they saw any girls from a distance they had to cover their faces (Liz: Ja) Oh today it's all different, I don't think they worry about that anymore. (Liz: Ja, ja) and er - as I say they had to live, to stay there full six weeks (Liz: Ja) in the in the veld. (E2:30,31)

He describes the events as happening outside of and apart from him (what 'they' did - then and now). Implied in the description is respect for a different and in some ways strange culture, some aspects of which did not have validity in his world-view. This can be seen, for instance, in the italicized phrase (my emphasis) '*...which they maintained was to make men of their sons*', which distances him from this belief. There is a sense of pride in knowing about how things were done in those days, and an implied criticism of the new ways: they probably don't 'worry about that any more' (par. 2). The account of his positive response to their invitation to 'fire a shot or two' (par. 2) seems to construct him as a person who is accommodating, neighbourly and helpful in response to the requests of people with whom he lives in a close, reciprocal, respectful and even affectionate relationship. Once again, one sees, in the fact that the parents invite him to 'fire a shot' (par. 2), the status he has as a white person in spite of being quite a young boy himself, and his acceptance of this as 'normal'.

George

George left the farm too early to have had any part in his friend Gig's initiation, but does relate a conversation he had with one of the men he works with about 'going to the bush'⁹⁴ (par 3).

3. I actually said to this one guy just before we closed, his son is going to the bush now, and I said to him, but why. No, to make a man out of him. So I said, you know just like we must accept change, I think you guys must also accept change.
4. I said there's no culture any more. Because their culture says, when they become a *makhwetha*⁹⁵ and they go to the bush, that *makhwetha* isn't allowed to even see a woman from a distance. (Liz: Mm) At all. I said, and what is happening now? The *makhwetha* huts are in town, I said, and their girlfriends are visiting them. I said that is not culture. (G2: 82)

George, like Ernie, is critical of the modern version of initiation, but is much more outspoken in his criticism, even challenging one of 'the guys' at work and giving him advice. In the sentence, 'Just like we must accept change... you guys must also...' (par. 3, my emphasis) he makes a clear distinction between black and white, implying that, for him as a white, it has not been comfortable to 'accept change' (par. 3). He would like to set the balance right and require some changes from the other side ('you guys' par. 3) as well. This seems right and fair to him. He makes quite authoritative statements about 'culture', assuming a position of superior knowledge about what is, or is not, 'culture'. His suggestion seems to be that since the old traditions of initiation are being so disrespected and defiled nowadays, the practice might as well be abandoned altogether. His views have a ring of 'white rightness'; George seems to feel quite free to make judgements about 'Xhosa culture', which he has made clear is not his own, particularly in its present form. The story creates a picture of very spirited communication between George and these 'guys' (par. 3), though we do not hear the responses, and certainly have no access to the thoughts and feelings of his work colleagues.

Brendon

Neither George, Ernie nor Riaan seems to have entertained the possibility that they could have undergone the initiation ceremony. Brendon, on the other hand, says that he would have liked to have gone through the ritual; it is perhaps part of his nostalgia for those days of closeness to his Xhosa friends, and his longing for re-integration and acceptance into Xhosa culture and

⁹⁴ A phrase often used to describe the initiation ritual.

⁹⁵ *Umkhwetha* (plural *abakhwetha*) : An initiate. George's usage is not quite correct.

identity. He engages in quite an extended discussion on how significant it is, in terms of identity, when a white boy undergoes the ceremony:

5. (...) when my friends went through it I was very much part of it (...) {but} I wasn't an initiate, no. (...) I would have wanted to be, (Liz: Mm) you know, and I see with my nephew as well, that he went through the same thing, of wanting to be initiated but now - it seems to me - he's now 21 and it's (Liz: Mm) - he's not even speaking about it anymore so I assume that there is some kind of thing that happens and I have a feeling that it's possibly either one, or both, parents who - have a sort of a block against - you know - allowing the child to actually undergo the circumcision (...). (B2:33)
6. (...) so I think it is quite a special thing when white guys undergo the ceremony because (...) it says something about - (...) sharing of spaces and changing of identity, (Liz: Yes) but it's easier said than done. I think with the white guy it can only happen if there's familial support - and often that isn't there because (Liz: Mm) it's just - not possible. (B2:38,39)

He holds on to the hope that it might become easier in the future for white boys to undergo the ceremony, and in that case that it might 'tilt identity' (B2:39) for those white Eastern Cape men who are initiated. He acknowledges the power of the English language and its accompanying western traditions in the suggestion that the stronger possibility is that everyone 'gets homogenized into English' (B2:39).

The quoted passage shows his sense of the power of the white parents, strongly needing to hold their children within the white ethos, which carries privilege and authority, even now, and fearing the 'loss' of their children to a culture which is simultaneously close to them and 'other' ('it's just - not possible', par. 6). The attentiveness of these parents to their children's racial identifications is reminiscent of Foucault's description of the 'surveillance' of 'parents, nurses, servants, educators' with regard to sexual development in children (1976, p. 98). His description implies that few parents would see initiation into manhood among the amaXhosa as an expanding and empowering opportunity, but would rather see it as a threat, and almost no child could or would stand against his parents in an issue of this nature.

Brendon sees initiation as a way for white males to win acceptance among Xhosa males ('I think white males who undergo circumcision would be much better accepted into erm - Eastern Cape culture, in a way' B2:35), the implication being that it could be a way for white South Africans to become 'insiders' in the community of the amaXhosa, the majority culture in the Eastern Cape. While participation in this community is something Brendon aspires to imaginatively (Wenger, 1998, p. 176), he acknowledges that 'Xhosa people' might not share his views on its desirability.

Speaking of another kind of initiation, that into the profession of Xhosa traditional healers (*amagqirha*⁹⁶), he says:

7. I'm not sure how Xhosa people feel about that. I think there's a sense of - there's a sort of nationalistic sense that I get amongst Xhosa people - not all Xhosa people (Liz: Mm) - because there's a sense that, you know, 'I own the tradition of the *amagqirha* or - you know, you as a white person, - I mean I don't really trust your motives as to why you are an *igqirha* (Liz: Sure) and I don't feel comfortable with it, you know'. (B2:41)

This comment shows that he is aware of quite a strong distinction between his own attitude towards this, and that of isiXhosa speakers. He calls this a 'nationalistic sense', pointing to a power dimension. With whites having enjoyed privilege and supremacy in so many areas of life, it would be surprising if isiXhosa-speakers didn't feel resistance to their entering spaces which have generally been sacrosanct. The desire of white men for membership in that community might threaten the power of amaXhosa men, who have in so many areas in the past found themselves surrendering power to whites.

Brendon constructs himself as someone who seeks greater intimacy with, and acceptance within, the Xhosa culture. While the other participants' identities could be seen to be defined in terms of membership of the farm (or rural Eastern Cape) Community of Practice, where the norm is still a clear distinction between 'us' and 'them' in spite of childhood intimacies, Brendon seeks to define his identity in relation to the Xhosa community itself, and therefore looks seriously at issues around initiation into it. If the other men had any wish to be part of the initiation rite, they are not exposing that aspect of themselves in this conversation with a white academic woman. Their 'inhabited' and 'ascribed' (Blommaert, 2005, p. 205) social identity is white, in spite of their early experiences.

For all of the men, though, this circumcision ceremony is a 'parting of the ways' in quite a defined sense. Though they have shared childhood with the Xhosa-speaking children, they cannot take the same path to manhood. Their prescribed path to manhood, as white young men, is through school, university education (for some), military service, and the world of work. We will now look at how these experiences shaped their identities and affected their language development trajectory.

⁹⁶ Amagqirha are traditional healers (*igqirha*, singular). At this point he was speaking of white people becoming initiated into the traditional healing profession, but it was part of the general discussion about whites engaging in Xhosa rituals. A number of whites have recently become *amagqirha*, just as there has recently been publicity about white boys being initiated into manhood along with black boys.

Rites of passage into manhood: University

Two of the four men, Riaan and Brendon, proceeded straight from school to university, Riaan to study Agriculture and Brendon to study isiXhosa, (among other things). For both men, aspects of the academic experience were to be important influences.

Riaan

Riaan emphasizes in his story the dominance of Afrikaans at the university he attended, but also is at pains to show that there were opportunities for him to use and improve his English (friends and books). This was, however, a period when he did not use much isiXhosa, except on holidays at home. He does speak, however, of affectionate relationships with the black cleaning staff at the university, and describes a recent reunion with one of them:

8. an old mama, and I immediately recognised her. (Liz: Mm) She was a cleaner in our residence, and we cried (Liz *laughs*) when we spoke, and we hugged each other. (Ri1:129)

He moved on from his first degree to post-graduate studies, this having the additional advantage of postponing military service⁹⁷, and possibly changing its nature, as recruits with degrees were often given specialized work to do.

His masters' research involved working with black people, in the Eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga), and gave him a chance to extend his range of isiXhosa (or SiSwati, which is of the same Nguni language family as isiXhosa) to what he called 'academic Xhosa', or 'interviewing Xhosa'. He describes the difference between registers as follows:

9. farm Xhosa, which is an authoritative [sic] (...) – 'Now you go and milk that cow' (...) and the normal conversation type of Xhosa and in fact in that academic type of Xhosa, in which {you} (...) conduct an interview, you 've got to have - you're dependent on the information, so you... you actually ... you've got to play fair, whether you like it or not, so that's how it works (*laughs*)... so.... (Ri1:46)

What is implied here is a development: a significant shift in 'head-space' from a register of isiXhosa which carried within it the assumption of authority of white over black, to a register conveying deference to and equality with the other, and an accompanying shift in identity from

⁹⁷ See [REDACTED].

farmer to academic (or researcher)⁹⁸. With the identity of researcher 'ascribed' to him, he was required ('you've got to ... whether you like it or not') to invest in this new register, and experienced a resulting shift in relationship. '[S]o that's how it works' (par. 8) he says, and laughs, indicating, perhaps, that this is just another aspect of 'normality', this time within the academic world. As the researcher is obliged to conform to this norm, it does not imply any virtue on his part. Conformity is, in fact motivated by self-interest. His adoption of the new register is not presented, then, as a particularly remarkable shift, and he comments that the 'mutual respect, which was bred into me' (Ri1:49) helped him reconcile the new with the old. Currently, he regards a person's use of 'authoritative (sic) Xhosa' as 'the worst thing that can happen' (Ri2.72) in terms of relations between races in the Eastern Cape. One could conclude that this was a very important turning point in his insight into language register and its significance in signalling power and attitudes in relationships. While he does not give himself the credit for having invested in this register ('you've got to ... whether you like it or not', par. 9), his narrative goes on to reflect the significance of this choice.

Brendon

Brendon's move to university was a logical next step from his public school type boys' high school. His enthusiasm about isiXhosa at school (though he could not study it right through until his matriculation year) led him to enrol for isiXhosa courses at university. 'I loved the Xhosa ... I loved studying the Xhosa' (B1:30), he said. His investment in the language, as was noted in Chapter 4, was directly linked to his longing to participate, in imagination if not through direct engagement, in the community of his childhood. Although isiXhosa was not initially the main focus of his degree, he registered for an honours degree, a master's degree and eventually a Ph.D. in isiXhosa once he had completed his undergraduate studies.

He speaks of his university years as 'barren', in terms of interaction with isiXhosa speakers:

10. I remember the '80s being very barren. Even although I was studying isiXhosa, (Liz: Mm) I don't really remember interacting with Xhosa people at all (Liz: Mm) - and the friends I had, when I was a child, I mean, there was no real identity-sharing with them anymore, I don't know, something had shifted, (Liz: Mm) probably due to my education and so on (...) (B2:57)

⁹⁸ Interestingly, the researcher is by no means powerless; the attitude s/he adopts towards his/her participants ironically gives more power, through respect. This is a mechanism which one needs to be aware of in the broader consideration of the relationships described in this thesis.

His use of and exposure to isiXhosa was academic, not personal; there is a deep sadness in the acknowledgement that it was 'barren', and there was no 'identity-sharing' any more. Nevertheless, there were high points within the academic study of the language, such as the visit of an oral poet who met and spoke to the students, inspiring Brendon to study oral poetry, and delve deeper into isiXhosa metaphor:

11. But I think that was a very significant meeting for me, and it - got me into the sort of - metaphor of isiXhosa (Liz: Mm, mm, mm) - got me to analysing it. (B2:5)

He also tells of a *braai*⁹⁹ which he organized at the residence, for the kitchen and cleaning staff, bringing a sheep from home. The following comment indicates his own enjoyment of the 'coming together' of this event, and suggests that he was as 'genuinely affected' as they were.

12. {I}t was a fantastic (...) - I think people were really genuinely sort of affected by that gesture (Liz: Ja) um and - (B2:85)

He also paints pictures of the bleakness and horror of the lives of these workers during those tense Apartheid times (the State of Emergency 1985-1989, see footnote 106):

13. I remember they had to leave early because there was a curfew. (Liz: Mm) If you were - and there was also boycotts. (...) I remember discussing with this one person who worked in that kitchen, it was a man - He told me this horrible story about how he contributed to necklacing¹⁰⁰ his own brother because you know, they thought he was an *impimpi*¹⁰¹. (B2:85, 86)

Clearly Brendon's 'Xhosa identity' was still alive and well during the 'barren' time, inspired by the oral poet, and able to communicate and listen with insight and compassion to the domestic staff. For both Riaan and Brendon, university represented alienation, for the time being at least, from the old farm relationships, and an introduction to and investment in new registers of isiXhosa: 'research' isiXhosa for Riaan, and poetic isiXhosa for Brendon, both representing a shift to relationships of more equality and respect between participants in the interactions. Both were also able, because of their early experiences, to establish what they experienced as warm relationships with domestic staff in the hostels where they stayed, but had few contacts with black lecturers or academics, with whom they might have related on more equal terms.

⁹⁹ *Braai* (Afrikaans; SA English): barbecue

¹⁰⁰ 'Necklacing' involved placing a motor-car tyre around the person's neck and setting it alight. The person would burn to death, an agonizing process.

¹⁰¹ *Impimpi* (isiXhosa): An informer. In Apartheid times this word referred to someone who gave information to the police in exchange for money or other favours. The townships were full of suspicions, accusations and counter-accusations that certain people were informers.

Rites of passage into manhood: Military service

The four men grew up in a time when all young white men were required to undergo a period of service in the South African National Defence Force¹⁰² after finishing school, or university studies. Like the conscription during the Frontier Wars (1779-1878), this was something which was bound to harden attitudes, polarizing black and white, and inducing whites to construct blacks as 'other' and 'the enemy', and themselves as the defenders of the country against 'black revolutionaries' and 'the communist threat'.

Ernie

Ernie, almost 20 years older than Riaan and Brendon, was one of the first youths to be subjected to compulsory national service (1964/65). For most young men at that time this consisted of a three-month period of basic training.

14. (...) that's where I did my basic training was at {W town}. (Liz: Ja, ja, so you just did the basics?) Yes, those days you had to go for three months and that was it (...)
15. Liz: Ja, how did you feel about that, how did it go?
16. Ernie: Oh, very lost (Liz: Umm) Got on the train here (...) and all these officers there, - very stern, not a smile and - (...) everything was very strange, it took about a week or two and - settled in and went all right (Liz: Umm, umm) you had to adapt to the food, entirely different to your home food.
17. L: Umm, ja, and - did you feel, um, - did you associate it in any way with what was happening on the border¹⁰³, or was it just like a routine thing that had to happen to you in your life?
18. E: Ja, it was more like a routine (Liz: Umm, um) (...) (E2:26-29)

It would appear that for Ernie, a young man who had never really left home, and has not even now left home for significant periods of time, the most difficult part of 'the army' was adapting to an unfamiliar and uncongenial environment: an institution, or community, with a very different repertoire (Wenger, 1998, p. 82): 'very stern, not a smile'; 'entirely different to your home food' (par. 16). He was glad when it was over and he could return to what was 'normal' for him. A man who is not a great talker at the best of times, he did not elaborate much about this experience, and the way I shaped my final question gave him an easy 'out'.

¹⁰²

¹⁰³ My question here was inappropriate, as the 'border war' had not yet begun.

Riaan

Both Riaan and Brendon had their military service deferred because of their studies, but had very different attitudes towards military service.

Riaan spent 18 months in 'the Army' (+1986/87), after completion of his Master's degree, but claims that by that time 'there was not much of a war left, in Angola' (Ri1:52). He went through his basic training and trained as a junior officer and then was seconded to the Department of Agriculture to do agricultural research. He says, 'We were actually in everyone's way, because we weren't well trained', and paints a picture of himself as 'a poor soldier' (Ri1:52) and 'the worst shot on earth' (Ri2:32). He says he wasn't 'exposed to real fighting blacks and shooting, and stuff like that, in fact. (...) I was fortunate not to be exposed to real warfare (Ri2:32)'.

His self-deprecating view of himself as a soldier may indicate some kind of embarrassment about having had a part in the military at all; it is as if he distances himself from a 'soldier identity', and says, 'I wasn't really involved'. In the current climate, and in the context of the work he is involved in, it is clearly advisable to play down one's role in the defence force, and one's 'soldierly' qualities. He portrays the fact that he didn't see action or have 'someone (...) shot next to [me]' (Ri2:33) as 'fortunate' (a word he uses repeatedly) – part of the great good fortune of his whole life. As peace was only declared in 1988 in Angola, and there were troops in the townships from 1983 and a State of Emergency until 1989, he was indeed fortunate not to have been involved in some kind of action.

However, his view of military training is not all negative. His time in 'the Army' was, for him, an important initiation into a new CoP, which formed – or maybe reinforced - certain key attitudes in him:

19. I was very lazy physically; I was 25 years old when I went to the army. (Liz: Ja) And I was obviously fat and old - the other guys were 18 years old, I was 25. (Liz: OK) And they had to carry me and so on and - they taught me that everyone has got a potential, we must just use that full potential. (...) They taught us we were only using - when we thought we were tired, we had only used 75% of your energy. You still have 25% left. (Liz: Mm) And I believe in that. (Liz: Mm, // mm, mm) It's true. // That thing, we must operate on that, // *laughs*. (Liz: Ja, ja, ja) // (Ri2:25)

His transformation from someone 'fat and old' to someone fit, with much more physical potential than he had realized, was obviously a key 'initiation' for him into a more active, productive and disciplined adulthood. His laugh may indicate that he wasn't sure how I had

received this view; I certainly did find what he was saying unexpected. My emphatic 'Ja, ja, ja' was designed to reassure him that I understood. He expresses a strong belief in the value of 'defence force' training for everyone:

20. {W}e'll have less trouble in this country, (Liz: Ja?) because the youth now haven't got discipline, (Liz: Mm) (...) and there, everyone was taught discipline. (Liz: Mm, mm, mm) (...) I - Honestly I think if everyone did national service, even if it was a year, this place would be a better place. (Liz: Mm - hm) Because you accept authority much easier (Liz: Mm) - and discipline and a system, you accept it much easier (Liz: Mm) - because you know where it comes from. (Liz: Mm) (Ri2:36)

Riaan is very critical of the ill-discipline which causes 'trouble in this country'. He uses discipline discourse, but it carries overtones here of an 'essentialist white racist discourse' which is common in South Africa, when whites get together to bemoan the fate of the country, now that it is in black hands. There is a possibility, though, backed up by other parts of his narrative (see later), that he is not speaking here as a white, complaining about black youth, but as a 'parent', speaking of the younger generation, black and white.

Wenger (1998, p. 129) writes that 'aspects of the repertoire of a practice ... are exportable'. Clearly, discipline is an important value for Riaan, and he indicates that this was a key value of the CoP of the army, which he has exported and adopted into his on-going repertoire of values. It is clear, though, that the values learned in the army were not out of tune with the values (i.e. respect, obedience and consequences for non-compliance) espoused by his uncle, an important role model in his life, and also by the farming community (including the isiXhosa speakers) within which he grew up. The acceptance of authority, implicit in his growing-up context, as it was within the ideology of Apartheid, is another value emphasized in this extract. One sees slight ambivalence here, for he speaks out strongly against 'authoritive' (sic) isiXhosa elsewhere. Finding himself using the word 'authority' positively, he elaborates and modifies it by saying, 'and discipline and a system – because you know where it comes from' (par. 19), making the principle sound broader, more rational and less oppressive.

Riaan's attitudes to the Defence Force are very mixed, then. He supports strongly the kind of training in discipline which was given, and experienced that as personally transforming. Evidence that this is a widely-supported popular discourse is found in a recent TIME magazine article (Klein, 2011, pp.30-35) about veterans of the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars, some of whom are proving themselves exceptional leaders back home in the USA. The article maintains that

they have learned a unique combination of discipline and flexibility, and do not flinch from painful experiences. While Riaan is somewhat uncomfortable about having been involved in the Nationalist 'war machine', deprecates his skills as a soldier, and is grateful that he didn't see action, he values his army experience highly. However, he also resents the fact that he had to do military service at that stage, as it caused him to miss out on an opportunity, never to be retrieved, to continue his studies to PhD level, abroad.

21. I got the opportunity to go and do my PhD (Liz: Mm!) in the United States. I had a bursary, everything {inaudible}. But then the Defence Force er er er didn't approve of me going, they forced me to go to the army first. (Liz: Mm, mm) (...) That made me cross (Ri2:35).

Riaan's time in the army certainly was, for him, a period when he didn't use isiXhosa very much. In spite of the fact that he was doing agricultural research, and all the farmers spoke isiXhosa, he says, 'I didn't speak it - I wasn't exposed to lots of Xhosa then' (Ri1:53). As part of the Defence Force, he circulated only in the white English and Afrikaans-speaking world; speakers of African languages were 'other' and 'on the outside'.

Brendon

For Brendon, national service was also transforming, but only because of his vigorous and successful efforts to avoid it completely! As explained in Appendix 8, conscientious objection was only tolerated for members of pacifist religions, and resistance to the draft carried heavy penalties in terms of imprisonment. It was therefore a common and 'safe' strategy for those who did not wish to serve, and who qualified for further studies, to take the study route. As can be seen from Riaan's case, one could not postpone the 'evil day' forever, but at the end of the 1980s it seemed reasonable to hope that conscription would end soon. In fact, it only ended in 1994 (see Appendix 8).

22. (...) there was this always being called up into the National - you know into the Army (Liz: Mm, mm), and, even though I had never come full circle, I just couldn't bring myself to doing my national service and going out into the townships (Liz: Mm) and, policing people and doing terrible things to people (Liz: Mm, mm, mm), so I just carried on studying, and so I think, in a bizarre sort of way I owe my PhD in Xhosa and everything else to the South African Defence Force [*both laugh*], telling me that I was exempt for the next year (Liz: OK) because I was studying (Liz: OK) (B1:30).

The thought of having to do national service creates unbearable ambivalence within Brendon. His image of 'the army' is of the part of it most hated by many who went through it – township

duty¹⁰⁴. In other words, for Brendon, serving in the army was very directly connected to 'doing terrible things' (par. 21) to his own countrymen and women; possibly even those people he knew and loved. He 'couldn't bring himself to doing' (par 21) something which carried within it this possibility, even though he felt 'he had never come full circle'. This cyclical image (Brockmeier, 2000, p. 53) is first used when Brendon speaks about his 'shift' away from his farm friends when he was at boarding school, saying with deep sadness, 'I've never been able to go full circle again' (B1:26). Its repetition shows that Brendon still experiences a sense of alienation and distance from his 'Xhosa' past; even now, he feels he has never been able, in spite of various efforts, to get back to the intimacy of those early years. It is perhaps the very strength of that sadness and regret which drives his actions in avoiding the draft.

When his PhD was almost complete, the 'border war' was over, and call-up papers were still coming (1989), his desperation to avoid national service drove him to seek refuge across the border of the then 'independent homeland' of the Transkei:

23. I just got in my car (Liz: Mm) and I drove to Mthatha and I, I made an appointment to see Bantu Holomisa¹⁰⁵ (...) and I thought that was quite brave of me to get up there (Liz: Mm), in fact I was going to do Transkeian citizenship and I had already organised with one of the chiefs to sponsor me and everything (...) (B1:32).

The above extract clearly shows how determined Brendon was to avoid the draft, and also shows his pride in the courage and ingenuity of this adventurous avoidance strategy ('that was quite brave of me'; 'I had already organized with one of the chiefs to sponsor me' par. 23). It represented for him, it seems, a significant move out of barrenness and towards coming full circle (par. 21). The fact that he devised this way out of his dilemma shows his identification with the Transkei and its peoples; obviously he reasoned that his identity was far more Transkeian than white South African at this time when white soldiers were pitted against the black citizens of the country. Holomisa welcomed Brendon and arranged a research position for him at the local university, which enabled him to spend an exciting period in Mthatha leading up to the transformation of the country in 1994.

¹⁰⁴ This was when the National Defence force turned from fighting an 'enemy' across the border, to exerting force against its own people, attempting to quell the frequent uprisings in the townships during the 1980s.

¹⁰⁵ Bantu Holomisa was the then leader of the military government of the 'independent homeland' of the Transkei, having led a coup to oust President Matanzima in 1987. The homeland had some measure of independence of the SA government, and was at that time allowing the ANC to use the territory as a springboard for their activities in South Africa (See Chapter 1).

George

George was exempted from military service because of his employment by the South African Railways, a government department rendering what were seen to be essential services.

24. I didn't go to - army; when I left school, I worked for railway (Liz: Ja), and if the war broke out, the trains still have to run (Liz: Ja), but - er, what I had to do, I joined up with the Kaffrarian rifles, and once a year, I was sent away for two weeks on an army camp (Liz: OK), that's what they call the Dad's army (Liz: Oh yes, the reserves). So I enjoyed it - thoroughly. (G4.2)

He says that he imagines he would have enjoyed military training itself, as well:

25. cause I enjoy, firearms¹⁰⁶, hunting - my kids are - I trained them from when (...) they were in Sub A, Grade 1, used to take them to the shooting range; even now in K-town, they go hunting.(G4.2)

We see here that, for him, he imagined military service as an extension of the outdoor lifestyle that he enjoyed, and shared with his boys, involving the technical and sporting equipment that he enjoyed using. This is a reminder of how easily these skills of the frontier farmer could be turned to the service of war, as they were in the 18th and 19th centuries, when settler farmers were conscripted. He does not dwell much on the fighting and killing aspect of military service, though he acknowledges that, according to his brothers, the war on the border, which they were involved in, was 'not a nice experience'(G4:3). He employs 'discipline discourse', expressing a view very similar to Riaan's about the need for army training for young people in the current situation:

26. the youth of today haven't got respect; there's no more discipline, and - I think - the experience of going to army (Liz: Ja) did have a major effect on the discipline of our youth (Liz: mmm), so I - if they could bring it back and make it compulsory, I think it's be a good thing. (Liz: Ja) They don't have to send them to war, or whatever, (Liz: Ja), but, er, they can help (...) (G4.4)

He goes on to describe the kinds of problems young people in his small town get themselves into, such as drugs and drink, and describes how he disciplines his boys by making sure that they have to earn their own pocket money, which they do by fishing. He is proud of his boys' fishing and sporting achievements, but says that they are naughty and need to be kept occupied.

The view expressed by Riaan and George, favouring military training for the purposes of discipline rather than the purposes of war ('We hate the war but love the Army', Klein, 2011, p.

¹⁰⁶ Footnote 143 gives some background about firearms in South Africa.

32) is paradoxical: how could one have military training without the possibility, or the reality, of war? Botha (personal communication, 15 July, 2011), whose son spent eighteen months in the Angolan war zone during his military service period, says that 'Anyone who thinks military training inculcates respect has never been to war', and it is perhaps significant that neither Riaan nor George was involved in active service. For someone like George, who has legitimate concerns about self-destructive habits among young people today, military training has some of the same benefits of sport, or an outward bound course, offering extreme challenges which have the potential for developing strength and leadership qualities, as described in Klein (2011). Botha (personal communication, 15 July, 2011), on the other hand, describes the process undergone in South African army training as one which severely damaged both self-respect and respect for the 'other', because its aim was to break down and re-shape conscripts into Foucault's 'docile bodies' (1975, pp. 135ff.), who did not regard 'the enemy' as human beings, and who would follow orders to kill without qualms of conscience.

One sees diverse themes, then, in the four men's experiences of the military call-up. Though none of the men expresses enthusiasm about the fighting aspect of 'the army', both Riaan and George believe that the training of young people in military discipline is something very desirable, lacking in present-day South Africa. They identify with the disciplinary ethos represented by the institution of the army, while distancing themselves from 'killing people'. The code of army discipline seems to accord with the lifestyle governed by respect taught them as children, by parental figures. Ernie, who underwent training when it was still brief and actual military engagement was remote, experienced it only as something strict and foreign, while Brendon saw township duty as something he would do almost anything to avoid. The solution he crafted to the extreme ambivalence of his dilemma speaks of his identification with isiXhosa speakers and longing for acceptance within their community. Above all things, he did not want to 'shift' even further away from them than he had done while at school.

Adulthood: Working life

As the men moved from school, military service or university into the working world, they joined different communities, with different practices. This section describes how they adapted to these, and carried into them the repertoires learned in earlier stages of their lives.

Riaan

Riaan constructs his life's course as a relatively smooth linear progression (Brockmeier, 2000, p. 53), issuing out of his farming childhood. This is in line with his aim to present an image of a consistent life (Ri1:68 *konsekwent*¹⁰⁷), although development as well as consistency can be seen in the forward movement of his career, as well as a certain ambiguity, which he works hard to fight against.

After completing his national service, Riaan returned home and began work in agricultural development, staying initially with his parents on the farm, later doing his own part-time farming. This was 'back to square one,' (Ri1:54) he says, in terms of being in an environment where he spoke a lot of isiXhosa and interacted often with black people – the farm CoP, with its familiar repertoires. Marriage and part-time farming were absorbed into the forward movement, as was the change in political dispensation, which moved him from working with white farmers to working with black farmers and rural people:

27. the then Transkei and Ciskei as separate entities were all merged into one entity¹⁰⁸, and so on, (Liz: Mm) and that was obviously now a very comfortable situation for me. Because I was fluent, and I knew the people's attitudes and cultures, (Liz: Mm) and whatever I had to know; it posed no fear... Then, from there it carried on until where it is now. (Ri1:55)

It seems important for him to convey to me that this change, which many white South Africans feared would move them *out of* their comfort zone, was moving him *into* his ('very comfortable for me, par. 26). He says that his life has 'carried on until where it is now' (par. 26), indicating minimal disturbance of the linear forward flow (Brockmeier, 2000, p. 53). Assuming perhaps that I would see the change from working with white farmers to working with black people as a frightening one for a white South African man, Riaan says that he was not afraid, because he 'was fluent, and I knew the people's attitudes and cultures, and whatever I had to know'. According to Wenger (1989, p. 164), 'we know who we *are* by what is familiar and by what we can negotiate and make use of, and we know who we are *not* by what is unfamiliar, unwieldy, and out of our purview'. Riaan's claim, above, which could be seen as presumptuous, is designed to convey his feeling of familiarity in this 'new' situation, but still suggests a binary 'us'

¹⁰⁷ *Konsekwent* (Afrikaans): congruent; consistent. Riaan uses the word consequent (with an English inflection) with this Afrikaans meaning.

¹⁰⁸ The post-Apartheid democracy re-configured the provinces of South Africa, incorporating the former homelands of Ciskei and Transkei into the bigger entity of the Eastern Cape (see Map 1)

and 'them'; 'the people's attitudes and cultures' are portrayed as different from 'ours'. There is, then, ambivalence: while the new situation took him into familiar territory, he is still positioned as a white person in the narrative.

In a later interview, revealing another side to his experience of the change in 1994, he admits that there were 'huge changes' (Ri2:16), from serving white farmers to serving developing black farmers, and that it took a while to 'understand the dynamics' (Ri2:17), but that he was able to make the adjustment. He elaborates on this, saying that the dynamics are different because of different 'cultures' (Ri2:17), but describes these 'cultural' differences not so much in terms of customs, beliefs and practices, as in terms of the situation rural people find themselves in as a result of South Africa's history:

28. {I}f you're in a community, a black community out in the rural areas, what do you really have to live for?
[pause]
29. And there someone comes with a bright idea and with a feasible story to say, 'Listen, if you do this, this is what your outcomes will be', that's what you can live for.
30. But you're stripped of your dignity; I mean, remember you were nothing. (Liz: Mmmm) For many years. (Liz: Mm) Our age people. You were nothing. (Liz: Mm) Now all you had that kept you alive was your your physical labour. Nothing else. You weren't allowed to have anything else.
31. So one must look at it from that point of view, and - often people are critical, this community got this and they're not using it, or whatever or whatever, whatever, whatever, but one must look at it in the bigger picture. (Ri2: 17, 18)

His repeated use of the pronoun 'you' and 'your' (par. 30) invites his listener to put herself in the shoes of the rural person of 'our' age. The empathy suggested here seems to reflect major insights gained through his work with rural people, and a sense of identity as someone who comes 'with a bright idea' (par. 30) and can offer people with little hope something 'to live for' (par. 30). He also distances himself from the incessant critical talk ('whatever, whatever, whatever' par. 31) which is rife in the country when development projects are discussed. This kind of talk points to how little black people have done for themselves, how ungrateful they seem for the aid they have been given, and suggests that they are unable to take up advice and benefit from aid. This fundamentally 'essentialist racist discourse' implies that whites would have done much better under similar circumstances. The situation of the rural people does

speak to Riaan, and he portrays himself, in his 'broker discourse', as a man positioned where communities intersect, who has an understanding which is superior to that of the critics.

Riaan's one move away from the Eastern Cape, for a year, to take up a lecturing post at a university in another province, took him right out of his comfort zone, and made him 'very, very uncomfortable'. As Wenger (1989, p. 164) puts it, the situation was 'unfamiliar, unwieldy, and out of our purview' (and represented, in Riaan's view, 'a mess, it shouldn't have never happened' (Ri: 56).

32. I felt very lost in {Y town}. (Liz: Mm) To communicate with Sothos. I can't understand a word of Sotho¹⁰⁹. (Liz: Is it? Not even now.) Not yes or no. (Liz: Mm) I can't understand yes or no. And there, I felt very very uncomfortable, very uncomfortable. (Liz: Mm) I can tell you now, I ... that's probably one of the main reasons why I came back to ... I couldn't even communicate in Xhosa with our gardener. (Liz: Yes) It's not my culture. I can't do that. (Liz: Ja) And that was probably one of the main re... so I came back

He felt quite disempowered and lost (without identity or 'culture') in a situation where he couldn't even speak to the gardener in his mother tongue. In this new situation, he was unable to use isiXhosa to mediate the uncomfortably extensive social distance between a South African employer and his or her employee, something which is the norm for him in the Eastern Cape. This left him feeling very ill at ease, a stranger to himself; it was a 'critical experience' (Block, 2007, p. 20) of ambivalence for him. Interestingly, he made no attempt to learn Sesotho or adjust to the place. He simply 'came back' (par. 31). This suggests how inextricably Riaan is identified with the Eastern Cape and isiXhosa.

Riaan's present CoP, agricultural development work, closely connected to government, has much in common with the farm CoP, with a significant difference being that the power is now increasingly out of the hands of the white man. Riaan has been an insider to the farm CoP, and can transfer repertoires (Wenger, 1998, p. 82) from there to this new context. He paints a picture of the language repertoires he uses now (Ri1:60-62): Afrikaans is the language of home and church; he uses isiXhosa with 90% of his clients, and in most meetings. English is the written language in the office, and his present secretary is isiXhosa-speaking. He is constantly extending his knowledge of isiXhosa. New registers have been gained, some of which are necessary in his current CoP (e.g. the language of finance) and some incidental (e.g. religious terms he learned

¹⁰⁹ Sesotho: Together with Setswana, mentioned earlier, this commonly spoken South African language belongs to a different family of languages from isiXhosa.

through listening to the preacher outside his office window). He uses the dictionary or asks his secretary when he needs new words, in order to read and write, for instance.

Over the years of working in the agricultural development CoP, he has learned other repertoires, guiding principles and values which facilitate his acceptance as a member, and enable him to act as broker, advising other white people ready to listen. This special knowledge gives him power, and means that he can feel 'comfortable' in the post-1994 environment, though he can never presume to be a full 'insider', or part of the isiXhosa-speaking community. Riaan's position is poised between participation, peripherality and marginality (Wenger, 1998, pp. 166-167). While he is in some senses a full participant in this community of people involved in agricultural development work, and has his own very specific and substantial role to play, his whiteness also puts him on the margins, restricting his participation rather than opening the door to his fuller participation. Examples of this can be seen in some of the extracts which follow, such as those where he discusses 'Boere Xhosa' and 'racist remarks'.

Riaan's guiding principle, facilitating his acceptance, is that 'mutual respect' is 'not negotiable' (Ri2:20). According to him, the childhood teaching in his family was that 'you respect and treat everyone ... with all respect due to them, until proven wrong' (Ri1:49). This, he says, has stood him in good stead in his work community.

33. For instance, in {the multi-storey building where I worked}, every morning, I greeted, from the cleaner in the foyer, right to my office, everyone I greeted, up to there. Resulted... that simple thing... my office is always shining. (Liz: Ja) And I didn't greet her Morning Sophie, because she's older than me, (...) I'd greet her as Aunt, (Liz: Yes) *uSisi*¹¹⁰ or *uMama*¹¹¹ (Ri1:124).

Here he shows us that the principle of respect 'pays', in a sense. These women reward him with good service, which in turn makes him feel accepted. In the next interview, he elaborates on the principle with another example:

34. There's a lady in {our building}, the lady is not, I would not say she's, she's just funny, she operates strange, I wouldn't say she's mentally retarded, (Liz: Ja) but she's just less developed, I'd say. And people make, people make mockery of her. And I just, every morning I ask her how she is, (Liz: Mm) and so on, and (...) I just respect her for what she does.

¹¹⁰ *uSisi* (isiXhosa): older sister, a term of respect for a woman, your older sister's age

¹¹¹ *uMama* (isiXhosa): mother, a term of respect for an older woman, your mother's age

There is a mixture here of deep empathy for the woman and self-righteous anger and moral superiority towards 'people', who make a 'mockery of her' (par. 33). Riaan holds himself apart; is in some ways a lonely figure standing against treatment which angers him. His relative isolation strengthens his compassion for the woman and his urge to make her feel included.

When I commented that the emphasis on respect for one's elders seems to be a value and a practice shared within Afrikaner and Xhosa traditions, Riaan spoke of how insistent he is on the practice of respect within his personal sphere:

35. English people don't have that, Liz - I for instance I still can't - I've got friends¹¹² now in {X town}, (Liz: Mm) same age, with kids and so on, and their kids don't - I'm used to uncle and aunt (Liz: //Ja) or Mrs// or Sir or whatever. (Liz: Ja) They call me {Riaan} and this guy is little like this!¹¹³ (Liz: Ja) I can't - It it it hurts me - Every time it hurts me (Liz: Ja - it just feels// very wrong) - When they // visit - when they sleep over with us, I say to them, 'In this house it's *Oom* and *Tannie*¹¹⁴, until your parents get back'. (Liz *laughs*) (...)

He then spoke further about how disrespect hurts him, this time in a situation involving Xhosa people:

36. I think [pause] the whole exercise of the new local government system. I've experienced that in {the} Municipality {in Z town}, where a young guy is a political counsellor, politically elected counsellor¹¹⁵, and where there is an older (Liz: Mm) traditional leader. (Liz: Mm) And where the two tackle each other in front of - other people, and say, you're wrong and you're wrong and - (Liz: Mm) That hurt me quite - seriously. I didn't - even if an older person is wrong, you still respect¹¹⁶ that person. (Liz: Mm)

These two extracts indicate that Riaan has brought together the Afrikaans tradition and the Xhosa tradition of respect for elders. In the intersection of the two communities, he has identified this value which they have in common, and invested so deeply in it that he experiences 'hurt' when it is violated.

¹¹² These were clearly, English-speaking friends

¹¹³ He gestured with his hand to indicate a young child of 7 or 8 years old.

¹¹⁴ *Oom* (Afrikaans): uncle; *Tannie* (Afrikaans): aunt. Afrikaans youngsters are expected to address adult men and women as *Oom* and *Tannie*, in a similar way that Xhosa people are expected to address their elders as *uSisi*, *uMama*, etc., see previous footnote. In some English-speaking South African families, especially in the past, this practice, of calling adult family friends 'Aunt So-and-so' and 'Uncle So-and-so' is also a norm.

¹¹⁵ Particularly in rural constituencies, there is often dissonance between politically elected local councillors and the traditional leaders, or chiefs (an inherited position).

¹¹⁶ The verb 'respect' here means 'behave respectfully towards'. There are specific ways in which respect should be shown.

Another of his important principles, referred to earlier, is that one should avoid at all costs a register of isiXhosa which is authoritative (*'Boere Xhosa'*¹¹⁷).

37. I'm also sensitive when you speak Xhosa in a professional capacity one must be very careful not to not to speak the Boere Xhosa, (Liz: Ja) the old farm Xhosa, the authoritative [sic] (Liz: Yes) voice, and I see it many a time that people make that mistake; (...) Rather speak English, or Afrikaans for that matter (Liz: Yes), than speak authoritative [sic] Xhosa, I think that's the worst thing that can happen (...) if you respect people you don't do that. (Liz: Yes, yes) (Ri1:66)

When asked to elaborate on why it is the 'worst thing that can happen', he said:

38. Because you you you you still treating people as if you their authority, you've got the right to - you're superior to them (Liz: Mm) if you use the Boere Xhosa. (Ri2:71)

Elaborating again, he tells an illustrative story about a white man who speaks 'Boere Xhosa':

39. In {a} sheep programme - (...) (Liz: Mm) And there's an old man with good intentions - white oldish person, (Liz: Mm) and with very good intentions, but he uses that strong authoritative (sic) Xhosa. (Liz: Mm) This sheep must be held like this'. Instead of 'Hold the sheep like this'. (Liz: Mm) You understand (Liz: yes I do understand.) and and and - I've seen it, I've seen it - and then and then people look at me, and they and they - they listen, but they don't listen with the same type of attention. This becomes now the white man's matter. (Liz: Ah-hu) It's not intended, and it's not his intention too, but he uses the wrong - he plays the wrong instrument. He uses the wrong - ja, he loses them, quickly quickly (Liz: They don't want to) Ja, no (Liz: go along with it.) Mm-hm! (...)

He gives credit to this 'old man' for 'good intentions' (par. 39). This is one of 'his' people; a member of the farming community to which he belongs, and in line with his guiding principle of respect, he gives him recognition, even though he is critical of his choice of language register, which threatens Riaan's own legitimacy in the community of black farmers within which he works. According to his description, it is not the white farmer's attitude which is wrong, but the choice of register: 'he uses strong authoritative [sic] Xhosa'; 'he plays the wrong instrument' (par. 39).

He repeats the phrase 'I've seen it' (par. 39), indicating that for an attentive observer like himself the impact of the 'Boere Xhosa' register is easily observable. '[A]nd then the people look at me' (par. 39). While he does not go into detail about why the black farmers look at him or what he feels at that point, the sentence paints a vivid picture of a look which casts doubt on Riaan's own position. The look seems to say, 'This is 'your' person; do you approve of his

¹¹⁷ *Boere Xhosa* (Afrikaans): literally, farmers' Xhosa

manner of approach? How will you react to this?' The black farmers' interest in what the old white man has to offer is withdrawn, and Riaan, by virtue of his whiteness, shares in his isolation ('This now becomes a 'white man's matter' par. 39). Riaan's divided identity is palpable: while his whiteness and his background identify him with the white demonstrator, his sensitivities are towards the Xhosa speakers around him. His distress and disapproval arise out of his own sense of losing the ground he has so carefully gained through his 'correct' choice of register. Riaan knows the crucial importance of presenting himself as a person who has not come to 'shove us around' (Ri2:76); who does not regard himself as superior to the Xhosa speakers. It is vital to inclusion in his work community and success in his work. The right register is cultural capital for him (Bourdieu, 1991) and it is also important to him emotionally, because of his background and socialization.

Riaan knows, then, that there is no space, in the Eastern Cape agricultural development community, and in public spaces in South Africa more generally, for a continuation of the racist discourse of white superiority which was so pervasive in the past. A corollary of this, for him, is that one should not address a person in isiXhosa initially if you have never met him or her before, as one might be perceived as looking down on the person (having a 'Boere Xhosa' attitude). He told me this advice had been given him by an isiXhosa-speaking friend, a person with the credentials of a full participant (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29) in the predominantly black communities in which Riaan works.

40. {I}t puts people off often (Liz: Mm, mm) in the sense that you are perceived as 'Do you think that I can't understand English? (Liz: Yes) Do you think that I'm stupid? (Liz: Yes) Why are you speaking Xhosa to me? Are you underestimating my abilities?' (Liz: Yes) And certainly that is not my intention at all by speaking Xhosa, and that's why I'm sensitive about it.

Riaan has exercised agency and 'invested' in a register of isiXhosa which conveys respect. He carefully distances himself completely from any suggestion of the 'Boere Xhosa' register, which could exclude him from participation in the agricultural development community within which he works, and the broader (mostly isiXhosa-speaking) world of the Eastern Cape post-1994.

A third principle of his, facilitating his survival as a white man who understands isiXhosa in this post-1994 CoP, is not to take too seriously comments made by black people which indicate negative or prejudiced attitudes towards whites. He explains that because he understands

everything that is being said in isiXhosa, he is exposed to a lot of what he calls 'racist remarks' from black people. But he says:

41. I don't think - one must take e::everything too - too serious what people are saying, (Liz: Mm) especially with racism. (Liz: Ja) Aaah, It's not that serious. If one will take it seriously it'll become serious. (Liz: Right) If you don't give it all its due, (Liz: // It, jaa) then it's not an issue //. (Liz: *laughs*, Ja, OK. So, in a way, it's how you take it that makes it - gives it its power in a way.) Yes, it's how you perceive it. (Liz: Mm) I mean, if, if, if - yoo, if I had to get cross or or disillusioned every time someone says, 'Jo, he's a white man, he's doing this,' (Liz: Mm) then I must - leave. (Liz: Yes) This is not the place for me to be. *Laughs*. (Liz: Yes) Ja, because I am white, I can't change that. (Liz: no, *laughs*) I can't change that. (Liz: Ja) (Ri2:22)

There is pain under the surface of what Riaan says here, indications perhaps that the temptation is always there to become 'cross or disillusioned', or even think of leaving, when black people 'play the race card'¹¹⁸. If he allowed 'racist comments' to 'get to him', he might exclude himself from the community. Race as a category is a constant reality in the world he lives and works in; his whiteness (skin colour; ethnicity), he says, and repeats, is something he cannot change; it has the power to move him to the margins of the community within which he works, and out, if he is not careful. He exercises agency, once again, in choosing not to take 'racist' comments seriously. This assists his survival in his chosen and familiar context. My own responses to what he says here (I often say 'Yes' in quite a definite way) show that at this stage I am moving beyond empathy, to agreement, as I listen to him. My workplace has some similarities to his, and although I do not understand all that is being said in my workplace, as he does, I recognise his approach as being a useful one for survival within it.

Indications that Riaan is an accepted member of his work community (and the community of isiXhosa speakers) are cherished as high points in his life:

42. fairly high high people in society have commended me on on being Xhosa-speaking in front of other people, and that has made me proud and (Liz: Mm) part of that culture. {Our boss} has often said in front of people, they 'It doesn't matter what you talk, this man can speak, talk with us, (Liz: Yes) and he knows how we think', (Liz: Yes) so - that has made me, - quite often it's made me comfortable, very comfortable. (Liz: Yes, yes yes. Made you feel) part of the (Liz: part of things) Yes, (Liz: accepted.) yes, yes, definitely, no that's definitely like that, yes. (Liz: Ja) (Ri2:59)

Riaan does not indulge in sentimental talk, and it seems that 'very comfortable' is about as far as he would go in describing positive emotions. It is precious to him, however, that an isiXhosa-

¹¹⁸ This phrase usually means: 'Attribute certain behaviour to the fact that a person belongs to a particular race group and therefore has certain characteristics and prejudices'.

speaker gives him credit as someone who 'knows how we think' (par. 41). He says that it makes him feel 'part of that culture', a sense, even if it is fleeting, of being a full participant (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29). Again, my 'Yes, yes, yes' indicates a strong sense that I would also feel very positive about this kind of acceptance within the Xhosa community.

So although Riaan constructs his life as moving smoothly forward in a linear fashion with little change, he has made important choices in terms of the principles which guide his life, and the register of isiXhosa which he uses, which have assisted his successful survival and inclusion in the strongly government-influenced communities of practice in which he has worked, starting pre-1994 with one short break, up until the present. He has also moved from a position of uncontested inclusion in the white agricultural establishment, during the old dispensation, into a much more precarious situation, where there are possibilities of isolation and marginalization which he has to work hard to keep at bay, as well as moments of feeling 'very comfortable' when acceptance is explicitly expressed to him.

George

George's working life and Riaan's developed very differently, mainly because of their different educational backgrounds. George's choice of a technical option at secondary school equipped him for the kind of work that he has done throughout his life. He sees himself as being a 'technically-minded person', and traces the continuity of this tendency in the life of his middle son, who is 'always building things and stripping things' (G3: 83, 84). He started work in the late 1980s, working for the South African Railways, a government department, which sent him on a short training course, but required no tertiary qualification.

When the branch that he was working in closed down in the early 1990s, because of technical changes, he moved to a job in a factory, and then later, after an injury, to a municipal job. He worked on his own for a while after leaving that position and was working for a timber company at the time of our meetings.

Speaking of the maintenance and development of his fluency in isiXhosa, he says:

43. But Xhosa does grow on a person; (Liz: Mm) it definitely does grow onto you...but like I say, you have to speak it every day. (Liz: Mm) And fortunate for me, in my line of business, you know, you know, we - (Liz: Mm) I'm the only white bloke out there (Liz: Mm).and I've got 26 black staff below me, (Liz: Mm) so ja - (G2:15)

We have already seen George's need to continue the outdoor rural lifestyle he enjoyed with his father, and pass it on to his sons. Most of his white friends and colleagues seem to fit in to this lifestyle, forming a kind of informal community where outdoor pursuits are the order of the day, and isiXhosa is commonly spoken, even among whites. IsiXhosa is also one of the languages spoken amongst the family in their home.

44. A lot of times um, we speak Xhosa at - the white guys - at work. (Liz: Ja) We speak Xhosa to each other. (Liz: Mm Is that so?) Even if there's no black person around, no Xhosa person around, (Liz: Ja) you know, sometimes we speak Xhosa to each other. (G3:56)

45. {O}n this last fishing trip, we went right into the rural areas. (Liz: Mm) And – fortunately all of us – we actually, we took a black guy with us on the trip. And we taught him how to fish and all that, so... (G2:11)

The latter extract shows the tendency to include black people in their activities. It is not completely clear why this 'black guy' (par. 45) was taken along, but George is at pains to show that he was included in their fishing activities and that they taught him something new. What is left unsaid after the 'so...' may be that he was not simply a servant. There is a suggestion of patronage here, a sense that whites are in control of the skills and routines of this informal community of leisure fishermen, which they share with those who are 'less advantaged'. The phrase 'fortunately all of us' seems to refer to the fact that they all speak isiXhosa and can communicate with their black companion. The ambivalence here is perhaps implicit in his life generally: the black man is a friend; he is also usually a subordinate, perhaps in some cases a servant.

In George's life story, the theme of 'black friends' is a consistent one from childhood up until the present. As we saw in the introduction to George (Chapter 3), he sees friendliness as being one of his key characteristics, and is proud of this. Apart from Gigs, most 'black friends' he mentions are colleagues from work, but friendships do extend at times beyond the workplace, and don't revolve around work. His friendships and associations with black people and with isiXhosa could be seen as an extension of the Community of Practice of his childhood, and its routines and practices.

The CoPs that he joins in his various jobs vary in their capacity to tolerate the practices which he brings from his childhood. In these variations one can detect changes which could be related to the shift in power relations represented by the political changes of 1994. One significant

episode which he describes took place before he was married, when he was working for the railways, before the 1994 change to a democratic government in South Africa:

46. There was a guy there, his name was Nathi (...) He was a cleaner there, (Liz: Mm) and this guy used to come into my house, he used to come and have a beer with me at home. (Liz: Yes)
47. And this other guy (...) he turned around and said to me, um, 'How can you let a black guy into your house? What's wrong with you?' (G2: 33, 34)

What is of interest here is that a white colleague challenged George on his friendship with a black man¹¹⁹. George defends his behaviour, and does not give in to his colleague's pressure, but he is clearly seen as 'out of line'. While this kind of attitude probably still prevails among many white South Africans, it is significant that it is spoken of in a story coming out of the time when white superiority was still unchallenged.

In George's numerous stories about the kinds of interactions he has with the black workers in his current job, he does not speak of a particular 'black friend', but of a number of different conversations and interactions. Like Riaan, he distinguishes between different registers of isiXhosa, terming the isiXhosa register which he speaks 'kitchen Xhosa', as opposed to 'deep Xhosa'. In response to my query about how well he was able to follow when 'deep Xhosa' was spoken, he said that he often didn't understand when his white colleague who speaks 'deep Xhosa' was conversing with Xhosa-speakers. He explained that his black colleagues adjust their language when speaking to him (George), so that he can understand¹²⁰. The register he speaks clearly disadvantages him in this and other ways, as is shown in a couple of incidents he describes.

The first portrays the black workers teasing him about his inadequate isiXhosa:

48. They tease me. (Liz: Ja) They tease me. (Liz: Ja) Two black guys at my work the other day laughed at me, the way I was speaking Xhosa my way, and I said, don't laugh at me, why don't you help me right? (Liz: Ja) And after that (...) I spoke to them in Afrikaans and they couldn't understand a word. And then they asked me in Xhosa and I said 'No', I said 'I'm not going to speak that language to you now, because you don't - you mock me'. (Liz *laughs*) I said, 'Now you will learn Afrikaans. If I give you instructions and you not going to do it, I'll give you a written warning.' (*laugh*)

¹¹⁹ This story is analysed in more detail in Chapter 6.

¹²⁰ Kaschula (1989) finds that it is common that black farm workers accommodate the farmer in this way, using a form of isiXhosa which the farmer can understand. This often leads to farmers having an inflated opinion of their own command of the language.

49. **Liz:** so the fact that you've got a supervisory role over these guys gives you quite a lot of clout, hey?

50. **George:** It does. It does. But also, I wouldn't really go and give them a written warning! (**Liz:** No) It's more like teasing each other. (G2: 100-102)

This story shows that George is piqued by the humiliation of being teased. In this new post-1994 dispensation, it seems his 'playmates' are no longer obliged by George's colour and position in society to be helpful ('Why don't you help me right? par. 48); they have the freedom to laugh at him. This distances them from George and he responds spontaneously and almost childishly, as if to say, 'I'm not going to play anymore!'

There is ambivalence in his feelings, as well as in his actions. Clearly this teasing was quite painful to him; he tells the story with intensity and emotion, at quite high volume. His response, firstly putting them at a disadvantage by speaking to them in Afrikaans, in which he is more proficient than they are, and then threatening with disciplinary action (using his other source of power, his managerial position), seems somewhat vindictive. Ultimately though, he constructs what has happened as 'more like teasing each other' (par. 50) - just a game, as it was in childhood - signalling to me that it was not his intention to damage the relationship.

The second extract which shows George disadvantaged by his 'kitchen Xhosa' relates to his 'broker role'. He has, in the past, been asked to interpret at labour hearings¹²¹ and meetings, but has recently been displaced by a black man.

51. I also had to inter - now before this other black guy started, Thami - I had to be the interpreter at all the hearings and (**Liz:** Mm) meetings and all that. (**Liz:** Mm) (...) But now that Thami's there, it goes much quicker because he is Xhosa-speaking (**Liz:** Mm), and - Ok, and he went to an English school so he's (**Liz:** He does the interpreting now.) He does the interpreting now. (G3:62)

52. (...) there's a lot of words that I'd like to say in Xhosa, especially words like a serious meeting, (**Liz:** Mm) but I don't know the words in Xhosa - it's difficult. (**Liz:** Mm-mm-mm) You know, you need a person with more capacity in Xhosa to do it. (**Liz:** Mm) You know, you need a person with more vocabulary in Xhosa to do it. (**Liz:** Mm...mm -mmm) (G3:63)

He assesses the situation quite honestly; 'it goes much quicker because he is Xhosa-speaking'; 'he went to an English school so he's' [fluent in English and isiXhosa] (par. 48); 'you need a person with more vocabulary in Xhosa' (par. 52). He expresses regret, 'there's a lot of words that I'd like to say in Xhosa (...) it's difficult' (par. 52). One senses that he is quite downcast by his

¹²¹ Internal hearings are held within companies and organizations when an employee is suspected and charged with a misdemeanour. These hearings are governed by labour law.

displacement by Thami; it has deprived him of a significant role which he filled, and means a loss of influence for him.

In spite of certain inadequacies in the 'kitchen Xhosa' which George speaks, he loves to speak isiXhosa, and feels odd when speaking English to a black person, something which is happening more and more often in his work environment, and even beyond it. In the world which he now inhabits, English is a repertoire used by 'blacks' as well as whites, and this is an uncomfortable change for him.

53. Thami, this guy that I work with, (Liz: Mm) him and I - like when him and I are talking we talk differently - in a different manner than - when, how can I say, when I talk with a white colleague of mine. (Liz: Mm) Um, not disrespectful or anything, but, um - I'm sure it's to do with the different cultures. (Liz: Mm) I actually find it difficult to talk to him in English. (Liz: I'm sure, ja) because I know he's Xhosa. (Liz: Ja) And he talks, and sometimes I talk to him in Xhosa and he answers me in English. (Liz: Ja - ja) I'm sure it's something - it must be a person's subconscious, or something - (Liz: Ja) that you'll always look at him as a Xhosa, not as a (Liz: an English speaker) as a white person. (Liz: Ja) I find it difficult to speak English to say, that person. (G3: 43)

George's world is clearly racialized, and language for him is an important marker of race. In other places he mentions that he always speaks Afrikaans to Afrikaans-speaking people as well, and justifies this racialization (and ethnicization) of languages as 'the right way' (G3:71); if you know a person's language, you should use it with them. There is in this belief a kind of assumption that each person has 'a language', i.e. is monolingual, or has a fundamental 'home' language, something which is not necessarily true about himself. One sees also in George's practices a contrast with those of Riaan, who will rather speak English or Afrikaans to a black person than a register which might be construed as 'Boere Xhosa'.

In the above extract, he describes the way he speaks to an isiXhosa-speaker as 'a different manner' (par. 53). He feels a need to defend this statement, ('not disrespectful or anything' par. 53), perhaps perceiving that it might be construed as racist. He 'finds it difficult' (par. 53) to speak to a black person in English, and it doesn't 'feel right' when a black person speaks English to him. An explanation of this which later makes sense to him is that he almost becomes a different person when he speaks isiXhosa. His identity is multiple; he has different identities when he speaks different languages, and links different languages quite firmly to different racial and ethnic groups. He feels quite uncomfortable when a black person, by speaking English, tries

to push him back into his white English identity, which for George, only matches interactions with white people.

George's identity position has shifted, then, with the transfer of political power from white to black. Once stigmatized for inviting a black colleague into his house, and feeling that his ability to speak isiXhosa was something enjoyable and 'special', he now feels disadvantaged at times by his particular brand of isiXhosa, in terms of being teased, and losing the identity and position of influence of an interpreter. He also finds that the familiar pattern of speaking isiXhosa to black people is more and more disrupted by 'blacks' who insist on speaking English to him, throwing his familiar range of identities into flux.

Brendon

Brendon experienced a time of great vibrancy during his period in the Transkei (Mthatha), where he interacted socially in a community comprising black people as well as white. This is contrasted, in his story, with the 'barren' (B2:54) years of school and university, where 'there was never an opportunity to share spaces' (B2.44). As part of the job he had been given in Mthatha, he had to organize a major event, quite an overwhelming task:

54. that was a - a very intense - thing that I had to do, cause we only had one telephone (Liz: Mm), the faxes never worked // (Liz: Mm, mm) - you know, // nothing was really working, so - they just said, here's R50 000, organise the {event}, you know
55. for me it //was a very significant chaotic moment in my life (Liz: Yes, ja) when I suddenly realised, gosh, you know, living in Mthatha is just not going to cut it for me, //(Liz laughs) in this //way that I'm used to - like at {my old university} everything worked and (Liz: Ja) (...) when I look back it was incredibly enriching (Liz: Yes) and - I almost felt like I could do anything after that. (Liz laughs) (B2:7, 8)

Here he describes a critical experience of ambivalence (Block, 2007), where he found himself within a 'chaotic' institution where 'nothing was really working' (par. 54). He felt totally out of his element '{it} is just not going to cut it for me' (par. 55). There is a sense of dismay here; he had made such a dramatic change in his life to be there, and now he didn't see how he could operate in that situation. My laughter here signals my recognition of this kind of consternation and frustration, which I am very familiar with, having worked in similar environments. Clearly, Brendon had no choice but to adjust and make it work, as he had done in a very different earlier situation, when he was sent away to school. There was a great sense of triumph and empowerment in having pulled it off: 'I almost felt like I could do anything after that' (par. 55). It

is apparent that for this white man, his ability to cope in a 'technically challenged' environment, common in black academic institutions due to their under-resourcing during Apartheid, adds new dimensions to the power he already has by virtue of his whiteness and his ability to speak isiXhosa.

However, there were other (non-technical) challenges to his power in this place, and at this time. Describing the political climate at the Transkei university pre-1994, he tells of a confrontation where a black student spat in his face, as well as an incident where a group of black students had him thrown out of a bar. He says:

56. there were hu:ge political dynamics at that university (Liz: Mm) that were at play, (Liz: Mm, mm) - um, and they were always underly - not so much underlying even - they were quite blatant, (Liz: Mm, mm) um - and there was, um, you know, this this strong anti - almost 'anti-white' feeling, you know (Liz: Yes) (...) I grew to understand that - you know, the PAC¹²² was a formidable force, (Liz: Mm) um, at that time, (Liz: Mm) on that campus, and um, and that not everybody was going to just welcome whites into the fold, you know, (Liz: Right) so - it was quite an interesting moment for me that, (Liz: Mm// mm, mm) um// -

Brendon's hesitation here in speaking of 'anti-white' feeling (par. 56) is perhaps evidence that he doesn't want to sound in any way like a stereotypical white, with fearful and 'anti-black' feelings. He would like his discourse to be enlightened, and not racist in any way. It is also evidence of how difficult it was (and is) for Brendon to confront his whiteness, and the impact it has on those around him. His ability to speak isiXhosa could extend his power, but could not undo his whiteness. He says 'I grew to understand', and calls it 'an interesting moment (par. 56)', establishing an academic distance from the tumult of painful and disappointed feelings it must have engendered. While he may have been crestfallen, all was not yet lost, in terms of his relationship to PAC members:

57. (...) one of the leaders of the PAC and - ended up - we had long discussions around these issues and (Liz: Ja) - and him saying No::: come on, join the PAC, you know, come on, we want white people to join the PAC (Liz: Ja) and it - and I was qu - it was all this juxtaposition happening in my head (Liz: Yes) cause I actually - at that point, politically, almost, I'd, I - agreed with the PAC, (Liz: Yes) cause I was trying to see it from - from their point of view and I almost felt like - in fact what they - their way of thinking - their Africanist way of thinking

¹²² The PAC (Pan Africanist Congress) is a political formation which held, at the time, that Africans needed to gain political freedom on their own, without the help or participation of other racial groups. It focused on land restitution, and also believed in the unity of all Africans, across the continent. Under certain circumstances, if they committed themselves to the ideals of the organization, whites and members of other 'racial' groups could be defined as 'Africans'. The organisation still exists in the new dispensation, as a political party.

was correct, (Liz: Mm) and if I was black I'd definitely be PAC - you know (Liz: Mm, mm, mm) - and, and it was interesting (...)

Brendon's discourse here is very ambivalent ('this juxtaposition happening in my head' par. 57), where he sees the Africanist point of view of the black man with whom he is conversing in isiXhosa¹²³, who is inviting him to join a movement whose philosophy was usually seen to be 'anti-white'. He had recently experienced strong 'anti-white' sentiments directed against him by some of its members. In spite of the pain and shock of these experiences, and those in the broader South Africa at the time¹²⁴, his strong wish for acceptance among black people, combined with his academic mind-set, move him to attempt resolution of the ambivalence by once again taking up an analytical and academic (enlightened) stance: 'it was interesting' (par. 57). His whiteness is still a fact of life for him. He does not see himself as black ('if I was black I'd definitely be PAC,' par. 57), and is not seen as black ('we want white people to join the PAC,' par. 57), and this leaves him on the margin of this community, unable to join the PAC, although a shared linguistic repertoire makes intense dialogue, and even an invitation to participate, possible.

During Brendon's time working in the Transkei he researched ways in which the historic and traditional art of isiXhosa oral literature was translating itself into the present. In speaking of one of the poets with whom he worked intensively, he says:

58. it really made my Xhosa come to fruition in a way (Liz: Ja), everything I had learned, because *izibongo*¹²⁵ in a sense are the highest form of verbal art (Liz: Mm) in the language, so in order to understand them and get a grasp of what they're about (Liz: Mm) you really have to apply yourself (Liz: Mm), even if you are Xhosa mother-tongue speaking. (Liz: Sure, sure) (B1:37)

There is a strong sense of pride and achievement here in having extended his isiXhosa proficiency to the extent that he can understand the high artistic form of *izibongo*. He also speaks of feeling greatly honoured to have known the poet, who 'grew up in abject poverty' and had not achieved high levels of schooling. He recounts the way the poet used to phone him even after he had left Transkei to tell Brendon dreams he was having about him; he believes that the poet had special spiritual gifts ('he was in a sense a *thwasa*¹²⁶ B1:36). Brendon felt a great sense of acceptance by this poet, and inclusion in his mind and heart space, and describes

¹²³ This was clarified in a later discussion with him

¹²⁴ At the time, violent incidents were also being experienced on farms, making people like his parents fearful.

¹²⁵ *izibongo* (isiXhosa): isiXhosa praise poetry

¹²⁶ *Thwasa* (isiXhosa): someone called by the ancestors to become a traditional healer and medium

as 'profound' (par. 58) what they managed to achieve together, recording his life story and turning his poetry into writing, and later into web-based video footage. Sadly, the poet has since died. Brendon explains that:

59. he was buried with his books, you know, which I thought was quite profound (Liz: Ja, ja), coming from a really rural background (Liz: Ja), and then, his orality and how it became transported into literacy, and now I'm going {abroad} in about two weeks' time to actually show how we've transported that literacy into technology... (B1:39)

Brendon has combined his rare brand of power, as an academic who has mastered this register of isiXhosa, and a white man, with his privileged background and training, with the power of isiXhosa oral poetry, in order to extend this poet's reach into print and web-based documentary. This has also been for him a great affirmation of his own power and agency, and was clearly a high point in his life and career. He felt that he had played a significant role and achieved quite a remarkable degree of acceptance within a rich rural cultural tradition of poetic practice, characterized by a very specialized linguistic register, in which he has a strong investment. This relationship seems to have represented quite intensely for him a moving together of the points of the circle, and the death of the poet was clearly a significant loss for him.

His next job, lecturing in the African Languages Department of a South African university also brought development in his command of the isiXhosa language, and of his sense of identity. He says:

60. And you have to teach in isiXhosa, (Liz: Mm) and, again I was confronted by my sort of being caught up between Xhosa and English (Liz: Mm) and what my identity was and - and at the beginning I was like - more sort of seen as a novelty in a way (Liz: Mmmm, mm) - white guy -

61. I remember the two books I taught (...) I did a comparative analysis of these two novels for the first years in isiXhosa and um, I think that was a big learning curve for me,

62. and, - um, it also made me realise that, - if you teach people in their mother tongue - in isiXhosa - they - I mean the class was incredibly vibrant compared to other classes that you taught in English (Liz: Yes, yes), you know, and there was a lot of conceptual - um - stuff happening and debate happening which didn't happen in the classes such as the sociolinguistic classes, so - that was for me quite a - turning point as well (Liz: Ja), in terms of my own sort of formation of my own um feelings around issues like language of instruction (B2:13,14).

This academic post confronted him with a new challenge: lecturing in isiXhosa. Comparing his isiXhosa-medium lecturing experience with his experience of lecturing in English, he saw what conceptual depth and vibrant debate was unlocked when learning and teaching was done in the

home language. This insight represented a 'turning point' (par. 62) in his thinking. The ambivalence that he experienced lecturing in isiXhosa ('caught up between Xhosa and English' par. 60) was intensified by the fact that he was seen as 'a novelty' (par. 60), a white man teaching isiXhosa. Fluency in a black language is incongruous 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1977) for a white South African to possess, and my participants' whiteness affects their 'audibility' and 'voice' (Blommaert, 2005); people do not expect them to speak a 'black' language.

The ten years following his departure from the Transkei moved Brendon ultimately into what he describes as a much more white and sterile space (B3:50), at universities based firmly within white South Africa, and culminated in a year teaching isiXhosa at an overseas university. Speaking of that year, he says:

63. I was desperately lonely, and I had, I even started having things like panic attacks, you know (Liz: Mm) I'd feel like really out of control (Liz: Mm, mm) (...) I mean I felt very vacuous (Liz: Mm), like it's an odd thing to be teaching Xhosa {overseas} (...) and I thought what have I become? You know, what's happened to me? (Liz: Mm) (B1:45)

In a foreign university, he is completely out of his element, a member of no meaningful community ('it's an odd thing to be teaching Xhosa {overseas} par. 63), and therefore feels as if he has no meaningful identity (what have I become? par. 63). He had also lost his power ('I'd feel like really out of control' par. 63), which he comes to sense is intimately connected to isiXhosa and the familiar space of South Africa. This is, for him, another 'critical experience' (Block, 2007, p. 20) of ambivalence, similar to that which he experienced as a child who had been sent to school. The difference, this time, is that he had more power to do something about it.

Throughout Brendon's adult life, creative writing, in English and isiXhosa, is another way in which he fights alienation and understands and reconstructs, through imaginative engagement, the world he experienced in childhood. Wenger (1998, p. 176) speaks of participation through imagination as 'a process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves'. In the midst of his alienation abroad, in order to reconnect with the source of his power and identity, he started writing a novel in isiXhosa. He indicates that, while he was there, his writing shifted into 'a more Xhosa-ised space' (B1:46). The sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness and isolation impelled him to engage more intensely, in his imagination, with the Xhosa side of himself, another part of his attempt to 'go full circle'.

Removed from the geographical space where he feels at home, he creates an 'imagined community' where his life has meaning. Kanno & Norton (2003, p. 242.), in introducing a special issue of the *Journal of Language, Identity and Education* which deals with 'Imagined Communities and Educational Possibilities' suggest that 'imagined communities are no less real than the ones in which learners have daily engagement and might even have a stronger impact on their current actions and investment'. This is certainly true for Brendon in this situation.

When he returned to South Africa, Brendon's movement to close the circle was a more concrete one: he eagerly responded to an offer of a post at the Eastern Cape University he had attended as a student, even though it meant a drop in salary. The work which he is currently involved in there is deeply fulfilling and exciting for him, giving him enormous scope for creativity to 'reposition the language' (B1:49), and '[resurrect] isiXhosa' (B1:51) in a space which is much more 'shared' and where he feels at home: 'I felt just such an overwhelming sense of homecoming and belonging' (B1:54), he said, of his return to the Eastern Cape.

He speculates quite extensively about the source of his energy and commitment, even hinting at the supernatural:

64. I just think that some - thing has just given me that gift or drive or whatever (Liz: Yes) to actually do this and (Liz: like inspired, it sounds as if you feel inspired) I feel, I'm absolutely driven, I'm inspired (Liz: Ja), I'm driven, I (Liz: Ja) (B1:52)

He considers the heritage of his 'European' work ethic as a source of this drive, but comes down fundamentally in favour of his childhood identity and desire to 'get back' and 'go full circle'.

65. So I don't know where all that came from, but I still think, it's all intertwined with me and who I am and my identity and my childhood and, (Liz: Mm) and I have an incredible sense of wanting to get back not because I feel guilty, necessarily (Liz: Mm), I have had moments of feeling guilty, I must be honest, because I'm a white Xhosa speaker, um, but this was driven by just an overwhelming sense of being able to get back because the financials were in place (Liz: Mm), and and being overwhelmingly committed to isiXhosa, much more than English - (B1:61)

He has clearly given serious thought to the possibility that white guilt is one of his motivations, and in a later interview he clarifies this guilt. He says that it is

66. just simply of being a white person living - through Apartheid and getting all the benefits of Apartheid - and only realizing that much later in life - (B3:35)

It is clear that Brendon, like most white South Africans growing up under Apartheid, is a beneficiary of all that is involved in white privilege, even though it was 'forced upon him', in some sense, and he has always wanted to 'undo' what happened when he was sent to school and something in him 'shifted' (B1:26). This means that he feels guilty of something which, in a sense he was not responsible for, but which he became complicit in. And the fact that he is now an influential member of staff at a historically white, and thus advantaged¹²⁷ university is also a consequence of white privilege, layered on top of the privilege of having shared childhood with people who were then (and now) disadvantaged, and augmented once again by his own drive to 'get back', and (perhaps) his characteristic industriousness and will to succeed. He shows awareness of all of this, but does not dwell on the guilt; that would be painful and immobilizing. Instead he aligns himself with the current national agenda and energetically does what he can to implement it, in this way trying, perhaps, to counteract the impact of his involvement in the previous system. He says:

67. But I I I do feel that I can achieve a lot in this country. (Liz: Mm) I do think it's partly because I do feel this sense of connectedness, (Liz: Mm) the sense of - the language gives me the ability to actually reach out more to people, (Liz: Mm) and to work with people. (Liz: enormously, hey) (B1:108)
68. I mean, as a South African, I feel, like if you want to do something, do it, (Liz: Mm) you know the chances of getting it right are quite good. (Liz: Mm) (...) I feel an incredible sense of optimism, (Liz: Mm) so, um, you know, with her¹²⁸, for example, if Nongugquko phones me and says, look, I want to buy a house, which I've told her like, you need to look for a house, you know, (Liz: Mm) of your own, (Liz: Yes) I mean, then we facilitate that process.(B1:99)

Brendon expresses great positivity about his work and about the opportunities that the new South Africa creates, which were never there before (e.g. for a rural black woman to buy a house). He aligns himself energetically and enthusiastically with the stated ideals of the new dispensation in a quest to build a South Africa where 'shared spaces' expand, and where indigenous languages and cultures are promoted and developed. This fits with Wenger's (1998) identification of alignment as a mode of belonging to a CoP. 'Through alignment, we become part of something big because we do what it takes to play our part' (p. 179).

¹²⁷ As with schools in South Africa, universities are divided into those that were 'previously disadvantaged' (i.e. ethnically based colleges set up in the homelands with government funding during Apartheid), and 'previously advantaged' (i.e. those which were situated within white South Africa, had some measure of independence from government, were attended by white South Africans, staffed by white South Africans and international academics, and were well-resourced through bequests, etc., by successful alumni, as well as government subsidies).

¹²⁸ He speaks here of the sister of his childhood friend, who at that time still lived in his father's home.

The academic world of universities (most of them 'previously advantaged') constitutes the main CoP within which Brendon has operated throughout his studies and his working life. Within that world, he has worked within the discipline of African language studies, his study and career choices driven by his desire to 'get back', to reconnect, participate in and find acceptance within the Xhosa world that he left behind when he was sent to school. The academic community of African language departments has kept him in contact with isiXhosa on an on-going basis, and has been an important 'island' for him in the white world, carrying him through the 'barren' times (B2:57) when he was cut off from most black people. Now, in the post-'94 era, when connections of all kinds are possible, he is able to extend this 'shared' territory to other departments in the university and beyond the institution's walls, aligning himself with national language policy. Academia has also given him cognitive tools with which to reflect on his experiences, and attempt to make sense of them.

Ernie

Like George, Ernie started work on the railways almost immediately after he finished school. He was transferred to different branches in the region, doing clerical work. His first job brought him into extensive contact with the public, most of whom were isiXhosa speakers. He speaks of what a great help his isiXhosa fluency was to him in that work, and says that his employers

69. even sent me for a - erm, Xhosa exam, I had to go and (...) the court interpreter (...) tested me in East London and passed it - and then - I got a special allowance (...) seeing I passed the er Xhosa test. (E1: 38)

Not only did his isiXhosa proficiency win him a 'special allowance'; it also enabled him to win a prize for fastest service delivery in ticket sales!

70. I feel that's the only thing that helped me, you know because (Liz: Ja) there was no delay, I mean I knew what they wanted each time (Liz: Ja) (...) I knew all the Xhosa names of the various towns (...) and er - it helped me a hang of a lot. (...) And I should imagine it helped towards my promotion as well. (E2: 4)

In this job he also developed his existing fluency in Afrikaans. '{M}ost of {his} superiors were Afrikaans' (E1:60), and he acted as secretary in their Industrial Safety meetings, where minutes had to be taken in Afrikaans every alternate month (E1: 60).

Ernie was clearly fully integrated into the CoP of the Railways. He expresses pride in his achievements in this job, and seemed to gain great satisfaction from performing his role well and earning approval from his superiors. His multilingual repertoires assisted him greatly in this,

and while he was there two other work opportunities came his way because of his fluency in isiXhosa: one on a radio programme, and another at an Agricultural college. He considered both carefully, but finally decided that it was not worthwhile to make a change. He says:

71. I was very happy while I was on the railways, it was I think one of the best government departments in those days you know they had a good pension fund, they had a good medical aid (Liz: Umm) and that all seems to be dwindling now. (E1: 67)

It is clear how much Ernie benefited from the privileges which white people enjoyed at that time, and that the power that he had as a white man was augmented by the 'cultural capital' of being able to speak three South African languages. This enabled the machine of government services to be rolled out more effectively, and Ernie was rewarded proportionately.

At the same time, he was able to maintain a second job and source of income, and a second identity as a farmer. In the following extract, which focuses on the faithful companionship of the youngster who lived with them who could not hear or speak, he describes how he fitted in the farming during that period:

72. {W}hen I was working on the railways I used to work a late shift and a early shift, late shift, early shift, and I did quite a lot of ploughing and that, and farming (...) and it could be what time of the night I'd be ploughing and he would never leave me alone, he would be there helping me clean the plough and the rest of it, I worked till, I would plough until eleven twelve at night and he would be there with me and er - he was very faithful. (E1: 33)

The description implies that Ernie would normally have done this work on his own, and that his friend's companionship and assistance was voluntarily offered; the youngster's need for the nurturing this family offered, and his attachment to and dependency on them was clearly extremely strong ('he was very faithful' par. 72).

In his first job, and in his current position, Ernie has played and still plays a very strong brokering role, mediating between workers and management in industrial relations hearings, and also mediating between employees and the public, and sometimes employees and other employees. In all of these situations, his isiXhosa knowledge (and sometimes his Afrikaans) comes into play.

In the following extract, he describes one of these hearings:

73. I had one recently at {my place of work} (Liz: Umm) (...) where this gentleman had stolen a item in the shop and so on and he insisted he wanted me to interpret. (...) and each time, most of them always ask for me to do

the interpreting and er, I did this one as well for him on his request (Liz: Umm) - and then the owners of the store agreed (Liz: Umm) (...)

74. Liz: And you have to interpret from English to Xhosa and then from Xhosa to English as well?

75. And this last one had Afrikaans involved as well. (Liz: As well hey) because the lawyer, ex lawyer that er (...) chaired the hearing was an Afrikaans-speaking gentleman, not everything, but here and there he was stranded, I had to help him, interpreting from Xhosa to Afrikaans as well (Liz: Umm) But it went all right (Liz: umm, umm). (E2: 38)

It is noticeable that he calls both the person who was accused of theft¹²⁹ and the chairman of the hearing 'gentlemen', being careful to be respectful in his descriptions of all involved. In my experience, Ernie habitually adopts a tone, behaviour and bearing which are modest and respectful. He, like Riaan, has invested in a respectful register. In introducing Ernie, I noted that he sees himself as a 'peace loving person, - can get on with any age - old or young, irrespective of colour' (E3:16). His chosen register facilitates this. He also clarifies repeatedly that the accused had 'insisted' (par. 73) that he interpret, and that this is often the case that they ask him to do the interpreting. It is clearly important to Ernie that I see him as doing this work at the workers' request, and not as appointed by management. Perhaps he wants to show me that the workers trust him to interpret accurately, and to be impartial. It may also be that the accused feels that having a white person speaking for them in this situation, where management is white, could somehow lend more power to their story.

But Ernie is not only a broker on formal occasions such as this; he indicates that he mediates in many conflict situations which arise in the shop:

76. There's a black doctor here in {V town}, (...) He came to me the one day, he says er - he says I'm just the wrong - colour he says he says, but he in his life knows me as the white Madiba¹³⁰.

77. (...) He'd heard me speaking there, you know, quite often they have - they normally call me in there if there's a conflict with the customers and the cashiers or something and you've got to go defuse this, and keep peace on both sides and so on - and used to hear me talking there as well (...)

78. No, he still, he still comes shops there, pops his head around the fridge there, 'Hello Madiba' [*both laugh*] (E2: 44)

¹²⁹ It is interesting that Ernie says 'he had stolen a item from the shop'; this could either mean that he was found guilty or that Ernie viewed him as being guilty.

¹³⁰ *Madiba* is the clan name of Nelson Mandela, first President of the democratic South Africa, and is often used to refer to him. This comparison of Ernie with Mandela probably refers to Mandela's strong commitment to reconciliation.

This compliment from a black man was obviously a source of great pride and pleasure for Ernie. It added to his pleasure that he could tell me that the manager of the store had also said at a recent function, 'Any problems with a customer ... call [Ernie] in the peacemaker' (E2: 45). When I asked for an example of the kind of situation where he had mediated, he offered the following description:

79. It went quite hot at the {shop} where the - price didn't correspond - with what was on the rack and (Liz: Ja) the cashier and the customer were - getting hot under the collar and (Liz: Umm)

80. I had to go sort that one out and had to explain to - them and of course it was no more than right that if the price - the customer's got to pay the price that is - the advertised price and er got it sorted it out and the customer left happy and er // the cashier //

81. Liz: Were they both // Xhosa-speaking people, the cashier and the customer?

82. Yes, yes, both spoke Xhosa. (E2: 46)

Ernie uses the word 'hot' to describe the atmosphere in the shop and the feelings of those confronting one another. It is clear that, in spite of the fierceness of this clash, Ernie had the authority to speak for what 'is no more than right' (par. 80). In other words, he was able to make a ruling on what was correct practice, perhaps because of his authority as a section manager and (maybe) an older person and a white person (this business is managed by whites). These factors combined with his ability to speak isiXhosa, as well as his character and mediation skills, to facilitate a resolution of the issue between these two isiXhosa speakers, one a cashier and the other a customer.

It would seem that in communities Ernie has worked in, he has taken pride in doing a good job, and in giving satisfaction to, and keeping peace between, management, workers and clients. While he speaks of no greater ambitions than to have a steady job with good conditions of service, he takes great pride in affirmations from his superiors and from others who observe that he exerts a positive influence. His whiteness gives him power and opportunity; his fluency in isiXhosa and Afrikaans gives him insight into a variety of viewpoints. This has meant that in the CoPs in which he participates, he is a person of considerable power, despite his modest bearing.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the four men's accounts of rites of passage into manhood, as well as their working lives, focusing on ways in which their language repertoires are used, maintained and developed, and influence their 'ascribed' and 'inhabited' identities (Blommaert, 2005, p. 205).

It has looked at different communities in which they participated, or from which they were excluded. The Xhosa circumcision ritual separates the boys from their childhood companions, a decisive exclusion from the community of Xhosa men. Brendon's comments suggest that, while force relations (Foucault, 1976) ebb and flow fairly freely between black and white boys in their childhood, as they grow older the power of white parents and other 'elders' guards and guides the racial identity of their sons, a surveillance similar to that described by Foucault in relation to sex (1976, pp. 98 ff.). In addition to this, Brendon suggests another power block: the AmaXhosa, who are protective of their rituals and resistant to invasion of their sacrosanct spaces, even though there are instances of white people undergoing the rituals.

For George, the South African Defence Force was an imagined community (Wenger, 1998, p. 176) which he wished he could have participated in, and he and Riaan both construct army discipline as something desirable for today's youth. Brendon, at the other end of the spectrum, struggled to escape participation in this institution, as engagement in its practices was incompatible with his imagined community, an adult reconstruction of a childhood world of shared identities with Xhosa companions.

Brendon and Riaan had the privilege of a university education, both emerging from the experience equipped with different discourses: additional registers of isiXhosa, and reflective discourses, tools enabling them to make more conscious choices in terms of the positions that they assumed. All men have made extensive use of isiXhosa in their adult working lives, and have been challenged to develop new types of fluency and new registers of the language. Brendon's investment in poetic isiXhosa enables him to mediate between a rare form of verbal art and modern literary and technological mediums. It also gives him some of the intimate connection he craves with Xhosa people and Xhosa culture. Riaan shows that acceptance in the agricultural and governmental circles in which he moves is conditional on his investment in the

value of respect and a register of isiXhosa which goes with it, and an outright rejection of the register he calls 'Boere Xhosa', associated with an attitude of white superiority.

All four men have felt, in one way or another, that their command of isiXhosa (often combined with their privilege as whites) enables them to play valuable roles. All have occupied 'broker' roles (Wenger, 1998 p. 109; Hall & Sham, 2007, p. 16), interpreting and negotiating between those who do not understand isiXhosa and those who do, between the rural and the academic, between management and workers, and also, in Ernie's case, in conflict situations involving speakers of isiXhosa only. Their fluency in isiXhosa has also made possible intense engagement, involving challenge and disagreement at times, for example, between George and his workers, and Brendon and the PAC members.

Most stories give indications of the multiplicity of the men's identities, and of changes and shifts in their identities over time: George's relationship with his black colleagues seems to contradict his 'essentialist white discourse'; his identity positioning changes with political changes; doubt is cast on Riaan's relationship to the black farmers by his identification with the white demonstrator.

All are very conscious of their rootedness in the Eastern Cape, and to one degree or another, their loss of a sense of belonging and identity when outside of it. Both Riaan and Brendon describe 'critical experiences' of ambivalence (Block, 2007, p. 20) when they were away from home territory, and had no 'voice' in isiXhosa.

In situations where much of the power is still in white hands, such as Ernie's place of work and Brendon's university, the men's fluency in isiXhosa strongly augments their power as whites, who grew up with white privilege and training and still carry it with them. In situations where the power structure is increasingly black, such as the student body of the university in the Transkei, and the government-dominated work which Riaan does, the men's positions as white people are more precarious. Here they tend to find themselves on the margins, and choices of subject positions and language registers have to be carefully made to ensure survival. As people who can speak isiXhosa, however, the men have negotiated, and are negotiating on an on-going basis, acceptance in most of their work CoPs. Overt expressions of inclusion by isiXhosa-speakers are high points in their careers, and all four men have experienced them, but the possibility of marginalization and isolation hangs over parts of their stories.

The next chapter takes up the theme of movement across Apartheid and post-Apartheid spaces and their borders, and looks in more detail at instances of this in the stories.

Chapter 6: Identity across spaces: white discourse and hybrid space

Introduction

In Chapters 4 and 5, I have followed the lives of George, Ernie, Riaan and Brendon chronologically. In this chapter, I use a different organizing principle in presenting my analysis of the data, focusing on the dimension of 'space', geographical, as well as political, social and personal. This involves considerations of power, separation and boundaries. I examine the four men's positioning and identity construction at points in the space spectrum of the Apartheid and post-Apartheid worlds in which they live, pinpointing shifts in the men's discourse as they position themselves in and traverse across polarized and shared spaces and even move at times into what I will term 'hybrid space', enabled by their multilingual repertoires.

In this chapter, I make use of theoretical constructs discussed in the section on 'Identity in time and space', in Chapter 2. My analysis relies on concepts of ethnicity of the margins, hybridity (Hall, 1992a, 1992b), and 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994), linked with heteroglossia and folk laughter (Bakhtin, 1981) and Bourdieu's notion of 'suspension of the laws of price formation' (1991, p. 71). I also refer to work on 'boundary demarcation' (Frankenberg, 1993 and Durrheim and Dixon, 2000; 2005) and brokering (Wenger, 1998). I make extensive use of the categories of 'white discourse', used by Frankenberg (1993), Steyn (2001) and Durrheim and Dixon (2005), which I have extended (See Chapter 5).

Bakhtin describes language as 'heteroglot from top to bottom' (1981, p. 291), calling different types of utterances 'speech genres'. He asserts that authorities oppose and work to overcome the realities of heteroglossia, establishing and devising strategies to impose 'acceptable' language norms. It is clear that my participants, by being able to speak and understand isiXhosa and Afrikaans, as well as English, can participate in a far greater range of speech genres than the average white South African. As Riaan says, speaking of white people who don't know isiXhosa,

1. they're missing out on basically 50% of what is going on (...) because you're not hearing the half of the, of the humour that's ...that's going on (laughs) and things like that, (...) and how people approach - (Ri1:75).

While I have no access to the isiXhosa speech genres or discourses which the men command and use, I analyse the typical ways in which they use English discourses to position themselves in

the racially polarized and shared spaces in which they operate. I also look for evidence of other 'spaces' to which they have access.

In my analysis, I distinguish between shared space and 'hybrid space'. In shared space, black and white people are simply doing things together. This is very common with my participants, most of whom work with black people, in a range of relationships, some of equality, like Brendon and Riaan with their colleagues, and some more asymmetrical, like George's relationship with the workers he supervises. The term 'hybrid space' describes a more exceptional experience, which moves the men into a different dimension, beyond the reach of dominant discourses. In speaking of his concept of 'the third space', Bhabha (1994) asks,

How are subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of the sum of the 'parts' of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories ..., the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable (pp. 1-2).

This description seems to capture something of the 'in-between' space my participants inhabit, where they encounter, and communicate with, people from groups usually seen as 'having values, meanings and priorities' which are 'antagonistic' or 'incommensurable', but who have 'a shared history' (pp. 1-2). My term '*hybrid space*' refers to situations in which, sometimes, in these 'in-between' spaces, my participants seem to fall out of the world of racial binaries which are so pervasive in Apartheid and post-Apartheid South Africa and into another dimension, where separations are irrelevant and 'life is one' (Bakhtin, 1981, p.209). The catalyst for this move into 'hybrid space', where they can exceed 'the sum of the parts of difference' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1), seems to be the ability of the white man to speak isiXhosa. The impact of the shift is often (though not always) a sense of freedom and joy, usually accompanied by laughter (which I relate to the folk laughter of Bakhtin).

Polarized space, shared space and hybrid space

Data analysed in chapters 4 and 5 has shown how most Apartheid and post-Apartheid space is polarized in terms of race and language. In this chapter I analyse incidents taking place in polarized space, where my participants' ways of speaking can often be called 'white discourse', of one of the types described in the introduction to Chapter 5. The chapter also examines

narrative about boundaries between racially polarized space and shared space and who constructs and maintains or breaks them, as well as where boundaries seem to collapse, where space becomes 'hybrid', and where the racially-divided norms and conventions of modern society - Apartheid, post-Apartheid, colonial and post-colonial - are overturned, largely through the men's multilingual repertoires.

Although I have not focused on the space dimension in previous chapters, it has already featured in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 4 I analysed how the game that George and Gigs played with the wire cars, taking place in shared childhood space, foreshadowed the divisions of the adult world. I showed how Brendon's mother tried desperately to sustain the colonial norms of polite British society (white space) in the life of her family, while her son persisted in identifying with his black friend's world and fleeing into their shared space. I commented on the ambivalence created in him by the clash between his mother's space and the space he shared with his friends.

I also noted that the boys had to make a 'shift' out of the shared space of childhood, often moving 'quite a far distance' (E1:57), geographically, to school, where Ernie couldn't 'speak Xhosa', and where Riaan had to stay with white people all the time, and wear shoes and do homework. Brendon indicated that the move to Afrikaans and then English school caused a 'shift' for him of an emotional kind, making the relationship between himself and his childhood friend 'more distant'. And he lamented that 'I've never been able to go full circle again', a metaphor that he uses repeatedly, in his adult story as well, to refer to his on-going and insistent quest to move back into the shared space and intimacy of childhood, or its equivalent in the adult world. I also argued that the move to a racially segregated school created two kinds of 'normality' (corresponding to two kinds of spaces) for Riaan: the Apartheid 'normality' of racial separation between himself and his friends, going to different schools, and also the 'normality' of being reunited in the afternoons, after school and in the holidays. In Brendon's childhood world, there were also two kinds of space and normality, that of his everyday activities with his friends, and his mother's normality, very difficult for Brendon to make sense of.

Chapter 5 followed the boys into white space, leaving their erstwhile friends in black space, as they moved into manhood. Brendon indicated again his interest in 'the sharing of spaces', which

he thinks is signified by a white boy going through the circumcision ritual, and which he tries to build through his work. I commented on Riaan's move 'out of his comfort zone' when he worked at the university in another province, and Brendon's move out of the Transkei into a much more white space which he felt was 'sterile', and then abroad, where he was completely 'out of his element'.

In this chapter, I analyse mostly stories from the adulthood of the four men, but start with one childhood story, from Brendon's narrative. I first examine three stories featuring 'boundaries' between shared space and polarized Apartheid space. I then analyse one or two stories from each man, in which they are positioned largely within polarized Apartheid (and post-Apartheid) space. When the men describe incidents from this standpoint, they tend to use one or other kind of 'white discourse'. Finally, I look at incidents where boundaries seem to collapse, where space becomes 'hybrid', and where the norms and conventions of Apartheid, post-Apartheid, colonial, post-colonial, modern society are upturned.

Boundaries

Eastern Cape colonial history features, as we have seen, an on-going process of setting up, breaking, shifting and negotiating boundaries between colonial space and the space where the indigenous people lived; the region between the Fish and the Kei Rivers is still referred to informally as 'Border'. It is not surprising, then, that the four stories give indications, at times, of where white space began, and 'blacks' could not cross the boundary.

In more recent times, Apartheid, which lingers on into the present in many social practices, envisioned a South Africa where each racial (and even ethnic) group had its own space, its own language, its own culture and traditions. Separation, or 'Apartheid', implies boundaries, and transgressing boundaries was only done for instrumental purposes. For instance, 'blacks' in white areas were defined as 'temporary sojourners'; they were needed as a work force, but the 'grand' scheme of Apartheid could not accommodate them as permanent citizens of white South Africa. Command of a black language was useful for managing the work force, and courses in isiZulu, isiXhosa, etc., often focused on forms and functions appropriate to this purpose. Beyond this, knowing isiXhosa was an instance of 'transgression' of the boundaries of Apartheid's binaries.

Brendon: 'So far and no further' (B2:62)

In the four stories, the homestead on the farm was clearly, in some sense, 'white space', although, there were differences between the four boys' situations with regard to how firmly black people were excluded from this space. George mentioned explicitly that his friend Gigs used to come and sleep in the house. Ernie's parents seem to have taken the young black boy who couldn't hear or speak into their home and brought him up almost as a second child in the family. In Riaan's case, though most play took place outside, his friends came into the house when he was sick, and shared his books, which were read to them by his child-minder.

In contrast to these examples, the story which follows, from Brendon's childhood narrative, shows how strict the boundaries were, between shared and white space, for him and his friend. It also shows the profound mistrust with which certain white people regarded black people, a mistrust which formed the basis for a belief in separation rather than relationship.

2. ... Sonwabo, in fact, and myself, we had little wicker chairs on the veranda - he was allowed to sit with me on the veranda in those wicker chairs but - I don't remember him ever sort of coming inside the house or anything. (Liz: Oh) It was always that sort of feeling that you go so far and no further, and I think you - as children, you worked out what the boundaries were, sort of thing. (Liz: Mm, mm) um, although you didn't really understand why they were there, but obviously - you were told that - this was what happens, (Liz: Ja) you know.
3. And a policeman had come to visit my father, and um - he - we had been playing outside, or whatever, and they were having tea, ... in the room sort of leading on to the veranda, and Sonwabo and myself came and sat down on the chairs, ...
4. I can't remember the full incident but, - um - I ordered two teas (*slight laugh*) sort of like from my mother ...
5. um, and this policeman turned around and said something like, '*Ja, en volgende week sal hy jou keel afsny*' (Yes, and next week he will cut your throat). (Liz: Ja) You know, which was quite a profou:nd thing, - I mean, you know, why would my friend do that to me? so -
6. there was obviously a sense of - I think from that person a sense of - this this is obviously wrong that these two kids are allowed to be such good friends, which they clearly were. (B2:62,63)

Brendon describes here something 'normal' in colonial / Apartheid society: a situation where an invisible line was drawn between the space where white and black could associate and the space strictly reserved for white people, in this case the farmhouse. This kind of rule was imposed by those in power - adults, in this case, who represented the dominant, legitimate discourse: 'you were told that - this is what happens'. This 'normality' was fully accepted by Brendon: you also 'worked out what the boundaries were', not understanding why.

The policeman, using the discourse of the 'white master-narrative', articulates another norm or belief of white society: that black people cannot be trusted. Even those you consider friends will turn on you, their primary loyalty being to those on the other side of the boundary. For this reason (Brendon assumes the policeman's logic goes), it is 'wrong' to allow black and white children to be friends. Brendon calls this 'profound', a word he uses quite often for things which affect him deeply. For him, the norm is the opposite; disloyalty to a friend is unthinkable; the possibility of betrayal is completely blocked out, invalidated ('why would my friend do that to me?' par. 5). He articulates here his childhood view - a genuinely colour-blind one; he did not see things in terms of colour, but of friendship; the racialized point of view made no sense to him. Deconstructing the situation, and his own whiteness, he followed up on this story, after a short interval, with the one which follows.

Brendon: 'Something blocking me' (B2:74)

This story comes from Brendon's adulthood, and shows how enduring the boundaries set up in childhood can be, in spite of the best will in the world. It concerns another close friend of Brendon's, someone whom he speaks of with great appreciation and affection, and whom he indicates has 'had quite a profound effect on the way that {his} interaction has developed with Xhosa-speaking people' (B2:52).

7. if I could just tell you another incident um - um - I'm not sure - whether this is relevant or not, but and - I, I mean Phumeza and {her children} came to visit me - Phumeza's husband passed away unfortunately from cancer - (Liz: Mm) - um, {at the coast}.
8. And we were going up - we went up to Lesotho together - and and we had a great fun time, and spent a week, cavorting around and doing this that and everything, and came back to {the coast} and then, um - on the way to Lesotho, that's right, they said why don't we stay with my father, you know, for the night on the farm. [pause]
9. And I w - you know - I would have loved that, and I'm sure that he probably would have - accepted it, but - I didn't do that - because there was something blocking me, you know um - and in a way I don't know if I was protecting him, or if I was protecting them - from him, or what I was doing - or protecting myself from a tense situation, or something that I - that I thought might make him feel uncomfortable. (B2:73-74)

Brendon is a little hesitant about telling this story ('um - I'm not sure - whether this is relevant or not' par. 7). It was clearly one he was not comfortable with, because he constructs himself as someone whose norm is 'shared space', space which has no racial boundaries like those which applied in his childhood. But in this episode he finds himself still subject, emotionally, to the

racial boundaries imposed by his father; 'there was something blocking' (par. 9) him from taking his dear (black) friends, with whom he had shared such a good holiday, to his father's home.

Brendon asks himself who he was protecting. He 'would have loved that' (par. 9), he says; it would have been good to have been able to share his family with his friends and vice versa. But there was a sense in which he wouldn't have loved it; there are significant hesitations before that phrase ('I would have loved that' par. 9); he imagines that it would have caused tension and discomfort to someone, or maybe to all involved. The long pause at the end of paragraph 8, and then the pauses in his statement about his father: 'he probably would have – accepted it, but - ' (par. 9) speak volumes; acceptance does not necessarily imply approval, or enjoyment. The boundaries still apply. Brendon's 'deconstructing discourse' here examines, very honestly, his own whiteness; how his upbringing and respectful though conflicted relationship with his father still holds him into the norms of a polarized racist society, much as he would wish it to be otherwise.

Speaking about his father's death, which occurred between our second and third meetings, Brendon commented that, difficult though it was to admit this, his father's passing brought a sense of relief and release. The boundaries were now gone, he said, and this opened the way for new possibilities.

George: Transgression of boundaries

The extract which follows, already referred to in Chapter 5, tells of an experience during the early years of George's working life, before he was married, and show George being reprimanded for the 'transgression' of boundaries into which his fluency in isiXhosa had led him. They show a situation of great ambivalence, where George's loyalties are divided between Nathi, the friend whom he encounters in the shared space, speaking isiXhosa, 'where the laws of price formation ... are suspended' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 71) and the white group with whom he is identified within the formal, legitimate, binary black and white South African system. Nathi is characterized as 'his friend', and George stands up for his friendship with him against a work colleague, who is clearly challenging him to declare whose side he is on.

10. There's a lot times, where you know, people that I know, (Liz: Mm) that, erm, don't like black people. Period.
11. You know, they, but our, my whole family we've grown up knowing blacks and, (Liz: Mm) I mean, my grandfather always used to say, 'You catch more flies with a bowl of milk than with a bowl of vinegar.' (Liz:

Mm) You know, it doesn't cost you a cent to be friendly to a person. (Liz: Ja) You know, it's not his fault that he's black, (Liz: Yes) (*laugh*) at the end of the day! (Liz: Ja) Nobody asked to be born that way, (Liz: Ja) and I don't, when I say that, I don't mean it in a disrespect, (Liz: Mm) that they different to what we are. We all human beings. (Liz: Mm) (...)

12. I'll give you one incident when I was working (...) (Liz: Mm) There was a guy there, his name was Nathi (...) He was a cleaner there, (Liz: Mm) and this guy used to come - into my house, he used to come and have a beer with me at home. (Liz: Yes)
13. And this other guy (...) he turned around and said to me, um, 'How can you let a black guy into your house? What's wrong with you?'
14. I said, 'He respects me; I respect him! (Liz: Mm) You know, he's my friend,' (Liz: Ja) and I said, 'I'd rather let him in my house than some white people that I know.' (Liz: Mm, mm) (...) He was always well-mannered. (...) When we walked into the house, he'd walk straight to the kitchen and tell me, 'No, let's sit in the kitchen.' (Liz: Mm). He respected my house and he was respectful and (Liz: Mm) when I was having a beer, I used to offer him a beer. (Liz: Mm) There was nothing wrong with it.
15. But there are a lot of people that have got the wrong attitude. (Liz: Mm) I think that is the problem, (Liz: Mm) is their attitude towards black people. (Liz: Mm) (G2:32-40)

George seems to find it difficult to explain what happened here. He is torn between defending his friendship with a black man, in terms that I, as a white person whose position on racial matters he is not sure of, will understand, and affirming the importance which such friendships have in his life.

He introduces the story of his friendship with Nathi with reference to the on-going relationships with black people in his family, offering a piece of family wisdom in support of this: "You catch more flies with a bowl of milk than with a bowl of vinegar". You know, it doesn't cost you a cent to be friendly to a person' (par. 11). While all the statements in paragraph 11 are presented in support of friendliness between races, they carry the implication that friendship with a black person needs to be justified, when talking to a white person. Dominant discourse (the 'white master-narrative') does not see it as 'normal' for a white South African to have a black friend; anyone who has friendships with black people needs to be ready to justify them in terms of some instrumental purpose (catching flies, as this saying goes). In the white master-narrative, friendship between white and black is a transgression, as later statements from both parties in the dialogue show: 'What's wrong with you?' his accuser asks (par. 13).

In defending his right to have a black friend, George offers a number of truisms and stereotypical constructions of 'other': 'You know, it's not his fault that he's black'; 'Nobody

asked to be born that way; we all human beings' (par. 11); 'I'd rather let him in my house than some white people that I know' (par. 14). George's intention is to proclaim his freedom from prejudice and his fellow-feeling for black people; at the same time, all these kinds of statements are truisms of 'white colour-blind discourse', used here to justify friendship with black people, which by implication is seen as 'wrong'.

The word 'wrong' is used three times in this extract. With different sets of values in mind, George asserts that, 'There was nothing wrong with it' (presumably the fact that he and Nathi were friends and that he offered him a beer) (par. 14). There could be two (or maybe three) sets of values at play in George's phrase 'nothing wrong': the values of the white master-narrative (there was nothing wrong because Nathi showed the 'proper' respect), the values of the shared space (there was nothing wrong because this was a case of simple friendship), and the values of 'colour-blind white discourse' (there was nothing wrong because I am not a racist; racism is wrong). George's discourse simultaneously subverts and reinforces the master-narrative, offering the listener alternative ways of interpreting what he says.

Another example of this can be seen in George's use of the word 'respect', a word which we have met before in Riaan's narrative, and which has a number of resonances in the Eastern Cape context, all of which probably live and are mixed within George's frame of reference. 'Respect' is a key term in Xhosa society, where one's seniors in terms of social position, but more importantly in terms of age, must be treated with deference, and addressed with appropriate titles, (see earlier, Chapter 5). Apartheid and the colonial white master-narrative constructed white people as automatically senior, which meant that they were to be given the traditional 'respectful' treatment, often regardless of age. Thus the Xhosa virtue of respect, rarely fully understood by whites, and often ignored when whites dealt with adult 'blacks', fed into the colonial, Apartheid system.

In defending himself against the 'other guy's' challenge, George starts by saying that Nathi is his friend, and that they respect each other (par. 14). Here he seems to be speaking of a mutual, two-way respect, the respect of friends for each other. In commenting on the situation, he shifts quite quickly to using 'respect' in a somewhat different way. Nathi was 'well-mannered'; he 'respected my house and he was respectful' (par. 14). These remarks hold a reassurance for those favouring white superiority: Nathi showed the kind of 'respect' that is the norm in colonial

discourse between a black man and a white. He 'knew his place'. Knowing the risks involved in transgressing Apartheid boundaries, Nathi said, 'No, let's sit in the kitchen' (par. 14). By doing this, Nathi made it easier for George to defend himself against those who saw him as 'a transgressor', and even against those parts of himself which might have felt guilty or fearful about 'transgressing' society's norms. Bourdieu describes a space, usually where 'private exchanges between homogenous partners' (1991, p. 71) take place, where the 'normal' ways in which people's value is determined, in terms of the linguistic capital they possess, and their position in society, do not apply. When George and Nathi are on their own, the 'formal law is suspended rather than transgressed' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 71), but the law catches up with them very quickly, and requires them to defend themselves for transgressing it, once George is back with his white colleagues.

In saying that he doesn't mean 'a disrespect' (par. 11), he shows awareness that I could perhaps interpret some of his statements in 'the wrong way'. He seems somewhat uneasy, not sure, perhaps, how to construct in words his friendships with black people. Having been brought up in the divided South African world with its dominant discourses, he struggles to find appropriate ways to speak, in English, about his experience in shared and 'hybrid' space.

Having told the story of Nathi, George continued with another, on an even more serious theme:

16. At one stage, *laugh*, I was accused of having a black girlfriend. (Liz: Oh) (...) And so I said to them, 'Now who's this black girlfriend I'm supposed to have?' (Liz: Ah)
17. Now they don't know, they heard.
18. So I said, 'From where, who told you?' (Liz: Mm) Let's sort this out.' (Liz: Ja)
19. No, he can't remember who told him.
20. So I said to him, 'Then you must stop spreading rumours.' [pause] I said to him, 'There's my girlfriend.' And I'm married to her today, and she's not black, I'm not going to lie (*Both laugh*)
21. So, no, (Liz: Mm) people, I think, just can't accept change. (Liz: Mm) But even before, when it was still Apartheid era, (Liz: Mm) I mean, I've always had a black friend. (Liz: Mm) Always. (G2: 42-46)

His white work-mates issue him the ultimate challenge: Would you marry one of 'them'? In Apartheid South Africa, marriage – or sexual relationships - across the colour line would constitute a radical instance of boundary crossing, declared wrong and made a crime, through

the Immorality Act¹³¹, by colonial and Apartheid authorities. 'Accused' (par. 16) of having a black girlfriend, he tacitly accepts the assumption that this would be wrong, and defends himself in 'courtroom' style, first by trying to trace the original accuser (par. 18), and secondly by bringing evidence that he is 'innocent', having a girlfriend who is 'not black' (par. 20), whom he goes on to marry. He may have black friends, he seems to say, but he is still a bona fide member of the white group, evidence being his white wife. In his marriage to a white woman, he affirms where he belongs: on the 'right' side of the boundary. It is important for him to maintain and continue the sense of family into which he has been born, thus ensuring security and a racial identity acceptable in the broader society.

Clearly, in the situations described in the two extracts above, George was caught. It seems that his friendship with Nathi was spontaneous and 'natural', and took place within shared space where they could meet on terms which were in some senses equal. However, he finds himself needing to defend himself against 'others' for whom his friendship with black people is 'wrong' and constitutes a betrayal of his own group. In the isiXhosa space, Nathi is one of 'us', and in his conversation with me he describes 'this other guy' (par. 13) and those who 'can't accept change' (par. 21) as 'other' in some way. However, in his accusers' white space, and even in conversation with me at times, he adopts the discourse of the white camp (the 'master-narrative' and 'colour-blind discourse'), almost in spite of himself.

His last statement, distancing himself from those with 'the wrong attitude', is a proud assertion that, 'I've always had a black friend. Always.' (par. 21) His identity is indeed a 'site of struggle' (Weedon, 1997), and his story full of conflict and ambivalence, but his tone communicates the message that his friendships with black people are not negotiable. It seems that George moves in spaces which he sees as shared. Being a practical and sociable person, and not too distanced, in many instances, from his black colleagues by economic, educational or lifestyle factors, it is possible for him to share spaces with isiXhosa speakers quite often and quite comfortably. Responding to the objections of other whites, however, he quite easily 'falls into line' and adopts the boundaries and the ways of speaking that are important within the master narrative of whiteness.

¹³¹ The Immorality Acts (1927 and 1957) made sex across the colour line illegal, and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) prohibited mixed race marriages.

These stories show Brendon and George positioned in shared space, with their friends, and coming up against the barriers created by the authorities. In the adult stories, there is a sense that the world of childhood play is being recreated (e.g. Brendon says 'we had a great fun time (...) cavorting around (...)', par. 8). In all three stories, the boys/men and their friends tacitly accept the boundaries, and make the right moves to conform to the expectations of dominant polarized space (e.g. Nathi walking straight to the kitchen, par. 14). Brendon is very aware of this, uncomfortable about it, and able to articulate it. He positions himself firmly as a person who opposes and works against boundaries and racial polarization. Using 'deconstructing discourse', he is able to express his relief that the pressure to conform is eased, now that his father has passed away. George's discourse also displays ambivalence, but he seems to handle it with philosophical acceptance ('... People that I know...that, erm, don't like black people' par. 10). He finds ways of living 'in-between', 'where the laws of price formation are suspended' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 71), while accepting the non-negotiability of dominant discourse and its requirements, which also work to his own advantage as a white person. His discourse is filled with ambiguity and multiple meanings, allowing for a variety of interpretations, suiting a number of audiences. In spite of their differences, both Brendon and George find ways of negotiating for themselves, or slipping into, a shared, private space where they can continue the lifestyle that they love and the friendships which are important to them (e.g. 'I've always had a black friend', George, par. 21). While many whites in the post-1994 democracy have quite extensive contacts with black people in the workplace, socializing with black people is not yet general practice among whites in the Eastern Cape. In the narratives of the four men, these two stories show instances of such socializing; there are none in the stories told by the two other men.

Polarized Space

In all of the incidents related in the section which follows, whether they recount incidents taking place during or post-Apartheid, the men position themselves largely within polarized space, and as white people, over against black people. In line with this, they use one or other of the kinds of 'white discourse' identified earlier. While the binaries of Apartheid and colonial space continue into post-Apartheid times, differences which have come about in the men's lives and relationships through the shift of political power from white to black can, once again, be detected.

Riaan: The incident at University of Free State

In the following extract, Riaan compares his time at university, in the Apartheid era, with the situation which led to the then recent incident¹³² at the Free State University, where a group of white students made a video of a mock initiation, in which they subjected black cleaning staff to a variety of demeaning activities, including tricking them into drinking urine. This extract appears in the context of a discussion of how respect of young people for the older generation, in black and Afrikaner contexts, is breaking down (See Chapter 5). He characterizes this as 'a huge problem in society in South Africa - a huge, massive problem' (Ri1:126), and in this story, constructs the 'old' Apartheid days positively, because, in his view, discipline and respect were maintained among the students, and between students and workers. The story has shades of the Afrikaner 'narrative' which Steyn (2004, p. 152) titles 'The good old days of way back then', describing it as 'a blend of nostalgia, confusion ... self-righteousness and tenacious faith in a discredited world view' (Steyn, 2004, p. 153).

22. just imagine if that had happened in the o:ld days; (Liz: Mm) in the Apartheid days. (Liz: Mm) You know what would have happened to those white guys. We had a number 14 takkie¹³³ in the residence, with a cake of soap in the front, and for misbehaviour, you were hit, - you could get up to 24 shots, with that takkie. (...)
23. In the first instance, we observed discipline it wouldn't have happened. (Liz: Mm) In the first instance. In the residence. With the black ladies there. In the second instance, pe - I don't know - people respected older people, - black or white. I mean when I was in residence, all my roommates, some of them coming from, from the rightest er er er political backgrounds, never considered doing something like that to the cleaners in the residence. (...)
(Ri1:128)

[Here he tells of his emotional reunion with one of the cleaners in more recent times, referred to in Chapter 5, to illustrate how positive relationships were, in his view.]

24. and that's why I'm so cross (Liz: Mm) about this matter; (Liz: Yes) I'm very very cross with it, I'm very very cross because it's so unnecessary.
25. Not that it's not happening, I mean there's no-one, when there's a white farmer murdered, no one makes a big hoo-ha about that. Which is also wrong.
26. I mean I came, last - year before last, I was the first to be on a farm and that we see a lady's throat cut.
27. So so but it didn't doesn't cause me not to respect a black person, or trust a black person. You understand the difference where it comes in (Liz: Mm, mm) If you hadn't been er brought up under those circumstances you

¹³² This incident took place in late 2007

¹³³ *Takkie* (colloquial South African English) a running shoe

could easily say that 'All black people are like that'. Easily! (Liz Very easy, very easy) Very easily, which is so wrong; which is so wrong.

28. And that's why I'm very very cross. Because now there's a contrary perception, that all white people are now - racists. (Liz: And especially Afrikaners, hey) Yes, now this happened at an Afrikaans university and (...) that's - It's so unfortunate - er. Things like that happen. Things like that happen. [pause] Jaaa... (Liz: Mm) (Ri1:130)

This section of Riaan's story is told in a very heated tone; the incident at UFS¹³⁴ has made Riaan extremely angry. He sees discipline as vital for the maintenance of respect, and together these form pillars of his philosophy of life. His 'discipline discourse' reflects this strongly.

He constructs the way of life at the university residence during his student days as both respectful and disciplined. The very strict discipline of the time – which many would see as cruel - is constructed as effective, and his fellow-students – even those 'coming from 'rightest' political backgrounds' (par. 23) - are constructed as respectful to older people – specifically the cleaners in the residences. While a generally accepted view of white Afrikaner attitudes during Apartheid times is that they dehumanized black people, and that older black people were treated as children (called 'boy / jong' and 'girl / meid'), it is important for Riaan that he sees these Afrikaners with whom he studied – his own people, by definition – as principled in ways that he approves. The pause, and the phrase ' – I don't know – ' (par 23) seems to indicate that he recognizes in some way the contradiction in terms implied, but he insists that he does not recall any student in his residence who would have considered treating the cleaners as the modern-day students have done. He experiences the behaviour of these modern-day students as a violation of his principles, and almost as a personal betrayal. According to him, the incident makes it easy for people to label all whites (perhaps particularly Afrikaners) as racists, which means he can also be labelled as racist. He clearly does not construct himself as a racist.

The phrase, 'Not that it's not happening' (par. 25) suggests that as Riaan speaks, a number of incidents flash through his mind, perhaps incidents of disrespect and violence shown by white to black and also by black to white. When he speaks, however, it is to focus on an incident of 'black on white' violence. It is common among whites to lament, as he does here, using discourse which reflects some of the values of the 'white master-narrative', that racist behaviour by whites is noted much more than criminal and violent acts perpetrated by black people against white people: 'when there's a white farmer murdered, no-one makes a big hoo-

¹³⁴ University of Free State

ha about that' (par. 25). He says that this is 'also wrong' (par. 25). He goes on to paint a vivid picture of an example which he witnessed of what could be seen as 'black on white' violence. He can clearly empathize with whites who easily conclude that all black people are vicious when confronted with this type of incident. One could deduce that he shares their feelings about what happened; he comes from a farming family, enabling him to identify with the victims of the violence. He does set himself apart from the general reaction, however, attributing his different reaction to his closeness to black people during his early years (which resulted in him being fluent in isiXhosa), and emphasizing, through repetition, that such generalizations are 'so wrong' (par. 27).

Riaan's introduction to the story 'Just imagine ...' suggests that he sees me as an insider in relation to the experience he is about to relate. My own strong response ('Very easy, very easy', par 27) shows that I do understand and am in a sense part of the discourse. In spite of having had close relationships with black people, I have spent significant periods in 'whites only' contexts, familiar to all whites who grew up under Apartheid. I recognise that in such an environment it 'comes naturally' to view black South Africans as 'other', and is an easy next step to construct them negatively.

The extract depicts Riaan standing very much within white space, but demonstrating, once again, a conflicted identity and 'ambivalent discourse': 'two [or more] voices collide within it dialogically' (Bakhtin, 1963, p. 104). Riaan is an Afrikaner and subscribes to the values of discipline and respect. He feels solidarity with the students with whom he studied, and sees them as respectful and disciplined; he empathizes, at a deep level, with white reactions to farm killings. However, his childhood in shared space, speaking isiXhosa, has shaped another deeply influential facet of his identity; it means he has much invested in being seen as someone who is respectful towards, has good relationships with, and does not make negative generalizations about black people. Conflict between these identities is clear in his condemnation of both the neglect of incidents of 'black on white' violence, ('also wrong' – par 25), as well as generalizations about black people ('so wrong' – par 27). It also means that he reacts strongly and angrily against young Afrikaners who 'let the side down' by humiliating and degrading elderly cleaners at the university. It was difficult for him to acknowledge any forms of disrespect to the elderly among his fellow students; now he feels extreme discomfort in accepting the continuation of racism among the younger generation. It makes it very difficult for him to 'hold

things together' as a person, and Riaan does not like ambivalence; he feels it is very important to be 'konsekwent' (consistent).

Brendon: Paternalistic [paternal] responsibility (B1:94)

In the extract which follows, Brendon speaks about his current relationship with Nongugquko, the elder sister of Sonwabo, his great childhood friend. In the process, he also reveals something of his relationship with his aging father¹³⁵, with whom the black family from the farm were then still staying, although in a house in the village, and no longer on the farm.

29. ... Nongugquko is still looking after my 80-year-old father... and we have a fantastic relationship, we speak very openly in the last year or two, (Liz: Mm) more so than what we've ever done, (Liz: Mm) um, especially now that my father's got another partner, because - you know, I can ask her things, you know, we we - you know, we have jokes about it, (Liz: Yes, *laughs*) which has made us feel pretty connected, you know, um,
30. and of course, you know, if she needs anything she knows she can phone me and tell me, (Liz: Ah) things for school, or whatever. (Liz: Ja) So there's partly - and her husband died many years ago, ... so, (Liz: Mm) um, you know, there's a whole - I do feel a certain paternalistic kind of responsibility, paternal in the sense of kind-of fathering this child, you know, because he doesn't have a father, (Liz: Mm) um,
31. and then, you know, Sonwabo's brother died of HIV, so (Liz: Mm) his two children are also there, and they're only little, 4 and 5, (Liz: Mmmm!) so she's looking after them, and - I really don't mind, you know, assisting her, um,
32. even although I don't really share that too much with my father, cause (Liz: Right) sort of in one way it doesn't concern him and ... it's just that, I don't want to undermine his space, in a sense, (Liz: Right) and, I don't know what he pays her but I imagine it's not, you know - so, you know - so, I don't know how he remunerates her, and I suspect, (Liz: Mm) and probably not, um, the going wage, or whatever (Liz: Mm) it's supposed to be, (Liz: Mm) because she lives in a nice house and she's got her food, and all that sort of stuff - (Liz: Mm)
33. but, you know, bringing up three kids, (Liz: Mm) actually four children because she has an older daughter, (Liz: Mm) who unfortunately is now 12 and never been to school, (Liz: Mm) so I don't know what's going to happen to her; she's, she's a young teenager, and she, we tried to get her into school and she went for one year this year, now she's already dropped out, so I think she's out of the system.
34. So my, my vision would be to take the younger kids and actually put some effort into them to, you know, to get them a proper schooling, (Liz: Mm) um, but
35. we've never spoken about, for example, that um Sonwabo's brother Thulani died of HIV, I mean, I mean he definitely had HIV and he was fully blown, he had, you know, he died of meningitis in the end, ... but - we were not able to get him to say that he had it and (Liz: Mm) ask for help anywhere. (Liz: Mm)

¹³⁵ His father died in July 2008, between our second and our third meetings, changing the situation described here somewhat.

36. So I think there's that saddens me as well, that there's all this - kind of silence, even now, um, um, especially in the rural areas, um,

37. so that is a debate that we, I've had with her, like have you been tested [for HIV], (Liz: Mm) and she has been tested and she's negative, um, (Liz: Mm) but it's not a debate that - it's a debate that's taken a while - for example my father could never have that sort of debate, (Liz: Mm, mm, mm). (B1:93-97)

He says that he and Nongugquko speak 'very openly' (par. 29) now. This is in some contradiction with what he said in Chapter 4 (par. 6): 'I've never been able to go full circle again'. It would seem that while there is no going back to his initial childhood connectedness with her, and particularly with Sonwabo, who is now hardly mentioned, he currently has new points of connection with her (e.g. the father and the new partner) within the shared space made possible by his fluency in isiXhosa.

While the space is shared, a great deal of ambivalence is apparent, created by the huge differentials in education and economic circumstances between these two friends, differentials set up by the patterns of privilege and deprivation which were perpetuated by Apartheid and the social system which went with it, and which preceded it and has continued even with its passing, in many ways.

Nongugquko and Brendon are connected by their common background and common interest in Brendon's father. The other connection Brendon feels towards her and her family is one of 'paternalistic' (par. 30) responsibility. He doesn't mind 'assisting her' (par. 31); she can phone if she needs anything. He is careful to explain that his use of the word 'paternal' (par. 30) relates to the fact that her children are without a father, rather than a paternalistic attitude. He, as a close and advantaged family friend – almost a family member is how he likes to see himself - feels it is appropriate for him to step in. He goes to a lot of trouble giving details which justify his assisting in this way, e.g. she's bringing up four children, two of whom are her brother's, who died of AIDS; he imagines she's not remunerated well by his father (pars. 31, 32). This probably points to the fact that he does sense that there is, unavoidably, a conflict in his actions between the paternalistic and the paternal, and a point where the one becomes the other.

He also explains that he gives this help without his father's knowledge, something which possibly also gives rise to some level of residual guilt. This is linked to his awareness that his attitude and response to Nongugquko's situation would not be his father's (he makes it clear that he does not know how much and in what ways his father supports her, and suspects that it

is not much), and he is unwilling to cause conflict by discussing this or by helping her openly. He and his father have a history of conflict around racial issues, something which is very difficult to reconcile with the respect which he feels a parental relationship requires. He manages the conflict by a strategy of avoidance and silence; one could even call it subterfuge.

He also explains this silence in terms of respect for his father's 'space' (par. 32): how he handles his household affairs. He and his father operate from different spaces: his father's space is that of the 'white master-narrative'; the old authoritative colonial and Apartheid relationships between black and white; Brendon's is the shared space of his 'imagined community' of 'going full circle' to the kind of world he experienced as a child, and of the idealized new South Africa. The 'high walls' between these spaces are made apparent by the fact that he does not discuss Nongugquko's affairs with his father at all. Brendon's space could also perhaps be characterized as an 'enlightened' or 'academic' space: the space of rational, 'enlightened' approaches to problems, and 'enlightened discourse' – in many ways quite a white and Western space.

There is discomfort for Brendon, as well as satisfaction, in his 'paternalistic' role, quite apart from his sensitivity towards his father, and fear of offending him. He definitely has power to help now, by virtue of his education and earning power, and the political system should be on the side of the Xhosa family. It frustrates and saddens him when, in spite of this, members of this family still suffer and seem 'stuck'; the 12-year-old whom they tried to help dropped out of school, and they were unable to get Thulani to admit to having AIDS and ask for help. Silence defeats his efforts, so the fact that Nongugquko has been tested for HIV is something of a triumph. He has now turned his attention away from these defeats to the new 'vision' of helping the younger ones to get 'a proper schooling' (par. 34). Perseverance and a determined optimism characterize his efforts.

While Brendon here is fulfilling a role as a 'member' of Nongugquko's 'family' – quite a 'normal' response in Xhosa society, and is in some senses an 'insider' in her world, the discourse he uses and the principles at play have largely been inculcated in him by his colonial Western upbringing and education: rational attitudes towards illness and poverty; the value and desirability of education; the obligations and responsibilities which come with privileges; the need to contribute to making other people's lives better. There is also a strong dimension of what could be called guilt in what he does; an intense desire and sense of obligation to make up for

injustices, inequalities, separations and divisions of the past – his own and that of South Africa generally.

It is clear that Brendon's fluency in isiXhosa enables and constitutes an integral part of the close relationship with Nongugquko and the extended family. The debate on whether Nongugquko should be tested for HIV 'has taken a while' (par 37), and there has clearly been much conversation with Thulani as well, unfortunately not successful in Brendon's terms. The 'very open' (par. 29) interactions Brendon has with Nongugquko about his father, and the laughter that they share, also involves linguistic subtlety. Through his linguistic repertoires and his upbringing, he is a 'participant' in the world of these people, who are 'stuck', dependent and deprived, perhaps as no other group in South Africa is, but he is also a participant in the privileged world of the university-educated, with the 'enlightened' ideology which goes with it. All of this points to tremendous complexity and multiplicity in his identity; his discourse is both enlightened and deeply ambivalent.

George: 'Racism from both sides' (G2:53)

In the extract which follows, George speaks from a position firmly within the binaries of 'us' and 'them' characteristic of colonial, Apartheid – and post-Apartheid – discourses. In the lead-up to this extract, he reflects on how things have changed in his relationships with black people post-Apartheid, saying he is glad they are no longer 'treated with disdain' (G2:48), and are receiving 'better treatment' (G2:50). He believes, however, that racism is still very much alive and 'today is coming from both sides' (G2:53). He describes a situation where the tables of the Apartheid days are turned. 'There's a lot of black people that are upset with white people, maybe they think they are better than us now,' (G2:53) he says. The following story, like the preceding statement, erects a very clear and strong divide between 'us' and 'them', constructing him as a white person threatened by a changed and changing society, and by new behaviours in 'the other'. His fluency in isiXhosa does however facilitate a shift in relationship towards the end of the episode.

38. One time, a guy rode into my vehicle, (...) and um he was very arrogant about it, and he called me a racist and all that. I said to him 'Excuse me, I'm not a racist, how can you accuse me of being a racist?' Then he looked very violent, and (...) all I said to him was, 'Where is your driver's licence; I'd like to see your driver's licence.' (Liz: Mm) and he started going off his head and swearing at me, (Liz: Mm) and erm, it ended up when we went to the police station to sort this out. (Liz: Mm)

39. But he was very arrogant, spoke to me as if I was a dog, (Liz: Mm) and things like that, any human being will get cross, (Liz: Mm) because you wouldn't want to be treated with disdain. (Liz: Mm, mm) And he brings up the Apartheid era and I said to him you weren't even living in the Apartheid era. (Liz: Mm) (...)
40. Liz: And er...in those situations, have you used Xhosa?
41. George: Yes. If he speaks to me in English, I answer in English. (Liz: Mm) (...) He got out and we were speaking English to each other, (Liz: Mm) but we got to the police station, he spoke to a black policeman in Xhosa (Liz: Mm) (...) and then when I spoke to him in Xhosa he got a fright actually, (Liz: Mm) 'cause he thought I couldn't speak it, (Liz: Mm) and I understood everything that he said to the policeman. (Liz: Mm)
42. Liz: And did that make any difference to the situation?
43. George: Yes, it did. (Liz: Mm) He calmed down very quickly, because he was giving a false statement, (Liz: Mm) and I told him that in his own language. (G2: 56-65)

George constructs this man's behaviour as 'arrogant' and deranged ('he started going off his head and swearing at me,' par. 38). He has expressed regret about the past when Xhosa people were 'treated with disdain', but now he finds *himself* 'treated with disdain' (par. 39), spoken to as if he was 'a dog' (par. 39). He appears to experience the black man's assumption of a superior stance as inappropriate. The stance that whites expect and are used to experiencing from black people, appropriate within the master-narrative, is one of humility, friendliness, gratitude, compliance, perhaps even servility. George, in particular, sees himself as someone who has friendly relationships with black people. As a white person, he is not used to black people's expressions of anger; they jar, offend and anger him. He is particularly angered by the fact that the man 'brings up the Apartheid era' (par. 39), again an implied accusation of racism. George says, surprisingly, that the man wasn't 'even living in the Apartheid era' (par. 39). As people who were born after the democratic elections in 1994 were then¹³⁶ only 13 or 14 years old, this is hardly true, but probably reflects George's strong need, surely typical of many white South Africans, to put the past, with its burden of guilt, behind him. It is striking that his need to distance himself from the thought that he is, or might have been, a racist, causes such feelings of conflict and ambivalence that they distort his perception of the passage of time. He expresses himself with great feeling and intensity, and repeats this view three times in the full version of this incident.

In his conversation with the man in the incident, he emphatically rejects the description of himself as 'racist', and constructs his request to see the other man's driver's licence (par. 38) as

¹³⁶ At the time of the interview, the end of 2007

a simple, rational, innocent request. It seems that this was not how the other man constructed it. The fact that he 'looked very violent' (par. 38) suggests that he saw George's behaviour as typical of a white person who feels it is his right to question the legality of a black man's actions. George's agitation, in his account of this incident, is palpable. 'Any human being will get cross,' he says (par. 39). In saying 'any human being', he uses 'colour-blind discourse' to defend himself against an implied accusation that he is reacting like a white racist. He is battling here with a violation of the colonial assumptions that make inequality between white and black something natural and permanent (Steyn, 2001, p. 21). The assured pride of place of the European can no longer be relied on, and this undermines the ground he stands on, in spite of his friendships with black people.

My questions about the use of isiXhosa seem to defuse George's agitated mood. His account of events at the police station suggests that his use of and understanding of isiXhosa also defused and calmed the situation. In a sense, it gave him the upper hand again, working in his favour and making him feel that his anger with the man was justified, and that he was in the right. His fluency in isiXhosa operated as 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 14) and restored his sense of control, in this particular situation. It is possible that it also changed the 'arrogant' man's perception of George (changed his 'identity' in the man's eyes). Another possibility is that he realised that, because George understood what he was saying, he could not give vent so freely to his feelings. Whatever the case, it seems to have put George in a position where he could challenge the offended party on his own terms. In other words, it created a more shared space, no longer as polarized in terms of black and white.

George: 'In your backyard, in a built-up area' (G2:90)

The next extract, which follows on from the section of narrative where George speaks about initiation (see Chapter 5), shows his strong conviction that certain things are appropriate in some spaces, but not in others. It suggests that the movement of black middle class people into 'once-white' suburbs gives George a feeling that his space – his comfort-zone - is threatened. This is a feature of the 'culturalist discourse' of white South Africans in the new democracy which is identified in the studies of Steyn (2001) and Durrheim and Dixon (2005).

In response to a request from me for examples to illustrate his statement that 'in the modern world, {Xhosa} culture 'doesn't make sense' any more (G2:84), George tells of a black man who has moved into a middle class residential area.

44. ... like this one guy lives in town, he's accepting the change. OK? He works for government. He's in town, but yet he still believes he has to slaughter an ox the old way, and all that, in his yard, for his forefathers that have passed on.
45. I mean, that's wrong. I mean, if you're going to get the change to that effect that you're top management, and you still got these old beliefs and are doing things the old way.
46. Like on a farm its fine, on the farm we used to slaughter our own cattle and our own sheep, (Liz: Mm) but in today's life you must also respect other cultures; (Liz: Mm) you can't just go and do it in your back yard, (Liz: Mm) in a built-up area.
47. So they...in some way I feel that they must also change - I mean, they can't expect the whole world to change. (Liz: Mm) They must also effect change, and bring their part. (Liz: Mm)
48. And then again, I might be wrong by saying 'they'. (Liz: Mm) I am sure there are a lot that have effected change and that don't do that anymore. (Liz: Mm) You know, so I shouldn't actually say 'they', (Liz: Mm) because ...I should actually say 'those that don't accept the change'. (*laughs*) (G2:88-92)

Here George, expressing a view which is very common among white people, once again speaks as one who knows about Xhosa culture, and how it 'should' be practised. He positions himself as having the authority to advise Xhosa people on what is right and wrong and how they should adjust (as he did when discussing initiation). The identity position he assumes here is a very different one from that which he adopts in the story about his friend Nathi. It is the identity of the archetypal rational white male from the 'white colonial master narrative', whose views represent 'common sense' from the white point of view, and a somewhat patronizing 'top-down' attitude towards the 'other': 'On the farm it's fine (...) but in today's life you must also respect other cultures' (par. 45).

Interestingly, at another stage in his story where he referred to culture, adopting a similar 'rational' stance, he says:

49. Now my mom is very superstitious, and my wife. They believe flat out on hili's and thikoloshe's¹³⁷ and all that. (Liz: Mm) And I said, they must first come and shake my hand. Then I'll believe in them. (*laughs*) (Liz: Mm) (G2:114)

¹³⁷ *uhili* and *uthikoloshe* (isiXhosa): characters from the Xhosa spirit world

This strengthens the impression that this is a white *male* view, and that he defines himself as the voice of reason over against black people and women.

George's story of the government official who slaughters an ox in town contains a number of innuendos. Firstly, there is the suggestion that 'the change' (pars. 44, 45) for the black man is a change to the western lifestyle. Secondly, there is the suggestion that it is 'wrong' (par. 45) to retain any part of the traditional lifestyle if you have accepted 'the change' (par. 44, 45), i.e. a job and house in town. There is an assumption that traditional practices belong in the rural areas and not in town, where 'you can't just go and do it' (par. 46), because it is not part of the accepted norms of the white people who have lived in those areas up until now. In white space, the white lifestyle must be adopted. In his talk about culture, George, from his stance as the authoritative white male, adopts the moral high ground, implying that certain practices which are out of tune with what he is used to are not ethical ('I mean, that's wrong.' par 45). Having been involved in such discussions myself, I was very quiet while George told this story. Aware of the 'enlightened' value-systems (e.g. health and animal rights) which can be brought in to support a stance such as George's, as well as people's rights to their own cultural practices, I was also coping with inner conflict.

The fact that George feels so strongly about cultural practices in town, could speak too of a need to protect the integrity of his space, or a feeling of displacement, or 'loss of home'. Steyn (2001) finds that many of her respondents experience changes in the country post-1994 as a 'loss of home', home being a psychological space as well as a physical space. She says they suddenly feel "out of place". Believing for several centuries that they were feudal lords, they woke up to find they had actually been squatters all along' (p. 156). What was once familiar, secure and loved has changed. Durrheim and Dixon (2005, p. 207), similarly, discuss at length, place, identity and dislocation, concluding that 'desegregation becomes experienced (and talked about) as a disruption to self-in-place'.

The spaces where George feels at home are farm and small town, in each of which, he feels, certain activities are appropriate. Post-Apartheid South Africa turns some of this upside-down. The activity of initiation, with its rules and norms, is coming from the rural areas to town, and rules are being changed. Black people are taking on western jobs and houses, but retaining traditional practices, which don't 'belong' in town. He finds this disturbing and disruptive to his

sense of 'self-in-place'. At the same time, George seems aware that what he has been saying may be inappropriately emotional, and possibly prejudiced, and tries to correct himself: "I shouldn't actually say 'they'..." (par. 48). In all of this, there is conflict and ambivalence; there are many voices within his discourse.

Ernie: 'It saved my life once' (E2:8)

In the following story, describing an incident which took place some ten years before the interviews (early post-Apartheid times), Ernie tells of how knowing isiXhosa saved his life.

50. {I}t saved my life (Liz: Ja) once - when I was - I was attacked - here in town (Liz: Umm) and so I was well prepared, I heard what these three *tsotsis* were saying, (...) I heard them saying that they're going to rob me and kill me (Liz: Wow) (...) and I was well prepared and I, - when they did come across I knew what to expect, (Liz: Ja) and er - and unfortunately I had - I had to shoot the one (Liz: Ahhhh!) that had - drew a knife on me and he had me by the throat and had I not understood Xhosa (Liz: Yes) they would have, - I wouldn't have known what they were talking about (Liz: Yes)
51. so they always say - if you're prepared you've - won the battle, sort of thing - if you're well prepared (Liz: Yes, yes) I wouldn't have known what they were up to (Liz: Ja, gosh hey). I think that was - (Liz: so you were armed¹³⁸?) I was armed, I always had - you know it was a bad area down there, still is in fact and (...) (Liz: Umm, hmm, so you used to walk up and down there quite regularly) Yes, this was about quarter past six in the evening (Liz: Ja, no that's not a good time of day hey) Ja, we used to work quite late on a Friday.
52. Liz: Wow, that was a frightening experience!
53. Yes, - so I know when these people get attacked and so on, I know exactly what they - //Liz: what they go through// Ernie: what they go through, ja. (Liz: Ja) Ja
54. Liz: Ja, and then the others - the other two ran away when you, when you fired.
55. They, no, they - they still came across and er - a black gentleman pulled up in a car there and he still said, 'Shoot those two!'; I said 'No', I said, 'they haven't done me anything yet' and then this guy collapsed and they helped him down the street, and do:wn onto the Market Square, he was just dragging his legs and anyway, I went I phoned from {a shop} (Liz: Umm) those days to the police station, they said they had no transport and when the report comes in they'll contact me and so on,
56. I said well I couldn't wait there any longer, I had to get home and see to my farming (Liz: Mm) and then a little further up (...) I met a - I stopped another police van, and I - there was a white constable in there - and I told him what had happened so he said, he'd make a note in his pocket book and if they get a report they'll come and contact me out at the farm.
57. I was barely there and then, they came along - there, then they found enough vehicles all of a sudden and they (Liz: Umm, umm) said could I come and identify him, he's - passed out in front of {the doctor's} surgery down

¹³⁸ Appendix 9 gives some background on firearms in South Africa.

in the (...) Square (Liz: Umm) so I said yes, and I went there and it was him (Liz: Umm) - lying there in a coma and er -

58. then of course I had to go through all the palaver of statements, - and they withdrew my firearm for ballistic testing and the rest of it and (Liz: Umm) till it was all finalized (Liz: Umm) - and er - anyway they put it down to self-defence fortunately and um, - next thing they phone me and said I could fetch my firearm (Liz: Umm)
59. that was the end of the story, as I said it was a frightening experience it shook me for a time (Liz: Yes, I'm sure) but it didn't change my feelings toward the - the the the outlook on on life and you know to the rest of the black community; you ca:n't sort of comb everybody with one comb, you know and - (Liz: Umm) people are not - not all like that. (Liz: Umm, umm, umm) - ja. (E2:8)

Ernie constructs himself here as someone who is careful and well-prepared ('I was well-prepared' he says twice in par. 50, and 'if you're well-prepared you've won the battle' twice in par. 51). In saying this, he seems to be referring both to the fact that he had heard and understood what his attackers said in isiXhosa, and to the fact that he was armed, having a realistic sense of the dangers which could be lurking in certain parts of town ('you know it was a bad area down there, still is in fact'; 'we used to work quite late on a Friday,' par. 51).

Like Riaan, Ernie moves towards empathic identification with people who experience attacks (par. 53). Also like Riaan, it is important for him, at this stage, to affirm that his 'outlook on on life and (...) to the rest of the black community' (par 59) is unchanged. He uses a truism from the 'colour-blind' repertoire, ('you ca:n't sort of comb everybody with one comb (...) people are not - not all like that', par. 59), to support his claim that he is not prejudiced. Included in the story he presents support for this assertion, the fact that 'a black gentleman (...) in a car' urged him to 'Shoot those two!' (par. 55) Here Ernie uses his accustomed respectful terminology 'gentleman' to describe this man, who is taking his side against the criminals. He disagrees with the view of the 'black gentleman', however: 'No (...) they haven't done me anything yet' (par. 55). He is careful to present himself as someone who will only use a gun for its legitimate purpose - self-defence. He certainly does not construct himself as a violent person; simply as one who is realistic and prepared ('{U}nfortunately I had - I had to shoot the one {that} drew a knife on me' (par. 50).

While he is careful not to complain explicitly about the inadequacy of the initial police response, he does make specific reference to the race (white) of the constable in the police van whom he met on the way home, and adds ironically that 'they found enough vehicles all of a sudden' (par. 57). The innuendo here is either that the white policeman is more efficient, that his word carries

more weight, or, perhaps, that it takes a white policeman to come to the help of a white man in trouble.

He constructs himself as 'fortunate' in having been acquitted of the charge against him because 'they put it down to self-defence' (par 58). The process of making statements and having his firearm 'withdrawn for ballistic testing' was a 'palaver' (par 58), and 'it was a frightening experience it shook {him} for a time' (par. 59).

In this story, Ernie could be seen as a victim of 'black on white' violence. The drama and horror of his predicament shakes me temporarily out of my reflective mode and into a closer sympathy: 'Wow, that was a frightening experience!' (par. 52). While Ernie remarks that the incident gave him empathy with other victims of crime, with whom he identifies here, he is also careful not to stereotype black people. He distinguishes between 'tsotsis' (par. 50) who are attacking him, and a 'black gentleman' who encourages him to shoot the *tsotsis*¹³⁹(par. 55). There is a suggestion that the white policeman was more able to 'make things happen' for him than the first people he contacted, and a strong possibility that his being white did mean that the process went somewhat more smoothly for him. He constructs himself as a non-violent person, who is however realistic about possible danger and prepared to defend himself, and who is extremely fortunate to be able to understand isiXhosa. This ability, he says, saved his life. He was badly shaken by the incident, but has managed to recover his equanimity, and claims that he has emerged with his attitude towards black people unaltered.

In this section I have examined stories in which all the men, now adults, position themselves in polarized and adult space. They use different white discourses: the 'rational white male', who rejects all superstition and knows best about black culture (George); 'colour-blind discourse' which denies racism and prejudice (Riaan, George, Ernie), and a discourse which values the kind of respect and discipline which Riaan remembers prevailing during his student days at university. All of the above discourses are very much focused on identifying what is right and, especially, 'wrong' in different kinds of behaviour (George, Riaan, the policeman). I have also identified an 'enlightened discourse' expressing the obligations and responsibilities of a

¹³⁹ The distinction he makes here is similar to that which he made when discussing the theft of his turkeys (Chapter 4), where the boys who stole and damaged his turkeys were 'tsotsis' and the others his friends.

privileged white person in relation to those less fortunate and needing his support (Brendon). Using these kinds of discourse, often very mixed within the same story, and within the same person's stories, some identify with white victims of violence (Riaan, Ernie), and see white friends and colleagues as respectful, and having similar attitudes to themselves (Riaan). Some battle with post-Apartheid changes which affect accustomed ways of relating between white and black people (Riaan, George) and lead to a sense of 'loss of place', because geographical spaces which were dominated by white norms are changing through desegregation (George).

All the stories are strongly tinged with the conflict and ambivalence which arises out of the men's fluency in isiXhosa, which means they are pulled in different directions. They find it impossible to succumb to stereotypical responses ('you ca::n't sort of comb everybody with one comb', par. 47) (Riaan, Ernie, George), in spite of empathy for victims of 'black on white' violence. Their fluency also makes so much possible: for George and for Brendon, friendships and a great deal of discussion and debate (Brendon with Nongugquko); for George, more equilibrium after the incident with the 'arrogant' man; for Ernie, his life saved.

Hybrid space

In this final section, three incidents are analysed in which boundaries dissolve and space becomes not simply shared, but **hybrid**. This kind of space seems to occupy another dimension from that of polarized space. It is not politically correct or incorrect, or threatened by the norms of dominant discourse; nor does it change those norms, which are reasserted once the participants re-enter formal space. It is incongruous, coming upon people unexpectedly, taking them by surprise.

George: 'He's very loud (...) and he jokes, and I joke with him' (G3:50)

George is conscious that he is not only in a different 'space' when he speaks isiXhosa, but is in a sense 'a different person'. The difference becomes especially marked when he is with Oupa, a friend and colleague from one of his jobs, who draws him completely into another isiXhosa space, out of reach of dominant discourses.

60. **Liz:** So, erm, in a way what you're saying is that (...) you're almost, a different person when you're talking to Xhosa people and when you talk to English speaking people (...)

61. **George:** That's right. Like here at {my previous work}, there's this one guy, old Oupa, (Liz: Mm) (...) and um, he always used to tell everybody, I'm a white man by mistake (*both laugh loudly*)
62. Even today, he's very loud, and - yeao - when we see each other, he...it's actually emb... my wife gets embarrassed, (Liz: Mm) because he's very loud. (Liz: Mm) And he jokes, and I joke with him, (Liz: Mm) and ja... [pause] But he's a very friendly guy, (Liz: Mm) well mannered, (Liz: Mm) we get on very well.
63. **Liz:** Ja – ja – So - (...) when you say he's very loud, you're meaning that he's, er, that's the way Xhosa people speak, (**George:** Ja) and then when you speak to him, you kind of enter into that.
64. **George:** Yes. *Laughs* That's why my wife gets embarrassed, especially when we meet at the mall! (*both laugh*) (G3, 51-54)

George enjoys Oupa's construction of him as 'a white man by mistake' (par. 61). It denotes acceptance. Oupa jokes with him and is 'very loud' and they 'get on very well' (par. 62). But it embarrasses his wife when she sees him in this mode, says George, 'especially when we meet at the mall!' (par. 64). The shopping mall is a highly public space where western norms dominate, and where they might encounter white friends and acquaintances. His wife feels most uncomfortable when they are at the mall, and George communicates loudly, with a lot of laughter, with a Xhosa person.

In this extract he constructs Xhosa people as 'very loud'; later in the interview, he describes himself as 'very loud' as well (G3:100). I suggest that, with Oupa, George may be entering into what Bakhtin (1981) calls, 'the common people's creative culture of laughter ... the eternally living element of unofficial language and unofficial thought' (p. 20). Laughter, according to Bakhtin, strips of falsity (1981, p. 236) and destroys hierarchical distance (1981, p. 23), and the monoglossia of authority structures. The eruption of the language of folk laughter into white public space and discourse is shocking. George moves right out of the normative structures of white discourse, to his wife's consternation, and to his and Oupa's delight. This is a 'language' and a space beyond the reach of the centralizing control of those in power.

It is interesting to note, however, that George once again reassures me, after quite a long pause, that Oupa is well-mannered (par. 62); that he doesn't overstep the norms of respect. This probably includes the norms of respect observed in Xhosa society, as well as the norms of respect between black and white. While this language of folk laughter destroys hierarchical distance, George does not experience it as something which transgresses either of these bounds of 'respect'; it represents a shift in dimension. Bourdieu's (1991) words are once again relevant: 'the formal law, which is thus provisionally suspended rather than truly transgressed, remains

valid, and it reimposes itself ... once they leave the unregulated areas where they can be outspoken' (p. 71).

Riaan: 'A more comic type of meeting' (Ri1:70)

A role that Riaan plays at work, as he did on the farm, is that of 'broker', someone who interprets between outsiders and insiders. His favourite story is one which challenges racial stereotypes, and shifts into hybridity:

65. It was quite a funny incident in {an important meeting} here; he's a friend of mine {from} one of the African countries (Liz: Mmm) - not Nigeria (Liz: Ghanaian, or...) Ghana, or one of those countries, (...) sitting next to me (...). So we're sitting (...) and some of the questions are asked in Xhosa, and there are white managers whom I assume haven't got a clue what's going on there, but people don't realize that {my friend} can't speak Xhosa. (Liz: They think, because he's black, hey?) Because he's black, it's assumed that he can speak Xhosa.
66. So one of the {big guys} asks the question (...) in Xhosa, (Liz: Ja) to the chairperson. So the Chairperson looks at {my friend}, and says, 'Answer the question'. (Liz laughs) {He} obviously hasn't got a clue.
67. So the Chairperson says, 'Someone translate to him', and here I sit and I translate, because he's sitting right next to me, so I translated to him, which was - that was an outburst - luckily changed the whole approach of the meeting into a more comic type of meeting, because here's a white chap now translating to a black guy in Xhosa from Xhosa to English.
68. So that was quite an incident that was that was that was fun and noteworthy. (Ri1:69, 70)

It is clear that this episode takes place in a highly official setting; it was an 'important meeting' (par. 65), involving 'big guys'¹⁴⁰ (par. 66). The story also shows clearly the racialization of language in the Eastern Cape: if you're black, it is assumed that you speak isiXhosa; if you're white, English.

By translating to a black man from isiXhosa into English, Riaan is doing the unexpected and completely breaking the stereotypes, and this changes the atmosphere, suddenly, with 'an outburst', from formal to comic. As with George and his friend in the shopping centre, the meeting suddenly moves from official monoglossic space into 'third, hybrid space', and Riaan, by doing something completely natural to him, unexpectedly and unintentionally assumes the guise of 'the rogue, the clown and the fool' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 159). 'Essential to these figures is ... the right to be "other" in this world'. These characters, says Bakhtin, are 'opposed to

¹⁴⁰ Both 'important meeting' and 'big guys' are substitute terms I have inserted to obscure identities. I believe they convey the same sense as Riaan's original terms.

convention and [function] as a force for exposing it' (p. 162). While the authorities in the Eastern Cape do speak English as well as isiXhosa, they have conventional expectations of what language is appropriate for each person to be able to speak, and a monolingual situation (with English added as a *lingua franca*) is the accepted norm.

It is interesting to note that while cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) is usually tied to English in South Africa, this formal governmental situation, like many in the Eastern Cape, inverts the conventional norms: isiXhosa is being used by 'big guys' (par. 66). IsiXhosa is the legitimate language and the white managers whom [Riaan assumes] haven't got a clue what's going on there' (par. 65) are at a distinct disadvantage, in spite of the usual advantages, in a colonial, or post-colonial situation, of being white and English-speaking. In this situation, Riaan unexpectedly shows that, despite appearances, he commands the dominant discourse.

Brendon: 'A very special relationship' (B1:84)

Both the above stories show a spontaneous shift into a different dimension, triggered by white men speaking isiXhosa, and characterized by iconoclastic bursts of laughter.

The extract that follows describes a very different kind of situation from the two that precede it. What the story has in common with those that go before, for me, is the incongruity of what is described, which seems to speak of another dimension which exists apart from, and unconnected to, the rational dimension constructed by dominant forces in society. One could see this as one of the 'in-between spaces' referred to by Bhabha, (1994, pp. 1-2). The story involves Brendon's father, rather than Brendon himself, and as Brendon is relating it, it probably tells us more about himself than about his father.

69. obviously for my father it's a totally different experience {of friendship} to, to what I had, or what I have, (Liz: Mm) um, he doesn't - I think I've always seen him as someone who gives instructions in Xhosa, (Liz: Yes, yes) // you know what I mean// Liz: It's a different kind of Xhosa//.

70. Yet (...) he had a very close relationship with, um, Nongugquko and Sonwabo's father, Zamani, (Liz: Mm) he really did, they had some weirdest, oddest, I don't know how many times the old man wasn't fired, but he just never went, (Liz: Mm) he just stayed, (Liz: Mm)

71. I mean, they knew each other from before my father was married, (Liz: Mm) (...)

72. and my father and that old man had a very special relationship, even though it was a constructed by Apartheid relationship, (Liz: Yes)

73. and I remember before the old man died, he brought my father a brand new pair of, um, sort-of-like plyers, and he gave them to my father, (Liz: Mm)
74. and, and I still remember my father saying, (...) you know, (Liz: Mm) why does it look like you want to leave me, old friend, you know, which for me was a very profound, intimate moment between two men that have really known each other their entire lives, um. (Liz: Mm)
75. So I think, there's such a deep sense of connectedness between these two families of which I'm part, (Liz: Mm) um, and - that is my history, I suppose. (Liz: Mm) (B1:83-85)

In his father's relationship with the old man, Brendon sees something completely at odds with the superficial 'facts', i.e.: that his father spoke what Riaan would have called 'Boere Xhosa' (the authoritative variety), indicating essentialist racist attitudes; that he tried numerous times to fire Zamani; and that their relationship was 'constructed by Apartheid' (par. 72) - master-servant, representing the suppression, dependence, deprivation and 'stuckness' of the farm labourer in relation to the farm owner. What Brendon saw was something 'weird' and 'odd' (par. 70), something which cannot be rationally explained: a rare kind of intimacy, a profound connectedness, in which he, Brendon, feels he shares – which is his 'history' (par. 75).

Is this the wishful thinking of the white man's son, who has in his memory positive memories of a relationship with the black family, and longs to see signs of something similar in his father? Does this represent just one more instance of the oppressed person's deferential behaviour, enacted in the interests of his own, or in this case his family's, survival? Does hybrid space overlay, or underpin, and in some profound sense overcome Apartheid space, in this story? Is it the implicit and intuitive sharing of this hybrid space which means that the firing of the old man never sticks? Or does he stay because he does not see another option, for himself or his children and grandchildren after him? These are questions which remain hanging in the air around Brendon's story. But Brendon constructs this incident as evidence of a special intimacy between the two men, a life-long friendship which, underlies, and is finally stronger than the master-servant, 'dominator-dominated' relationship. I found myself strongly drawn to Brendon's view as he told this story. I wanted there to be a redemptive and even mystical dimension to the life of this man who gave the impression of being a racist. Indeed, I longed for this to be true about the whole of life, which often feels so tragically divided and fragmented.

Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter has shown that all four men are fundamentally positioned in white space, by the boundaries set up for them through their schooling and socialization, and by the expectations of those around them, black and white. This is their ascribed identity. While they comply with the minimum requirements of the divided society into which they were born, they are always poised, by virtue of their early socialization on farms and their knowledge of isiXhosa, on the margins, and often move into shared space, as a matter of preference, when they can. It is also possible for them, because of their backgrounds and linguistic repertoires, to tumble unexpectedly into another dimension, a hybrid space, out of reach of dominant discourses.

Evidence of their positioning in white space can be seen in the 'white discourses' which they adopt when speaking of matters relating to relationships between black and white, and changes that have taken place since 1994, most still describing the world in terms which imply, blatantly or subtly, the superiority of whites over 'blacks'. All have benefited in many ways from the superior status assigned to them as white people, and some show signs of being thrown quite badly off balance by the changes which have overturned this, or which portray them as racist.

In spite of this, they clearly have access to a much broader range of genres and experience than that of white people restricted to English and/or Afrikaans. Their linguistic repertoires open up to them shared and hybrid spaces removed from the racial binaries of dominant South African culture, and they persist in enjoying interactions and relationships with black people.

Their experience of moving across spaces and their understanding of isiXhosa means that they often experience conflict and ambivalence, being pulled in different directions by their white positioning, and their empathy and friendships with isiXhosa-speakers. George's discourse reflects clearly the 'multiple' nature of his identity, sometimes having features of 'essentialist white racist discourse', and other times issuing directly out of hybrid space. In spite of being emotionally torn at times, for all four men their multilingualism is a source of power and joy, and they seem to handle the ambivalence without undue stress, and construct themselves as 'fortunate'.

Bakhtin maintains that dominant social groups attempt to impose their monologic views on society, to unify and centralize meaning, but heteroglossia 'stratifies and fragments ideological thought into multiple views of the world. ... and creates the conditions for the possibility of a

free consciousness' (Morris, 1994, pp. 15-16). There are examples in this chapter of 'society's monologic views' (pp. 15-16). The policeman in Brendon's story and George's colleague from the Railways insist on the dangers and wrongness of friendships across the colour line; Riaan's meeting expects people of certain colours to speak certain languages; the relationship between Brendon's father and Zamani is locked into the master-servant 'Boere Xhosa' paradigm. Societal pressures are experienced by Brendon as he considers taking his friend home, and by George's wife in the shopping mall. But in each of these situations, the multilingualism of the boys / men releases some of the stranglehold of these views: Brendon's friendships, made possible by his language repertoire, work against the policemen's expectations and the societal pressure imposed by his upbringing; carnival laughter breaks open the formality of the meeting and the humdrum atmosphere of the shopping mall; and the relationship between Brendon's father and Zamani *may* be much more multidimensional than it seems. Polarization yields, here and there, to hybridity, which brings with it a sense of greater freedom.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In this chapter I bring together the findings from my data analysis to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the thesis:

- *What enabled these white men to acquire, develop and maintain fluency in isiXhosa?*
- *How do identity construction and isiXhosa acquisition and competence interrelate in their life histories?*
- *How does this study contribute to understandings of language, power, identity and change in settings of societal multilingualism such as South Africa?*

This study is not unique in focusing on race and language learning. However, its location in the context of Apartheid and post-Apartheid South Africa, characterized by stark racial inequalities, means that the specific ways in which language, power, race and identity can work together and influence language acquisition and use have been thrown into sharp relief. This chapter highlights new insights gained into these relationships through the findings of the study, these insights constituting the contribution to knowledge represented by this research. The chapter also outlines some of the limitations of the study, highlighting areas for further research, and returns to the personal concerns which prompted the study.

The four participants in my study are white South African men who grew up on farms in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, and developed fluency in the African language of isiXhosa, in addition to their 'languages of inheritance' (English, Afrikaans and German), in a period of history when law and policy were rigidly focused on keeping black and white South Africans apart. In answering the first of my research questions, I have shown how the boys acquired their initial fluency in isiXhosa before they went to school, and in periods after school such as weekends and holidays, through legitimate peripheral participation in the CoP of the farm (Wenger, 1998). In this context, they engaged in childhood play with the isiXhosa-speaking children of farm workers, and in the practices of the farm with both children and adults who spoke isiXhosa. Here, they were also socialized into the language and culture of the farm, and to some extent, of the isiXhosa-speaking community, by isiXhosa-speaking caregivers and 'second parents', as well as other adults and the older siblings of their playmates. Their identities as legitimate peripheral participants in the farm gave them full access to interaction in isiXhosa, and their 'farmer identity' was constructed and reinforced, in turn, by this developing language

repertoire. Their deep investment in isiXhosa, developed through the pleasurable experiences of play and involvement in the practices of the farm, ensured that they continued to develop and maintain their linguistic competence into adulthood. Their own parents and family members also played a part in the language socialization of the boys, speaking isiXhosa to them and to other farm members, as well as English, German or Afrikaans, the 'language of inheritance' (Leung et al, 1997, p. 555), or 'first language' of the white family, used when communicating with other whites, or within the family circle.

I commented in my introduction to the study that the bilingual situation most similar to that of these boys is that of children whose parents are speakers of two different languages. This appears ironic when one looks more deeply into the power dynamics of the Apartheid farm, where authority and control is stacked on the side of the white farmer, and farm workers have very limited power in the realm of farm affairs, depending heavily on the farmer for their livelihood. The farmer's power is shared by his children, although in their pre-school years they are not aware of this, and live in a world of illusory 'equality' with their black companions, who share their parents' dependency. This childhood milieu could be viewed as a 'second world' of carnival (Bakhtin, 1965, p. 6) for the boys, where the hierarchical arrangements of the outside world are temporarily suspended. Here, the children's shared identities as farm children 'equalises' power relations between the black and white children in their early years and enables access to isiXhosa conversation for the white child¹⁴¹. The deceptive side of this 'equality' reveals itself when the white child goes to school, and disillusion, to one degree or another, sets in. The realization that 'carnival time' has ended can cause a strong sense of betrayal, hurt and anger for the white child, (which has been seen particularly in the case of Brendon). This is surely more painful for the black child¹⁴², when it becomes apparent that the 'friends' are destined to inhabit very different worlds, the white person to be groomed for ownership of the farm, or for a profitable career or profession, while the black person remains marooned in a position without prospects, usually not even having learned English, commonly regarded as a key to upward mobility (de Klerk, 2002; McKinney, 2007a; Probyn et al, 2002).

¹⁴¹ There are some differences between the four men; Ernie's friends, for instance, were not farm workers' children, but children who lived in the neighbouring 'location'.

¹⁴² This is not a focus of the present research, but this kind of reaction is suggested in the story in Appendix 10, (John Allwood, 13 December 2011).

Chapter 1 showed that white farmers often resisted providing education for their workers¹⁴³, seeing this as something which would deflect them from their destiny as farm workers, and their commitment to the farm.

isiXhosa is, then, the language of control on the farm¹⁴⁴, enabling the farmer to instruct his workers, preparing the farmer's son for his future position of authority on the farm, and minimising 'hidden transcripts' (Scott, 1990): aspects of workers' lives and thoughts which they want to keep private from the farmer, or insubordinate intentions which they might have. Kaschula's research (1989, p. 102) suggests, however, that farmers are not always as fluent in isiXhosa as they would like to think, because workers often accommodate the farmer's language, adjusting to his register over time. This is one way in which the isiXhosa-speakers retain for themselves an area of privacy which is not open to their master's scrutiny. Indeed, indigenous languages can be seen as creating a sacrosanct space, where dominant power relations can be subverted, and where African people in colonial and Apartheid South Africa, are free and in charge, safe from the invasive attention of white people. A white person fluent in an African language can therefore be seen as dangerous, or as 'knowing too much'¹⁴⁵, in the eyes of a black South African.

The power relations described above are very different from those in previously researched bilingual or SLA situations, and from the situation of other white South Africans engaging in the learning of an African language in a more formal context. The context of immigrants learning English in Canada, Britain or the USA, for instance, is often also characterised by large power differentials, but in their case, depending somewhat on social class position, learners have little power, in a situation dominated by the hegemony of English. The learner often struggles for participation, and has to invest in particular identities which enable access to conversation (McKinney & Norton, 2008; Norton, 2000). The position of the black isiXhosa-speaking learner in a previously white-dominated South African school is similarly one of little power in relation to the dominant Western ethos of the school which imposes its powerful norms on all who enter its portals (McKinney, 2010). As a white English-speaking learner of isiZulu, particularly in the Apartheid years, I wielded considerably more power through my race and class positioning than

¹⁴³ Riaan's uncle had a farm school on his farm, and Riaan's uncle supported some of the boys through secondary school.

¹⁴⁴ This language of control could be identified with Riaan's 'Boere Xhosa' or Authoritative Xhosa

¹⁴⁵ This point of view was presented to me informally by one of the participants in my research, and is confirmed by Brendon's views about Xhosa attitudes towards white people who undergo Xhosa rituals.

did members of the isiZulu-speaking community in which I needed to participate in order to gain access to the language in use. On the other hand, I had very few of the skills and competencies which I needed to cope in a black township or rural community. Within a power mismatch of this kind it is difficult to find an identity in which to invest which enables extended participation and access to conversation in isiXhosa. It is not too difficult for me to gain access to conversation with middle class isiXhosa-speakers, but most such interactions would occur more naturally in English, which most middle-class black South Africans have had to master in order to succeed in educational and employment contexts.

The LAMP language learning system on which the TALK project was based recognises how crucial and difficult access to conversation is, and lays down as a guiding principle that the language learner explicitly position him or herself as 'learner' (Brewster & Brewster, 1976, p. 7), as a starting point for any interactions with mother-tongue speakers. This indicates a focus, in this method, on identity and positioning, as well as on the unequal relations of power which it is assumed would often exist between a Western missionary and members of a third world community¹⁴⁶. The missionary is also an immigrant, but is often in a very different position from those already discussed. He or she is often a white, middle-class, educated, English-speaking, Western, Christian person, all of which characteristics currently carry extensive cultural capital in many contexts. Communities in which missionaries hope to work, on the other hand, are often 'other' in the colonial sense: dark-skinned, from 'third world' countries, perhaps rural and poor, with little Western education, 'heathen' in a colonial evangelical Christian sense, and speaking languages which are not of Germanic or Latin origin. The people in such communities are also likely to be multilingual, in the sense that Canagarajah (2007) describes. This learning situation is similar, in a number of ways, to that of a white South African learning an indigenous African language. While it seems appropriate to adopt a learner identity in an attempt to mitigate the power inequalities inherent in the South African context, access to participation in an African community where a white South African could develop fluency in an African language

¹⁴⁶ '[I]n language learning, the attitude of superiority that often goes (subconsciously) with the sophisticated role, must be laid aside' (Brewster & Brewster, 1976, p. 7)¹⁴⁶. The system insists that the learner needs to adopt 'a role that will be perceived as that of a servant rather than the ascribed role of master' (Louw, 1983, p. 167), in order to move towards becoming 'a cultural insider' (Brewster & Brewster, 1976, p. 7) or a 'belonger' (Louw, 1983, p. 4). Murray (2002, p. 117) comments that adopting the 'learner' role means that 'the learner has to give up some control, and in the South African context this may involve a reversal of the usual roles occupied by white and black African people'.

was very difficult during Apartheid times because of enforced racial segregation, and even now, would usually require fairly drastic and long-term changes in lifestyle.

Returning to the question of my participants' language and identity development, the study shows that their identity as farmers' sons meant that the boys had to attend a white school, where 'language practices ... are bound up in the legitimization of relations of power among ethno-linguistic groups' (Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996, p. 128). This meant an interruption of the development of their isiXhosa, which they now used mainly on occasions when they returned to the farm. Brendon, wanting to extend his engagement with the isiXhosa-speaking community through imagination, took isiXhosa as a subject at school, but this developed his grammatical rather than his communicative competence. Attendance at a white school introduced subjective conflict and ambivalence in different degrees to each of the boys, finally confirming their white identity, through discourses of white superiority in English and Afrikaans, and bringing about, for Brendon at least, a subjective 'shift' into a different space, distanced from his erstwhile companions. Much of the rest of his life is a struggle to undo the shift, and circle back to that original intimate space, which becomes his 'imagined community' (Norton, 2001; Pavlenko & Norton, 2006; Wenger, 1998).

The childhood period was irrevocably concluded for the young white men by the Xhosa initiation ceremonies of their black friends. These were effectively closed off from the white boys because of jealous parental control of white identity, as well as Xhosa traditional authority which protected sacred space. Having left school, two of the boys went to university. Academic and literary discourse, in isiXhosa as well as English and Afrikaans, brought with it identity shifts, such as Riaan's shift into 'research Xhosa', which constructed a more respectful and equal relationship with research respondents, and 'poetic Xhosa', which brought Brendon into close relationship with oral poets. These more equal relationships once again led to language development, extended into their working lives. Brendon crafted further imagined communities on the basis of his childhood experiences, through creative writing in English and isiXhosa. The other two men, in more working class environments, found that their knowledge of isiXhosa extended their scope and usefulness, Ernie in the public service, and George in more supervisory roles in relation to isiXhosa speakers. Both men had on-going and new friendships with black people, and each in his own way built on and extended his childhood lifestyle, Ernie continuing his farming activities and George engaging in outdoor pursuits which recreated the

imagined community of his childhood. For all four men, the power which was theirs by virtue of their racial identity as white men was augmented by their isiXhosa competence.

The 1994 shift of political power into black hands in South Africa also meant change in identity, language use and power for the men. Brendon found that new national policies and priorities expanded his work scope tremendously, and opened up endless possibilities, both personal and professional. As a white man in a previously white institution, who speaks isiXhosa, he has legitimacy and credibility as well as the ability to promote a 'transformation agenda'¹⁴⁷ for African languages. This translates into power to realise his 'imagined community' in a number of ways. Riaan also finds himself working on a 'transformation agenda', in rural development, but in 'black-dominated' government circles he has to walk a fine line to retain credibility, making sure that his isiXhosa discourse has no trace of the 'Boere Xhosa' of white superiority in it; his white identity can make him 'marginal', rather than 'peripheral', in Wenger's terms (1998, p. 167). Ernie's life and roles have changed little in the post-Apartheid era. Working for a white-owned company, he finds that his role as mediator and peacemaker, which makes use of his language repertoires, is valued now as it was pre-1994. While George still enjoys using isiXhosa, 'kitchen Xhosa' (like 'Boere Xhosa') has less power and usefulness in the post-1994 democracy; he finds himself replaced in his interpretation role by an isiXhosa-speaker, who sometimes prefers to communicate with him in English. In other words, the fact that he is white carries less and less weight, in and of itself, and the register of isiXhosa which he commands also has less credibility.

Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 36) assert that 'Legitimate peripherality is a complex notion, implicated in social structures involving relations of power'. They also comment that 'unequal relations of power must be included more systematically in [their] analysis' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 42), something which is not done in Wenger (1998), as the contributors to Barton and Tusting (2005) demonstrate. My research offers more clarity on the concept of legitimacy in relation to participation for language learners in target language communities, showing how closely it is bound up, as Norton argues, with inequitable relations of power. The contexts of language learning and use which are examined in this study demonstrate that legitimate peripheral participation in a community, and thereby language learning or development,

¹⁴⁷ In current South African terms, this means an agenda which transforms the culture of the institution away from Eurocentric spaces where whiteness is the norm.

requires investment in an identity which establishes a degree of equality, albeit temporary or illusory, between members of the two language communities. This conclusion is confirmed by a re-examination of other research contexts. So, in spite of huge power differentials, the small white boys gain legitimacy of participation because they share a 'farm boy' identity within the 'equal' world of childhood play; Riaan invests in 'research Xhosa' and in respectful isiXhosa, and Brendon in poetic isiXhosa, thus levelling out the stark disparities between black and white in their worlds. Similarly, Martina, an Eastern European immigrant to Canada, (Norton, 2011, p. 413), needs to invest in her identity as 'mother', rather than 'quantity surveyor'¹⁴⁸, 'immigrant' or 'broom'¹⁴⁹, to gain legitimate participation on terms of relative equality to conversation in English with co-workers in a Canadian restaurant; black learners in a desegregated South African school seek legitimate participation in the imagined English-speaking community of fashion and media icons within the commercial world, where money 'has no colour', equalizing relationships, and making identification with the dominant white community of the school unnecessary. By adopting the identity of 'learner of isiZulu', I can lessen the power differentials between myself and the community of African language speakers, but successful learning will require access, on somewhat equal terms, as a legitimate peripheral participant to the practices of a community which uses isiZulu as its dominant linguistic repertoire. This is difficult because of extreme power differentials, relating particularly, in the democratic dispensation, to the power of English as a global language. Examples of people who have achieved the necessary access to participation in order to learn an African language include those involved in missionary work, research, agricultural or development projects and enterprises, whose work involves extended stays in rural or township settings. Such people are often from abroad, and therefore not as saturated with South African power polarities and discourses.

Bourdieu's work shows that language is a form of symbolic power, related to social class, and that the worth of an utterance is closely linked to its speaker's cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 67). My research, focusing on the South African context, adds the dimension of racial identity and power to Bourdieu's theory. IsiXhosa is not usually a language invested with a great deal of power in the broader South Africa, specifically in educational, commercial and political contexts. Exceptions to this include Eastern Cape government contexts (e.g. meetings attended by Riaan), and those involving traditional leadership and cultural practices

¹⁴⁸ Her relatively high status occupation in her home country

¹⁴⁹ The identity she felt was ascribed to her by the English-speakers around her at work

(e.g. oral poetry). White people, on the other hand, have long wielded a great deal of power and influence in South Africa, and in spite of political changes this still tends to be true in a number of contexts. The hegemony of English also continues unabated; in fact, globalization and electronic communication have rendered it almost unassailable. This power has combined with the power of 'whiteness' and the power of the Western capitalist and consumerist lifestyle to become hugely dominant in South Africa, as it is world-wide. The men's stories demonstrate that isiXhosa can become a language of power when combined with whiteness, its privilege and resources. So, for the white farmer, isiXhosa is a tool of power and control; isiXhosa augments Ernie's usefulness on the Railways, and makes him eligible for more employment opportunities; isiXhosa makes George a more useful supervisor; as a privileged white university student, Riaan can use his isiXhosa competence to carry out research towards a master's degree, and thereby extend his isiXhosa competence further. There is evidence that this has changed somewhat in the post-1994 political dispensation, and that the white men's power is diminishing; this is not universally the case, however. George, for instance, is replaced as interpreter by an isiXhosa-speaker. Brendon, on the other hand, is able to use his power as a white person to extend the power of isiXhosa, as I have discussed above. The men's whiteness can be a liability in contexts where power is in black hands, but there is evidence that their language repertoires can still enable them to negotiate something closer to inclusion. Brendon experiences rejection by the PAC as a white person, but intense discussion, using isiXhosa, leads to an invitation to join the black organisation. Riaan sometimes feels marginal because of his whiteness, but his background and language repertoire enable him to invest in isiXhosa discourses which do not position him as superior, and thus enable his continued inclusion.

My research shows that, in line with their socialization into the rigid racial binaries of South African society, the men speak to me out of white space, usually a space of power and superiority, using discourses on race which are typical of white people (Frankenberg, 1993; Steyn, 2001). However, it also shows that the facet of their identities which experienced, in childhood, what could be called 'carnival space', where inequalities are inverted and 'life is one' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 209), informs their attitudes and decisions, and the directions taken by their lives. In line with this, they use discourses of the margins, which display ambivalence and perform brokering functions; George's discourses are mixed and conflicting, suggesting the multiplicity of his identity; there is evidence that, in spontaneous moments of incongruity and

laughter, the men can fall back into that 'hybrid space', which could be seen as a constant dimension of all life, not subject to the machinations of political and economic power structures. This is the space of Brendon's imagined community, of George and Oupa at the supermarket, of Riaan in the meeting which became comic. It is also, perhaps, the space underlying Brendon's father's relationship with Zamani.

The stories indicate that the South African identity of the four men is strengthened and made more inclusive by their fluency in isiXhosa, which also reinforces their intimate connection with the familiar space of the Eastern Cape. Brendon feels lost and without identity and meaning when he is outside of the country in the USA; Riaan cannot stand living in a place where he cannot speak to his gardener, and comes back 'home', without making much effort, it would seem, to acclimatize to the new environment. Ernie feels very 'lost' when he leaves his familiar environment to go to the army, and George, in a somewhat different way, feels lost with black people who insist on speaking English to him. The four men are far more able to participate in, and contribute to, the broader Eastern Cape society than South Africans with no African language competence. In a province where more than 80% of people are isiXhosa-speaking, these men are able to occupy posts which would otherwise need a mother-tongue isiXhosa-speaker (e.g. rural development practitioner and isiXhosa lecturer), and are able to interpret and mediate between white and black, rural and urban, uneducated and academic, on a number of levels. They are able to listen to and appreciate interchanges in isiXhosa covering a number of topics; they are able to laugh, joke, challenge and argue with speakers of isiXhosa. This certainly constitutes a more inclusive South African identity than that of monolingual or bilingual English and/or Afrikaans-speakers.

Chipkin (2007, pp. 200 ff.) spends some time discussing the term 'fraternity', in the context of the French revolution and French politics. This term, which he sees as more important than 'liberty' and 'equality' in defining democracy, implies that: 'the demos coincides with the community of brothers. Its unity and its limit are given by the especially strong, "virile" affective bonds that exist between its members' (p. 203). 'Outside the demos lie, if not enemies, then not friends' (p. 210): the 'other'. The affective bonds are usually cemented through kinship, and through common language and culture, but another way of thinking of a fraternity is 'a very particular community of friends' (p. 202). Significantly for nation-building, the four men in this study refer often to isiXhosa-speaking people as 'friends'. More than 60 references of this sort

are made across all the interviews, most prominent in the stories of George and Brendon. Ernie, an only child, twice refers to his black friends as, 'brothers' (E1:6; E1:30). I have also shown that all had isiXhosa-speaking 'second mothers'. Their childhood experiences, then, built up a real sense of fraternity, family and friendship between them and the isiXhosa-speakers with whom they grew up, something which constitutes raw material for true democracy, according to Chipkin. While school and adult experiences undermined this brotherhood, instilling a sense that white is superior and black is 'the other', all four men retain a strong connection with, and, explicitly in the case of Brendon, a commitment to their place of birth and its people.

In summary, this study makes a contribution to research into naturalistic language acquisition, analysing a bilingual context not focused on before, in which language, power, race and identity interact in unique ways. It demonstrates the explanatory power of the theories from the 'social turn' in SLA which it uses, and adds to studies of language learning as participation, augmenting understandings of the importance of framing the Communities of Practice model (Wenger, 1998) within theories of power, identity and discourse (Foucault, 1975, 1976; Weedon, 1997, 2004). The research shows that access to legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) in a target language community requires investment in identities (Norton, 2001) which ameliorate the inequities of power relations. It shows that in the South African context, where power differentials and dominant discourses usually make it very difficult for a white South African to gain the kind of legitimate participation needed for African language learning, once an African language is acquired, the power of a white person can be augmented by this linguistic competence. In the case of the four men in the study, isiXhosa could become linguistic capital for them (Bourdieu, 1991), depending on context and the isiXhosa register that they used. The research also contributes to post-colonial and 'whiteness' studies in the South African context, focusing as it does specifically on white men who grew up speaking isiXhosa. While their discourses show similarities to white narratives identified in Steyn's studies (2001; 2004), they also use, fairly extensively, what I have called 'discourses of the margins'. The powerful identity ascriptions of colonial and Apartheid discourse have left the four men with a dominant identity position which is indisputably white, but the early period spent in shared and hybrid 'carnival' space (Bhabha, 1994; Bakhtin, 1981) forms a facet of their multiple identities and a dimension of their lives. This influences them on an on-going basis, constituting the basis for imagined communities and identities and, on occasion, breaking through dominant polarised

space. The men's background and multilingual repertoires also intensify their connection with the Eastern Cape and make it possible for them to participate more broadly and become more deeply engaged in South African society.

This research only touches the tip of the iceberg in terms of the relationships of language, power, race, identity and African language learning in the South African context. Dealing as it does with a small sample of four white South African middle-aged men, it has many limitations. Future research projects could explore questions similar to those asked in this study, focusing on white women who speak isiXhosa, or on language, language acquisition, race and identity in the lives of younger white South Africans, growing up in the post-1994 democratic dispensation. Identity construction and isiXhosa learning could be examined in the lives of white learners in multi-racial schools in the Eastern Cape, or youngsters currently growing up on farms. Another interesting group of participants would be white South Africans who have successfully learned isiXhosa at later stages in their lives, and who were not brought up on farms. Similar research projects could be carried out in different parts of the country, where African languages other than isiXhosa are widely spoken, or where a number of languages are spoken (e.g. urban areas such as Johannesburg). Such studies could inform an action research project on African language learning for non-African language speakers in South Africa. In another direction entirely, significant findings could come out of research into the life histories and identity constructions of black farm labourers who grew up playing with the farmer's children (See Appendix 10).

I return, in closing, to my initial curiosity about white speakers of isiXhosa whom I encountered in the Eastern Cape, and to the assumptions with which I embarked on this research project. What have I learned, and what has surprised me in the men's stories? I indicated that my interest in the project arose out of my own quest to learn an African language in order to close the gap between myself and black South Africans. My assumption was that knowing an African language would be a path to reconciliation and a more inclusive South African identity. When I came in contact with white people who spoke isiXhosa in the Eastern Cape, I was curious about how they had learned the language, whether they were 'bicultural' in any way, what kind of relationships they had with black people, and whether their bilingualism caused similar tensions and ambivalences to those which I had experienced in the process of trying to learn African

languages using the TALK method. I also had questions about common perceptions that white farmers who spoke isiXhosa were often racist.

I have been delighted, but not really surprised, by the accounts of how the men acquired and developed their isiXhosa. It has been satisfying to find theories which account for this acquisition, and fascinating, as well as sobering, to see how identity and relations of power are implicated in it. In relation to my question about the men's 'biculturalism', it has been valuable for me to realise how multiple and complex identity can be, and to study the different ways in which the men deal with the experiences of ambivalence and multiplicity which are a part of living in a divided society, exacerbated by having language competences which enable movement across boundaries. Ernie seems to feel little ambivalence, following a lifestyle which has a great deal of continuity across generations; Riaan strives for consistency across the divisions of his life, and often seems to thrive on the challenge; as an adult, Brendon makes clear choices which enable him to live in spaces where he feels more comfortable and can be productive; George incorporates a number of different and often conflicting identities into a life spontaneously lived. These diverse responses have enabled me to be more tolerant of the multiplicity of identities which exist within me, and the ways in which I move between them.

Riaan and Brendon both describe white people who speak an 'authoritative' isiXhosa, and who could clearly be viewed as racist in an essentialist sense. One can only speculate about the subjective multiplicity which they experience, or suppress, or express selectively in different contexts, as I have done in looking at the story about Brendon's father. I conclude, though, that being able to speak isiXhosa does not necessarily promote reconciliation between racial groups in South Africa. However, I observe a great deal of energetic participation across a fairly broad spectrum of South African society, black and white, in the lives of the four research participants, as well as instances of close fraternal bonds, in Chipkin's sense (2007, pp. 200 ff.) between black and white people. This, I argue, supports the view that knowing an African language *can* contribute to building in a white person a more inclusive South African identity.

The study has not increased my optimism, however, about the likelihood of white South Africans learning African languages effectively, in any numbers. In terms of how these languages can be learned by white South Africans who do not have the special circumstances of my participants, the study has confirmed my view that an extended immersion experience in a CoP where isiXhosa is the linguistic repertoire would be the best way to develop fluency. The study

has given me new insight into the principles of the Brewster method (Brewster & Brewster, 1976), particularly that of adopting a 'learner' identity and becoming a 'belonger' or insider, and extended my understanding about investment in identities which enable participation. It has also given me food for thought about the importance of learning 'culture', in this case meaning 'ways of behaving which are regarded as respectful among isiXhosa-speakers'¹⁵⁰. Riaan expresses regret that his daughters have not had the opportunity to learn isiXhosa, but says that he believes that it is almost as important that he has managed to transfer 'the whole matter of trust and respect' (Ri1: 88) which he learned along with the language as a child. I do believe, then, that the insights which my research has provided could inform future African language learning enterprises, as well as projects which have the aim of building a broader South African identity.

¹⁵⁰ This clearly needs to be seen as very variable across contexts such as rural, urban, traditional, modern, etc.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Timeline of Events in the Eastern Cape (and South Africa)

1497-1498	Vasco da Gama sails to India via the Cape, and names Natal
1500	Earliest Portuguese shipwrecks and castaways on Eastern coast of South Africa
1600	Rise of Tshawe, chief who unified diverse groups as amaXhosa
1652	Dutch establish a refreshment station at Cape
1702-1780	Trekboers move out of the Cape into the hinterland, with Khoi servants, meeting amaXhosa in 1770s
1775	The amaXhosa kingdom divides, people of Rharhabe settle South-West of the Kei River; people of Gcaleka North-East of the Kei River
1778	Dutch Governor agrees with Gwali tribe on boundary of colony along Fish and Bushman's Rivers
1779	First Frontier War (Trekboers and amaXhosa);
1779	First missionary, JT van der Kemp, visits Ngqika, Chief of Rharhabe Xhosa
1792	Second Frontier War
1803	Third Frontier War (during First British occupation of the Cape 1795-1803)
1803	Dutch reinstated and new governor visits Ngqika
1811	Fourth Frontier War; amaXhosa driven out of Zuurveld across Fish River. Grahamstown established as military post
1816	London Missionary Society establish a mission amongst Ngqika Xhosa
1816	Slagtersnek: Some Boers executed for plotting with amaXhosa against British
1819	Fifth Frontier War (that of Nxele)
1820	Arrival of 5000 British to settle in the Zuurveld (Albany) to form a barrier against amaXhosa encroachment
1820s	William Shaw, a settler, starts to establish a string of Wesleyan missions across Xhosaland
1824	Three Church of Scotland missions established, one being Lovedale.
1826	Brownlee establishes a mission on the Buffalo River
1820s	Ngqika dies and is succeeded by Maqoma
1820s	Kat River Settlement formed for Christianized Khoi and Bastards in Maqoma's old grazing lands
1828	Ordinance 50 guarantees equality before the law for all free men, black, brown and white
1830	Restrictions on trade lifted; trade in firearms flourishes
1830s	Mfengu people, displaced by Shaka's wars in Zululand, move South, clashing with Southern Nguni groups. Some settle as clients with Hintsisa, chief of the Gcaleka Xhosa

1834	Emancipation of Cape slaves
1834-1835	Sixth Frontier War (that of Hintsa); amaXhosa invade Albany (the Zuurveld)
1835	Hintsa is killed by Sir Harry Smith's men; British make pact with Mfengu
1836-1838	The Great Trek: Large numbers of Boers leave the Eastern Cape for land across the Orange.
1840	English proclaimed the only medium of instruction in schools and for administration
1845-47	Seventh Frontier War (that of the Axe)
1850	Charles Brownlee appointed in charge of Ngqika Xhosa by Harry Smith.
1850-53	Eighth Frontier War (that of Mlanjeni)
1854	George Grey becomes Governor of the Cape; new vision of combining settlers and amaXhosa into a 'civilised' community. Much support given to mission schools and hospitals. Non-racial, qualified franchise in the Cape. Chiefs of the amaXhosa accept stipends in exchange for surrender of judicial authority.
1856-1858	Nongqawuse's vision, leading to 'the Cattle Killing'; amaXhosa population in British Kaffraria reduced from 105,000 to 27,500 by death and emigration into the colony.
1858-1862	3400 German immigrants (soldiers and peasant farmers) land in East London to be settled on small farms.
1867	Discovery of diamonds
1872	Charles Brownlee first Secretary for Native Affairs; areas East of the Kei are brought under British rule
1877-1878	Ninth Frontier War
1886	Discovery of gold on Witwatersrand
1894	Glen Grey Act introduces quit-rent to be paid on land, to District Council
1857-1913	Rise of black peasant farmers, many mission-educated
1899-1902	South African War (between Boer Republics and British Empire)
1910	Union of South Africa (British colony and Boer Republics); Black rights sacrificed
1912	Founding of ANC (South African Native National Congress)
1913	Land Act, designed to protect white agriculture, forces blacks off the land into the labour force and ends private ownership of land by Africans.
1914	Afrikaner National Party formed, focused on independence of Britain for Afrikaners (Hertzog)
1924	Afrikaner National Party comes to power
1933	Hertzog joins with Smuts to form the United Party - huge majority
1939	Smuts decides to join World War 2 on the side of the allies; Hertzog joins with Purified Nationalists (Malan)
1948	Election victory for Malan's Nationalists, many of whom identified with Hitler's Nazism

1949-1957	A slew of race-based legislation passed (e.g. Population Registration Act; Mixed Marriages Act; Immorality Act; Group Areas Act; Suppression of Communism Act)
1954-1955	Resistance to Apartheid legislation The Defiance Campaign and Congress of the People (Freedom Charter)
1956-1961	Treason Trial of 156 people, including Nelson Mandela
1958-1966	Hendrik Verwoerd Prime Minister
1960	Police fire on protesters against the Pass Laws in Sharpeville, South of Johannesburg
1960s	Vigorous implementation of segregation: 'black spots' 'removed'; tenant farmers expelled from white farms; Africans 'endorsed out' of towns, to 'homelands' (Ciskei, Transkei, etc.)
1961	South Africa becomes a Republic outside the British Commonwealth
1961	ANC military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, formed
1963	Rivonia trial; Detention without trial becomes law, torture common
1963	Self-government Act allows for elections in the Transkei 'homeland'
1967	Compulsory military service of 9 months for all white male South Africans
1969	Steve Biko founds Black consciousness organizations
1974	Independence of colonial rule in Angola and Mozambique: conflict in Angola between rival parties
1975	Plans passed for consolidation of homelands - expropriation of white farms
1976	Uprisings by school-children in Soweto spread to other groups and across the country.
1976	'Independence' of the Trankei.
1977	Military service extended to 24 months; Steve Biko dies at hands of police
1978	PW Botha becomes Prime Minister of SA; militarizes government through security committees. Cross-border raids into neighbouring states. Reforms to free the economy.
1980	Independence of Zimbabwe
1981	'Independence' of the Ciskei
1983	UDF (United Democratic Front) launched to campaign against tricameral Parliament (whites; Indians: 'Coloureds') and Apartheid. Troops deployed to townships to work with the police. Widespread violence in townships.
1985-1989	State of Emergency
1987	Afrikaner reformists go to Dakar, Senegal, to meet the ANC for talks
1987	Major-General Bantu Holomisa seizes power in Transkei, lifts State of Emergency and unbans ANC and PAC
1988	Nelson Mandela admitted to Tygerberg Hospital with TB
1989	PW Botha suffers a stroke and is succeeded by FW de Klerk.

1989	Namibian independence.
1990	Political organisations unbanned; Nelson Mandela released; armed struggle suspended; exiles return; negotiations begin
1994	Democratic elections; Nelson Mandela first President, with government of National Unity. Restitution of Land Rights Act
1996	Nationalists leave government
1999	ANC returned to power with increased majority; Thabo Mbeki president
2000	Democratic Alliance formed; floods in Mozambique
2001	9-11 attacks; World conference against racism in Durban
2004	ANC returned to power with increased majority; Thabo Mbeki president for second term
2005	Shabir Shaik found guilty of fraud and corruption; Jacob Zuma relieved of his post as Deputy President of SA and charged with corruption
2006	Zuma acquitted on rape charges
2007	Zuma elected Chairman of ANC; SA wins Rugby World Cup
2008	Selebi dismissed as Police Commissioner; Mbeki recalled by ANC and Motlanthe installed as President of SA; Zuma's corruption case dismissed
2009	ANC returned to power with 66% of vote in elections, Jacob Zuma President
2010	FIFA World Cup in South Africa

Appendix 2: Historical events and the lives of the participants

Names	Historical events	Ernie's life	Riaan's life	Brendon's life	George's life	Liz's life
Forebears		<i>Grandfather one of original German settlers, coming to Eastern Cape 1858; Ernie born and grew up on original settler farm; Father and himself married wives of German stock.</i>	<i>Afrikaans-speaking father and mother from English-speaking family, not much detail about origins but all in Eastern Cape.</i>	<i>First settler ancestor came to Eastern Cape with German settlers in 1857, settled in border area, father met mother when they were at school together; mother of Scottish origin.</i>	<i>Early ancestor of Portuguese extraction (likely an early castaway); Grandfather and Father both married wives of German extraction, as did George. A long family history in the Transkei.</i>	<i>Great grandparents arrive in SA 1860 to work in Lutheran mission; paternal grandfather Swedish missionary in Zululand; maternal grandparents Church of Scotland missionaries in Eastern Cape.</i>
1945		Born				
1947						Born
1948	Election victory for Malan's Nationalists, a number of whom were Nazi sympathisers.					
1949 1957	A slew of race-based legislation passed (e.g. Population Registration Act; Mixed Marriages Act; Immorality Act; Group Areas Act; Suppression of Communism Act).					
1950		Starts school at local village school				
1951						Starts school at local village school
1954-	Resistance to Apartheid legislation. The Defiance					

1955	Campaign and Congress of the People (Freedom Charter)					
1956-1961	Treason Trial of 156 people, including Nelson Mandela					
1958-1966	Hendrik Verwoerd Prime Minister					
1960	Police fire on protesters against the Pass Laws in Sharpeville, South of Johannesburg	Starts as day scholar at High School in nearby town				
1960s	Vigorous implementation of segregation: 'black spots' 'removed'; tenant farmers expelled from white farms; Afrikaners 'evicted out' of towns. Lo 'homelands' (Ciskei, Transkei, etc.)					
1961	South Africa becomes a Republic, joins the British Commonwealth; ANC military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, formed					
1963	Rivonia trial: detention without trial becomes law, torture common. Self government Act allows for elections in the Transkei 'homeland'		Born	Born		Matriculates
1964		Matriculates and starts work on the Railways. Three months military service.				Enrols for B.A. Degree at University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

1967	Compulsory military service of 9 months for all white male South Africans.	Family farm expropriated for Ciskei; family buys another farm.		Family moves to another farm, on border of Transkei.		Mother passes away Enrols for University Education Diploma at University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.
1968						Starts teaching at Inanda Seminary, High School for African girls.
1969	Steve Biko founds Black Consciousness organizations.		Starts school in English medium school in nearest town, as a day scholar, after a short unsuccessful period of boarding.	Starts school at Afrikaans medium school in nearest village, as a weekly boarder.	Born in Transkei.	
1972						English Honours, Stellenbosch University.
1974	Independence of colonial rule in Angola and Mozambique; conflict in Angola between rival parties.		Moves to Afrikaans medium High School in same town (still a day scholar).		Move near grandfather's farm in corridor between Transkei and Lesotho.	English teacher, Ladysmith, Natal (after teaching in Johannesburg and Durban).
1975	Plans passed for consolidation of homelands - expropriation of white farms.	2nd farm expropriated for Ciskei; family buys a third farm.		Goes to English medium boarding school in more distant town.	Starts school in local village school.	
1976	Uprisings by school-children in Soweto spread to other groups and across the country. 'Independence' of the Transkei.					
1977	Military service extended to 24 months; Steve Biko tortured to death by police.				Parents' divorce; mother awarded custody; he goes reluctantly to town with	English teacher, St Chad's school for Africans, Ladysmith.

1985-1989	State of Emergency					
1989						1989 establishes Transfer of African Language Knowledge Project
1985		Mother and his friend who could not hear or speak both pass away	Masters research on farm labour relations			
1986			18 months military service			
1987	Afrikaner reformists go to Dakar, Senegal, to meet the ANC for talks. Major-General Bantu Holomisa seizes power in Transkei, lifts State of Emergency and unbans ANC and PAC	Father dies				
1988	Nelson Mandela admitted to Tygerberg Hospital with TB	Boarded after serious operation; begins light work in retail business; still farming	Starts work in Agricultural Extension in home town. Continues part-time farming himself, until 2002.			
1989	PW Botha suffers a stroke and is succeeded by F.W de Klerk. Namibian independence.			Goes to Mthatha to evade military service	Starts work on the railways	
1990	Political organisations unbanned; Nelson Mandela released; armed struggle suspended; exiles return; negotiations begin					
1991			Marries	Awarded PhD	Marries	
1992			First daughter born			

1993					Shifts to a job in industry	
1994	Democratic elections; Nelson Mandela first President, with government of National Unity. Restitution of Land Rights Act	Section Manager in supermarket		Works in the Western Cape until 2004	First son born	
1995	Inspired by Mandela, South Africa wins the Rugby World Cup		Moves from working only with white farmers to working with black farmers.		Second child dies	
1996	Nationalists leave government		Second daughter born		Moves to a job in a local Municipality	
1998						Marries; moves to Eastern Cape to work at Fort Hare
1999	ANC returned to power with increased majority; Thabo Mbeki president		Starts work for an international development agency		Third son born	
2000	Democratic Alliance formed; floods in Mozambique				Fourth son born	
2001	9/11 attacks; World conference against racism in Durban			Mother passes away		
2003			Takes an academic post for a year, away from the Eastern Cape.			
2004	ANC returned to power with increased majority; Thabo Mbeki president for second term		Returns to Rural Development work, based in Bhishe; lives in East London			

2005	Jacob Zuma relieved of his post as Deputy President of SA and charged with corruption			Spends a year in US	Leaves work in municipality; self-employed	
2006				Appointed to temporary post in an Eastern Cape university	Starts working in Forestry company	
2007	Zuma elected Chairman of ANC; SA wins Rugby World Cup			Permanent post and promotion in same university		Registers for PhD
2008	Mbeki recalled by ANC and Motlanthe installed as President of SA; Zuma's corruption case dismissed					
2009	Zuma becomes South Africa's President					
2010	FIFA World Cup hosted by South Africa					

Appendix 3: Subject Information Sheet

2 Nowers Street
King William's Town
5601

Tel/Fax: (043) 642 1928
Cell: 082 780 1920
Email: lbotha@ufh.ac.za

Dear

My name is Elizabeth (Liz) Botha. I work at the University of Fort Hare and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Doctorate at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am interested in the experiences of white people in the Eastern Cape who are fluent in isiXhosa, and would like to invite you to be one of the participants in my research. My aim in this research is to explore how English or Afrikaans / isiXhosa bilingualism affects my participants' sense of identity, as shown in their life stories. I am also interested in how my participants came to be fluent in isiXhosa, and how they maintain this fluency.

Participation in this research will entail being interviewed by me, at a time and place that is convenient for you. I will ask you to tell the story of your life, focusing on parts which relate to your ability to speak and understand isiXhosa. I am proposing that we meet three times, each interview lasting for about one and a half to two hours. With your permission these interviews will be audio-recorded in order to ensure accuracy.

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you will be included in the research report. I will use a pseudonym whenever I write about what you have said in my report. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person except myself and possibly my supervisor, and will only be processed by myself. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions; my contact details are given above. I will contact you within 2 weeks to discuss your participation, or you could fill in the forms which are attached and fax them to me, once you have made up your mind.

Sincerely

Liz Botha

Appendix 4: Informed Consent Forms

B.1: Consent Form - Interviews

I _____ consent to being interviewed by Elizabeth (Liz) Botha for her study on language and identity among white Eastern Cape South Africans fluent in isiXhosa.

I understand that:

- participation in this interview is voluntary;
- there will be three interviews of 1 ½ to 2 hours each;
- I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to;
- I may withdraw from the study at any time;
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed _____

Date _____

B.2: Consent Form – Audio-Recording of Interviews

I _____ consent to my interview with Elizabeth (Liz) Botha for her study on language and identity among white Eastern Cape South Africans fluent in isiXhosa being recorded.

I understand that:

- the recording will not be heard by any person other than the researcher, a transcription typist, and possibly Liz's supervisor;
- I will be given a false name (pseudonym) to be used in the transcription of the interaction and my name will not be revealed in discussion of the research.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix 5: Interview schedules (Initial plan)

Interview 1:

1. I would like you to start by giving me an overview of your life, fairly brief, focusing on milestones such as starting school, moving house, starting a new job, etc. You will get a chance to go into more detail later. I will record what you say on this dictaphone, and also fill in the key details on a life history grid.
2. I would like you now to describe in detail (paint a picture of) the situation within which you became a speaker of isiXhosa: the place, the people, your relationships with them, the kinds of things you did and experiences you had. Tell me what it was like for you; what were your feelings at the time.
3. (Optional question, depending on situation) Were there periods later in your life when you gave attention to learning isiXhosa? Could you tell me a bit about those?

Interview 2:

1. I would like you now to focus on a few key incidents or experiences, involving the use or understanding of isiXhosa, which stand out in your memory. These experiences may have affected or changed you as a person, and your feelings about life and the world around you. You can include experiences which made you feel good, and experiences which made you feel bad. Please tell them as stories, as vividly as possible. I will not interrupt you, except to clarify details, but I may ask a couple of additional questions in-between incidents, or once you have finished.

Examples of questions which I may ask are:

- How did your relationship with isiXhosa and its speakers change: e.g., when you went to school; when you started work; when the new democratic South Africa came in?
- Are there Xhosa-speaking voices which live on in your memory, and inform your actions and decisions?
- Are there parts of your story which you would prefer to have told in isiXhosa? Are there parts that you have left out, but would have told if you were telling the story to a Xhosa-speaker? If you were to tell those parts, is there a particular person, or kind of person, you would choose to tell it to?
- Although you communicate easily and frequently with Xhosa-speakers, it seems that there are boundaries drawn in terms of your relationship with them, and what you do together. Would you like to talk about that?
- Do people in your 'English/Afrikaans-speaking' circle of acquaintance know about your fluency in isiXhosa? Was this always the case? How? Why? /Why not?
- Do you ever speak isiXhosa to a white person? When? Who? Why? /Why not?
- Can you think of experiences where knowing the language made you feel you were a participating in Xhosa culture / were in some way bicultural?

- Can you think of experiences where knowing the language made you feel a sense of inclusion in the community of isiXhosa speakers?
- Can you think of experiences where knowing the language made you feel excluded or rejected from the community of isiXhosa speakers?
- Did the racism of the society in which you were living ever cause you painful experiences, in relation to the people with whom you communicated in isiXhosa?
- Were there periods later in your life when you gave attention to learning isiXhosa? Could you tell me a bit about those? (If not covered in Interview 1)

Interview 3 (after reading transcripts of Interviews 1 and 2):

1. Today, I would like to give you a chance to react to what you have read in the transcripts, and to correct or clarify or add to your story, any important elements which you feel you have left out.
2. Have your perceptions changed at all since our first meeting?
3. What has the experience of telling your story been like for you?
4. How would you introduce yourself – to an English / Afrikaans speaker; to an isiXhosa speaker (i.e. How would you answer the question, 'Who are you?')?

Appendix 6: Interview 2 with the four participants

Notepad pre-session 2: George		
Topic/Theme	Terms about situation, time, event, happening, occasion	Return-to-narrative questions
Friendship	All my friends were little kwedinis, great pals, ol' Gigs, learning from talking and being friends; good black friends; nothing ever changed between ol' Gigs and I	You have spoken a lot about having 'good black friends'. Can you tell me about an experience where the friendship became difficult because of politics, the law of the land, or other people's (anti-black or anti-white) attitudes.
Kitchen Xhosa	The Xhosa we speak is kitchen Xhosa	You have said that the Xhosa you speak is 'kitchen Xhosa'. Does this make it difficult at times to understand or communicate with black people? Can you remember an experience where you were lost because someone was speaking really 'deep' Xhosa?
Translation	If you translate it directly it doesn't make sense	When you recited Gigs' poem about John and Mary, you said that when it is translated directly it doesn't make sense. Have you had an experience with black people, speaking Xhosa, which was difficult to explain to white friends who don't know the language? Could you tell me about such an experience?
Love for farm life; small town life	That's why I live in a small town; I love farm life; I could never live in a city; I'm not a city man	
Supervisory role	I was the traffic cop; used to make money from the other little {kids}. I've got 22 black guys underneath me; I'm their manager in the forest.	Meeting 3
Hunting and eating birds and mice	We used to lie to ourselves and say it tastes so lovely, meanwhile...; we even ate them; little skins drying out	
Not knowing their real names	I don't know what his real name was; I don't remember	

	what his real Xhosa name was – but we knew him as Gigs; I can't remember his real Xhosa name	
Attachment of a black person to a white person	Him and me were great pals; He was just my gran's guy	
Divorce / Separation of Mom and Dad	My mom and dad were still arguing; I don't mean any disrespect to my mom ...	
Only English guy in Afrikaans school	I took all my subjects in Afrikaans higher grade; the only English guy in that school; English girl	
The baby of the family	I was the baby of the family from my mom's side; they were much older than me, and it was their job to do my homework with me (girls) there was a big age gap between us (brother)	
Admiration for his Dad	My Dad is excellent in Xhosa, he went to a black school in U-town; the DoE have still got a project of my Dad on the Xhosa language; he was forced to play piano; he plays it very well	
We always tell my kids they are fruit salad	People think I'm Afrikaans because of my surname, but because of the way it's spelt, I'm actually Portuguese. But I can't speak Portuguese We always tell my kids they are fruit salad; They are from Portugal, way back; my gran was a German; my father married a German; I married a German	
Teased at school	I was teased a lot because I couldn't speak English properly	You said you were teased at school because you couldn't speak English properly – only Xhosa. Can you remember any details about a time

		when the kids at school teased you?
Partially Xhosa-speaking Whole family speaks Xhosa	Even today... we speak a lot of Xhosa (no maid or anything) My kids all speak it fluently; middle one gets all the qi's and Xi's right; my wife can speak it; my whole family can speak	You have said you and your family speak Xhosa at home. Could you think of an occasion when you spoke a lot of Xhosa, just to give me an idea of the kinds of situation in which you speak Xhosa.
Negotiating meaning – multilingual repertoire	Not in Chinese, but he used to understand them, and ...they used to understand him (middle son)	
We live for our kids	We all live for our kids...and to go and lose them ...would be devastating. Maybe I'm being overprotective but I don't like them in the streets.	

Additional questions for Interview 2:

- Is there any experience you can tell me about which shows that things changed for you in your relationships with Xhosa-speakers when the new democratic South Africa came in?
 - Can you tell me about an experience where knowing the language made you feel you were really taking part in Xhosa culture?
 - Can you tell me about an experience where knowing the language made you feel that you were part of the black community?
 - Can you tell me about an experience where knowing the language made you feel excluded or rejected from the community of isiXhosa speakers?

Notepad pre-session 2: Riaan		
Topic/Theme	Terms about situation, time, event, happening, occasion	Return-to-narrative questions
Different language speaking friends		Is there an experience you can tell me about when the racial divisions of the society in which you were living caused you difficulties, in relation to the people with whom you communicated in isiXhosa?
Comfortable in various societies;		
And then 94 came,	And that was obviously a very comfortable situation for me	Can you tell me about an experience or two which illustrate how things changed for you after '94?

no fear; no threat		Can you think of an occasion where understanding Xhosa has made you feel threatened?
I had to play the middle man	One of the groups eventually felt left out of the game and left	You said that when white friends came to the farm and they didn't understand Xhosa well, you had to play the middle man, and that was a difficult role to keep up. Can you tell me about any difficult situation later in life where you have had to play the middle man?
Army		Can you tell me a bit about the experience of having to go to the army; how it was for you, in the light of the fact that you had grown up so close to black people.
Initiation school; rugby and leaving school (varsity)		Can you tell me how it was for you when your farm friends went off to initiation school? I'm assuming that you didn't go.
I was brought up by them		You were brought up by these black people, and you were disciplined by them, and shared so much with them, and then there were moments, like when the evening story session was over, when you 'went your separate ways'. Could you tell me a bit more about occasions of that sort and how it was for you?
After that we go our separate ways and go and sleep and ...		
		Having been brought up by black people, in a way, I suppose one could say that you are bicultural. Which experience you have had has made you feel closest and most included in Xhosa culture?
Continuity of Afrikaans and Xhosa culture in terms of respect for elders		You see quite a similarity, and continuity between the Xhosa culture of respect for elders and the Afrikaans culture of respect for elders. You say that the loss of it is responsible for a lot of our problems. Could you tell me an experience that you have had that bears that out?
Loss of culture of respect responsible for most of our problems		
Never start with Xhosa		Can you tell of an experience where you did start with Xhosa and it ended up badly?
Boere Xhosa;	the worst thing that can happen; if you respect people you don't	I get the impression, with some of the things you say, that you have on various occasions watched white people putting

	do that	their foot in it with isiXhosa speakers.
Understanding how people approach	I often feel that – no, that person doesn't want to understand it, and it becomes a racial issue	You have said that using Boere Xhosa is 'the worst thing that can happen' Can you tell me about an experience which made you realise this? Or which illustrates it? You have said that when a white person doesn't understand how a Xhosa-speaker approaches things, it can develop into a racial issue. Could you give me an example of this which you have watched happen?

Notepad pre-session 2: Brendon		
Topic/Theme	Terms about Situation, Time, Event, Happening, Occasion	Return-to-narrative questions
This meeting is essentially a continuation of the last one, and as you gave me such rich information about your life last time we met, you may feel that there is not much more that you want to or need to say. I'm going to start with a very open question and see where it takes us. I may add a couple of other questions later.		
Experiences changing sense of self		Are there any incidents or experiences in your life which you have not yet told me about, involving the use or understanding of isiXhosa, which have been key in affecting or changing your sense of yourself, and your feelings about life and the world around you?
His mother, non-acceptance of his Xhosaness by whites	I always had this feeling ...that my Xhosaness was something that would never be accepted by my ... late mother (17)	You said that you often felt your Xhosaness was not accepted by your mother. Can you tell me about any other experiences where people, or the racism of the society in which you were living, made you feel that your Xhosaness, or your closeness to Xhosa people, was not acceptable.
Conflicting things	A whole lot of conflicting things that were going on at that time (17)	You spoke at one stage about 'conflicting things going on'. Are there other experiences you could tell me about that show conflict brought about by your closeness, as a white person, to Xhosa people through the language and your upbringing?
Inclusion in Xhosa	I mean I used to	You have spoken of participation in Xhosa

culture	partake in rituals (16); he was in a sense a thwasa, but he was a poet...(36); come full circle in Port St Johns, is the whole divinerhood thing (105)	rituals in your childhood, and relationships with imbongi and diviners in later life. Are there particular experiences you could tell me about, which you haven't yet described, where your knowledge of isiXhosa has made you feel a real sense of inclusion in the culture and community of isiXhosa speakers?
		Can you describe any experiences where knowing the language made you feel excluded or rejected from the community of isiXhosa speakers?
		Can you describe experiences which show the kinds of changes you experienced in your relationship with isiXhosa and its speakers when the new democratic South Africa came in? Or was there little change?

Notepad pre-session 2: Ernie		
Topic/Theme	Terms about situation, time, event, happening, occasion	Return-to-narrative questions
Follow on from last time		Have you remembered any other experiences involving the use of Xhosa which you would like to add to what you told me last time we met?
Experiences changing sense of self		Could you tell me about any experiences involving the use or understanding of isiXhosa, which have changed your feelings about yourself and about life?
Nanny / Black adults	'most of my friends were black boys ... and that is where I picked up my Xhosa'	You have spoken a lot about your black friends. Were there Xhosa-speaking adults who were important in your early life? Did your parents put you into the care of a black 'nanny' when you were a baby or toddler? Can you tell me any experiences from childhood involving black adults?
Parents and isiXhosa		You have said that isiXhosa was your strongest language when you went to school. Did you speak isiXhosa with your

		parents as well as with the Xhosa-speakers around you?
Conflict or difficulty		Are there any experiences you could tell me about where your closeness to Xhosa people has caused conflict or difficulty in your life – in other relationships, perhaps?
Inclusion in Xhosa culture		Many of your childhood friends were Xhosa speakers. Could you tell me about any experiences where this made you feel included in the Xhosa culture and community?
Pre and post 1994		Have you experienced changes in your relationships with isiXhosa speakers since 1994? Can you describe any experience which illustrates these changes? Or was there little change?
Army		Were you involved in military service? Can you tell me a bit about the experience of having to go to the army; how it was for you, in the light of the fact that you had grown up so close to black people.
Initiation school		Can you describe any experience relating to the time when your farm friends went off to initiation school?
School	You said that the biggest change, as far as school was concerned, was going to Dale – that it was ‘entirely different’	Would you like to say a bit more about what made Dale so ‘entirely different’?
Understanding	You said that you and your ‘deaf and dumb’ friend ‘understood each other’, and you also said that you and the travellers on the railways ‘understood each other’	The understanding between you and your ‘deaf and dumb’ friend was obviously based on something other than language. Can you suggest what it might have been based on?
Hearings and interpretation		One of the important ways in which your knowledge of isiXhosa is useful to you is in acting as interpreter at hearings. Could you

		perhaps tell me about one specific hearing and the role that you played in it?
Reading and writing	'taught myself to read and write'	Would you like to give a bit more detail about how you taught yourself to read and write; what kinds of things did you read and write, for instance.

Appendix 7: Interview 3 with the four participants

Possible questions for Interview 3, George:

Would you like to react to what you have read in the transcripts, to correct or clarify or add to your story, any important elements which you feel you have left out?
Are there parts of your story which you would prefer to have told in isiXhosa? Are there parts of your story that you have not told me, but would have told if you were telling the story to a Xhosa-speaker? If you were to tell those parts, is there a particular person, or kind of person, you would choose to tell it to?
(Refer to the friend who used to come and have a beer at his house, the fact that Gigs used to sleep over in the farmhouse.) Although you communicate easily and frequently with Xhosa-speakers, it seems that there are boundaries drawn in terms of your relationship with them, and what you do together. Would you like to talk about that?
Do your white friends and acquaintances know about your fluency in isiXhosa? Was this always the case?
(Refer to the fact that he and his family speak isiXhosa to one another at home on occasion.) Under what circumstances would you speak isiXhosa to a white person?
Who have been the most important influences in your life?
Are there Xhosa-speaking voices which live on in your memory, and inform your actions and decisions?
How would you describe yourself?
How would you introduce yourself? to an English / Afrikaans speaker; to a speaker of isiXhosa (You can tell me in isiXhosa)
What has it been like for you to tell your story?
Has the experience of telling your story changed the way you see things, in any way?

Possible questions for Interview 3, Riaan

Would you like to react to what you have read in the transcripts, to correct or clarify or add to your story, any important elements which you feel you have left out?
We live in a society which is still very racially and linguistically divided. Would you say that there are different compartments in your life, in which you speak different languages? Are there boundaries between the part of the life where you relate to isiXhosa-speakers and the part where you relate to Afrikaans speakers, for instance? Is it difficult for you to remain <i>konsekwent</i> across these contexts?
You said when we first met, when I was doing the other piece of research, that you

don't speak Xhosa to whites. Would you like to say more about that?
Who have been the most important influences in your life?
Are there Xhosa-speaking voices which live on in your memory, and inform your actions and decisions?
Do you think that you, or members of your immediate family, would ever seriously consider leaving this country?
How would you describe yourself?
How would you introduce yourself? to an English / Afrikaans speaker; to a speaker of isiXhosa (You can tell me in isiXhosa)
What has it been like for you to tell your story?
If I had been a Xhosa speaker, how would the story you have told me been different?
Has the experience of telling your story changed the way you see things, in any way?

Possible questions for Interview 3, Brendon

Would you like to react to what you have read in the transcripts, to correct or clarify or add to your story, any important elements which you feel you have left out? Are there particular things which stood out for you as you read your own story, in your own words?
Something that stood out for me, re-reading the first transcript, was your sense of destiny; of somehow being guided in some almost supernatural way towards the work that you are now doing. Would you like to say more about that?
You mentioned moments of guilt about being white a couple of times in our first meeting. Would you like to say more about that?
You said that undergoing something like a circumcision ceremony would be one of the things which could 'tilt identity' for a white man. You also said that there are points in the life of a person like you, or your nephews, where 'one capitulates to parts of the European identity. So it seems as if maintaining a truly hybrid identity in South Africa is quite a balancing trick. Key moments can topple you into one side or another. Moments you mentioned were ceremonies such as circumcision, ukuthwasa, and starting work and becoming 'a boss'. I imagine another might be falling in love, or marrying, and raising a family. Would you like to comment a bit more on this as it applies to you. (Block out or avoid those things which might 'topple' you in a direction you don't want to go.)
You spoke about boundaries: the boundaries that you knew, as a child, that you could not cross with Sonwabo (onto the veranda but not into the house). A similar thing seemed to be operating in you on the occasion that you were on holiday with Pam and her child and decided not to stay with your father. Later you spoke of boundaries again, in a different context, where you were learning to set boundaries so that you didn't get too exploited, or taken advantage of. Any more comments on boundaries in your life?
It seems to me that academia has played an extremely important role in making certain things possible in your life. Would you like to comment on that?

Have there been key people who have exerted a great deal of influence in your life?
How would you describe yourself, in a nutshell?
What has it been like for you to tell your story?
Has the experience of telling your story changed the way you see things, in any way?
Anything more that you'd like to add?

Possible questions for interview 3, Ernie:

Have there been key people who have exerted a great deal of influence in your life? Who are they?
Are there Xhosa-speaking voices which live on in your memory, and inform your actions and decisions?
Do you think that you, or members of your immediate family, would ever seriously consider leaving this country?
We live in a society which is still very racially and linguistically divided. Would you say that there are different compartments in your life, in which you speak different languages?
How would you describe yourself, in a nutshell?
What has it been like for you to tell your story?
Has the experience of telling your story changed the way you see things, in any way?
Anything more that you'd like to add?
When I write about you in my thesis, I cannot give you your real name. Would you like to suggest a pseudonym for yourself?
Part 2
I know there are things which you felt you wanted to add to what you had said at our previous meeting. Let's start there.
What would you like to add, or correct, having looked at the transcripts?
Any other stories that have come to mind, connected to your speaking isiXhosa and relating to people through the language?
Many of your childhood friends were Xhosa speakers. Could you tell me about any experiences where this made you feel included in the Xhosa culture and community?
Something I'm curious about - the people who worked on your farm - had their families been there since the coming of your grandparents, or did they change from time to time?
If you were at a meeting or workshop, say work or church related, and were asked to introduce yourself, and say a bit about yourself, what would you say?
Last words; something else you'd like to add.

Appendix 8: Military service in South Africa, 1957 – 1994

In 1957, a Defence Act was passed which made white males liable for a period of three months compulsory military call-up to the Citizen Force.

In 1967, when guerrilla fighters of the ANC and other liberation movements started infiltrating South Africa and its neighbours, an amended Defence Act made it compulsory for all white South African males between the ages of seventeen and 65 to serve a nine-month period in the South African Defence Force. 'A non-combatant option "as far as may be practicable" was granted to members of pacifist sects' (Connors, 2007, p. 59). Deferment of military call-up could be applied for by those registered for tertiary studies.

As the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal ended in 1974, independence was granted to Angola and Mozambique, and colonialism officially came to an end. Conflict was unleashed in Angola between three rival parties: the MPLA (regarded by the United States as Soviet-backed), the FNLA (supported clandestinely by the CIA) and UNITA (which South Africa, urged by the United States, agreed to support) (Sparks, 1991, p. 299). In 1972 the government once again amended the Defence Act, extending military service from nine to twelve months, to be followed up by nineteen days annually for five years (Connors, 2007, p. 63).

In 1975, after a secret and unsuccessful invasion of Angola, the then Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, began devising a military plan for South Africa to become a super-power in the region, to withstand what they perceived as a 'total onslaught', part of a Soviet imperialist strategy to dominate South Africa' (SAIRR, 1978, p.53). The Defence Act was again amended in 1976, doubling the length of initial military service to 24 months, with more annual camps. It also increased the sentence for 'peace-church' objectors, the only kind of conscientious objection recognized at the time (Connors, 2007, p. 64).

In 1978, John Vorster stepped down as Prime Minister, to be replaced by P.W. Botha, who rapidly militarized government through a network of security committees. In the early 1980s, the army conducted cross-border raids into neighbouring states seen to be harbouring ANC cadres. At this time, Riaan and Brendon were undergraduate students.

In 1983, when the United Democratic Front, aligned with the ANC, came into being to campaign against the tri-cameral parliament, South African Defence Force troops, now committed to even more extended service periods, were deployed to the townships to work with the police in 'the prevention and suppression of internal disorder' (SAIRR, 1985, p. 422). This was associated by some with a reported increase in those failing to report for military service, and a 'steady stream' of 'draft dodgers entering Britain' (SAIRR, 1985, p. 327), supported by a growing network of local and overseas supporters and a UN resolution recognizing the right of persons to refuse to go to war in support of the Apartheid state

(Connors, 2007, p. 66). Calls for more options for conscientious objectors, and for an end to conscription, gathered momentum.

In 1985 a State of Emergency was declared, remaining in force for four years. SADF and police action in the townships became openly violent. During this time, Riaan did his basic and officer's training, and was then seconded to do agricultural research work, as part of his military service. In 1988, peace talks were held between Angola, South Africa and Cuba, resulting in the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola and the termination of South African rule in South West Africa/Namibia. In 1989 Brendon went to the Transkei, in a last ditch attempt to avoid the call-up.

It was not until 1993 that white conscription ended, and in 1994 it was finally announced that no person attempting to resist the call-up would be prosecuted (Connors, 2007, pp. 111-112).

Appendix 9: Some background on firearms in South Africa

The early South African settlers lived and died by their guns, and in 19th century Eastern Cape, gun-running to black tribes quickly became a lucrative trade. On the eve of the South African war (1898), it was 'unlawful for a man not to possess a firearm in the Transvaal Republic' (Besdziek, 1996, p. 2).

In present-day South Africa, the motivation to own a firearm is not so much the prospect of war as the fear of crime, or the wish to commit crime. 'South Africa is ... one of the few countries that will regard 'self-defence' as a suitable reason to allow almost any applicant to possess a firearm' (Besdziek, 1996, p. 10). In 1996, there were more than 3 million legal firearms in South Africa, owned by almost 2 million citizens. There were also innumerable illegal weapons in circulation, imported and smuggled from neighbouring territories where wars of liberation and destabilization had recently been fought, or stolen from private individuals, the police and the military.

Besdziek, (1996) is of the opinion that only a more secure situation with regard to crime will significantly reduce the number of firearms in the country. Recent attempts to control this proliferation of firearms have been an amendment to the Arms and Ammunition Act, to limit the use of a licenced firearm to the person to whom it is licenced, and a firearm control act requiring people to prove competency when applying for a firearm licence. A general 90-day amnesty in 2010, offering immunity from prosecution to anyone handing in a firearm, resulted in more than 32 000 firearms being recovered across South Africa. 27% of these were illegal and 53% voluntarily surrendered (SA Info. 2010).

Appendix 10: Extract from John Allwood's memoir

This appendix is an extract from a memoir written by John Allwood (13 December 2011), who was brought up on a farm in Southern KwaZulu-Natal, under similar circumstances to the four men who participated in my research. Initial parts of the story have been summarized, and focus thrown on John's later encounter with his childhood friend. This gives a glimpse into the feelings that his friend had about their friendship and later separation.

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

Barefoot, running over the muddy farm yard to guide a straying heifer into the kraal, there was no difference between us, except that he could run faster and could whistle louder and crack the whip with a deafening clap like thunder. My friend Nkongweni came each morning with the workers from the huts over the hill. As the sun rose the men and few women would make their way past the pig sties to the boiler-room. There buckets and milking machines were assembled and taken to the milking kraal.

[The story goes on to describe 'work-play' that they shared, working in the mornings, swimming in the Kwabala brook and hunting field mice later in the day. He tells of the 'normal' routines that governed their lives, whereby Nkongweni would eat in the 'boy's hut' while John went into the farm-house for his breakfast and lunch. It speaks of the changes that took place when John went to school, and had other friends, only playing with Nkongweni in weekends and holidays. The next quoted section describes a time when John was recovering from rheumatic fever and Nkongweni was summoned to keep him company.]

I taught him to play draughts and checkers and snakes and ladders. I used to nearly always win and then he would say they were silly games and why did we not go outside and do something fun. I told him that was not allowed. He told me that a duck had hatched six ducklings and that they could swim in the little pond. I asked him to bring me one. So he came back later with a big enamel bowl half filled with water and a little duck cheeping away in anxiety, swimming madly round and round in the bowl. We dried it off on my towel and gave it some porridge. That kept it quiet. Then we gave it another swim. He brought the duckling every day for a visit. But then it grew bigger and made a mess on the quilt and Mum got cross and banned ducks on the bed.

Nkongweni came after breakfast each morning. Just before lunch he was told to leave and come back later. He was sometimes offered juice when I had it. But at meal times he was told to leave because "they prefer their own food in the boys hut". I got better and Nkongweni went back to farm work.

[The story goes on to tell that, as Nkongweni started doing men's work, John saw him less often, and that Nkongweni disappeared when he was sixteen: "Run away to the mines no doubt¹⁵¹. Never did think he would make a good farm boy," was all that John's father said. John completed school and then went to university. Needing a break from the pressures of first year studies, and feeling somewhat homesick, John took a bicycle ride to town. The story continues:]

People mostly white in this part of town, lingered on the pavements, chatting, window shopping. Some urgently walked by, pushing past, hurrying on to some other urgent activity. It was an amazing scene for an Ixopo boy, independent, alone, in 'Maritzburg with a little money in my pocket.

I saw him coming hesitantly up the street from the black part of town, apparently heading for the railway station at the top end of Church Street. A young Zulu man dressed in baggy khaki trousers with large bright pseudo patches, a hat at a jaunty angle set on his closely cropped hair. He came closer, keeping to the road side of the pavement to avoid the white shoppers. Then I recognised him. The slight limp which he had through falling off a horse and breaking his leg on the farm brought the memory flashing to my mind. "It's Nkongweni!" I rushed forward. He walked past, looking at me but not seeing, no change in his intense nervous expression, as though knowing that he should not be there. "Nkongweni!" I hissed loud enough for him alone to hear, and caught his arm. Alarmed he stopped, looked at me and then said in colloquial southern Zulu¹⁵², "*John, angi' ukwaze. Wangishiye, wazuwayo eskolweni. Yege ngiya'hambe*" (John, I don't know you. You left me when you went to school. Let go, I am leaving).

People were looking at us strangely. I let go, confused, rejected. He walked rapidly away, the limp more pronounced and his shoulders hunched.

Two farm boys separated by the great gulfs of racism, culture, master/servant relationships and the historical issues of land occupation and entitlement; two boys who had spent a childhood chatting in Zulu, playing happily unaware of the great divisions. Then caught in the traps of our respective realities.

¹⁵¹ Another possibility was that he had gone to join Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress.

¹⁵² John has written it down the way he perceived they had spoken; spelling and orthography are not conventional.

I know all this now, all these years later. But then, I only felt a deep loneliness and vague longing for the muddy farm yard, the little brook Kwabala, little boys pressing to a warm rock to get dry after a naked swim in the cold pool.