

**PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS AND LECTURERS ON THE USE OF XITSONGA AS
LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
LIMPOPO**

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Language Education

in the

Faculty of Humanities

(School of Education)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

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2020

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Wendy Shihlamariso Nxumalo (Chauke), hereby solemnly declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, that is my work in design and in execution, and that all materials contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Thokozile Teynah Nxumalo; siblings, Love Matimba, Theodorah Tiyiselani and Fumani Dennis Nxumalo and my two kids, Tiyiselani and Nhletelo Lion ‘Xikoci’ Chauke for their lovely care and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to my supervisors, Dr. JW Foncha, Prof MW Maruma and Dr MA Khosa, not only for your inspiring tutelage and guidance, but also for your timely appearance when I almost gave up on the study. This thesis would not have been a reality without your constant care and support. I have come to witness a great deal of growth from your ideas and feedback. Working with you has provided a wonderful and unforgettable opportunity to grow up, both personally and professionally. Your affectionate care and emotional involvement acted both as a stimulus and synergy for me.

I will remain forever grateful to the University of Limpopo for granting me a space to author this thesis. The Writing Retreats through Research Office and University of Limpopo Women Academics in South Africa (ULWASA) made it worthwhile to persevere. Thank you for giving me support.

I am also greatly indebted to Prof. KJ Kubayi and Dr. TW Molotja for your great interest in my professional development and my teaching beliefs. And for your unfailing encouragement and mentoring during difficult times.

I would like to express my sincere feelings of appreciation and heartfelt thanks to the following persons who supported me morally and materially at the time that I was busy with this study:

- I. My children, Chauke Tiyiselani and Nhletelo Lion (Xikoci) who are the reason why I decided to study up to this level as pace-setting for them.
- II. Risimati Osborn, nkatanga. Words can't express how blessed I am to have a caring, supportive and loving husband that you are, a package that is immeasurable. You set the standard. I am setting it for our kids. Kanimamba Mhlengwe!!
- III. Tivanani George Chauke for the food he prepared for me and the care given to the kids during this time. Inkому Chef!!
- IV. Nsuku xa ka Shakani my study partner, thanks a lot for encouraging me to wake up in those awkward but quite hours to exchange study hours and space. Inkumu kokwani.

V. Messrs. Mashele, Shirinda, Zweli Khosa, ‘Khongoloti’ Mahlaule and Xikombiso Mthembzi, the enthusiastic students who helped me with the collection of some of the data and technical aspects so that the thesis can be what is.

VI. Dr. Andries Pududu Moswane my classmate. You always made sure that we rally together, bravo.

VII. Dr. Kgaladi Maphutha. You made sure that I did not miss any writing opportunities available and were concerned about my progress. O a hlokagala mo bophelong, Classmate.

VIII. Ms Ablonia Maledu, Sharon Mmakola and Dimakatso Makgoba, thank you for the computer literacy lessons and moral support.

IX. Prof Mahlapahlapana Themane thank you for being concerned about my progress and assistance provided.

X. To VLIR Project 3 for affording the space to finalize the thesis.

XI. All the participants that contributed to the data collection process.

XII. To all my colleagues, your support during my health challenges while compiling this study, you are highly appreciated.

XIII. Hlulani, son thank you for being a ‘mother’ to my kids and made sure that all is well during my absence.

XIV. All my relatives, friends and well-wishers.

XV. Ahi Khomaneni Vanghana you lifted me up during trying times. Thank you very much.

XVI. Mrs Khawurisa Lizzy Baloyi thank you for being a sister. You always say, “Xikwembu Xi langutile makwerhu”.

XVII. Rev. PT Ndlovu and the EPCSA family for your spiritual support. The journey was too thorny.

Last but not the least; I should like to acknowledge my gratitude to Thokozile Teynah Nxumalo, my mother, for her unfailing moral, emotional, financial and physical support. Her always loving care and concern have been a wonderful stimulus to me throughout

my academic achievements. I therefore, dedicate my success to her. Hi rero gaweni ro tshwuka leri a wu ri navela, N'wa Njemana. To God be the Glory!!!!

ABSTRACT

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) mandates that “the official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu” (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: 4). However, only English has continued to be used as the language of teaching and communication in almost all institution of higher education. The Language Policy for Higher Education in South Africa (DBE, 2002) calls on all institutions of higher learning to develop African languages. The Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:10) asserts that “everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice...”. In consensus with this, the Language Policy of the University of Limpopo (1996:3) mandates the institution, to uphold the legislative provision of multilingualism as defined and laid-out in Section 6 (1) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996), the *Language Policy and Plan for South Africa* (2000). In addition, the *National Language Policy Framework* (2002), and the Ministerial Committee’s Report on the *Development of Indigenous African Languages as Mediums of Instruction in Higher Education* (2005). However, no practical plans to meet the mandates of these language policies have been made, except in the teaching of the language as a module. Many Xitsonga university students face challenging linguistic contexts when they enter institutions of higher learning. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of students and lecturers of the use of the Xitsonga language in teaching, learning and communication at the University of Limpopo. The Xitsonga students often codemix and codeswitch during lectures and social interactions. The researcher had to identify, describe, analyse and reflect on the kinds of learning and communication practices that emerged in this context. The investigation is an ethnographic case study of the language attitudes and behaviours of the students and lecturers at the University of Limpopo. The researcher spent time with Xitsonga students and lecturers in the School of Education and in the School of Languages and Communication Studies, where Xitsonga is offered as a module. The researcher used her class in the School of Education and observed lectures in the School of Languages and Communication Studies to develop a case, which can be used to enrich an understanding of other cases. The study was qualitative in nature within interpretivism paradigm. Research techniques namely interviews, documentary analysis

and observations were used for data collection. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and thick descriptions were used to analyse the data coded into themes to highlight the power play between English and the indigenous languages, with particular reference to Xitsonga. The results indicated that the environment at the University of Limpopo does not afford Xitsonga students the desire and motivation required to communicate in Xitsonga. The researcher also observed that language is only recognised for greeting purposes and cultural activities. As such, most Vatsonga students do not contribute to the development of the language. The study therefore recommends that the institution language policy be revised and implemented accordingly to cater appropriate use of the SOVENGA languages.

Keywords: *Language Learning, Communication, Xitsonga, Indigenous African Languages, Language Policy, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation, Motivation, Attitude, SOVENGA*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE THESIS

1. APS: Admission Point Score
2. B.Ed. SPF: Bachelor of Education Senior Phase and Further Education
3. BA: Bachelor of Arts
4. CAPS: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
5. CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis
6. HCEP: Method of Xitsonga Teaching
7. HETA: Xitsonga for Education
8. HL: Home Language
9. HMXA: Method of Xitsonga
10. HTSA: Xitsonga Literature and Culture
11. HTSO: Xitsonga Linguistics
12. LANGCOM: School of Languages and Communication Studies
13. LL: Linguistic Landscape
14. MOI: Medium of Instruction
15. NLP: National Language Policy
16. PGCE: Post Graduate Certificate in FET Teaching
17. SASA: South African Schools Act
18. SOE: School of Education
19. UL: University of Limpopo
20. XLRDC: Xitsonga Language Research and Development Centre
21. XLU: Xitsonga Lexicography Unit
22. XNLU: Xitsonga National Lexicography Unit
23. ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Wa Thiong'o (1986), declared that the idea of English as a language of liberation was mainly used as a means of gaining supremacy by the then apartheid government in Africa. In light of this, foreign languages were imposed on African people in order to control their minds, as part of the process of entrenching the colonial system of imperialism. In addition, Wa Thiong'o (1986) said that it is not possible to decolonise African minds through the use of foreign languages. Thus, foreign languages cannot be languages used in the liberation of colonised people. This study is based on the argument that, although African languages are being standardised, little effort is being made to develop them as languages of teaching, learning and communication especially in institutions of higher learning.

South Africa boasts 11 official languages, but it is only English and Afrikaans that have stood the test of time as languages of instruction in higher education. In 2017, South African Sign Language (SASL) gained official status as the 12th official language in South Africa. Subsequent to this, a Language Policy was developed at the University of Limpopo (UL) to guide the governance of languages to be used in teaching, learning and communication. The policy's main aim was to ensure parity between languages and to promote the equitable use of English, Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Setswana, isiNdebele and Afrikaans as the main languages used at the University (University of Limpopo Language Policy, 2006).

At UL, Xitsonga is taught as a module in the B.Ed. SPF degree as HETA (Xitsonga for Education), HMXA (Method of Xitsonga) and in the Post Graduate Certificate in Education programme as HCEP (Method of Xitsonga teaching). Xitsonga is also taught to prospective teachers of Xitsonga Home Language in the School of Education, to BA and BA and Communication Studies students as HTSO (Xitsonga Linguistics) and as HTSA (Xitsonga Literature and Culture) in the School of Languages and Communication

Studies. In the same vein, Xitsonga is taught to the native speakers of this language as a subject or Home Language (HL) in most primary and high schools. This is in line with the Department of Basic Education's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011), which stresses that the language of learning in all grades, from Grades R-12, should include all 11 official languages in South Africa. Moreover, CAPS is in line with the multilingual language awareness of the South African government. As a result, one cannot ignore the fact that language is a tool used for thought and communication. It is through language that cultural diversity and social relations are expressed and constructed. Furthermore, the CAPS document states that learning to use a language effectively can enable learners to think critically and construct knowledge in order to express their identity, feelings, ideas, and to interact with others, and to manage their world.

To this end, the Department of Arts and Culture has recognised a number of institutions where the Xitsonga language can be developed. Some of these institutions are functional while others are not. These institutions include institutions such as the Xitsonga Lexicography Unit (XLU) and the Xitsonga Language Research and Development Centre (XLRDC), which is situated at the Tivumbeni Multi-purpose Centre in Nkowankowa, East of Tzaneen. The latter has since closed in January 2009, due to bad planning and conflict within the National Department of Arts and Culture in 2008. The XLU, and other similar units for the Tshivenda and Sepedi languages, for example, have been operational since 2005 to date.

To a broad extent language practice in different countries makes each country unique. In view of this, Australia is a nation with a unique, complex and rich linguistic situation based on its history and geography that is highly populated by immigrants. English has always been entrenched as the *de facto* national language along with a number of indigenous languages. English as such has the same dominating role over the world. In Australia, there are more than 300 indigenous languages which are dominated by English (Lo Bianco and Slaughter 2009).

In Chile, the predominant language is Spanish. English is a language for commercial benefits and is even taught in most schools. Consequently, English is unpopular in popular tourist destinations. This shows that Chile values its indigenous languages

because the country benefits economically from tourists. Interaction with tourist's language wise, is easy because they are not compelled to use English as a means of interaction. Hlúšek (2011) asserts that there are a number of indigenous languages in Mexico but they all belong to a marginalised group of languages and they are underdeveloped regardless of the number of their users. This case is similar to that of South Africa. There are a number of indigenous languages but they do not enjoy the same status regardless of stipulation in the Constitution (1996).

Samuelson (2012) attests that Rwanda's new language policy has dropped French as an official language, shifting to a monolingual English medium of instruction. The shift only caters for Kinyarwanda which is taught as a subject in universities. Also, Botswana has 29 languages (Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2013), but its Constitution states that English is the official language while Setswana is the language that is mostly used. The other languages, according to Anderson and Jason (1997), are almost totally neglected.

After Cameroon gained its independence from the joint colonial masters, French and English were declared its official languages. Bilingualism in these two languages was deemed a priority and little attention was paid to the 279 indigenous languages (Abongdja 2013). The language practice as reflected in few countries above attest to the challenges and struggles endured by some indigenous languages as languages of learning and communication in educational institutions.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The University's Language Policy recognises Xitsonga as medium of instruction (MoI), yet there seems to be a reluctance by students to use this language for teaching and learning. Nkhwashu (2011), as well as Nkhwashu, Madadzhe and Kubayi (2015) attested to this negative attitude. The unwillingness of Xitsonga students to use their home language freely places English in a more prestigious position, leading to subtractive bilingualism. Makamu (2009) points out that first language speakers of African languages on the Turfloop Campus of the University of Limpopo do not use their source languages. This occurs because these students hold negative attitudes towards their source languages. By source languages, Makamu (2009) is referring to the SOVENGA languages, namely, Sotho, Venda and Xitsonga. The source language concerning this

study is Xitsonga. In view of this, Makamu (2009) argues that people prefer English because they regard it as a language of power, pointing out that this attitude puts African languages at a disadvantage, which is disturbing to this researcher. In this regard, the researcher was triggered to attempt to find a way of decolonising this mind-set, a mindset that goes against the quest for multilingualism.

The idea for this study developed from the researcher's observation that some Xitsonga lecturers and students from the Language Education department and the Department of Xitsonga have a negative attitude towards their own Xitsonga language. It may also be interesting to note that even postgraduate students in the Language Education department are compelled to use English in the writing of their research reports, dissertations and theses. In view of this, this researcher was eager to establish why this attitude and behaviour towards the Xitsonga language persists.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Aim of the study

The study set out to investigate the perceptions of students and lecturers on the use of Xitsonga as a language of teaching, learning and communication at the University of Limpopo.

1.3.2 Objectives of the study

To achieve the aim, the following objectives guided the study:

- i. Identify different motivations with which Xitsonga students at UL approach the study of Xitsonga.
- ii. Establish different motivations with which Xitsonga lecturers at UL approach the teaching of Xitsonga.
- iii. Describe what the linguistic landscape says about the university's language policy.
- iv. Determine how the language of teaching and learning influences planning, policy development and policy implementation at the University of Limpopo.

1.3.3 Research Assumptions

A number of assumptions, which affect language learning, underpinned this study:

1. The languages used at home, and the frequencies of their use, influences attitudes (Morgan, 1993);
2. The number of languages used at UL, and the coefficient attached to them, affects the motivation and attitudes of students and lecturers (Cummins, 2000);
3. The student environment, in terms of parents, government policy, and friends (i.e. the socio-cultural context), can either help to develop a negative or a positive attitude in the student and, to a certain extent, would determine their motivation in the learning (Spolsky, 1989); and
4. The opinions of the students about Xitsonga, and native speakers of Xitsonga, would affect the kind of attitude they bring to the learning (Gardner, 1985; Gardner and Lambert, 1972).

1.4 ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY

The study was grounded in constructivist theory and premised by Weber and Horner's (2012) language hierarchy. These authors argue that some languages are more privileged than others. It is common to see that privileged languages easily form varieties, given that most people prefer to speak a privileged language to distinguish themselves from others (Abongdja, 2013). Based on Webber and Horner's language hierarchy, power relations come to play, which motivates the use of critical discourse analysis (CDS) as an analytical tool used in the interpretation of results obtained in this study. The language hierarchy, which is constructivist in nature, provides a theme in which the data will be coded and interpreted. Thus, interpretivism is informed by the perspectives of the researcher, lecturers and students, which gels with constructivism. As an ethnographer, the researcher is well versed in the participant's view, which provides a mirror for interpreting the data collected. Constructivist theory focuses on the negotiation and co-construction of knowledge. The theory is embedded in the belief that the status of any language is a social construct. Thus, power relations are at the fore where life is about the survival of the fittest.

To this effect, Weber and Horner (2012: 16-20) suggested the following characterisation:

- The uses of a language can be named and broken down into ‘languages’ or varieties. There is justifiable evidence that some languages are more privileged than others.
- The *standard language ideology* is the socio-political influence and not the inherent superiority that determines which language is privileged over the other.
- Social conditions determine what constitute good or bad language use.
- Language is judged based on the territorial boundaries and national identity.
- There is a common belief that the speakers of a language only have one mother tongue.

Weber and Horner (2012) concluded that the fear of a linguistic heterogeneity, and of social conditions, are translated into practices, with social challenges for the entire community. In this case, the entire community comprises the Xitsonga students and lecturers at the University of Limpopo.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is framed within the interpretivism paradigm. Interpretivism affords researchers an opportunity to understand the world of human experience (Cohen & Manion, 1994). They discover reality through the views, background and experiences of the participants in their research. Willis (2007:110) argued that the goal of interpretivism is to value subjectivity, while interpretivists eschew the idea that objective research on human behaviour is possible.

The approach to data analysis was qualitative in nature. This method is based on information expressed in words and other non-numerical data (Walliman, 2016). The choice of this research method was based on the fact that feelings, attitudes and issues of language ideologies cannot be measured numerically. Therefore, the study can only be well informed by digging deeper in order to arrive at some form of cause and effect in an attempt to understand why certain things are the way they are.

1.5.1 Research design

Punch (2009:112) posited that research design is a basic plan for a piece of research. He stressed that design includes four important features, namely; strategy, conceptual framework, subject or object of the research and method. This investigation is an ethnographic case study of the language attitudes and behaviours of Xitsonga students and lecturers at the University of Limpopo. The researcher spent time with Xitsonga students and lecturers in the School of Education (SoE) and the School of Languages and Communication Studies (LANGCOM). The researcher used the class she teaches in the SoE and observed lecturers from the LANGCOM which, is referred to as the Mainstream by the UL community to present a case, which can be used to enrich an understanding of other cases.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study and its outcomes may be able to motivate the potential practice of multilingualism at the University of Limpopo. It is anticipated that the publication of the study will encourage Xitsonga speakers to become hands on with respect to the standardisation of their language through nurturing the variety of dialects that Xitsonga encompasses. This researcher, therefore, envisages that Xitsonga will be sustained and developed through these dialects. Again, the study may encourage Xitsonga authors and users of this language to embark on projects, such as neologism. Neologism is the creation and use of new words to enhance the development of a language's generic and technical dictionaries, in this case, Xitsonga, through the Xitsonga National Lexicography Unit (XNLU).

The novelty of this study is to call the attention of policy makers to the perceptions and attitudes of indigenous African language users towards African languages with the aim of the actual realisation of the University of Limpopo Language Policy. Needless to emphasise that the predominant use of English over the SOVENGA languages is an aspiration of the University of Limpopo, as well as South Africa. If the perceptions and attitudes of the users are well understood, there is a possibility that the linguistic landscape, as a whole, will change and that the institution's policy will be adhered to.

Moreover, the study will make a contribution to national and international countries as lack of the use of multilingualism is a worldwide problem.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section outlines key concepts and their definitions as they were used in the study, as follows:

Communication is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behaviour. The term communication has been derived from the Latin "communis," which means "common". So, to communicate means to make common, to make known, or to share, and includes verbal, non-verbal and electronic means of human interaction. (Velentzas and Broni, 2014)

Indigenous language is a language native to a country (Department of Arts and Culture, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the researcher concentrated on the African language spoken at the University of Limpopo (UL) with special reference to Xitsonga.

Home language (HL) is the language, which is spoken most frequently at home by a learner (DBE, 2010:3). The language is sometimes referred to as a mother tongue.

Language is a system of words used in a speech community, by people, in naming the world around them, their interaction with nature and with each other in the process of production of the goods and services necessary for their survival. Language differentiates human beings from animal species, so language is the communicative gift of being human. To this view, Santana (2016) cautions that human beings should ask themselves that what sort of roles the concept of language plays in linguistic theory and practice.

Language of learning refers to the language medium in which learning and teaching, including assessment, takes place (DBE, 2010:3). According to Alexander (1999), language of learning refers to the language used by the teacher and the pupils for learning and teaching activities in the formal classroom. The Language of Learning and Teaching

(LoLT) is also known as the Medium of Instruction (MoI) in a particular institution of learning.

A lecturer is an academic rank within many universities. The meaning of the term varies somewhat from country to country. The term lecturer generally denotes an academic expert who is hired to teach on a full- or part-time basis. A special reference to a lecturer in terms of this study is an academic who teaches Xitsonga.

Student is a person who is studying at a university or other place of higher education. Reference to the study are Xitsonga students who are doing their final year and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education.

Perceptions vary from person to person. Different people perceive different things about the same situation. Nevertheless, more than that, people assign different meanings to what they perceive and the meanings might change for a certain person. One might change one's perspective or simply make things mean something else.

Xitsonga is one of the 12 official languages in South Africa spoken mostly by people in the Limpopo and part of the Mpumalanga provinces where the language is taught in schools as a Home Language. The two provinces are made reference to because students enrolled in the UL mainly come from these provinces. The official languages of the Republic of South Africa are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) with South African Sign Language which gained its status in 2018.

1.8 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

1.8.1 CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL ORIENTATION

Chapter one provides the general orientation and the introductory background to the problem under study. The problem statement of the study was outlined and the research objectives identified. The rationale, as well as the purpose of the study was highlighted. The research theory, methods, the research design and the limitations of the study was

presented. In this chapter, the significance of the study, key concepts and the structure of the thesis was outlined.

1.8.2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter interrogates the concept of perceptions and language ideologies, and how they are similar to language attitude and motivation. Language policy, planning and evaluation within the framework of responses to multilingualism alongside language learning will also be discussed. The chapter will address the relevance and values of research on perceptions, communication and language ideologies, particularly in relation to their influences on national, regional and institutional language policy and planning. The chapter will further reveal the necessity for an understanding of language attitude in multilingual spaces, such as the case study in this thesis. Finally, the chapter will signpost an overview of the major and reciprocal roles played by language policy and planning in the shaping of different perceptions towards particular languages.

1.8.3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter three will provide an account of the empirical research methodology and explain the research population and how it was sampled. The research objectives of the study will be presented in this chapter. A detailed discussion of the paradigm, as well as research design for the study, will also be discussed. The chapter will also provide details of the research methods used for the data collection, as well as the justification for the inclusion of individuals into the study sample. This chapter will comment on how interviews, observation and documentary analysis were conducted and used respectively. The issues of sampling, ethical considerations as well as limitations that guided the study will also be highlighted.

1.8.4 CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, data collected through the interviews, documents and observation of lectures and generally within the UL environment will be presented and analysed.

1.8.5 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS OF DATA

This chapter will focus on a discussion of findings of data presented in Chapter 4.

1.8.6 CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will present a summary of the study findings, implications of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research. This chapter will also open a new field for the study of perceptions on the use of indigenous African languages as languages of learning and communication and will provide contributions to the international literature in this area of study.

1.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter one discussed the general orientation of the study. The background and the rationale for conducting the study were discussed. More importantly, the key concepts that shape the study were also discussed and overview of the layout of the study was provided. The next chapter unpacks the literature that was reviewed in relation to the research topic and to the research questions posed in the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the perceptions of students and lecturers on the use of Xitsonga as language of learning and communication in one of the universities in South Africa. The chapter further looked at what would assist both lecturers and students concerning the use of Xitsonga at the university level. Consequently, the current chapter that is chapter two would interrogate the notion of perceptions rooted in language ideology and their effect on individual language attitudes and motivation for learning a particular language. Recognising this fact, the researcher will, in this chapter, attempt to explore some of the works from literature that have attempted to address some aspects of interest to this research. In view of this, the researcher was eager to interrogate students' and lecturers' perceptions on the use of Xitsonga as the language of learning and communication at the University of Limpopo.

Based on the socio-cultural context of Xitsonga as one of the SOVENGA languages within the University of Limpopo, it is important to note that practices and experiences of an individual or a group can influence language usage in a particular setting. This is supported by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of human learning, Vygotsky described learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture. The major theme of the socio-cultural theory is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). For Vygotsky, although biological factors constitute the necessary pre-requisite for elementary processes to emerge, sociocultural factors are indispensable for elementary natural processes to develop. Vygotsky argued for the uniqueness of the social milieu and regarded sociocultural settings as the primary and determining factor in the development of higher forms of human mental activity, such as voluntary attention, intentional memory, logical thought, planning, and problem solving. Base on the above the study positioned itself by scrutinizing the following concepts:

2.2 PERCEPTION

Damask and Mellet (1982:21) described perception as a cognitive act in the cognitive relationship between man and world, accomplished through the senses. In other words, perception is a sensory act in which the real world is visibly involved. To Very (1984), senses are the medium through which one makes contact with the perceived object, the perceived object in this study being the Xitsonga language as a module and as a subject taught in schools. Xitsonga is a subject that both Xitsonga lecturers and students must teach and study respectively. In order to attain effective output. Roth and Frisby (1986) noted that an environment plays an important role because that which is perceived is transformed into experiences of objects, events, sounds, taste and smell. To this effect, Barkhuizen (2002) examined the perceptions of high school perceptions of the status and role of Xhosa (an indigenous African language) and English in an educational context. He surveyed 2 825 students at 26 high schools throughout the Eastern and Western Cape provinces. These Xhosa high school students were being instructed in their mother tongue, while learning English as a second language. Barkhuizen discovered that students preferred English as a second language. Dyers (1999), in her study of Xhosa university students' attitudes towards South African languages, observed a similar pattern. The two studies looked at mother tongue as the medium of instruction. However, this study concentrated on teaching and learning in a Xitsonga lecture context and its status within the environment of UL. The context of this study is related to that of the abovementioned studies. In this study, perception is used to denote responses of thought, belief or opinion.

2.3 ATTITUDE

Closely related to the study of perception is the attitude that students bring to the language-learning situation. Makamu (2010) investigated the attitudes of UL students towards more than four source languages, namely, English, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Makamu focused on these languages in order to determine the prevalence of attitudes towards the use of their source languages. The aim of the study was to find out why students preferred to use English in a context where they could make use of their mother tongue. The analysis indicated that, while English is recognised as the dominant

language in South Africa and, more specifically, in the domain of education, some categories of respondents acknowledge the usefulness of their source languages.

Nkhwashu, Madadzhe and Kubayi (2015) complement Makamu when they examined the acceptability of using Xitsonga as a medium of instruction for teaching and learning (Mol) at the University of Limpopo. Their study determined whether the introduction of Xitsonga as a Mol would be tenable and desirable at the aforementioned university. The data collected indicated that the majority of Xitsonga speakers at UL believe that Xitsonga should not be used as a Mol in higher education.

Nkhwashu et al (2015), concluded that mother tongue education enhances, rather than diminishes learning, including the learning of additional languages.

Langa (2005) conducted a research study, which dealt with learners' attitudes towards the use of Northern Sotho at the Capricorn High School, Limpopo Province. The study concentrated on how learners felt about their source languages compared to English as a medium of instruction. Similarly, the study concentrated on the learners' use of Northern Sotho in the classroom, during the learning process and when communicating with friends. Langa found out that learners believed that they would gain more knowledge if they did their studies in English instead of in their source language. In addition, the study recommended that the South African government should take a number of steps to ensure the recognition of all languages in South Africa. The study further recommended that the government should make an effort to elevate African languages to the same level as English. The Langa (2005) study is relevant to this study because the circumstances under which this research was conducted were similar to those observed by Langa.

Mabila (2007) reviewed the case of some learners and their attitudes towards the use of mother tongue at the Capricorn High School in Polokwane, Limpopo. In an interview with (Sunday Times, 22 July, 2001), he noted that a 16-year-old learner had said to him: "We don't find our mother tongue that important. You don't make overseas calls in your mother tongue; you don't use it in everyday life. It's not useful". This is evidence that many children do not see the importance of African languages in their lives. English, to them, is the only language, which has a positive impact in their lives. Mabila (2007: 29) went on to note that "what is interesting is that it is not only the learners who project negative

attitudes towards learning mother tongue. Some black parents want English for their children and are vocally opposed to the introduction of African languages".

Barkhuizen (2001) undertook a study on learners of isiXhosa as a first language in Western and Eastern Cape secondary schools. The study confirmed that the majority of the learners thought that it was important to study isiXhosa, mainly for integrative reasons. Barkhuizen also noted two factors that may undermine the support for IsiXhosa as a school subject: the way IsiXhosa is taught as a subject and the difference between the language variety studied in school ("deep" IsiXhosa) and the one students speak. To Barkhuizen there was no clear orientation towards an English-only policy and space was left for the definition of a possible role for isiXhosa as an additional language of teaching.

Madadzhe and Sepota (2007) noted that negative attitudes towards African languages play a major role in their unpopularity. Their study shows that African languages are mainly associated with backwardness, poverty and inferiority. They also noted that this negative attitude towards African languages might be attributed to the changes taking place in South Africa at the time. Currently South Africa and the corporate world in particular, are emphasizing courses that will ensure competitive advantage in the global business context, due to the dynamics of globalization. It is, therefore, not surprising that more attention is given to courses that are seen to yield immediate financial benefits. According to this point of view, African languages are definitely not considered courses that yield immediate financial benefits. In a wider context, it is undeniable that African languages should be beneficial to their speakers, but they are, nevertheless perceived to be of no value. This leads to a negative attitude amongst both students and parents.

Madadzhe and Sepota proposed that, while they see a need for the continuation of African languages as courses to be offered at universities, their study did not deny the importance of English. They suggested, however, that the emphasis on the teaching of English should not be done at the expense of African languages.

Webb (1992) provided a useful summary of language attitude studies conducted prior to 1992, the year in which the shift in politics was reflected in the broadening of the field of South African linguistics. Webb identified a number of indicators of language attitudes in South Africa, namely, language behaviour, social judgements, policy preference and

institutional support. Language behaviour was revealed by the respondents' knowledge of South African languages, language preferences, code mixing and language shift. In this analysis, Webb revealed that Afrikaans displayed a far larger degree of code-mixing as well as borrowing than English. Webb felt that this mainly one-directional mixing of Afrikaans with English is a further indication of the social relationship between the languages concerned and, therefore, of language attitudes.

While Webb has no information about language shift among Black communities, he revealed a strong shift towards English in the Coloured communities, even among those with wholly monolingual parents. However, studies involving Black respondents prior and post 1992 by scholars such as Cummins (1981), Amastae (1990) Dyers (2008), Schlettwein (2015), to name a few revealed evidence of a language shift towards English. This can only mean that most Africans are not proud of their languages; hence the shift towards English.

It is important to note that the above authors are either in support of the introduction of African languages as Mol or in support of the general usage of those languages in different teaching and learning environments. Thus, this study acknowledges that African languages are recognised as subjects in schools and modules in institutions of higher education. The study restricts itself to the perception of Xitsonga student-teachers and their lecturers' behaviour in the preparation of an ideal Xitsonga Home language teacher.

2.4 MOTIVATION

Closely related to the study of attitudes is the *motivation* that students bring to the language learning situation. According to Gardner (1985), one might think that those with favourable attitudes would be more attentive and more serious than those with negative attitudes, however, such attitudes might not be related to achievement. An individual could hold positive attitudes, but prefer not to study the language at school because of a dislike of the teacher.

Norris-Holt (2001:1) defined language attitudes and motivation as "the learner's orientation with regards to the goal of learning a second language". Norris-Holt thought of motivation as one of the factors that combine with other factors to influence a learner's

success. He alluded to one of Gardner's (1985) theories, which identified the linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes of the learning experience. A linguistic outcome refers to the actual language knowledge and language skill, while non-linguistic outcomes reflect an individual's attitudes concerning cultural values and beliefs towards the target language community.

Macaro (2003:93) believed that, from the 1990s, there has been a shift in the perception of motivation. He said that motivation was being perceived in a way that it incorporated cognition. This could be supported by the following question he proposed: "Does greater cognitive performance (for example greater powers of vocabulary memorization and instant recall) lead to finding the subject relatively easy ...?"

The researcher, however, differs from Macaro because, in her view, motivation or enthusiasm on the part of the lecturer goes a long way to encourage the students to like the subject. A lecturer who is highly motivated will encourage the students and vice versa. Subsequently, motivation must also be initiated by the surroundings of a particular environment. To this effect, Vesely (2000: 71) contended that the more accessible African languages were in the public environment, the higher their status would become, and the negative impact of hegemony of English would be minimized. She was of the view that, only when a commitment towards language inclusiveness is made, would attitudes change and policy manifests, would education and employment become accessible to African language speakers, and transformation would truly be underway. Thus, Vesely, like Alexander (2000), was an exponent of mother tongue and the use of African language in more important domains, which would certainly benefit the majority of speakers of African languages.

2.5 IDEOLOGIES AND LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

Before the researcher addresses the issue of language ideologies, an understanding of the concept *ideology* is useful. Irvine (1989) defined ideologies as the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with the loading of moral and political interests. In this definition, the emphasis is on 'moral and political interests' that underpin societal ideologies. In light of this, ideologies cannot exist outside the power relationships in any society.

Fairclough (2003) noted that, if ideologies are primary representations, they could nevertheless also be ‘enacted’ in ways of acting socially, and ‘inculcated’ in the identities of social agents. It is to this effect that Fairclough (2004) suggested that a textual analysis should be framed with respect to a social analysis, which can consider bodies of texts in terms of their effects on power relations. Thus, because ideologies can also have durability and sustainability which transcends individual texts or bodies of texts, the focus for this study should be seen as a social practice. The language policies in South Africa are a reflection of this power play. In considering the particular ideologies of language that inform the current language policy in South Africa, the most significant is the conception of languages as stable, bounded entities clearly differentiated from one another. Makoni (1999) pointed out the continuities between apartheid linguistic engineering, where language was used as a divide and rule strategy, and the official enshrining of a particular list of 11 official languages, which gives room for choice of language usage. Therefore, these languages policies are a reflection of this power play.

In this study, ideologies of language are an essential part of ideologies in other domains of human activity, such as the creation of language policies and attempts to implement them. This study also has a significant contribution to make in the perception of language usage in any speech community. In doing so, one might draw from works on language ideologies from two sets of researchers: linguistic anthropologists, such as Kroskrity, Schieffelin and Woolard (1992); Fairclough (1992); and sociolinguists, such as Weber and Horner (2012) and Myers-Scotton (2006).

According to Wortham (2001), contemporary linguistic anthropology sees language ideologies as a fertile area for research in terms of its theoretical insights and empirical contributions. Educational research by various scholars indicate that the study of ideologies is relevant to understanding why people behave as they do, and how ideologies can unlock new understandings in order to emancipate previous injustices. Interrogating Xitsonga students and lecturers about the wellbeing of their language can give insights into, and an understanding of, why and what should be done to correct the status of the language itself. Wortham (2001) held that cultural anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists have increasingly used language and discourse as explanatory constructs in theories as an identity. Based on the explanatory constructs

mentioned, the researcher construed that language has a role to play in identity development and learning. Communicating thoughts and ideas in Xitsonga in an appropriate manner in various situations within the university is of utmost importance because different ethnic groups can then be in a position to follow and understand information being shared.

Through personal observation, since the researcher was a student at the institution from 1993, the University of Limpopo, as a multilingual and multicultural community, practices imbalances regarding the usage of the languages. Xitsonga is only used in gatherings in order to pass on greetings as if the only function of the language is to communicate greetings. If efforts are made to communicate in writing, the greeting expression is wrongly spelled. This will be discussed chapter 4. It is rare to find an incorrectly spelled expression of English, even in the linguistic landscapes that represent the university. Sadly, some of the Xitsonga speakers are victims of the same practice where they misspell Xitsonga expressions but do not misspell the English ones. The above relates well with the behaviour of some Xitsonga students and lecturers as, to some extent, they are overshadowed by counter discourses and settle on a preferred language of communication, either English or Sepedi.

2.6 LANGUAGE IDENTITY

Language is one of the fundamental means through which people establish their identity and shape themselves. Social groups and communities use language to identify their members and to establish their boundaries (Myers-Scotton, 2006; Thomas, Warein, Singh, Peccei, Thornborrow, and Jones 2004). Thus, language is an important instrument for the construction of individual and social identities. Like dress codes that display people's membership of a social group, there are also certain kinds of linguistic behaviours that signal people's identity in relation to a group, as well as their positions within it (Thomas et al., 2004).

West (1992: 46) contended that identity relates to desire, the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation and for security and safety. He goes on to say that, people's access to material resources determines how they articulate their desires. Thus, a person's

identity may shift depending on changes in his/her social and economic status. This may also imply a shift to a different, perhaps more socially prestigious, language. Such shifts have also been reported on in South Africa (Dalvit, Murray, Mini, Terzoli and Zhao, 2005; Heugh, 2008; Dyers, 2010). These researchers have also reported major shifts from the indigenous languages and Afrikaans to English (particularly among young people) as a result of their perceptions of English as the language of power and a key factor in gaining good jobs, education and politics; in addition to its role as a global language.

Baker (2006: 136) is of the view that, speaking a language often identifies our origins, history, membership and culture. He argues that our identity is conveyed in our language, in our expressions and engagements and in our predilections and preferences. Language is a symbol of unity, conveying our preferred distinctiveness and allegiance. He holds that our identities are reframed, developed and sometimes challenged, as situations change because we do not establish our identities in isolation. In this regard, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 21) held that identity is more or less imposed, assumed and negotiated. An imposed identity is one that is often forced on an individual by those in power, for example, the religious identity of a family, which the children have to accept; while an assumed identity is one that people generally accept as one that they feel comfortable with. Negotiable identities can, according to Ferris (2013:373) be contested or debated. Baker (2006) held that some people hate to be called members of a minority language group because, like the concepts 'minority ethnic group' and 'cultural minorities', the term carries a negative stigma, implying that the language and its speakers have less status than those of the majority group who would also be less inclined to learn the minority language. Sadly, some of the Xitsonga students and lecturers are caged in this axiom.

2.7 IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Identity and culture, in terms of this study, is to be constructed through discourse. This explains why the notion of identity is a responsive concept, which is only understood within a given context, through an ethnographic study, because it means different things to different people. It is useful for the purpose of this study to look at personal identity, cultural identity and social identity. These different forms of identities have been created by the different contexts of interactions that can be referred to as culture.

Identity is seen as socially constructed, something we “do” rather than something we “are” (Ochs, 1993). We “do” different identities in different contexts and, therefore, we have multiple identities, rather than a single identity. Identity, therefore, should be regarded as a cover word for a range of personae, including statuses, roles, positions, relations, institutional and other relevant community identities that one claims or assigns in the course of one’s social life (Ochs, 1993:288). Identity is also constituted in our discourses through our conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions, where our sense of the self is constantly reconstituted in discourse each time that we speak or think (Weedon, 1987:32). Individuals are known to negotiate their identities with others in order to attain competence in interpersonal and intercultural interactions. In light of this, the researcher argues that it is not sufficient for an individual to look at the self as constituting a particular identity; others must also recognize the identity as well. Individuals are capable of taking up or resisting identities that are assigned to them. At this stage, some Xitsonga students and lecturers only identify themselves with the language through the established cultural group, the Tinyungubysi Cultural Society. This society’s main activity is to organise and perform Xitsonga cultural activities.

2.8 INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

A functional life-story is one that can address the issue of personal identity by describing how a person has come to be the current self by the remembering and interpreting past experiences. This idea was endorsed by Karniol and Ross (1996). They further asserted that individuals often react to the present as if they were reliving the past. The past, as represented in people’s memories and in their conceptions of history, can also influence motivation. The stories that people construct about their lives is influenced by how they see themselves at a particular time. In this sense, identity is a life story (Whitty, 2002). Narrative and self are inseparable in that the former is borne out of experience, while the self gives shape to experience. Narrative, in this sense, is considered as a version of reality and, as such, is an essential resource in the struggle to bring experiences to conscious awareness (Ochs & Capps, 1996).

Karniol and Ross (1996: 593) were also of the opinion that, in order for one to examine conceptions of the future, it is important to determine how the individuals in question

bridge the present and the future. The past is central to their argument, in that it is a view of the past that people tend to project onto certain future goals. This is a common occurrence in an ethnographic study. These authors use the concept of the motivational push of the past to capture the significant impact that this aspect has on an individual's life. They investigated the impact of current goals on recall, as well as individual differences in using the past. It is specifically these aspects of this study that resonate with the current study being carried out. In this regard, an individual's story is a subjective construction of episodes filtered by the narrator's perception and understanding of relevance of those events, activities and decisions mentioned. Telling the story, therefore, implies making sense of a number of single stories that are temporally and/or causally connected, by integrating them into the large context.

Whitty (2002) also suggested that, when an identity is conceptualized as a life story, researchers should also consider story-writing methods in their investigations into identity-formation. According to Whitty, to know a person, therefore, is to know the story that person has been participating in. In view of this, making sense of others requires knowing their subjective experience, as people live in and through their stories. What this implies is that identity is a life story. It becomes apparent to the researcher that this combination of features of the life-history, alternatively referred to here as a 'narrative', can become a suitable investigative tool to be used in a study of this nature.

2.9 CULTURE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Varner and Beamer (2005:5) defined culture as the coherent, learned, shared view of a group of people about life's concerns which ranks what is important, furnishes attitudes about what things are appropriate and dictates behaviour. Therefore, we as humans are capable of changing for better or worse. If we are brought up to respect our cultures, then we can also respect other cultures around us. The issue is that we need to understand that no two cultures are the same, and none of these cultures is more superior to the other. The need for negotiation is determined by its use and, as such, can account for the reasons why some cultural baggage is usually picked up or dropped off during teaching and learning.

People continue to encounter difficulties when they meet and interact with a diverse other or when they interact with a radically different corporate culture. To this effect, Jameson (2007) confirmed that it is more difficult to recognize the impact of culture on one's own values, attitudes and behaviour than it is to recognize in the impact of culture on others. According to Foncha (2009), culture does not only connect people but, rather, it defines them as unique individuals. In view of this, people tend to gain a sense of self through relationships with others. It is important to consider how relationships modify a person's cultural identity. Social elements, therefore, account for a change over time and can acknowledge the impact of power and privilege in identity construction.

Usually, ignorance of cultural awareness and sensitivity can lead to subjective identity, ethnocentrism and its extreme form of xenophobia. Subjective identity, in this case, encompasses what Triandis (1989) referred to as personal and collective identity. Personal identity refers to the sense of self-derived from personality, character, spirit and style. As such, Ting Toomey (2005:212) viewed personal identity as the unique elements that we associate with our individuated self. In view of Ting Toomey's assertion, personal identity here can only be understood qualitatively because it is very subjective and context based. Collective identity, in contrast, is what Foncha (2013) refers to a sense of self derived from formal or informal membership of groups, such as the participants in this study. Moreover, Foncha (2013) accentuates that, the argument above needs to include both cultural and social aspects as being related, but not the same. To Foncha (2013), cultural identity involves a historical perspective that focuses on the transmission of knowledge and values between generations, whereas social identity is anchored in a particular moment in time. In addition, Foncha (2013) points out that social identity is rooted in acts and stances of each individual, based on their community's morality. Based on these explanations, it is useful to look at the notion of language for a better understanding of identity, since language is the medium through which identity is constructed and ascribed or avowed to individuals.

Language, in this sense, defines cultural groups, as well as being the most frequently used symbolic system through which cultures are conveyed. Sapir (1970:69) believed that we see and hear and otherwise experience largely as we do because the language habits of our community predisposes certain choices of interpretation. People use multiple discourse systems related to their membership in cultural groups as they make

choices about how to communicate (Brown, 2007). Brown also emphasised the fact that the human mind is mediated, thus humans use tools or signs and symbolic artefacts to regulate, mediate and alter relationships with others, the world and ourselves.

In view of the standpoints examined earlier, the field of perspective needs a stronger focus on the understanding of the “self”, primarily, before an understanding “other”. This means that cultural identity is an individual’s sense of the self that must have been derived from formal or informal membership of groups and which transmitted and inculcated knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions and ways of life (Jameson, 2007). Thus, a study of “other” is a study of “self” in relation to the “other”. A broad conception of cultural identity should not privilege nationality but, instead, should try to balance components related to vocation, class, geography, philosophy, language and the social aspects of biology. Cultural identity can change over time, mainly through negotiation and renegotiation. It can be intertwined with power and privilege, which might have been affected by close relationships, and negotiated through communication. Cultural identity can serve to highlight components that are directly related to intercultural communication competence, such as language, economic class and professional affiliation, as well as demonstrate how culture not only connects people but also defines them as unique individuals (Jameson, 2007). This can enrich learning in interculturally diverse contexts. Seen through the above lenses, cultural identity is, therefore, one part of a larger concept of individual identity.

2.10 LANGUAGE VARIETY

Xitsonga has different dialects, which range from Xirhonga, Xihlangane and Xitshwa. There are regional dialects from the regions of the former Gazankulu Homeland, which are Xihlave and Xinkuna spoken in Bushbuckridge, Giyani, Hlanganani and Malamulele. The language varieties are, therefore, governed by the approved orthography, where the standard variety is the official language in formal settings, for example, in teaching and learning. The existence of regional dialects of Xitsonga has a bearing in the study because, in Xitsonga lecture halls, there is a challenge related to the development of both speaking and writing as skills which needs to be addressed, as enshrined in the CAPS document policy statement. According to Anchimbe (2011: 81), colonialism had two major impacts on the linguistic status of the country. While colonialism complicated the

multilingual landscape through the introduction of written languages, whose functions were different from those of the local oral indigenous languages, it also increased opportunities for the construction of linguistic (and social) identities. As highlighted in Chapter 1, the township that grew around the university was named SOVENGA, an acronym for the Sothos, Vendas and Tsongas. These three ethnic groups were supposed to study at the university situated there. This implies that cultural diversity begun an existence of evolution of home languages and status as witnessed in the *status quo* of the communication activities within the university.

2.11 LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

Education is the basis for mass participation, social mobility, manpower training and the development of human potential, among other benefits (Bambose, 1991:62). The issue of language always crops up when dealing with schooling because it is mainly through language that knowledge is transmitted. However, it is saddening to note that a large portion of the population of Africa is not competent in the languages of power in their countries (Gora, 2014). A language may also be taught as a subject, not necessarily implying its use as a medium of instruction. Education must be concerned with the liberation of human potential for the welfare of, not only the individual, but also the community at large. Language empowers the speakers of that language. African language speakers should learn their own languages and acquire the skill of using these languages. This becomes very important in managing and developing human resources (Mutasa, 2006). The introduction of a language in education is closely tied to levels of education, that is, preschool, primary, secondary or tertiary levels (Gora, 2014). It is possible to introduce language as a subject at any of these four levels. For a language to be used at a level, it should have been taught as a subject at a level lower than the one in question, as a case at UL Xitsonga where is taught as a module. The above is relevant to the present study because a language should help students grasp new knowledge and apply the new knowledge to real life situations beyond the classroom.

2.12 LANGUAGE LEARNING

Participation in language learning in the context of this study involves shifting the focus of investigation from language structure to language use in context, and to the issues of

affiliation and belonging (Lantolf, 2000:156). In this regard, language learning needs to be seen as contextualized and socially constituted in what Block (2003:64) referred to as interactional and interpersonal communication at the service of the social construction of self-identity, group membership, solidarity, support and trust. The focus on language learning in this study rests on doing, knowing and becoming part of the greater whole. According to Gora and Mutasa (2015), speakers of African languages should, therefore, study and acquire the skill of using their own languages. This becomes important in human resource production for concerned professions. It means that learning does not only involve the acquisition of rules and codes, but also involves ways of acting and participating. This emphasizes an ecological and constructivist view of language, with particular reference to affordances.

In this study, language learning is part of acculturation, where the focus is on emigration. This research study is interested in exploring issues of language, identity and culture in South African universities in the country's second decade of democracy and free market economy. In addition to their diverse culture and languages, South African universities are characterized by a significant diaspora presence and multiculturalism or multilingualism in and outside lecture halls. Thus, an understanding of matters of identity in relation to language learning cannot be achieved through pre-existing models but can be explored through observing participation and listening to the voices of the participants.

Language learning in this context, therefore, is a personal journey of choice by the language learner. It is up to the participant to adapt to a new culture or not. The participants' attempts to adapt to new cultures is what Schumann (1986:379) referred to as acculturation. Acculturation is the social and psychological integration of the learner into the target language group. In view of this, the researcher is inclined to suggest that learning a language happens in direct relation to acculturation. The above argument is based on the premise that there is simply no way one can learn a language in isolation of the culture of that language.

Engagement in a target language and culture takes place when it is perceived by the learner as an expansion and an exploration of a learner's sense of self, rather than as a threat to identity or imposition of unwelcome cultural practices (Brown, 2007:47). Therefore, as mentioned earlier, language learning only takes place for instrumental or

integrative reasons on the part of students. This explains why the participants in this study were doing all they could to learn English.

2.13 LANGUAGE AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE

Emmitt and Pollock (2000) alluded to the fact that language is a social practice and part of a culture. This means that one cannot dissociate a language from the social habits of a particular community because a community functions with the use of a language. Xitsonga group of students are considered to be a community in this regard and the expectations are that the use of Xitsonga during teaching and learning determine the functionality of the class. Emmitt and Pollock also highlighted the fact that a language is inextricably tied to ideology. Gee (1990) defines ideology as a systematic body of ideas organised from a particular point of view. In any complex society, such as the UL, different ideologies operate, often competing in different discourses and texts. Emmitt and Pollock (2000) further indicated that, in this context, texts are defined as the product of any language event, in a form of a text, which can be oral, written or visual. It is through these texts that language usage is displayed.

In view of the above, certain perspectives become rooted in the language and come to be seen as natural. In this way language users' choice of preferences in making and sharing meaning are influenced. Emmitt and Pollock (2000) are of the view that through the ideologies in languages, a particular reality is produced. This, seems like common sense to the users even though it may be in conflict with another's view of the world. In this regard, human beings can be both informed and manipulated by texts, since language is a means of communication and control. Subsequently, some critical theorists like Gee (1990), Woolard and Schieffelin (1994), Kroskrity (2000), Fairclough (2003), Ricento (2006) maintain that some ideologies seem to carry more power than others, and command more attention than others. This means that in any society, some members or groups may not be in a position to speak or be heard. All texts, both oral and written involve hidden relations of power, which is the case with the SOVENGA languages at the UL. The relationship between language and culture would be discussed in details from 2.13.1 – 2.13.4 below:

2.13.1 Resemiotization

The term *resemiotization* refers to the ways in which “meaning making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or one stage of a practice to the next” (ledema, 2003:41). The concept of *resemiotization* is useful because it places emphasis on how lecturers and students take material and lived experiences in constituencies and encode them into spoken words during teaching and learning. In this study, the term “*resemiotization*” is used to refer to instances of reconceptualization from one mode of semiosis to another, while using the superordinate term “*contextualization*” for instances where knowledge is repeated in the same mode.

2.13.2 The ecological view of language

The ecological view of language can be relevant to this study because it sees language as connected to the sociocultural aspects of life. Language, in this regard, is not just the grammar or native speaker proficiency, but rather an agent through which any culture is portrayed (Foncha, 2013). Hence, an ecological view of language looks at every phenomenon of a language as an emergence and not as a reduced set of components that present phenomena in simplistic terms (van Lier, 2000). Secondly, an ecological view of language also stresses the notion that the perceptual ability and social involvement of a student can be seen in his/her interaction, which can serve as a means of learning in this context. Thirdly, an ecological view of language also supports the notion that a complete explanation of cognition and learning cannot be made based on the process that takes place inside the brain. Similarly, ecological view of language is seen as an antithesis to the rationalist/positivist positions of language. The accruing ecological view of language challenges the position that language learning is a cognitive process that relies on the brain to process information, thus shifting the emphasis from a scientific reductionism to a notion of emergence. In addition, ecological view of language says that, at every level of development, properties emerge that cannot be reduced to those of prior learning (Lantolf, 2000:246). To this end, Foncha (2013) highlights that not all cognition is explained in terms of all the processes that take place in the brain. Consequently, the perceptual and social activities of a language learner, particularly the verbal and the nonverbal interactions, are central to understanding (van Lier, 2000). In view of this,

verbal and nonverbal interactions do not only facilitate learning, they are also a learning process in a fundamental way (Lantolf, 2000:246). Therefore, each student is immersed in a space filled with meaning making potential.

This researcher is of the view that an ecological approach to language learning is important as it places interaction in a pivotal and prominent position. Interaction, from this perspective, is understood as the negotiation of meaning viewed as a learning process or as learning opportunities in this research. To this effect, Long (1996) was of the view that interaction can benefit any student by fostering an improved comprehensibility, enhanced attention and the need to produce an output. The usefulness of an ecological approach is the notion that it brings about an emergence of language learning. In terms of learning, language emerges from semiotic activity, where its context provides the ‘semiotic budget’ within which the active student engages in meaning making activities, together with other participants who are either more, equally or less competent, in linguistic terms. Semiotic budget, therefore, refers to those meaningful opportunities for action that are opened up to an active language user (van Lier, 2000). Semiotic budget is dependent on the opportunities provided for all the meaning making actions that the situation could afford, rather than on the amount of input that is harnessed for comprehension (van Lier, 2000). Deriving from the stated inputs, Xitsonga students are not an exception as they are expected to practice learning from their peers and to evaluate each other through group discussions and presentations. The complement of the group members is defined at their own discretion, as the best are familiar with each other.

2.13.3 Affordances

As indicated above, language learning is not a process of representing linguistic objects from the brain based on input received (van Lier, 2000). Hence, a human being does not have or possess language, rather a human being is capable of learning and living in language in any given context. Their environment is full of language repertoires that provide opportunities for learning and for active participation in their learning. Shotter and Newson (1982:34) summed this up in their argument that the linguistic world to which a student has access, and in which the learner is actively involved, is full of “demands and

requirements, opportunities and limitations, rejections and invitations, enablement and constraints- in short, affordances". In the context of this study, 'affordances' offer an alternative way of looking at the dynamics of a language. This suggests that an ecological approach to language can unite a number of well-established perspectives of language learning. The term 'affordances' is used to denote an aspect or quality of an ecology which can facilitate action but not necessarily cause it to happen. In this sense, affordance affords action depending on what an organism does with its environment and what it wants from its environment. However, this does not change the fundamental properties of the organism. In the same way, language can offer different affordances to its learners/users, who will find encouragement in the use of these affordances in their construction of meaning (Foncha, 2013).

In light of the above, affordance in this inquiry is viewed as a dynamism that underlies the relationship between language and its learner/user (van Lier, 2000). Xitsonga students, therefore, require a rich semiotic budget to be able to structure their activities and participation, so that access to information is made available, and engagement is encouraged.

2.13.4 Constructivist view of learning

According to Glaserfeld (2003:351), constructivism is a view of learning theory which holds that individuals acquire knowledge by building knowledge from the individual's innate capabilities by interacting with their environment. Constructivist theory suggests that, as students learn, they do not simply memorize or take on the conceptions of the reality of others; instead, they create their own meaning and understanding. Creating their own meaning and understanding serves as the rationale for this study in that they would be able to respond according to learning activities and impart what is relevant to relevant recipients at the relevant time. In the lecture halls, students use similar means to construct their own meanings from the stimuli and the inputs that are available to them. In view of this, it would appear that the task of the human brain is to make sense of an experience. Drawing on all the input and experiences, both lecturers and students are continually constructing a view of what is real and truthful. Each participant does this in a unique way, through inventiveness and creativity. Each participant, therefore, needs regular opportunities to do more than just memorize what lecturers and books convey to them. Consequently, for teaching and learning to occur, the participants need to deal with

information and experiences by putting everything together in order to make meaningful sense of the information and the experiences. According to Sivasubramaniam (2004), lecturers can only help students to acquire deep learning in the following ways: by listening to the students' ideas and by encouraging their questions; by encouraging students to actively participate in doing, discussing, and creating; by providing more than one source of information so that the students can see different perspectives and have many inputs; by encouraging students to compare and contrast ideas; and by including writing so students can think through their ideas.

Since our worldview is based on our prior knowledge (history), more than anything else is, it is essential to focus on the semiotic context in order to understand where the participants are coming from and to understand the choices that they have at their disposal. The participants in this study, as scholars, are bound to make choices from their past and present. This is not so easy for them because they need to compromise the context each time that they interact with others. This study is conceptualized mainly on language teaching and learning, along with the beliefs, intuition and values that underlie teaching and learning. The social nature of humans is, consequently, central to language use. In other words, language is an instrument for the creation of meaning, which possesses the power to create meaning afresh and anew each time that it is put to use by its users (Sivasubramaniam, 2011). Sivasubramaniam further observed that the intrinsic meaning of a word only becomes extrinsic when it is used across cultures. Therefore, language acquisition should rather be viewed as an interactive and social process

2.13.5 Translatability

Paraphrasing Hatim and Munday (2019), translatability is a comparative concept and has to do with the extent to which meaning can be adequately expressed across languages, despite obvious differences in linguistic structure (grammar and vocabulary, for example). Iser (1994) hints that translatability is necessary in a multicultural society as a struggle for dominance of foreign languages, English over African Indigenous languages is observed in such a society. Although translatability may not be a mighty force in itself, it can trigger an attempt to counteract political power which the various groups in such a

social set-up bring to bear, in order to impose their own cultural heritage upon other segments of a multicultural community. However, translatability exposes the politics operative in such a struggle for dominance and, thus, proves to be a counter-concept to both the politics inherent in culture and the politicizing of culture as a whole. Baker and Saldanha (2011) argued that different languages may package meaning differently, but ultimately all languages are able to convey all possible meanings. Paraphrasing Roman Jacobson's words, Iser (1994) confirms that all cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language and languages differ essentially in what they must convey and not in what they may convey. Given the multicultural society characteristic of this study, the researcher's desire is to enlighten Xitsonga students to the notion that, through their language, they can convey meaning at all costs. This would assist to reflect the language policies of UL and SA as discussed below:

2.14 LANGUAGE POLICY, LANGUAGE PLANNING, POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

2.14.1 Language policy

Language policies are bodies of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve some planned language change (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997: 3). Language policy may be realised in formal (overt) language planning documents and pronouncements (e.g. constitutions, legislation, policy statements, educational directives), which can be either symbolic or substantive in form, in informal statements of intent (i.e. in the discourse of language, politics and society), or language policies may be left unstated (covert). Brumfit (2006), concurs with this by indicating that all humans are born with the ability or capacity to acquire a language(s) that they are exposed to. Thus, humans have no genetic links to a particular language. Brumfit further notes that thresholds are found both between and within languages, with liminality as a characteristic of contemporary language use. Liminality is a situation where people shift from (and eventually lose) their original identity, role and positions. This happens as the liminal person moves from one place to another, dropping and acquiring new values along the way (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Turner 1982). In this regard, Xitsonga students move from their different regional areas to an institutional setup where such students are exposed to a

variety of languages and where they are expected to adhere to certain rules and standards pertaining to the formal/ standard Xitsonga.

Brumfit (2006:36,) in his research on language policy in Europe, argued that policymaking is normally aspirational and symbolic. What is significant about a policy is what is excluded, as opposed to what is included, and what is considered desirable to the policy makers. Conversely, Brumfit thought that a policy might run the risk of not being practical and not meeting the needs of the people. People's individual repertoires are modified, changed and widened because of language contact as a result of the permeability of language boundaries. Such extended repertoires frequently find no reflection in language policies.

Brumfit (2006) and Baldauf and Kaplan (1997) thought that there is a discrepancy between the language policies put in place and actual practices in reality. Instead, they contended that most policies are diametrically opposed to reality, driven by political, rather than linguistic, forces. This is in line with the ideas of Kamwangamalu (2000) and of Abongdja (2013) who said that there is a mismatch between language policy and language practice in South Africa. In addition, the official policy promotes multilingualism, but practices are shifting the country towards English monolingualism in all the higher domains of language use.

2.14.2 Language Planning

Language planning should deal with the problems of attitudes and/or perceptions of stakeholders towards some languages in a multilingual situation. This is an area of language status that is of great interest to this researcher as it is closely linked to attitude and perception of participants as subjects for the study. Bambose (1991:110) advised that, in language planning, there should be a distinction between 'policy' and 'implementation'. Decisions on language status are policy issues because such decisions generally have political and/or socioeconomic implications. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) required that the government or its agents be involved in the decision-making process. Language planning involves deliberate, although not always overt, future oriented change in systems of language code and/or speaking in a societal context. In view of this,

Mühlhausler (2000) argued that languages are not isolated systems but interact with other systems outside linguistics, systems such as culture, politics and environment. Based on this, language planning in one part of this system somehow affects the other parts of this system in one way or the other, either consciously or unconsciously. That is to say that the perception of individuals toward a language are, in a way, influenced by language planning and policy.

From Spolsky and Shohamy's (2000) standpoint, language policy is defined as "an effort by someone with or claiming authority to change the language practice (or ideology) of someone else". Thus, the policy maker has some level of authority over those expected to follow the policy. Spolsky and Shohamy were in support of Ager (1996), who saw language policy as obtaining power rather than distributing it.

2.14.3 Policy implementation, and Evaluation

To get a better understanding of the policy implementation and policy evaluation with reference to language learning and communication, a study undertaken by Chick and Wade (1997) revealed a significant swing towards English among IsiZulu-speaking school-leavers and first year university students. English invades the IsiZulu-speaking school-leavers communication which, according to Schlebusch (1994), occurs as a result of greater access to white-only schools which led to, at least a partial, language shift among the black pupils she investigated at one of the schools. De Klerk (1996) supported that lack of implementation strategies, and evaluation thereof, hence learners and students tend to become confused and neglect their African languages as they progress with their studies. To some extent, some students become loathed to speak, or be associated with, their African languages, which leads to social judgement.

Social judgements, according to Webb (1999), are revealed by stereotypes, language evaluation and sociocultural identity. Black perspectives of Afrikaans- and English-speaking white South Africans were first examined by Vorster and Proctor (1976) using the matched guise technique in order to study first year students at the University of Fort Hare. The study revealed that the respondents regarded Afrikaans-speaking whites as strict, authoritarian and unsympathetic, whereas speakers of English were seen as friendly and sympathetic. A study undertaken in the Eastern Cape by Bosch and de Klerk

(1994) among Afrikaans, English and Xhosa respondents largely confirmed this stereotypical attitude which African (Xhosa) respondents have towards Afrikaans and English speakers. Language evaluation information provided Webb with further evidence of the high-ranking that English is given in the African community, as opposed to the ranking of their own language.

Webb (1992) gave no information on the role of the socio-cultural identities of Africans in expressing their language attitudes, but the research of Chick and Wade (1997:276) revealed that IsiZulu learners turn to code-switching "to index an English identity while still retaining a Zulu identity". In other words, they speak a type of English which still clearly identifies them as Zulu, in the same way that many Cape Coloured speakers signal their identity in the way they speak English. In 1992 English was preferred as the (interim) sole official language in Cape Town, emerging as the preferred medium of instructions (MOI) in African and coloured schools. As a school subject, African pupils also regarded English to be of greater value than Afrikaans.

Institutional support from the government and cultural institutions, as well as from the media, are also, according to Webb, indicative of the status of a language in a community. In the same year (i.e. 1992), English and Afrikaans were the favoured languages of government. Afrikaans enjoyed strong support from cultural organizations in the Afrikaans community, while the African languages had "relatively" little cultural backing, being restricted to government-controlled language boards that concerned themselves with standardizing these languages and with vocabulary development (Webb, 1992:447). African readers read publications in English, rather than reading Afrikaans publications, while mainly listened to radio stations broadcasting in an African language. Webb (1999) showed that little had changed in the language behaviour of South African communities, arguing that, in its public life, South Africa is becoming monolingual. Webb gives various examples of this apparently inexorable trend, such as: the fact that almost all parliamentary business is conducted in English; that parastatal bodies, like the Post Office, the telecommunication firm, Telkom, the South African Broadcasting Corporation and South African Airways either use English exclusively or show a strong bias towards English; and that English continues to grow in the private sector. As a medium of instruction, English continues to be the preference of most learners and parents in most provinces, - a situation revealed by the research of Mawasha (1996) and Barkhuizen

(1996). All the other South African languages continue to be undervalued against English in the African and coloured communities, although pressure to improve the status and usage of these languages is beginning to be brought to bear by some sectors of the English-educated elite.

Spolsky and Shohamy (2000) thought that, if a language policy aims to change language practice, then there is a concern for studying, not just policy making, but studying the implementation and evaluation of the policy as well. For policy to be analysed, it becomes very important to evaluate its impact. It is, therefore, important to note that sometimes the statement of the policy can be more important than its effective implementation.

Phaswana (1994) restricted his research to the University of Venda's language policies, and observed that students preferred English to African languages as medium of instruction because English is perceived as a language of success in the economy, politics and in education. Phaswana confirmed that African languages continue to be marginalized: "They will only serve as subjects that the students choose for completion of their curricula" (Phaswana, 1994, 44). Phaswana advocated for indigenous African languages to be promoted as official languages of government, the economy and in education, in the true sense of the word. To Phaswana, without such affirmative action, any new language policy will fail to achieve the goal of ensuring the equality and democratization of all languages (Phaswana, 1994: 45). It is not only a matter of promoting languages; it also has to do with encouraging people to speak them, and to see the significance of using them in all aspects of life. Nkuna (2010) argued that language policies of institutions of higher learning emulate the practices of the government and concluded that there is not fit for the desired plan for developing the minority languages. Gora (2014) lamented the fact that, in most African states, no preparatory steps are undertaken to identify language problems in order to devise suitable language solutions and map possible outcomes. These ideas shed some light on how to evaluate and to what extent the policy of the University of Limpopo is implemented and evaluated.

2.15 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The chapter interrogated the concept of perceptions and language ideologies and how they are similar to language attitude and motivation. Language policy was also discussed, as was planning and evaluation within the framework of responses to multilingualism alongside language learning. In this chapter, the author addressed the relevance and values of research on perceptions, communication and language ideologies, particularly in relation to their influences on national, regional and institutional language policy and planning. The necessity for an understanding of language attitude in multilingual spaces, such as the case study in this thesis, was revealed. An overview of the major and reciprocal roles played by language policy and planning in the shaping of different perceptions towards particular languages was included in the chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was the literature review that attempted to point a broad picture and in-depth understanding of the importance of using Xitsonga as a language of learning and communication. In addition, this chapter looked at the theoretical underpinnings examined in the literature review chapter, which suggests that a study of perceptions can best be understood qualitatively. Respectively speaking, it is because the perspectives are context based and can only be understood from a participant's point of view. In view of this, the researcher affirmed her faith in the interpretivists view of language learning, where language teaching would be seen as a fundamental factor that is both indispensable and pivotal, as learning could hardly take place without it. The South African Schools Act (1996: B-32) states, that "The language of learning and teaching in a public school must be an official language". This background is important as the School of Education (SOE) at the University of Limpopo is training student-teachers. In addition, some of the students in the Language and Communication Department of the School of Languages and Communication Studies (LANGCOM) register for the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) after completing their BA degree with Xitsonga as a teaching subject.

The main aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Xitsonga students and lecturers towards Xitsonga as a module and a school subject. In addition, this seeks ways to improve competence in the language through participation in a variety of activities, as a social practice, rather than gaining knowledge through what goes on in interpersonal and intercultural interactions. Since language teaching is an educational practice, this study, as an educational inquiry, poses fundamental questions about the nature of human experience (Brumfit & Mitchell 1990). In other words, all humans have that natural ability to pass on culturally acquired characteristics and qualities of education. Thus, developing a language and its discourse is a process that contributes to language development and upliftment (Sivasubramaniam, 2004).

The above assertion suggests engaging the researcher's professional practices in the setting under study to extend both her professional practice and social interactions to understand how language learning can help to develop and shape interactions in a particular setting. The setting in respect to this study was Xitsonga lecture halls and social spaces within the University of Limpopo. For this reason, this chapter is meant to attend to issues of design, setting, methodology and the research questions. Thus, the design in this chapter presupposes the particular ways in which language is used to capture and express experience (Kern, 2000:1). Similarly, this would look at ways through which the beliefs and values that underlie the behaviour and attitude of individuals rather than focusing only on how to learn a great deal about conventions of the language. Focus is mainly Xitsonga students doing Xitsonga as a module, which they must be able to teach as a Home Language (HL) in schools.

Conversely, in this chapter, the researcher is concerned with the tools for data collection and their impact on the role-players, for example, the multilingual and multicultural participants at the University of the Limpopo. The purpose of this study guided the researcher's choice of methodology. The desired results were meant to suggest an in-depth understanding of how a lecture hall, and how individual characteristics, influence the level of individual and cultural identity in a society. The study aimed to uncover how participants in a multilingual and multicultural university could be advocates and significant innovators regarding their language. Additionally, participants could become patient and tolerant towards each other's culture in order to deal with the language of learning, attitude, motivation and communication competence as suggested in the literature in Chapter 2.

In view of the theoretical and empirical grounding of this study, the researcher thinks that this study can only be understood within the context in which it is situated. Each context appears to be unique and, can influence meaning making. Basically, perceptions about a language can only be understood within a given context. Based on the above, the participants in this study were able to articulate and so, they were being invited to express their own account of the use of Xitsonga in their respective disciplines.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

The study was framed within the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist researchers understand “the world of human experience” (Cohen & Manion, 1994). They discover reality through participants’ views, their background and their experiences. However, Willis (2007:110) argued that the goal of interpretivism is to value subjectivity, and that “interpretivists eschew the idea that objective research on human behaviour is possible”. This is needful for this study because issues of language can only be understood subjectively and qualitatively (Foncha and Kepe 2014).

In this regard, a paradigm is seen as a mental map that details a pattern of thinking that allows the researcher to decide how the research phenomenon should be studied (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This is to suggest that it is a narrative of the perspectives of the research population (Kepe, 2014). As mentioned earlier, to justify the perspectives of the participants the following data collection instruments were used: face-to-interviews, participant observation and document analysis. These were deemed crucial to dig deeper for richer responses and quality data from the participants (Bassey, 1999) to understand the perceptions of students and lecturers on the use of Xitsonga as a language of learning and communication. Thus, the researcher solicited responses from the participants within the context of their environment. As such, this paradigm was necessary since people are cunning in nature and certainly not the way one sees them outwardly (Kepe, 2014). As an insider therefore, the researcher’s standpoint in choosing this paradigm trailed the proclamation that interpretivists believe that human life can only be understood from within and not be observed externally (Livesey, 2006).

3.2.2 Research design

The research design approach taken in this study was qualitative in nature. This method is based on information expressed in words and other non-numerical data (Walliman, 2016). The choice for such a research method was based on the fact that feelings, attitudes and issues of language perspectives cannot be measured numerically. The

theoretical grounding of this study supported the use of an emic qualitative approach, with the researcher as emic. The rationale behind the choice of an ethnographic research (3.2.3) is, as an insider, the researcher has the ability to follow up known indexicality that might have led to the findings of this ethnographic study. The choice for doing a qualitative study, rather than a quantitative study, was based on the argument raised in the literature review chapter that perceptions are context-based, not context-free, and hence it could be misleading to come to a definite conclusion of findings on perceptions. The rationale behind the selection of qualitative research method lies in the nature of this kind of research, which is exploratory and open-ended. The researcher had the liberty to follow up anything that was not clear, using interviews, in order to understand the different types of misunderstanding that occurred in this space. Thus, the subjective reality of the participants was, therefore, very purposeful and suggestive. According to Finch (1985:114), qualitative methods can provide theoretically grounded analytical accounts of 'what happens in reality in ways which statistical methods cannot accomplish'. Qualitative studies, therefore, reflect the subjective reality of the people being studied. This may help to explain why the variables usually do not appear to be controlled because it seems to be exactly this freedom, and the natural development of action and representation, that is captured, in order to avoid bias to ensure reliability and validity of the data collected.

There was free interaction between the researcher and the participants in this study which helped in the collection of data. The focus was on understanding meanings, and looking at, describing and understanding experiences, ideas, beliefs, values and intangibles. Qualitative methodology was applied because a study of language, culture and identity can only be understood contextually, given the porous and dynamic nature of these three concepts, viz language, culture and identity as highlighted in the literature review. Thus, the researcher wished to understand the phenomenon under study from the perspective of the participants, rather than through the use of numbers. The purpose and the objectives for this study helped highlight perspectives as context-based, rather than a universal norm, where competence can be universalized. In view of this, statistics would not be helpful to this study because the use of statistics presupposes norms and figures, rather than reality. Qualitative research using various principles of ethnography provided the researcher with the opportunity to better understand the perspectives of the participants.

3.2.2.1 Ethnography

Breen (2007) argued that it is crucial for social researchers to clarify their role in the research, especially for those researchers utilizing qualitative methodology to make their research credible. The researchers who undertake qualitative studies take on a variety of member roles when they are in the research setting. These roles can range from complete membership of the group being studied (an insider), to being complete stranger to the group (an outsider). While there are a variety of definitions for insider-researchers, generally insider-researchers are those who choose to study a group to which they belong, while outsider-researchers do not belong to the group they study.

Furthermore, the standing of the researcher as emic has the following advantages: (a) affording the researcher to have a greater understanding of the culture being studied; (b) not altering the flow of social interaction unnaturally, which would happen if the researcher was an outsider; and (c) allowing the researcher to establish intimacy which promotes both the telling and the judging of truth (Bonner & Tolhurst 2002). Despite all these advantages, the researcher also experienced setbacks, such as familiarity, that led to a weakening/dilution of objectivity. The researcher was aware that she could unconsciously make wrong choices based on her prior knowledge. This could be considered as bias. However, the researcher safeguarded against this and focused principally on the subjective views of her participants, despite the fact that these views cannot be said to be completely independent of her own subjective views (Unluer, 2010).

Additionally, an ethnographic study was more useful to the researcher because, as a method because it seemed to have provided the necessary tools for data collection, that informed by the theoretical and epistemological framing of the study. Hence, the researcher selected this design was that this design could provide a sound methodological underpinning of the study. Mcleod and Thomson (2009) defined ethnography as a method used to observe life as it is happening as the basis for generating knowledge of other cultures. In this study, the researcher sought to document and understand the everyday spectacle of the Xitsonga Home Language students and lecturers and their perceptions of the use of Xitsonga as a language of learning and communication at the UL. The principal aim of the study was to elucidate the importance of language learning and interactions. The distinctive characteristic of this study revolved

around meaning making and how the participants interpreted the world around them. The researcher saw a need to understand the particular worlds in which people live and in which they construct and utilize knowledge (Goldbart & Husler, 2005). Thus, this study set out to see the meaning of a cultural whole from the point of view of diverse cultures. Yet the analysis of culture is still "intrinsically incomplete" and "essentially contestable" (Geertz, 1973). In this respect, perceptions can only be understood qualitatively within a given context. As a convention, this study was conducted within a particular space in a location that was familiar to the researcher. A cluster of instruments was applied to the fieldwork, which included interviews, observation and documents.

In this regard, the researcher captured cultural processes as they happened, with the most important time and space being the 'here and now' of the present (Mcleod & Thomson, 2009:81). The researcher presupposed that the focus of this study would be oriented towards practices and meaning making over the whole time of data collection within UL, and in which she attempted to apply to the present and future. Similarly, this approach appears to have captured just the way change emerged and evolved with the intention to understand the relationship of the past to the present, and with how memories of the past can inform the ethnographic present. The past can be seen as the baggage of culture and language that the participants carry with them in the form of identities. The present and future can, therefore, be captured through the negotiation of these identities in an attempt to construct a new world (Abongdia, 2013). In view of this, perceptions require the negotiation of identities from the different worldviews of its participants.

Subsequently, the researcher made use of thick descriptions, which are accounts of field experiences, and in which she made explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context (Holloway, 1997). Throughout this study an attempt was made to produce understanding through richness, texture and details of descriptions (Ortner, 2006:43). Therefore, all the ideas were integrated to culture, which made it possible for the researcher to describe the entire system or to grasp the principles underlying the system. Despite fragmentation and contradictions in cultures, "otherness" seems to have been understood to a greater extent (Crang & Cook, 2007) through the use of thick descriptions, which is the greatest strength of this research. Therefore, an understanding was only attained because the researcher attempted to follow the whole procedure of events as they occurred, within a particular time and place.

The researcher committed considerably to the field by making intensive and extensive use of time with the participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The participants were followed to the lecture halls and social spaces, such as their social gatherings, to see how their identities shifted or changed given a change in space. Thus, long term and in-depth engagement assisted the researcher to distinguish between routine and exceptionality. The researcher was obliged to return to the participants regularly in order to establish a long-term relationship. Most of the tools used for data collection were used as a short-term, intense observation, which was intensified by the duration of the study.

The weakness of ethnography in this case is that ethnography conveys a “culture and practice frozen in time” and also that it might refuse to “admit either competing chronologies or even to recognise itself as a normative construct” (Britzman, 2000:34). This study was meant to provide a more dynamic account of a temporality and a provisionality that is more concerned with emergence, practice and performance (Brown, 2003:72). In short, temporality should be seen as something, which emerges from the production of discourse and practice. With the abovementioned shortcoming of ethnography, the researcher found it necessary to blend some aspects of ethnography with a case study approach (3.2.5), which could be supportive and useful to this study.

Ethnography helps to announce new partial and fluid epistemological and cultural assumptions, thus providing a hypothesis on which a study can build. In other words, ethnography is the closeness to the practical ways that people can enact their lives, as a promise to understanding how everyday gets assumed (Lather, 2007:482). Consequently, ethnography, is a place for discovering the rules by which the ‘truth’ might be produced. In this regard, the use of ethnography can account for the complexities and thinking of the limit, which is reflected in this study through the tools used for data collection. Subsequently, life can only be understood through living and reliving, and the telling and retelling of life stories, it was necessary to use interviews, documents and participant observation in order to capture the perspectives of participants.

3.2.2.2 Ethnographic design

Creswell (2007:436) defined ethnographic design as that qualitative research procedure used for describing, analysing and interpreting “culture sharing group’s patterns of behaviour, beliefs and language that develops over time”. According to Creswell, culture appears to be central and should be seen as “everything having to do with human behaviours and beliefs” (2007:338). Human behaviours could also include language, rituals, economic and political structures, life stages, interactions and community styles. Ethnography is a qualitative design that enabled the researcher to identify a group of people through the use of relevant tools for data collection. Such a study can take place at home, in the workplace, at school, during rituals, for example, and develops a general portrait of a group. According to Creswell (2007), ethnographic research usually focuses on the shared beliefs of its participants, their values and attitudes. It was only through addressing such issues that the researcher could attempt a deep understanding of where misunderstanding and miscommunication might be coming from, and also how one can gain language ideologies when one moves through time and space. The researcher found that the information on the participants’ perspectives gathered through the use of the data collection tools stated appeared to be very informative and captured the participants’ subjective views.

The researcher spent considerable time in the field observing and interviewing the participants and gathering documents about the group in order to understand their culture, behaviour, belief and language. Hence, an ethnographic study is only conducted in a situation where the researcher has long-term access to a culture sharing group in order to build a detailed record of their behaviours and beliefs over time. As an ethnographer, the researcher played the role of a participant (insider) and an observer (outsider) who gathered field notes, conducted interviews and gathered documents in order to establish a record of the culture sharing group.

From the above stated position, the data that was collected for this study was a ‘case’ of such larger categories, which, in a sense, justified the researcher’s blending of case study and ethnography approaches. Theory, as a result, should be seen as the outcome of theorization of the data and generalizations can then be recognised as cognitive

processes. This may help to explain why this study needed a framework beforehand that helped to influence the design of the fieldwork and the kind of data to be collected.

3.2.2.3 Linguistic Ethnography

Methodologically, linguistic ethnography appears to be wide ranging in its empirical scope. That is, the investigation of communication within a temporal unfolding of social processes involves persons, situated encounters and institutions, networks and a community' practices. Persons refers to the physical bodies, senses and perceptions, cultural and semiotic repertoires and the resources at the disposal of these persons (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The resources and capabilities at their disposal, their capacity and habitual practices, likes and dislikes, desires, fears, commitments, personality, social status and category are uplifted and systematised.

As a method, linguistic ethnography can provide an opportunity for a researcher to choose specific tools for data collection, as an observer and a participant, since the researcher has the opportunity to interact with the participants. Thus, the data collected might project subjective views of the participants through their actions and interactions during their social processes and practices. The situated encounters in this study included events and types of activities in which the participants interacted, as well as the use of semiotic materials (sign, language, text, and media), inference, interpretation and the participant's abilities to understand or influence each other. In view of this, these actions are known to fit with interactional and institutional processes over longer and broader stretches of time and space. Institutions, network and communities, are shaped, sustained and reproduced through text, object, media, genre and practices. Institutions also appear to control, manage, produce and distribute persons, resources, discourses, representation, spaces, for example, that can have a bearing on the perceptions and attitude of participants of this study.

Gumperz (1982) argued that linguistic ethnography could provide an insight into linguistic and cultural diversity from a communication environment and its impact on individual members' lives. In view of this, diversity should no longer be treated as a matter of grammar and semantics in homogenous language-culture systems that divide people

from historical separate others. “Regardless of where we live, diversity is all around us and affects much of what we do in everyday life..., even among the people who regard themselves as speakers of the same language” (Gumperz, 1982:453). Interactional sociolinguistics is situated communication that pays attention to the efforts made by persons in order to get others to recognise their feelings, perceptions, interests, for example, which appeared to be the most appropriate basis on which to collect data for this research. Thus, linguistic ethnography provided the researcher with the opportunity to capture the subjective views of the participants.

3.2.2.4 Case study

Yin (1984: 23) defined the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. According to Stake (1995), three categories of case study can be identified in terms of their broad purpose, namely, (i) intrinsic, (ii) instrumental and (iii) collective. The researcher’s focus was on the intrinsic case study, which aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of a particular individual case, in the UL setting.

The University of Limpopo was chosen as the case study setting because of its diverse cultural background and the researcher thought that the participants would throw light on perspectives of language usage from their subjective positions. The participants also represented the diverse communities where the Xitsonga language is spoken, in areas of both the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces which, constituted the former Homeland of Gazankulu. The researcher felt that the views of the participants would be suggestive of language ideologies and could open the doors to UL becoming a multilingual institution. The participants in this study told and retold their stories on their attitude towards Xitsonga through the researcher’s use of semi-structured interviews. Through their actions and interactions, participant observation on the part of the researcher offered the researcher an opportunity to capture the participants’ different views on communicative competence within this space.

3.2.2.5 The Setting

The University of Limpopo is located on Turfloop farm, approximately 40 km east of Polokwane, formerly known as Pietersburg. The University nestles in the foothills of the Hwiti Wolkberg mountain range in Mankweng, midway between Polokwane and the spectacular splendour of the Magoebaskloof. The town that grew around the university was named Sovenga, an acronym for the three ethnic groups: Sotho, Venda and Tsonga. These ethnic groups were supposed to be the main beneficiaries of the institution. The name Sovenga is significant because the postal office serving the Mankweng area is named Sovenga, instead of Mankweng. The university is mainly surrounded by rural communities, for an example, Makanye, Mamotintane, Viking and Boyne. The name University of Limpopo, as the university is currently known, came about as a result of the merger between the former Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA) and the University of the North (UNIN), which occurred on 01 January 2005. The two institutions have since demerged, (UL Intranet) but the name still remains intact.

The areas that were targeted for data collection included lecture halls, where the researcher had a keen interest to observe differences in teaching styles and the curriculum offered to the diverse student body. There are no lecture halls specifically set aside for language teaching. The lecture halls are shared among the university community. Some lecture halls are not user-friendly in terms of capacity, with insufficient seating available, so students have to share seats. This is a challenge during tests. The layout of the lecture halls is not up to standard, with little electronic media installed. The design does not encourage group discussion during lectures and students have to participate in group discussions during their own time in venues that suit them. This diversity helped the researcher bring out differences in the backgrounds of the different students present. The researcher had the opportunity to visit lecturing venues of the sister department to observe and understand how lecturers using these diverse lecture halls engage in collaborative work and classroom discussions. Language seemed to be a factor that determines a student's decision to participate in learning or not. Observation was mainly used during lectures and office consultations as a data collection tool. The reason for this was that the researcher was looking for a true reflection of teaching and styles and based on the topic being studied and this could only be achieved when the

participants were not aware of the presence of the researcher so that the researcher could capture their true sense and feelings.

In this regard, the researcher's interest in this study was to gain an understanding of the perception of students and lecturers of the use of Xitsonga as a language of learning, and of teaching and communication in a multilingual and a multicultural setting, the researcher found it necessary to observe how the participants interacted in other social spaces, outside of the lecture halls, therefore, the researcher decided to form a WhatsApp group. Sometimes the researcher was a silent member of this group in order to follow the chats of the participants. The WhatsApp group became our meeting place. Another meeting place was the cultural gatherings of the participants. The Xitsonga students formed a well-known cultural group, named the "Tinyungubiseni Cultural Society", which translates to "Be proud of yourselves Vatsonga". Normally the members of this group organise cultural festivals and entertain a variety of audiences. The researcher observed most of their gatherings.

In view of the settings mentioned above, there appears to be confusion between ethnography and case study. A case study (discussed in 3.2.5) is an important type of ethnography although it differs in so many ways. Case studies mainly focus on events, programmes or activities that involve individuals rather than groups. Researchers in case studies are usually more interested in describing the activities of a group rather than identifying shared patterns of behaviours exhibited by the group. In this sense, a case study is less likely to identify a cultural theme. Instead, the focus of the case study would be on an in-depth exploration of the actual "case" (Stake, 1995). In other words, a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, such as activities, process or individuals, based on an extensive data collection (Creswell, 2005:439). Despite the confusion that exists between ethnography and case study, the researcher believes that a blend of both could lead to the findings that could bring out communication competence in Xitsonga during and outside Xitsonga lectures.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.3.1 Population

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:85), a population is a set of elements that the researcher focuses on, to which the obtained results should be generalize. Moreover, Scheaffer, William and Ott (2006: 8) state that a population is a collection of elements about which one wishes to make an inference. The population for this study consisted of:

- Four levels of classes of Xitsonga undergraduate students in the Bachelor of Education Senior Phase and Further Education, namely year 1 to year 4, involving 69, 38, 65 and 43 students, respectively;
- 30 students in the Postgraduate Certificate in Education(PGCE) in FET Teaching programme in the School of Education (SoE); and
- Three levels of classes in the Bachelor of Arts (BA) Language and Communications Studies (LANGCOM) course, namely year 1 to year 3, involving 105, 40 and 46 students, respectively.

3.3.2 Sampling

Neuman (2000:518) defined a sample as a smaller set of cases a researcher selects from the larger pool, and generalised findings to the population. According to the Neuman, a sample can be described as a component of the overall population under study. According to Brink (2001:133), a sample is a part, or a fraction, of a whole, or a subset of a larger set, selected to participate in a research project by the researcher. According to Brink, a sample consists of a selected group of the elements or units drawn from a defined population. A sample is drawn from a population. The sample, in this study, consisted of 4 academics teaching Xitsonga, 2 from LANGCOM course and 2 from the BEd SPF and PGCE courses, who were interviewed. Three focus groups of 6 students per focus group were purposively chosen from the final year students in their 4th year PGCE, and also from students in the 3rd year of the LANGCOM course. The choice of participants at these exit levels was made based on the fact that both groups of students had been exposed to both academic and professional practice in the build-up to their teaching careers and

their experience was invaluable. Participants from the LANGCOM group were eager to be education students in the BEd SPF programme but could not be enrolled because of limited admission space. On completion of their junior degree, these students can enrol for teacher-education in the PGCE program. With the LANGCOM students, the blend of their content knowledge and exposure to teaching environment was of value. Finally, 2 members of the Formulation of Language Policy Committee were also interviewed. The total sample size was 24 participants.

3.3.2.1. Purposive sampling

Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) assert that data gathering is crucial in research, as the data is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework. It is important that when selecting the manner of obtaining data and from whom the data will be acquired this be done with sound judgment, especially since no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data. According to Etikan et.al.(2016) The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. In addition, it is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. This means that the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. It is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources. This involves identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest. For the purpose of this study some Xitsonga students training to be teachers and lecturers were sampled as they are the ones who teaches and still to teach Xitsonga as a Home language.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

This study was developed through engaging in an increasing range of interactions, in line with Denzin and Lincoln's argument that the "realities that constitute places where empirical materials are collected and analysed... These practices are methods and techniques for producing empirical materials as well as theoretical interpretation of the world..." (1998:35). These authors further argued that social research and humanities

approaches have a long tradition of employing research methods that involve direct engagement with the participants, whether through research interviews or through observational methods. The qualitative nature of the data collected through ethnographic sources can then allow for the use of triangulation through multiple sources of data collection. The instruments used in this study included interviews, documents and participant observation. All these tools were kept deliberately semi-structured to ensure that there was an opportunity to follow-up on any information as necessary.

3.4.1 Interviews

According to Bernard (2005), interviews are a site of knowledge production that can be fashioned within a more or less distinctive interpretation frame. Interviews can best be seen as the spinal cord of any qualitative research and evaluation. Babbie and Mouton (1995) defined interviews as a one-on-one interactive conversation with the aim of getting detailed information in the form of stories and experiences. In this regard, an interview is, in a way, a verbal picture of systematic behaviours. Interviews are rich with an in-depth description that can explain, and give meaning to, people's lives. Bernard (2005) further argued that the skill of the interviewer usually appears to be more important in an interview than the quality of questionnaires. Thus, pre-field training should be seen as a pre-requisite for any qualitative interview intervention to be successfully undertaken.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005:869) contended that interviews consist of "accounts given to the researcher about the issues in which [(s)he] is interested". Interviews are structured differently in qualitative research, with the choice of procedure depending on the interviewer's usage and the purpose of the investigation. Generally, unstructured interviews are always useful for explanatory investigations (Bernard 2005:1), which was the case with this study.

The use of face-to-face interviews became very important for this study as they helped the researcher to probe the interviewees' subjective views of the use of Xitsonga as language of learning and communication. At the end of the interview, the researcher further attempted to engage the participants in general and informal discussions around the language used in and out of the lecture halls, and on the language policy of the

university, in particular. This helped the researcher to gain more insight into the participants' attitudes and perceptions, both from their verbal and non-verbal language, which was captured in the form of field notes. The participants' verbal and non-verbal language was important, especially in cases where some of the interviewees said one thing but their reactions and or facial expressions revealed another. Given that the discussions took place in an informal environment, where the students were relaxed, they expressed themselves better. Code-switching from Xitsonga to English was a common behaviour among all the participants.

The students interviewed were selected based on their participation in class, their availability and their interest in this project. The aim of this selection process was to ensure a mix of the different categories of students in order to ascertain their perceptions towards the use of Xitsonga as a vernacular language. This further determined whether this hampers or fosters competence in use of the language in a diverse community. Thus, the researcher interviewed students who were very active in class, as well as those who were inactive. This approach was taken in order to determine whether language had a role to play in teaching, learning and communication and how the participants felt about Xitsonga as their language and an academic module they were engaged in on campus. A total of 18 students were interviewed as part of the data collection process in this study. Some of the students could not freely express their feelings towards the language situation, in general, and towards the language policy of the university, in particular. Other students were bold and could talk about exactly how they felt about the policies. Additionally, some participants even went as far as naming lecturers and listing their experiences with these lecturers during lectures, consultations and away from the formal university setting.

Open-ended questions were used, in a sense semi-structured, to ensure that the questions acted as a guide in order to obtain the perspectives of the participants. There was a total of 37 questions posed to all participants. Nonetheless, the researcher made follow up on any of the questions that were not clearly answered or where the answers given indexed a new idea. Subsequently, out of 37 questions, questions 1 to 11 were posed to the students, questions 12 to 28 were posed to the lecturers, and questions 27 to 37 were posed to the committee established to formulation of UL's language policy. Thus, the sample questions developed for the interview acted as a guideline. Hence, it is

important to note that most of these questions overlapped to provide incremental value to the study. The similarity between most of the questions was meant to emphasise on the key themes of the study.

3.4.2 Documents

Documents are the records that are written, and kept, by actual participants in, or eyewitnesses to an event (Best & Kahn, 2006). Similar to Best and Kahn, (Cohen, 2006) states that documents may be internal to a program or organization or may be external. Moreover, Cohen (2006) mentions that documents may be in hard copy or in electronic format. Consequently, data was retrieved and reviewed (document review) from documents to argument the data collection instruments for the study. Similarly, document review includes a basic overview of document review, when to use it, how to plan and conduct it and its advantages and disadvantages. Document review is a way of collecting data by reviewing and evaluating existing documents. The documents may be internal to a program or organization or may be external. Documents may be in hard copy or in electronic format (Cohen, 2006).

To get a better understanding of the perceptions of the participants, the researcher reviewed and evaluated the university's language policy, the participants' test and examination answer books, communiques sent to the entire university and communiques between Xitsonga students and their lecturers. These documents were chosen in order to evaluate the implementation of both the university's language policy and the push for multilingualism and language development by the government of the Republic of South Africa, as stipulated in the country's Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

3.4.3 Participant Observations

According to Anna (2004), during participant observation the participant observer seeks to confirm what people say they believe and say that they do in relation to their behaviours. Since inconsistency appears to be a common attribute in humans, observation in research can serve as a powerful tool to be used to capture what people

say about themselves during the interviews, focus group sessions and when completing questionnaires. A participant observer needs to observe and participate in an event or activity. It might be of interest to differentiate between participating and observing. When researchers observe, they watch the activity and may take field notes as an outsider. Nevertheless, when a researcher pre-participates, the researcher takes part in the activity while, at the same time, documenting what might be deemed essential to the study. The data that the researcher collected through participant observation appears to only reflect her own observations, descriptions and notes of the activities, and as such, there was a need for triangulation, which would explain why the researcher made used of other tools.

Participant observation is a type of qualitative study tool, with its roots in traditional ethnographic research, as described in section 3.2.3. The objective of participant observation is to discover the perspectives being held by the study population. Given that, researchers presume multiplicity of perspectives in a community, their aim in participant observation would be to know what the different perspectives could be, and to understand the interplay among these perspectives (Anna, 2004). Obtaining an informed perspective of a community can only be accomplished through participant observation.

In view of this, the researcher decided to participate in, and observe, the environment where the research questions were centred. As a participant observer, the researcher was distinctive because she approached the participants in their own setting in order to learn how life was to an insider, while remaining both an insider and an outsider. The researcher made careful and objective notes about what the researcher saw in her observations. This was done in order to parallel and/or complement the objective notes with the data collected by means of other tools. Any data that was collected through participant observation helped to overcome any subjectivity on the part of the observer. In addition, the participant observation provided the researcher with an opportunity to gain access into the physical, social, cultural and economic spaces in which the participants lived. This design also helped the researcher to understand the relationship among and between the participants, the context, ideas, norms, events, people's behaviours and activities. Participant observation further helped the researcher to familiarize herself with the cultural milieu. Thus, this gave the researcher a nuanced understanding of the context that could only be gained through personal experience.

Therefore, participant observation could not be replaced as a means of data collection in this study. In view of this, Anna (2004) asserted that observing and participating are integral to understanding the breath and complexities of human experience.

Through participant observation, the researcher uncovered an understanding of the research problem that was unknown to the researcher when she initially designed the study. It also provided some answers to the research questions, as well as helped to reshape the questions that the researcher took into the field. Observation at the start of this research helped to develop and facilitate the relationship between the researcher and the key participants, whose assistance was genuinely needed to ensure the success of this study. This relationship called for ethical clearance, as mentioned in section 3.7. This relationship further helped the researcher to access potential participants in this study. Thus, the participant observation helped to ensure the cultural relevance and the appropriateness of the interviews. Similarly, the participant observation determined who should be recruited into the study and who not be recruited. Thus, frequent consultation of participant observation data throughout the duration of this study helped to confirm instrument design, saving time and avoiding mistakes.

Ethics is of utmost importance in participant observation because the researcher needed to be cautious enough to who she was and what she was, so that she did not disrupt the running of any activity. The researcher also needed to make sure that the participants with whom she interacted, did not feel that her presence compromised their privacy. The researcher needed to be truthful in this research project and about her role in the project. The researcher needed to be open, cognizant and polite in her role as an outsider. Since the researcher used participant observation as a tool, she needed to be prepared for uncontrolled situations and settings. The researcher also needed to make sure that the participants engaged in their activities in the same way as if she was not there. The researcher needed to participate in the activity to understand better what was taking place, in order to avoid the participants' attention of considering her as a spectator. It was vital that the researcher disclose her identity to the participants, together with her affiliation and the purpose for her being present. Lastly, the researcher needed to go where the participants went in their daily lives, and to engage in all activities of interest.

The main weakness of participant observation appears to be that it is time-consuming. Secondly, the documentation of data obtained through participant observation relies on the memory, personal discipline and diligence of the researcher. Thirdly, participant observation might require a conscious effort on the part of the researcher to remain objective, because this method of data collection is inherently subjective. The advantages of participant observation include, among other things, the fact that it allows for the gaining of insight into the contexts, the relationships, the behaviour and the attitudes, which form the basis for any qualitative study. Participant observation can provide information previously unknown to a researcher, which could be crucial for the purposes of project design, data collection and the interpretation of data obtained using other data collection tools. Participant observation can complement instruments, as is the case in this study where the tool was used alongside interviews and documents.

3.4.4 Rationale for the choice of techniques in the current study

The study was developed through an increasing range of interactions in line with Denzin and Lincoln's (1998:35) argument that the realities that constitute places where empirical materials are collected and analysed. These practices are methods and techniques for producing empirical materials as well as theoretical interpretation of the world. They further argue that social research and humanities approaches have a long tradition of employing research methods that involve direct engagement with the participants, whether through research interviews or through observational methods. The qualitative nature of the data collected through ethnographic sources allow for the use of triangulation through multiple sources of data collection. All the techniques were kept deliberately open-ended to make sure that there is a follow-up to any information that might become necessary.

3.4.5 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE FIELDWORK

Writing was central to the study and included the writing of fieldnotes, a private practice of documentation and reflection. The notes that were taken were then translated into a commentary or an account of the research and circulated in the form of this Thesis. The representation could be seen as an act of construction not a reflection of empirical reality, but as a productive act of invention. Law (2004) is of the opinion that messiness, partiality

and provisionality replace ordered system of meaning, core truths and rescued realities. This form of representation might arouse suspicion since it could be seen as dangerous and seductive. The danger here might be what has been excluded, and seduction is the representation that entices the readers as a truth. Ethically, there might be the question of whose voice the reader listens to, the researcher or the participants? To a larger extent, these field notes either hindered or helped the capacity and agency of the research participants and thus either distorted, silenced or enabled voices (Britzman 2000).

Based on the above, three major challenges were encountered. It was not easy to access participants. Most did not honour appointments secured. They gave one excuse after the other. Privacy also was a challenge as some wanted their friends to be part of the interviews to assist them when they get stuck. Moreover, the timings of the field work were congested as they were some clashes of periods between the researcher and that of the participants.

3.4.5.1 Problems relating to observations

Anna (2004) affirms that observing and participating are integral to understanding the breath and complexities of human experience. Based on this, Ethics was of utmost importance in participant observation because the researcher needed to be cautious enough to who she was and what she was so that she did not disrupt the smooth running of any activity. The researcher had to make sure that the participants, with whom she interacted, did not feel that her presence compromised their privacy. Moreover, the researcher needed to be truthful in this research project and also about her role in it. The researcher had to be open, cognizant and polite to her role as an outsider. The researcher needed to be prepared for uncontrolled situations and settings. She also had to make sure that the participants engaged in their activities the same way as if she was not there. Again, the researcher had to participate in the activity to understand better in order to avoid the participants' attention hence, it was vital that the researcher disclosed her true identity to the participants. Lastly, the researcher had to go where the participants go in their daily lives, and also to engage in all activities of interest.

3.4.5.2 Problems relating to the interviews

Foncha (2013: 114) asserts that interviews can be disadvantageous in that they could be biased due to poorly constructed questions. Some respondents attempted to give only answers to what was required by the data collector, thus being bias and subjective. There was also inaccuracy due to recall. During the interviews, there were cases where some of the interviewees said one thing but their reactions and or facial expressions revealed another. Some of them could not freely express their feelings on the language situation in general and the language policy of the university in particular. Some even went as far as naming lecturers and listing their experiences with them during lectures and consultations.

3.4.5.3 Problems relating to written documents

Cohen (2006) outlines some guidelines which are of assistance when using document review as a data collecting instrument. Of the list, Cohen asserts that reviewing existing documents helps one to understand history, philosophy and operation of the program one is evaluating and the organization in which it operates. As discussed earlier on, students' assessment scripts and the University's language policy were analysed. Analysing these documents posed some challenges. Some of these challenges were that the information was inapplicable, disorganized, unavailable or outdated. In some of the assessment scripts information was incomplete or inaccurate. Based on this, it was time consuming to review and analyse scripts of students.

3.4.5.4 Controlling problems encountered in the fieldwork

The purpose of these diverse methods of data collection (triangulation) was meant to ensure that the data is relevant, reliable and reflexive (Foncha: 2013). For the period of data collection, the researcher had to capture principally the subjective views of the participants which the researcher presented in the data analysis in chapter 4 and the discussion of the findings in chapter 5. The researcher did all that needed to be reflexive so that she could attain a certain degree of objectivity. In view of this, for the researcher to gain access participants had to sign consent forms to ascertain them that they participate in a scholarly research and that information will not be traced back to them.

They will remain anonymous. They were assured that there is no monetary gain attached to the study conducted. With regard to interviewing them in their rooms, the office of the researcher was used during convenient times for both the researcher and the participants with no company. In honouring time slots the researcher had to reschedule her periods and made sure that the rescheduled periods do not clash with that of her students. In this regard students had to attend late lectures when they are all free.

Davies (2008) point out that interviewers need some particular skills to reduce the effects of their individual attributes on informants by employing technical test on reliability. In order to be reflexive the researcher made sure that she distanced herself from the participants to assure that she did not influence their perspectives anyhow. Voice recording was essential as the researcher was able to re-listen to the conversations during the transcription phase. During observation stating the purpose of the researcher's attendance and participant in some activities to some extent relaxed the participants and be at their normal practice during teaching, learning and communication. Likewise, participants assisted retrieving some of the written assessment tasks at their disposal. The researcher had to make copies as proof of the data collected.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Maluleke (2005) dealt with the issue of language as an instrument of power and aimed to prove by examples, arguments and analysis, that language is by far the most important medium for transmitting or communicating power. Power relations are socially constructed and fall within the ambit of constructivist theory. Since power play, in this case, is socially constructed, a better understanding of power play should be based on the different interpretations of participants' responses. In view of this, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to analyse the data in order to bring out the power play between English and indigenous languages, with particular reference to Xitsonga. To attain this a tape recorder was used to record all the interview schedules. Recorded interviews were later transcribed to be presented as data collected in Chapter 4. The transcribed data was coded and recorded to arrive at the themes that emerged from the transcripts. In view of this, the researcher identified most prevailing themes from the data and then categorized data according to these themes. Thick description was used to present and analyse the collected data. Weber and Horner's (2012) informed interpretivism, language

hierarchy, which helped the researcher to understand which language was seen by the participants as more prestigious than the other. Thus, themes provided by the constructivist theory were used to code the data in order to tell the story of language planning, policy and implementation. In this manner, policy implementation and multilingualism might be capacitated.

3.6 QUALITY CRITERIA

3.6.1 Credibility and Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the idea of credibility or validity refers to the accuracy of data obtained. Credibility is used to indicate correctness of information, explanation, interpretation, or other accounts of data, as disclosed by respondents (de Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 1998). Credibility was achieved through the consultation of appropriate documents and through preliminary visits to the participants themselves. Lincoln and Guba (1989) recommended that “prolonged engagement” between the investigator and the respondents assist in establishing a relationship of trust between the parties, which makes the work of the investigator easier.

Trustworthiness provides a means to support the arguments that the inquiry’s findings are “worth paying attention to” (Lincoln & Guba, 1989:290). Flick (2002) argued that qualitative researchers need to be as vigilant as positivist researchers are about ensuring the validity and reliability of their studies, even if they choose to use other terms, such as credibility and authenticity, to describe the qualities that establish the trustworthiness of a study. The utilisation of trustworthiness in this study assisted the researcher to determine whether the data analysis was in harmony with the respondent’s experiences (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). To achieve trustworthiness, the respondents were given an opportunity to verify the researcher’s interpretation of their responses as being sensitive to, and reflective of, their intended meanings (Creswell, 2005).

3.6.2 Reflexivity and Ethnographic Research

In any qualitative research, reflexivity is of paramount importance. In this study, reflexivity helped the researcher to be objective during data collection, the data analysis and during the writing of the discussion of the findings. The researcher should be accountable for the usage of diverse designs for data collection (triangulation) during knowledge generation. Geertz (1973:448) defined reflexivity as story participants themselves by themselves. In view of this definition, Davies (2008) referred to reflexivity as social reflexivity. Reflexivity could refer to an explicit and deliberate conscious reflection of people about themselves but that could only be reviewed through the interpretative insight of the researcher. However, social reflexivity can lead to the researcher taking a privileged and a non-reflexive position (Watson, 1987). When social reflexivity and the reflexivity of the individual were combined to give rise to the data that was produced as a cooperative product, the researcher noticed the kind of reflexivity that is claimed by social sciences by self-critiquing her frame of reference, cultural biasness, and the ethical issues that emerge in field work. Social reflexivity appeared to be convincing because the information that the researcher obtained from the participants did not only express a surface meaning but also an underlying meaning about the nature of the society in which the participants exist. The researcher may have imported notions from her own belief system when analysing the data, however, the researcher was mindful of the fact that a reflexive research recognizes that any finding is the product of the researcher's interpretation. This radical form of reflexivity seems to attest that any society should be part of itself and any statement about culture should be a statement about society (Crick, 1982:307), while social research is about itself. When studying the other belief systems of the participants, the researcher did not do so just to learn about herself and her own norms and values, but did so because of a belief that she was learning about something outside herself.

Whenever a researcher makes inquiries, there is usually an implicit assumption that the researcher is investigating something outside the researcher and what the researcher seeks to explore cannot come out of the researcher entirely or through self-introspection. On the other hand, Davies (2008) believed that the researcher cannot investigate something without having contact with, or being completely isolated from, that which is being investigated. This is captured in the quote: "All researchers are therefore to some

extent connected to or part of the object to their research" (Davies, 2008:1). This connection leads to the question whether the research is not subjectively linked to the researcher's presence and the researcher's inevitable influences overall research process.

Reflexivity, as such, appears to be central to social science research, in particular, where the connection between the researcher, the research setting and the social world is clearly much closer. Therefore, reflexivity is also where the research objects could be seen as "conscious and self-aware" through the influence of the researcher on the research process. Reflexivity in qualitative research seems to influence the outcomes to be more likely and less predictable (Davies 2008:2).

Moreover, the notion of reflexivity appears to be more concerned with objectivity versus subjectivity in social research, based on the control of the effect of the researcher on the research. The notion of reflexivity was meant to maintain a coherence using observation and other methods for data collection (triangulation), methods in which self-interaction was either minimized or highly controlled. This appears to have been the only way that objectivity could be attained in this study. Participation in the activities and events of the setting was, therefore, indispensable to the researcher's identity to be concealed from influencing the results of the data. Blommaert and Jie (2010) seem to disagree with this view, since they argue that the self is subjective and focuses only on the truth that it understands and remembers. However, Davies (2008) countered this argument with her view that, even the most objective of social research methods still need to be reflexive. In order to be reflexive as a researcher, the researcher made sure that she distanced herself from the participants in order to ensure that she did not influence their perspectives in any way.

Based on the above opinion, Davies (2008:4) referred to reflexivity as "turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference... [A]nd the ways in which products of research are affected by the personnel and the process of doing research". Such effects are found in all phases of a research process, from the initial selection of the topic to the final report on the results obtained. Reflexivity, as such, is, therefore, particularly salient in ethnographic research, where the involvement of the researcher in the society and/or culture of those being studied is close because of participation and observation. An

ethnographic study should be viewed through the lens of a research process that should be based on fieldwork, using a variety of mainly (but not exclusively) qualitative research techniques (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007:13). Furthermore, the relationship between the researcher and the participants formed the base of a subsequent theory and conclusion that was expressed through interaction. The researcher's observation formed part of the data collected for this study and appears to tie in with Powdermaker's (1966:19) assertion that participant observation requires both involvement and detachment, which may be achieved by developing the ethnographer's role of stepping in and out of a society. In other words, the researcher was obliged, in a sense, to design tools that would fully acknowledge and utilize subjective experience and reflection. Thus, as an ethnographer, the researcher played an intrinsic part in the research context, "turning back" (self-examination) of cultural critique, that has both moral and political implications (Davies, 2008:5).

In view of this, the "turning back" (both individual and collective) may have led to a form of self-absorption, in which the boundaries between subject and object may have disappeared, with one replacing the other, thus denying the possibility of social research. Nevertheless, this critique needs to be taken into consideration in any social research, including the case in question. Nonetheless, the results of this study were meant to augment the understanding of social reality by developing explanations for social forms and events, as well as critically examining the concepts used in the explanation. Research that is based on ethnographic fieldwork must be informed by reflexivity and assessed by a critical scholarly community in order to express a reality that is neither accessible directly through actions and texts of the participants nor simply a reflection of the individual researcher's mind.

Contrary to the above view, Roberts and Sander (2005) argued that reflexivity is not just one phenomenon, but also rather a variety of forms that affect all research processes through all their stages. As a result, "total reflexivity requires full and uncompromising self-reference. Thus, no process of knowing can be fully reflexive until it is explicitly turned on the knower who becomes self-conscious even of the reflexive process of knowing what has been termed 'radical constitutive reflexivity'" (Woolgar and, 1988:22). Therefore, a researcher's reflexivity appears to express their knowledge/awareness of their

connection with the research situation and their effects on the study, which Davies (2008:8) terms ‘reactivity’.

In view of the above argument, the researcher made an effort to eliminate with her influence on the overall research process as much as possible. In this regard, the researcher used open-ended questions during the interview sessions in order to promote and standardize the wording of the questions and to control responses from the participants, to limit her influence on the particular encounters. In fieldwork, the researcher attempted to make herself as inconspicuous as possible to limit reactivity. The researcher literally become a bystander or made use of a contrary approach by participating as fully as possible in any given event or activity, in order for her to become almost invisible in her role as a researcher. The latter needed to have been adopted because “the specificity and individuality of the observer are ever present and need to be acknowledged, explored and put into creative use” (Okely, 1999:28).

In any event, reflexivity is fully focused on the individual researcher rather than on the research as a social process. Crick (1982:25) affirmed this by saying that “the ethnographic enterprise is not what one person does in a situation, but how two sides of an encounter arrive at a delicate workable definition of their meeting”. Steier (1991), who observed that a research process is one where the researcher and readers (not participants) are engaged in constructing a world, further strengthens this assertion.

The purpose of these diverse methods of data collection (triangulation) was to ensure that the data was relevant, reliable and reflexive. The essence of reflexivity in this research was employed to avoid excessive subjectivity on the part of the researcher and that of the researched. The researcher focused on the context, language and all other interactional resources which were brought in to bear on the data generating events, and their subsequent recontextualization (Davies, 2008). Theories can only be described as reflexive if the knowledge they generate is explained without having to refer to the information that is outside the theory itself.

Like many other sociological approaches, this study employed minimal attempts to understand another life world using the “self” as the “instrument of knowing” (Ortner, 2006:42). There was an immersion of the researcher’s physical self through the recording

of field notes and all the other forms of documentation. The ambiguous position that the researcher maintained as a participant observer encapsulated a tension and immersion, objectivity and subjectivity (Tanboukou & Ball, 2003). It is, therefore, paradoxical that the researcher had a native point of view without going native (Behar, 1996:5) meaning the researcher should understand the researched and their behaviour to make informed judgement.

The greatest challenge that the researcher encountered in the study was navigating the relationship between a particular and a larger entity. In relation to the study the particular the identity and class of participants represents the particular in relation to their cultural beliefs, while the larger entity referred to all the Xitsonga speakers in UL. This challenge led to a dilemma because of variations for methodological and epistemological importance that only rested on its capacity to clarify and render the perspectives of UL Xitsonga students and lecturers which, in turn, explained a wider cultural behaviour of the Xitsonga community within the UL. The study can be seen as an instant of a larger whole, as suggested by the intensive and extensive investigation of this study.

The above challenge was dealt with through the use of thick description, which seems to be the strength the researcher drew on in this study to interpret the specific situation. Thus, it would not be appropriate to understand this study as a cultural whole, but rather as a case in itself, since issues of identity, culture and language are very porous and can only be understood within a context.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For the purpose of ethics, the researcher committed herself to staying open by informing the participants of the purpose and nature of this study. The researcher made sure that their participation was voluntary and she also sought permission from all the participants to take part in, and respond to, the interviews. The researcher also obtained permission from the participants to record the interviews. The participants also held the right to withdraw from the study at any given point in time, or to ask for the information already recorded to be erased. The researcher made the participants understand that the recordings and transcripts would only be accessible to her supervisor and herself. The

researcher assured all the participants that their participation would remain anonymous during the process of presenting the data.

The researcher is aware that the nature of reality, and the possible knowledge of reality, with the status of truth claims, all have implications on the judgments and responsibilities of ethnographers. Thus, the lack of an agreement about the methodology in ethnography is reflected in the approach's ethical considerations. The researcher is aware that, of all research approaches that involves human participants, ethnography raises significant ethical concerns (Murphy and Dingwall, 2007:347). According to de Certeau (1998:43) "we never write on a blank page but always one that has already been written on". In other words, we need history to develop philosophical truths. Geertz (1973:143) refers to ethnography as a task, which no one ever does more than not utterly fail. Knowledge, according to Geertz, simply offered different types of futures, instead of providing answers. Therefore, this study is suggestive of the notion that the perspectives of students and lecturers on the use of an indigenous African language as language of teaching, learning and communication are being presented in perspectival terms, rather than as facts and prescriptions.

3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher selected students and lecturers who were passionate about language development, bearing in mind that they were going to exercise a degree of empathy, but which, as it turned out, the opposite occurred as the researcher received one excuse after the other from these participants. Most of the participants rescheduled appointments a number of times and failed to keep appointments during the face-to-face interviews. It was very difficult for the researcher to go after the participants because some of them felt uncomfortable being followed to where they lived and, at times, they were not honest about their schedules. Nevertheless, a few appointments were kept.

The transcription of some of the interviews was a challenge problem to the researcher because of some of the problematic anonymity references assigned to the participants. The background noise distorted the voice of the participants and the researcher struggled to do the transcriptions. It was not easy for the researcher to record events drawn from the naturally occurring data and field notes because the researcher had to follow the

event and, at the same time, take notes. Even during moments when the researcher was accurate with her note taking, the researcher missed the non-verbal components of the conversation. Some students could not provide the much-needed information for this study due to their inability to express themselves in English. The use of observation was also not easy to accomplish. For the observations to take place the researcher had to wait and honour appointments to visit lecture halls and to be very alert every time when in the office or any public domain of the university. Following the cultural activities that the participants were engaged in was not easy because the researcher had to exercise patience and rely on when and how events took place.

3.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In conclusion, it was envisaged that this enormous amount data would generate useful and informed discussion that could possibly answer the research objectives that evolved from the literature review in Chapter 2, and from the research designs discussed in this chapter. These tools were helpful because they were capable of providing information that, largely, has shed more light on the purpose of the study. Consequently, the research design, along with the research findings, point out the different ways through which language perceptions can be addressed while taking into consideration multilingualism in institutions of higher learning, in order to develop one's language (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

There are two possible ways in which the researcher used the data to seek answers to the questions posed (Foncha, 2013). In the first approach, the researcher used the research questions as assumptions to understand perceptions, based on the Weber and Horner's (2012) language hierarchy. In the second approach, the researcher strived to see how meaning was constructed through discourses by using thick description, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The researcher believes that the analysis of the findings, which will be presented in subsequent chapters, may help to bring out the kind of attitudes and motivation that influenced perceptions and the needs to improve on those perceptions

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter interrogated the research methodology that drives the study. Amongst other things, the research paradigm, research design, population and sampling were discussed. This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of data collected from the interviews and observations with the participants and relevant documents in order to determine the perceptions of students and lecturers of the use of Xitsonga as language of learning and communication at UL. The study generated a huge volume of data. Although this enormous amount of data might have captured the beliefs and value systems of participants in the investigation, it is practically impossible for the researcher to present all the data in the limited space that represents the documenting of this study. Therefore, the researcher was forced to make a very rigorous selection of data for inclusion. The rigorous selection of data was based on the argument by Foncha, Sivasubramaniam, Adamson, and Nunn (2016) that there are no guidelines in qualitative research for determining how many instances of data extracts are necessary to support a conclusion or interpretation. This, according to Taylor and Bogdan (1998:156), will always be a judgement call on the part of the researcher. This argument appears to have thrown some light on the point that a single incident or instant can be sufficient to build a conceptual category. In view of this, the best insights may have come from a small amount of data. Underlying this perception, Bleich (1985:261) argues that the process of teaching the development of detailed subjective response is simultaneously research into the nature of response processes.

Based on the position taken above, this study used only selected strands of the data that were related to the research questions in order to obtain the participants' perceptions within the context of this study. Thus, the strands that are presented here should be seen as illustrative sections of a discourse that the participants produced during the interviews, during the participant observations and from relevant documents (Sivasubramaniam, 2004:268). The researcher believes that the epistemological underpinnings discussed in chapters 2 and 3 can provide a perspectival and a speculative view of knowledge to the

focus of this investigation. Consequently, what counted as knowledge in this study is context-bound.

For the above reasons, both the narratives of the participants themselves and the researcher determined objectivity or truth. Most of the data that was collected for this study seemed to be congruent with the themes described in the literature. The analysis, then, attempted to show the agreement and disagreement between the literature and the data. In instances of disagreement, the researcher reserved her comments for the next chapter in order to reduce subjectivity, as mentioned earlier in section 3.7.

When the researcher sifted the data at the end of data collection process, a number of similarities and uniformities were noticed. These similarities and uniformities appeared to have formed conceptual patterns and categories in a sense. A scrutiny of the data revealed remarkable patterns of congruencies and connections in the different types of data collected from the participants in this study. In a way, these connections and agreements appeared to tally with most of the perceptions of the participants' notions of language attitude and motivation. In this regard, the use of metaphor was deemed to be the way through which the notion of language ideology which, in a sense, appears to align with the constructivist view of language learning and communication, where each context seems to generate different meanings for its participants.

"Assuming that all knowledge is to some extent perspectival", the researcher decided to present the data analysis as a retelling of the response phenomenon as observed by (Bilton & Sivasubramaniam, 2009:315). In light with this, Foncha et al. (2016) observed that description, explanation and theorization could qualify a study as a creative act of discovery and inquiry. This is in keeping with the view of storytelling since, in the words of Denzin and Lincoln (1998:60), in the construction of narratives of experience, there is a reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story. As researchers, we are always engaged in living, telling, reliving and retelling our own stories.

Thus, the stories that the participants in this study tell and live are being retold and relived, where metaphor appears to be the most appropriate way to classify the data that was collected, with two possible categories into which respondents were grouped, namely,

the Committee for the Formulation of Language Policy and the lecturers' and students' perceptions. In this sense, metaphor provided the researcher with the much-needed themes for the analysis of the data.

Viewed in the light of the constructivist and ecological approaches that the researcher cherishes a great deal in this research, the learning environment of the classroom has been the core of a pedagogy of voice and participation (Freire, 1972). In this sense, the pedagogy proposed by this investigation is not an inventory of predetermined skills or behaviour blueprints. On the contrary, the proposed pedagogy is a dynamic and discursive realm where no one is a custodian of truth and everyone has the right to understand and be understood (Sivasubramaniam, 2004). Therefore, the pedagogical frameworks of the study aimed to support the realization of language planning, policy and implementation through dialogue in any given context. However, where such a realization is believed to be able to connect the policy with implementation through the use of English and indigenous African languages (Xitsonga, in the case of this study). The lecturers and students in this research were not overly concerned about the pre-meditated tasks of policy and implementation as specified by the language policy of the University of Limpopo. The data and research instruments attempted to describe the dynamics between, and fall-outs of, participants' engagement with language policy and implementation and, thereby, attempting to come to terms with how they perceive their language.

Furthermore, the researcher's beliefs and value-systems underlying this investigation made it necessary for her to use personalised, value-laden language to interpret and describe the 'context-bound characteristics' (Bailey & Nunan, 1996: 2) of the knowledge that this research has set out to construct. Therefore, it was contingent upon the researcher to dismantle the reverential position accorded to objectivity and factuality in what counts as knowledge. In this sense, there is neither "scope nor space for depersonalized, objective/value-free language in this research" (Sivasubramaniam, 2004:362). It is argued that, in a constructivist view of knowledge, the process of understanding and the context(s) in which the participants construct and interpret for themselves, 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) can be attempted only through the figurative use of language.

This is precisely what the researcher attempted to do in this investigation. Atkinson (1992) supports the decision of the researcher in this study to use figurative language in the narrative(s) as a means of presenting perceptions in detail, as well as presenting the meaningful experiences of the participants in the space of teaching and learning. In this sense, the data analysis appears as a narrative in which constructions are synonymous with connections to, and interpretations of, phenomena and language practices.

Finally, through the metaphorical categorization of the data collected, and with the help of the theoretical underpinnings from the literature, the study made use of the following themes:

1. Attitude towards the use of African languages
2. Motivation for language learning
3. Prestige enjoyed by English
4. Existence of language policy
5. Developing Indigenous African languages

The themes enumerated above were suggested by the data obtained in this study and the researcher believes that this approach can support a better understanding of the analysis. In this respect, the themes should be seen as pathfinders for the analysis. The above themes that were suggested by the data appeared to be prominent in the study and will be dealt with at greater length in the discussion chapter (Chapter 5).

4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Demographic information was elicited in order to capture the details of participants while attention was drawn from their experiences in both the learning and communication of Xitsonga at the UL. It is important to note that data was collected from three groups of participants, viz., lecturers, students and members of the Committee for the Formulation of the Language Policy. In this view, each participant's qualification, registered degree and major subjects were precise and their identity kept anonymous. This was done in order to keep information confidential and to protect the participants from being exposed. Pseudonyms were also used for the participants.

4.2.1 Participants' Background (Gender of lecturers)

Participants	Gender
Lecturer 1	Male
Lecturer 2	Male
Lecturer 3	Female
Lecturer 4	Male
Lecturer 5	Male

Table 1: The table presents the gender of the lecturers

The table above indicates the number of participants interviewed in terms of gender. Out of the five participants four of them were male and one was female. The researcher saw it fit to assess the gender in order to establish whether gender had any bearing on the teaching of an indigenous African language.

4.2.2 Participants' Qualifications

Participants	Qualifications	Experience in teaching
Lecturer 1	BA, HED, BA HONS, MA & PhD	23
Lecturer 2	BA PAED, BA HONS, MA, PhD	29
Lecturer 3	BA, HED, BA HONS, ABET & MA	24
Lecturer 4	BA PAED, BA HONS, MA, DLitt, PhD	30
Lecturer 5	BA, BA HONS, MA, MA & PhD	38

Table 2: The table indicates the qualifications of lecturers

This table indicates that, out of the five participants interviewed, only one participant (a female) was qualified up to a Master's degree level. The four males held Doctoral degrees. Surprisingly among the four males, one holds two PhD's while another one holds two Masters Degrees. All participants have a teaching qualification in a form of BA PAED or HED. All these participants had more than 20 years of teaching experience, teaching an African language.

4.2.3 Participants' Background (Students)

No. of Students	Level of study	Major subject	Registered qualification
6	3 rd year	Xitsonga	Translation & Linguistics; BA
6	4 th year	Xitsonga	B.Ed. SPF & FET
6	PGCE	Xitsonga	PGCE

Table 3: The table illustrates the registered degree of Xitsonga students together with their major subject and year of study

The table above confirms that the participants were in the final year of their degrees. They all registered for Xitsonga as one of their major subjects. They were all enrolled students in the BA, Translation & Linguistics Studies and B.Ed. SPF & FET degree programmes or registered in the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme.

4.2.4 Participants' Background (Gender of students)

No. of students	Gender
12	Male
6	Female

Table 4: The table presents the gender of Xitsonga students

As with Table 1, the above table shows the gender of the interviewed students. Of the total of 18 students in both schools, 12 were male, while the remaining 6 were female. More males than females participated in the study.

4.3 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The categorization of the themes was done discretely for the purpose of analysis and interpretation. During the course of data collection, there was never an instant where the participants were made to understand that they were being placed into these categories. The reason why the researcher categorized the participants into the two groupings was because focusing on the individual participant as the principal unit of analysis would have

produced an incomplete and an unrepresentative story (Willet, 1995). Based on the above submissions and values, the researcher decided to present:

1. data from the interviews;
2. data from participant observation; and
3. data from document analysis.

In this chapter, the researcher used all the above 3 sources as focal points in order to present and analyse data. She also used the narratives from participants as a chain of analysis with comments, descriptions, narrations and realizations being made before and after the data strands. By doing so, the researcher through the narratives would be able to do away with the notion of objectivity in order to locate knowledge and meaning in the subjective interpretations of its participants (Foncha et al., 2016).

Metaphorically, analysis of the data seemed to suggest two categories of participants, namely, the Committee for the Formulation of Language Policy and lecturers, on the one hand, and the students, on the other. However, it is important to note that, within the data segment of lecturers, responses by a member of the committee for the formulation of the university's language policy was included. The reason for this inclusion was the fact that the participant was the only person reachable at the time of this study. The data pointed to the fact that these different groupings shared similar perspectives on language ideologies within the space of the University of Limpopo. In the analysis that follows, the researcher used a representative sampling form each of the above categories in order to bring out the participants' perspectives on language attitudes and behaviours in the use of Xitsonga and the other indigenous African languages at the University of Limpopo.

The researcher used 5 equal strands from each of the categories of the participants for the purpose of salience and illustrated all the data sections presented in the analysis by using italics. Hence, segment 1 is the data from the interviews; segment 2 is based on participant observation and segment 3 is the document analysis. In each theme for segment 1, data was divided into two sections, namely, interviews with the lecturers and interviews with the students. Based on the title, the segregation was done purposefully in order to accommodate the views from both categories of participants. Given the immensity of the data provided by the participants in respect of the theme dealing with

attitude towards the use of indigenous African languages, the researcher was inclined to begin with this theme for the purposes of data analysis since it emerged as the strongest theme.

Each of the above segments was illustrated with five strands of data for the purpose of saliency and consistency. The lecturers were labelled as Lecturer 1 to 4, while the participant representing the committee for the formulation of the UL Language policy was labelled Lecturer 5. The students were presented randomly and their labels ranged from Students 1 to Student 18. The distinction between the students was numerical.

With respect to the participant observation, the researcher either presented strands of data or did a presentation using thick description to present the data in the analysis. As mentioned earlier, it is important for the reader to note that the themes that the researcher used in the data analysis were not mutually exclusive, but rather interconnected.

4.4 ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

When the researcher scrutinized the collected data for this study, it appeared that all participants seemed to agree that the learning of an indigenous African language, with reference to the SOVENGA (Sotho, Venda, Tsonga) languages, is a challenge that needs to be overcomed. This theme appeared to be recurrent in the interviews, participant observation and document analysis.

4.4.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

4.4.1.1 Interviews with the lecturers

The following data strands from the interviews portray lecturers' attitudes towards the use of African languages at an institutional level. The following are some of the responses from lecturers based on responses to questions 3 & 11(lecturers) and 4 & 5 (Committee for the Formulation of Language Policy) from the interview schedule which focused on the attitude towards the use of African languages.

Question 3: Which other languages are used in this university and in what situations?

Lecturer 1: *English. It is the medium of instruction in some formal gatherings. Sepedi. Official language around Campus as most of the general workers are Sepedi speaking people. Tshivenda in Tshivenda classes only. IsiZulu mostly spoken by Zulu students in their private conversation.*

Lecturer 2: *Sepedi, Tshivenda and English as languages of teaching and learning.*

Lecturer 3: *Xitsonga, Venda, Sepedi. African languages are used in lecture halls during their classes but medium of instruction is English.*

Lecturer 4: *Northern Sotho, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Siswati are mainly used as languages of discourse outside the lecture halls by students and lecturers. Northern Sotho, Xitsonga and Tshivenda are also used as languages of learning and teaching in their respective discipline/ classes. Since this area is a predominant Northern Sotho area, Northern Sotho dominate the other African languages in general conversation domains like administration and the general workers.*

Question 4: Which other languages are used at this university?

Lecturer 5: There are people who speak Siswati, isiZulu, isiNdebele, Sesotho, Setswana, isiXhosa, etc

Question 5: Under what circumstances are these languages being used?

Lecturer 5: In lecture halls for example for teaching and learning purposes, and also during interactions among employees and students in various work stations

Question 2: Do you speak some other SA Languages?

Lecturer 5: Yes, Afrikaans

In light of the above comments, participants seemed to be in agreement regarding the distribution of languages usage at this university. Some participants strongly alluded to the fact that the African indigenous/ SOVENGA languages used at the University of Limpopo are mostly used in the teaching of these African languages during subject-specific lecture periods.

Question 11: Do you have any problems teaching Xitsonga?

Lecturer 1: No

Lecturer 2: No, I don't have a problem

Lecturer 3: Yes, because students lack in their speaking and writing skills

Lecturer 4: No

Lecturers indicated that they did not have a problem with the teaching of Xitsonga, however Lecturer 3 indicated that she experienced problems with the students as she felt that they lacked the necessary speaking and writing skills. This, she felt, compromised teaching and learning.

4.4.1.2 Interviews with the students

Students demonstrated their negative attitude towards their HL, Xitsonga and their feeling regarding the choice of Xitsonga as one of their major teaching subject and a module in their responses to questions 1, 4 and 5 below:

Question 1: What is your official language?

Student 1: Xitsonga

Student 2: Xitsonga

Student 3: Sepedi

Student 4: Xitsonga

Student 5: Xitsonga

Question 4: Did you choose to study Xitsonga?

Student 5: No, I did not choose. (follow-up question): What happened? Because you are doing it. Student: They chose it for me.

Student 7: No, but I like to study Xitsonga.

Researcher (follow-up question): What happened because you are studying it?

Student 7: They chose it for me because I scored higher marks.

Student 8: No, I did not choose. (follow-up question): So what happened? Student: The University chose for me because I obtained high marks in Xitsonga.

Student 10: No, I did not. (follow-up question): What happened because you are studying Xitsonga? Student: I applied for Social Sciences and languages, so they took me in Xitsonga.

Student 15: No, they just placed me in my majors, Xitsonga and life orientation.

Question 5: What two modules should you have chosen?

Student 11: I should have chosen law.

Student 13: I should do teaching and major in English and Geography because I would love to know about the nature.

Student 14: Life sciences and Computer literacy.

Student 16: I was going to choose Business and Economics.

Student 17: I would choose Agriculture and Mathematics.

The above responses accentuated the notion that, if the students had performed well in their matric year, they would have chosen to do subjects other than their Home language, Xitsonga.

4.4.2 Data Segment 2: Participant observation

This data segment was divided into General observation and Classroom observation and is presented as follows:

4.4.2.1 General observation

Ever since the selected themes in the preamble appear to interlink, the general observation segment would be continual as with other preceding segments. Most of the data was collected through observations made inside the space of the University of Limpopo, and originates, in the main, from the researcher's observation and from remarks made by lecturers and students, as well as comments made in the lectures that were observed by the researcher. Some of the comments presented below were not captured

as word-for-word transcriptions of what the participants said, they are, therefore, an approximation of the participants' views, because the researcher scribbled them down in the form of field notes since there was no opportunity to tape record the interactions directly.

The following data is a transcript of a conversation between the researcher and a student which the researcher could not omit, since it has a bearing on the study. This conversation took place in the researcher's office, involving a student who underperformed in a test. The student visited the researcher in order to express his frustrations based on the feedback he had received relating to his underperformance in a test.

Student: Mem swilo a swi fambanga kahle eka test and mi tsale ku ri ni mi vona

[Mam, I did not perform well in the test and you wrote that I must come and see you]

Researcher: Xana ni fanele ku ku vitana loko u nga tirhanga kahle ke?

[Do I have to call you if you have underperformed in your assessments]

Student: Ee. Swa tika mem. Xitsonga a hi ririmis ra mina, a ni boheka ku xi dyondza exikolweni hikwalaho ka ndhawu laha a ni tshama kona. A ni hlayisiwa hi kokwana ene xikolo xa le kusuhi a ku dyondziwa Xitsonga ntsena. Mina ni mulobedu. Ni xi pasile ene kwala loko va ni admit va ni hlawulele Xitsonga hi mhaka ya tipoyiti. Xona a xi ri henhla kambe a no xi tiva ngopfu. Swa ni tikela swinene.

[No mam, it's really hard. Xitsonga is not my HL. I was forced to study it because of situations beyond my control. I was staying with my grandparent and the only school nearby was offering Xitsonga as a HL. I had to study that. I am a Mulobedi not Mutsonga. I managed to pass it and when I was admitted here Xitsonga had more points, so they chose it for me. I am not well conversant with it and it's a big challenge to me.]

During registration at the university one often hears frightening comments from both lecturers and students mocking those students who experienced problems with marks in

indigenous African language courses. An example such comments include the following interaction between a lecturer and a student:

Lecturer: Why mi tale laha ka corridor. I January. University a yi se pfula.

[*Why are you lingering the corridors? Its January. The University has not opened yet.]*

Student: A ni kumanga/ pasanga module wa African language lowu a ndzi wu endla. Ni lava ku kombela ku zameriwa pulani leswaku ni tsala kumbe ku wu khera. I lembe ro hetelela ene wu ta ni khomeleta.

[*I did not get the result/ pass the African module that I was doing. I want to negotiate that I be given another chance to write or reregister it since this is my final year and it will delay me]*

Lecturer: U feyila ririmi ra le kaya. Why u rhistarile. Mi tlanga hi mali. A hi khoso xilo xexo. Xo vulavuriwa ntsena.

[*You failed a home language. Why did you register it in the first place? You are just wasting money. This is not a course. It is just meant for communication purposes.]*

Based on the participants' responses above, majority of students master indigenous African Languages. This results to the minority making fun of those who master African Languages as most of the lecturers use SOVENGA languages. In one of those unpredicted conversations, students and lecturers who are not majoring in indigenous African languages make fun of students who are majoring in these African Languages. From the above conversation, a lecturer who does not teach African languages, but whose mother tongue is one of the SOVENGA languages, was attempting to establish why that particular student was on campus during a time that other students were still enjoying their recess. The student indicated that he had failed an African language course. The lecturer did not sympathize with the student, pointing out that, in his opinion, the course was not a module, but a course meant for communication purposes only.

4.4.2.2 Classroom observation

The following are selected strands from the researcher's observation of the lecture halls during Xitsonga lectures at the University of Limpopo:

In the researcher's own class, which was composed of Xitsonga students from different geographical areas that are distinguished by a variety of dialects, the researcher observed that, more often than not, students seemed to be at ease with discussing or interacting with each other in their dialects first. If, during the interaction, they did not agree with each other, they simply switched to English during a Xitsonga lecture. In view of this, students appeared to battle with, almost finding it impossible, expressing some concepts in Xitsonga. For example, during a novel discussion, the researcher would act as the mediator and, from time to time, would move around between the groups of students, listening to their deliberations. Conspicuously, in almost all the groups, the reflections were made in Xitsonga dialects and in English. More so, as a researcher and a lecturer in this class, the researcher would, not only move around listening, but also intervene at times, when necessary, in order to try to spark a debate by further reinforcing Xitsonga concepts to inspire them and to lighten an awakening call in a subtle way to induce them to speak Xitsonga.

When trying to establish what the challenge was, the students would simple say:

Matheme lama ma tika hi Xitsonga.

[*These terms are difficult in Xitsonga.*]

Mem Xitsonga xi tika ku tlula English.

[*Mam Xitsonga is difficult than English.*]

Ni kota ku twisia hi ku hatlisa hi English hi ku na ha ku prisenta swo fana na leswi kona.
[*I can easily follow in English because I just presented the same topic in an English lecture.*]

Hileswi hi swi vurisaka swona laha ni humaka kona.

[*This is how we say it from my village.*]

The above argument indicates that the students were convinced that Xitsonga is very difficult. They said that Xitsonga concepts were difficult. They hid behind their regional dialects, saying that this was how they would say something in their villages. The above particular student stressed that she could easily follow the topic under discussion in English because she just presented the same topic in English. Secondly, looking back at other lecture visits, the status quo prevailed. Students would murmur in their dialects if they did not understand a concept or failed an assessment. They would say:

A hi dyondzanga hina leswi. [We were not taught this.]

Hi jumiwile. [We were caught off-guard.]

Xitsonga lexi, hayi. [This Xitsonga, no.]

Although most of the students acknowledged that the university offered indigenous African languages as modules, in view of the above, they still appeared to agree that the choice of module disadvantaged their learning, teaching and communication as they were being tutored, had to make presentations in class or had to teach during their teaching practical. Their opinion was that it was easier for them to make a quick reference to something in a Xitsonga lecture using English.

4.4.3 Data Segment 3: Document Analysis

Using this tool, data was gathered from tests and examination question papers, students' assignments and communiqués by management, lectures and students. For tests and examination question papers, the researcher concentrated on the cover page as designed by the university. In most cases, the covers of these assessment instruments were written in two languages, Xitsonga and English. The translations of these covers were not necessarily in both languages, characterised by careless writing with regard to language usage. One will notice, for an example, the time allocation in the extract of a paper below is in English, while total marks allocated are written in Xitsonga:

Time Allocation: 1 hour 15 minutes

[Mpimonkarhi: Awara na timinete ta 15]

Marks: 100

Regarding communiqués issued by management at any level, indigenous African languages were only used for the introductory salutations and minimally elsewhere. This is demonstrated as follows:

Avuxeni; Thobela; Molweni; Dimatsheloni

The above translation of the greetings was determined by time on which the address is carried out, i.e. if the document was created in the morning ‘Avuxeni’ in Xitsonga was used, while ‘Thobela’, a Sepedi word, can be used at any time of the day. Likewise, ‘Molweni’, is IsiXhosa and is used to greet more than one person. This IsiXhosa greeting is used at any time of the day while ‘Dimatsheloni’ is a Tshivenda word used in the morning. After the greetings, the writer usually switches to English. This practice is also the same with cover pages of students’ assignments and communiqués between students themselves and their lecturers. The following trend was spotted:

Students would furnish their particulars haphazardly, codemixing Xitsonga and English. In the content subjects, they sometimes ran out of Xitsonga words and switched to using English words. Sometimes the students inserted brackets or inverted commas around those words, or simply presented them as is. The students believed that they had presented their writings well if the two languages were used at the same time.

4.5 MOTIVATION FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

The interview questions in this regard elicited how motivated the participants were to use an indigenous African language for teaching and learning purposes.

4.5.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

4.5.1.1 Interviews with lecturers

The following data responses were obtained from the lectures. It should be noted that, although these lecturers are from two disciplines, the School of Education and Languages and Communication Studies, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the objective of both schools is to ensure that the Xitsonga taught is in a standardised Home Language form. The

following are data obtained from responses to Question 1 for the lecturers and Question 1 answered by the Committee for formulation of Language Policy in order to paint a picture of which medium of instruction (Mol) was being used during Xitsonga lectures.

Question 1: Which is your medium of instruction when teaching Xitsonga?

Lecturer 1: Xitsonga

Lecturer 2: Xitsonga

Lecturer 3: Xitsonga

Lecturer 4: Xitsonga

Question 1: Which of the UL official languages are you most comfortable in?

Lecturer 5: Tshivenda, English, Northern Sotho and Xitsonga

Regardless of the School where Xitsonga is offered as a module at the university, all participants indicated that they used Xitsonga as Mol in teaching Xitsonga. In addition, Lecturer 5 indicate that he was most comfortable in Xitsonga, regardless of his language background. Looking at the demographics of the participants, it is clear that lecturers had positive attitudes towards Xitsonga, advancing their academic language proficiency, even up to a level of PhD, in some cases. All the lecturers confirmed that they use Xitsonga as the medium of instruction in their teaching.

4.5.1.2 Interviews with students

The following are some of the responses from the student interviews, based on responses to questions 6 and 7 of the interview schedule, which focused on motivation for language learning.

Question 6: What language is used during consultations and in your group discussions?

Student 1: Okay, let me start with group discussion. In group discussions we use Xitsonga as the language that we communicate. And then during consultations we also use Xitsonga, but it depends on the consultation I am attending, let us say I need to know about a particular author which is for Xitsonga, somewhere somehow when I want to know about the profile of the person we usually go beyond, we check in English what was the background of this person before he became an author and that is where we will use internet and those things are found in English.

Researcher (follow-up question): So, in other words for some of the information you rely in other languages like English just to build up your Xitsonga content. Is that what you are saying?

Student 1: Yes, especially let me say the time we were learning about the Bloom's taxonomy. We have a Bloom's taxonomy in English. But because we wanted to know it in our language we had to translate it so that we can understand it very well. We quote what other authors are saying. Let us say we are talking about knowledge, what other authors are saying about knowledge and we translate it into Xitsonga.

Student 4: In our Xitsonga discussions we use both Xitsonga and English.

Researcher (follow-up question): Why do you use two languages in a Xitsonga group discussion?

Student 4: Because there are some words in English which have no equivalents in Xitsonga. However, we don't write them we just use them to understand the content.

Student 6: In Xitsonga modules we use Xitsonga, however, we codeswitch where we do not have equivalents.

Student 15: We use Xitsonga in our group and consultations for Xitsonga modules. However, when we are with non-Xitsonga speakers we use English.

Student 16: We use Xitsonga, because we want to invest and improve more in our language.

Question 7: Is it easy for you to participate in classroom interactions?

Student 1: I can say it is not really easy, because usually when I talk it is very rare that I can talk maybe five minutes without including English. So I think it is a problem somewhere somehow because we are used to English than our language. So I turn to mix with English. Even in presentation sometimes, it is better to present the whole presentation without including English although it is not a time to quote but I tend to include an English word.

Student 2: Yes, it is very easy. However, we sometimes include English where we do not have enough words.

Student 8: I can say I have challenges, because there are some of the words in Xitsonga I don't know.

Student 14: No, it is not easy for me. Because I am a little bit shy.

Student 16: No, I may say no. In most cases, I am a student who does not participate in class since high school.

From the above responses, majority of students seem to prefer both languages that is Xitsonga and English for group discussion and consultations. To these students, English enhanced the Xitsonga language because they mostly relied on English in order to understand what they are learning or discussing. While the minority to some, it was not easy to participate in classroom interactions because of their poor Xitsonga vocabulary.

4.5.2 Data Segment 2: Participant Observations

4.5.2.1 General Observation

As indicated in Chapter 1, the Vatsonga students, and some of their lecturers, have organized themselves into a cultural group called Tinyungubiseni Cultural Society,

meaning, “Be proud of yourselves Vatsonga”. The UL Vatsonga community constitutes all regional dialects found in the areas that constituted the former Homeland, Gazankulu. These are students and lecturers from Bushbuckridge, Giyani, Malamulele, Elim, Phalaborwa and Tzaneen. For the past years the steering committee for this cultural society has been made up of representatives from all the districts of the former homeland because, even though they are all Vatsonga, there are some differences in terms of cultural dances and attire. *Xibelani* is commonly worn by women from the area, based on inter-cultural marriages and friendship.

The main purpose of the group is to instil a sense of belonging among the Vatsonga community at UL, regardless of whether a student is registered as a Xitsonga student or not. The group brokers a sense of belonging among the members and a visibility of the Vatsonga people on campus. This is done through entertainment. Each year campaigns and cultural activities are organized. During those activities, songs are divided and played to suite all the former homeland members, as indicated above. When dancing starts, members of each and every tribe will dance to their own music. To this end, connectedness has matured to a point where, irrespective of where they come from, they can dance and follow the notes and rhythms of every song played. This happens naturally from the point at which they rise up while the performer is on stage. Surprisingly, the movements suit the rhythm well. The following are some of the comments made by participants during those activities:

Eish... why mara? [Eish.... But why?]

Ri famba na ngati. [It goes with the blood.]

EBush akaya, Muchongolweni. [Home, Bush Muchongolweni. {a traditional dance by men and women in Bushbuckridge}]

Teka...teka...teka. [sense of excitement]

Hamba Gaza. [Ululating the Gaza traditional dance]

Giyani weee! [Showcasing that the dancer is from Giyani.]

Through the above comments, the participant shows excitement during social activities. Participants readily show who they really are during these events. From the above comments, one recognizes that there are Vatsonga from Bushbuckridge and Giyani among the participants. They display their regional dances at this type of gathering.

4.5.2.2 Classroom Observation

The following strands were selected from researcher's observations in the Xitsonga lecture halls:

Firstly, in the researcher's own class, which comprised of Xitsonga- (a variety of dialects) and a few of Sepedi-speakers, the researcher observed that students seemed to be at ease using their dialects first, when discussing. The students usually chose the student who was the boldest, with regard to speaking and reading skills, to be their spokesperson. Those who had low self-esteem remained in their comfort zones, while others benefitted from the contents of topics taught, as it is said that 'practice makes perfect'. One can read from their non-verbal communication gestures that the students were not willing to participate in class, which delayed progress in class. Students tended to be non-assertive in their teaching and learning, and in the career that they are trying to build. The listening and speaking skills became a problem because, when they wrote, they would normally commit writing errors because they failed to comprehend the speaking, listening and writing skills, both in- and outside of the lecture hall.

Secondly, looking back at other class visits at UL, the above appeared to be the norm. At some point, the dialects would mislead students, as some concepts do not necessarily have the same meaning. Below are some of the examples:

Xikotlola > Xisabelwana > Xibavhana > [bowl vs bath tub]

Tinguvu > Xibelana > Swiambalo > [clothes vs cloth material]

Xipfalo > Ximbhonyo > [Lid vs door]

Mazingi > Mathayere > [Corrugated iron vs tyres]

The above examples display different meanings and usages of the concepts from different Xitsonga dialects. The examples, as captured above, indicate that a bowl is different from a bath tub, clothes and cloth material, lid and door and lastly corrugated iron and tyres.

4.5.3 Data Segment 3: Document Analysis

The university's language policy has been used as a point of reference with respect to document analysis. Attention was on policy implementation and evaluation. This was done mainly by outlining what the policy stipulates in some sections and then relate these stipulations to what was done in practice. To cite an example, the policy says that:

The University sees multilingualism as a source rather than a hindrance towards South African's political healing, economic growth and development, effective education and training, fairness in the Courts and mutual respect across its social and religious 'rainbowiness' that has become the hallmark of South Africanness.

Quoting from the document, section 3.7 reads thus:

To ensure parity and to promote the equitable use of English, Sesotho sa Leboa, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Setswana, isiNdebele and Afrikaans as the main languages in the University's hinterland.

From these quotes, there is a place at UL for indigenous African languages and that the university will promote the equitable use of these languages. Consequent to that, regarding the medium of instruction with respect to indigenous languages, the Language Policy of the University of Limpopo states that, "Xitsonga will be used as a medium of instruction in Xitsonga courses. At postgraduate level, candidates have the right to use Xitsonga as a medium of instruction" (University of Limpopo Language Policy, 2016: 6). Ironically, at the Masters and PhD level, students are obliged to produce an English version of their project proposal. This causes delays in the completion of their studies, as

they are expected to write a proposal in English while the dissertations and thesis will be written in Xitsonga. This situation is the same for the other indigenous African languages. When some students accomplished the writing of the proposals in English, they no longer want to write their research reports in Xitsonga, but wish to continue to use English.

4.6 PRESTIGE ENJOYED BY ENGLISH

Another area of interest that was deemed necessary to investigate is the position of English at UL. Most people at UL, in particular believed that English is the most dominant language in South Africa. Currently, the practice at UL regarding the choice of modules per programme in teacher-education solely relies on the performance of students in Grade 12, for entry to the undergraduate programme. For the PGCE students, a combination of the applicable teaching subjects is the main consideration. Students are admitted to modules based on the scores they obtained. They do not have the liberty to choose for themselves. Based on this, the following segments highlight the prestige enjoyed by English.

4.6.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

4.6.1.1 Interviews with lecturers

The following data were responses from lecturers which, relate to the prestige English enjoys within the university. It should be noted that an environment can define itself based on its linguistic landscape and the strategies that are used to disseminate information. Below are the responses to questions 14, 15 and 16; 8 & 7 (This order covers responses of lecturers and those for the Committee for formulation of Language Policy) of the interview schedule that was used to illustrate lecturers' views about the language practice at UL.

Question 14: How do you feel about the dominance of English in UL public spaces?

Lecturer 1: I am very positive about it as English is the only language, which accommodates everybody, as is none African language. So its usage discourages language dominance among African languages.

Lecturer 2: We cannot do anything about it, but one can try to improve communication of Xitsonga and other African languages. Forget about English and try to promote Xitsonga as hard as possible.

Lecturer 3: Intimidated and not belonging to the environment. Not developing the indigenous African languages.

Lecturer 4: It is not good at all especially for the new students coming to the university because they shy away from choosing/ registering African languages and even speaking them. This is a perpetuation Anglicization at the expense of indigenous languages.

From the above quotations it can be seen that there is a perpetuation of a process of Anglicization, where English suppresses indigenous African languages. It is surprising that one of the lecturers was of the view that the dominance of English is a good thing in a multilingual environment because it prevented the dominance of one of the university's SOVENGA languages at the institution. This means that this lecturer did not see the necessity for an indigenous African language to dominate in an institution of higher learning, such as UL. The feeling one gets from the above is that nothing can stop English from being a dominant language at this institution. Participants blame the institution's language policy and its rural setting for this.

Question 15: Is the dominance of English positive or negative?

Lecturer 1: Positive

Lecturer 2: Both

Lecturer 3: Negative. SA 11 languages are not applicable in the university level; it is just acknowledgement but the usage is poor. English remains the official language.

Lecturer 4: Negative

From the above quotations the participants express that the dominance of English in the space of UL is negative because there are other languages that are being used in UL.

Question 8: How do you feel about the dominance of English in the space of the University?

Lecturer 5: English is the de facto language of the economy; so we have to use it. However, there is space to still promote the use of African languages in academic programmes, and notices.

The majority of the participants hammered home the fact that the dominance of English is negative, based on the fact that there are other official languages that must be taken into consideration as well.

Question 16: In your opinion, is the awareness of multilingualism reflected in the languages used for teaching and learning?

Lecturer 1: Yes

Lecturer 2: Yes, but the implementation is very slow. People need decolonisation of mind. The Language policy is fine; the problem is with the people with wrong minds.

Lecturer 3: No. The usage of Xitsonga is at the informal level. It is just spoken at the informal setting. No documentation in Xitsonga is available at the university.

Lecturer 4: No, this is one reason I indicated in the beginning that the university language policy is a white elephant. What is contained in the policy and happening on the ground are opposites.

Question 7: Is the awareness of multilingualism reflected in the University language policy?

Lecturer 5: Yes, but there is room for improvement. For instance, some street and residences bear names in African languages. There are academic programmes that embrace multilingualism (e.g. Master's in African Languages); students and employees are allowed to express themselves in the language of their choice. Bill boards are in the

official languages of the Province. It would strengthen multilingualism if all notices at UL are in the four official languages of the Province.

There is dominance of ‘but’ in the above, which shows that the policy was seen to taking care of all the SOVENGA languages, however, the challenge is with the implementation part. There is a mismatch between policy and practice. There is an indication that the usage of Xitsonga is informal as there were no formal documents from the university that were written in Xitsonga, meant for the Xitsonga-speaking community and those who might be interested in learning the language.

4.6.1.2 Interviews with students

Responses to questions 8 and 9 presented below unveil how students associated themselves with the environment of their institution.

Question 8: How useful is the environment of the university a good tool for learning Xitsonga?

Student 5: No. it doesn't motivate me. I do it on my own.

Student 12: I think the environment is poor.

Interviewer (follow-up question): Why do you say the environment is poor?

Student 13: Since we are in a multilingual society, I think the university only focuses on two or one language(s), English and sometimes Sepedi.

Student 15: No, up to so far it is not useful. Because most of the times when we want to enter buildings like library or computer laboratories the people working there are not multilingual. They only speak Sepedi. Even notice boards are written in Sepedi and English.

Student 16: I think it is not much useful, because everything is written in some other languages, and Xitsonga is not one of them.

Student 18: The University is a good tool for learning Xitsonga. We have a traditional organisation Tinyungubyiseni in the university which helps us to see the importance of our culture.

Question 9: How does the diverse nature of this environment help/hinder communication?

Student 2: I think it does not help, because some people think their language is more superior than the others.

Student 3: It helps because many of us learn different languages and it hinders because some of the lecturers and students use their own languages when they communicate with others.

Student 6: I think it hinders when you meet people who cannot speak your language, nevertheless, it assists us in learning other languages as though it is compulsory, because if you do not learn them you cannot live well or get what you intend to on daily basis.

Student 8: I can say it hinders communication, because we have different languages and when I meet people I don't speak their language communication will be compromised.

Student 15: It does not help at all. It actually hinders our communication. I can say we are undermined in this university, because when we are with other language speakers we are forced to speak their languages, or English.

Students expressed the opinion that the environment of the university was not a good place to assist them to learn Xitsonga. To them, the university environment only promotes the use of English and Sepedi. Moreover, these two languages dominate everything, in the vicinity of UL, even at a linguistic level, because all notices are written in English.

They did, however, acknowledge the diverse nature of the university, while at the same time they insisted that the institute hindered their communication in Xitsonga.

4.6.2 Data Segment 2: Participant Observations

4.6.2.1 General observation

The following observation focused on the prestige enjoyed by English. However, some of the comments presented below are mere approximations of the participants' views, since the researcher did not have an opportunity to record them in any way. Reference, in this instance, are the activities carried out by the Xitsonga cultural group, Tinyungubyiseni Cultural Society at the university. The practice by this group is that they hold a series of events during the academic year, namely, open air campaigns, memorial games, a beauty contest and heritage celebrations. In the 2017 and 2018, during the campaigns and celebrations, as tradition demands, students dressed up in their Xitsonga traditional attire. The attire differs per region of origin. There is, for example, *Xibelani* dressed by women from *Xipilongo*, which comes from places like Giyani, Malamulele and Hlanganani. On the other hand, *Qhovo* is worn by women from Bushbuckridge and some women from Phalaborwa. Men from all these areas dress in *tinjhovo*. It was interesting to hear some of the Vatsonga students bemoaning the fact that the programme directors spoke in their regional Xitsonga dialects, in preference to mixing these dialects with English, so that the students could understand the proceedings. The use of regional Xitsonga dialects was an attempt for the recognition of Vatsonga at UL.

The following are some of the remarks made by students:

En then ku humeleta yini? [And then what's happening?]

Twanani Xipilongwana lexi. Xi zama yini? [Listen to this Spilonkeng. What is he trying to say?]

U ta twa na xibuxwana xi khuluma na xona. The Bushbuckridge one will follow suit- (khuluma- represents Bushbuckridge dialect)]

Hey, a hi mi twi ku mi ri yini? Mi nga hi huhwisi. Hi lava ku ejoya ndhawu leyi. [Hey, we don't hear what you are saying? Don't play games with us. We are here to enjoy ourselves.]

Mi pfa mi thoka swi ta hatlisanyana. Go! A yi suke magents. [Mix with English so that you can be a bit fast. Go! Carry on gentlemen]

The above utterances indicated that some participants felt that English was concise and that they understand the language far better than they understood their home language. A student was urged to speak in English rather than use his regional dialect. The reason for this is that it will be quicker to construct a sentence that will be understood with ease by all. They also mixed their sentences with *Tsotsitaal* and transliterated some of the English words into Xitsonga. Originally, *Tsotsitaal* is mainly a language that is used in mines for people who speaks different languages for them to understand each other. It is not written anywhere. For other sectors like institutions of higher learning like UL *Tsotsitaal* is mostly used by the youths in their social gathering when they communicate. When students transliterate they adopt the sound of that particular language whether English or Afrikaans and pronounce the word in Xitsonga by following the syllable construction in Xitsonga where a system is a consonant + a vowel, *for example: stoel* (Afrikaans) *in Xitsonga the word is x+i+t+u+l+u* (Consonants + vowels) = *Xi+tu+lu* (Syllable formed) =*the word Xitulu.*

4.6.2.2. Classroom observation

The following are some of the selected strands of the researcher's observation in the Xitsonga lecturer halls during teaching and learning. The researcher concentrated on the interpersonal relationship of participants during classroom interaction. The researcher observed that there was a gap between some students and lecturers during learning regarding their interpersonal values. Interpersonal values are the sort of human relationships that are considered important by the individual (Molero Jurado, Pérez Fuentes, Luque De La Rosa, Martos Martínez, Barragán Martín, Márquez & del Mar, 2016). Lecturers appeared to be confident and to care for the students so that the

students may learn. Contrary to the above, the majority of the students seemed to be detached, forceful and getting others to like and approve of them.

From the above, the majority of these students appeared to be detached from classroom interactions because they were convinced that they could only respond in English and not in Xitsonga. As a result, lecturers force the students to give responses, even when they do not give an indication that they have something to say. This led to forceful learning, as learning should be learner-centred and, in this case, the students are learners in an academic environment. Moreover, some students enjoyed getting others to like and approve of them because, even though they knew the rules that the language of MOI was Xitsonga, they forcefully responded in English. Other students would applaud them for having done so, and said ‘you are the boss’. When asked why did they did that, they lamented that English is an easy language in which to construct and learn concepts in. This kind of response, therefore, led to some students staying away from lecturers, failing assessments and, ultimately, failing the module (Pérez Fuentes et.al., 2016).

4.6.3 Data Segment 3: Document Analysis

English enjoys its superior standard even in the layout of the language policy of UL. Furthermore, the policy is divided into 5 subsections and Section 3 describes the Underpinning and Principle. Quoting from the document, Section 3.7 reads thus:

*Compilation of official records such as minutes, agendas, calendars, etc., study materials (save those in the language programmes) shall be created, developed and made available in **English**, but where possible and practicable, explanations may be made in any one of the indigenous languages of the students to facilitate meaningful internalization of concepts.*

The above seemed to motivate that indigenous African languages are recognized by the institution. In the quote, English is written in bold so as to outshine the indigenous African languages that need to be developed to the same level as English. The SOVENGA languages are not even mentioned for clear recognition but are only referred to as “any

one of the indigenous languages". Moreover, the phrase is more about the implementation and the evaluation of the 'any one of the indigenous languages' as to when and how this may take place. The above, emphasised in the policy, states that, "*English will remain the medium of instruction in the majority of academic programmes because of the language's local and international relevance.*"

Again, the researcher observed from Xitsonga scripts that most of the students, when responding to Xitsonga assessment tasks, tended to use both English and Xitsonga in some context. This practice does not occur in English assessment tasks, i.e. they do not use Xitsonga if they are missing an adequate concept in English. This stresses the degree to which English has indoctrinated speakers of indigenous African languages.

4.7 EXISTENCE OF LANGUAGE POLICY

As indicated in Chapter 1, the study drew most of its concerns from the university language policy, highlighting the fact that there is a mismatch between the institution's language policy, implementation and language practice. The Language Policy of UL ostensibly promotes multilingualism but, in practice, only English dominates. Below are the responses of the participants with respect to this theme.

4.7.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

4.7.1.1 Interviews with lecturers

As far as the language policy of the university is concerned, all participants were aware of the document and its contents. Their concern was with the implementation and evaluation processes. Responses to questions 6, 7, 9 & 10; and 3 for the Committee, give a brief outline of the practice and feelings of the participants.

Question 6: Does this policy help or hinder students in achievement of learning Xitsonga?

Lecturer 1: It helps as Xitsonga students are able to learn Xitsonga in their own language.

Lecturer 2: No, students just have attitude towards their African languages in general and Xitsonga in particular.

Lecturer 3: It helps because the platform is there to learn/register Xitsonga as a module. The environment hinders because it is not conducive enough because they give in for English. Xitsonga modules are not supported in terms of resources.

Lecturer 4: In fact, this policy does not help progress of students that have registered for TSO, VEN and N. Sotho. Lecturer do not compromise to use African languages to clarify their lessons.

Question 7: What is your opinion of the language policy of this university?

Lecturer 1: It is fair and follows the Constitution of the Republic.

Lecturer 2: It has not been published to reach all level or corners. All stakeholders need to know it.

Lecturer 3: The policy is not implemented enough. Not elaborating how to use it. Xitsonga and Tshivenda are at the minority level. No measures to monitor the usage of the policy.

Lecturer 4: It is a white elephant and a toothless dog. It seems that it was written to please government yet in reality it does not apply what is contained in the policy and what happens in day to day situation are two different things.

From the above quotations participants indicate that the University language policy aligns with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa but the practice on language usage at UL does not align with what is stipulated in the language policy itself.

Question 9: Is this policy being implemented successfully?

Lecturer 1: No. Most of the communications are done in English only and sometimes a little of Sepedi.

Lecturer 2: No

Lecturer 3: No. This may be translated into Xitsonga so that Xitsonga speakers may feel accommodated in the UL.

Lecturer 4: No, I said it is not applied.

Question 10: Does the policy meet the students' needs?

Lecturer 1: Yes, to a certain extent.

Lecturer 2: Not yet because it has not been implemented successfully.

Lecturer 3: Partially it does. If they do Xitsonga they feel intimidated. No incentives. Only certificates at grassroots level. They do not get bursaries. They must be on the same par with other courses.

Lecturer 4: No it doesn't except for students registered for TSON, VEN and N. Sotho

Question 3: Is UL Language Policy a written document or the one that is tacitly understood?

Lecturer 5: It is a written document. It is easy to understand it.

The above excerpts hammer home the gap that exists between policy and practice. Participants acknowledged that indigenous African languages are recognized, but emphasised that this was just on paper. The policy, they felt, was not implemented as there were no efforts made to translate documents into any of the SOVENGA languages, as stipulated by the policy. There was a concern that this also affects the availability of resources in indigenous African languages.

4.7.1.2 Interviews with students

Ignorance seems to be a stumbling block for individuals to access information and to act on information accordingly. Responses from these participants evaluate how abreast students are with the language usage situation at their institution. Responses to question 3 appear to indicate how responsible participants were in aspects that have a bearing on their teaching and learning activities to help equip them to make informed decisions.

Question 3: Do you know whether the university has a language policy?

Student 2: Yes, I do know. And it says the language of instruction is English.

Student 9: No, I do not. But I will try to find out.

Student 12: Not really, but I will go and look for it. I hope it should be having one.

Student 15: Yes, I know. But I just heard from other people, I have never seen it though.

Student 18: Yes, I know. The language of teaching and learning is English. And it also gives a right to students to choose any African language as their major subject.

Looking at the above responses one can see that these students were ignorant of what governs them, as far as language usage is concerned, while they pursue their studies and shape their academic careers. They did not appear to know that there is a language policy at their institution. Those that know deemed it hearsay. They did not know the contents of the policy.

4.7.2 Data Segment 2: Participant Observations

4.7.2.1 General Observation

The following data indicates that the prestige enjoyed by English has a bearing on the execution of different activities in the UL environment.

The following are some of the remarks made by students:

En then ku humelela yini?

[*And then what's happening?*]

Twanani Xipilongwana lexi. Xi zama yini?

[*Listen to this Spilokeng. What is he trying to say?*]

U ta twa na xibuxwana xi khuluma na xona.

[*The Bushbuckridge one will follow suit- (khuluma- represents Bushbuckridge dialect)*]

Hey, a hi mi twi ku mi ri yini? Mi nga hi huhwisi. Hi lava ku ejoya ndhawu leyi.

[*Hey, we don't hear what you are saying? Don't play games with us. We are here to enjoy ourselves.*]

Mi pfa mi thoka swi ta hatlisanyana. Go! A yi suke magents.

[*Mix with English so that you can be a bit fast. Go! Carry on gentlemen*]

In the above, students just intimidating one another, despite them being Vatsonga. They come from different regions and when they come together, they talk in their various dialects. What emanated above is that, using those regional dialects, students claim that they are not quick enough to construct a meaningful sentence. Instead, to some of the students, using English would benefit them most.

4.7.2.2 Classroom observation

As far as observations are concerned, the researcher focused on both her experiences as a student at this university and as a researcher. It was noted that English was the main MOI as well as the language of communication at UL. In a Xitsonga lecture, some students would insist on being assisted in English. When the lecturer resisted the students would insist on seeing the lecturer privately in the office because they could not understand what was being said unless they received clarification in English. In another situation, after the lecture, a student asked if they could not be assisted to

paraphrase the quotes that were given to them in English to Xitsonga, because they could not do that on their own. The student further said that they could at least read what had been provided in the desired language, in this case, Xitsonga.

When told that they must learn to do that on their own, they lamented that the language policy promotes English only and that they needed to practice the language because even some of the Xitsonga lecturers preferred to speak English. They had gone so far that even comments written in the students' scripts were mostly written in English, because it was hard for them to master the standard version of Xitsonga. An indication of this was that, at some point, their dialects were not considered and, as a result, they became easily confused. However, it is interesting to note that they also mentioned the fact that there were some lecturers who were willing to go an extra mile to assist them.

4.7.3 Data Segment 3: Document Analysis

UL, like other institutions of higher learning, has its own language policy which was developed to manage the language affairs of the institution. The introductory background information of the policy shows that it was developed in alignment with documents that govern language usage in South Africa, and in alignment with a number of programmes that have a bearing on the teaching and learning of the black child. In practice, there are no mechanisms in place for either implementation or evaluation. Most activities related to the policy are in limbo.

4.8 DEVELOPING INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa stipulates that all official languages must be developed in order to enhance their status. The following data segment presentations will be dealt with this theme.

4.8.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

4.8.1.1 Interviews with lecturers

The following data from responses questions 12, 13 and 17; & 9 posed to the Committee elicited the perceptions of lecturers of how they are participating, and wish to participate, in the development of Xitsonga and other UL languages.

Question 12: Do you acknowledge regional dialects during teaching and learning?

Lecturer 1: To a certain level depending on the context but standard language is one which I always promote.

Lecturer 2: Yes, Sometimes

Lecturer 3: Yes, recognised to enable them to participate. To understand the content.

Lecturer 4: Yes. But students are made aware that regional dialects usually emanate from influence from neighbouring languages and this is normal but in writing they should use standard language.

Question 13: How do you deal with regional dialects?

Lecturer 1: Try to allow my students to use their dialects minimally and promote the standardised language as they are expected to teach Xitsonga in its standard form.

Lecturer 2: I do not concentrate on dialects because I use standard language. Concentration is on standard language.

Lecturer 3: By giving them formal assessment and feedback. To remind them about using standard language when speaking and writing. Teach them how to use the language.

Lecturer 4: Students are made aware that regional dialects usually emanate from influence from neighbouring languages and this is normal but in writing they should use standard language.

Question 17: What are you doing to develop the Xitsonga language within or outside campus?

Lecturer 1: Teaching Xitsonga although referencing is done in other languages as limited resources are available so far. Trying to develop Xitsonga terminologies which can be used instead of their English versions.

Lecturer 2: I am using my Xitsonga for communication, with students, colleagues and more. I also give motivational talks about the importance of Xitsonga. I always say to them God created you as Mutsonga, Xitsonga speaking person and He has a purpose. So carry out God's plan.

Lecturer 3: Engage in competitions of writing and speaking skills where students may be rewarded. Translating some information from English to Xitsonga.

Lecturer 4: By teaching student's current trends in language and human language technology. Encourage students to be part of book clubs. To participate in terminology development activities and to expose university students to how terms are coined from English to Xitsonga.

Question 9: What needs to be done to give all other UL languages the same status?

Lecturer 5: Changing the attitudes of staff and students is key. While acknowledging the dominance of English, staff and students should be taught that they can achieve more success in all areas of life by using their own indigenous languages. Each Faculty must choose one programme (besides African languages themselves) where an African language can be used as a medium of instruction.

From the above excerpts, participants had a number of activities to do, both long and short term, but they indicated that there was a need to change people's attitudes first when it comes to language usage.

4.8.1.2 Interviews with students

Xitsonga students as indicated earlier possess variety of Xitsonga dialects as a result their language background, norms and values somehow differs which then inform how they preserve their cultural practices. In most cases the language usage of an individual is rooted in the language practices which have a bearing on how that language is preserved by that individual. Responses to question 11 below ascertain the language background and language use of the participants.

Question 11: What can you do to develop the Xitsonga language?

Student 11: I can create a chance for other people who do not speak Xitsonga to learn Xitsonga. I can also have a motivational class for Vatsonga students.

Student 15: I will firstly try by all means that people who are working at major building like library and computer laboratory get to know Xitsonga. And all notices accommodate Xitsonga. Also, I would make sure that there are more materials for Xitsonga language.

Student 16: I think we can have reading and writing clubs for Xitsonga language for every Tsonga and even those who are interested.

Student 17: I can make sure the university includes Xitsonga in the writing of notice boards.

Student 18: I can study further from a first degree to doctorate level where I can write Xitsonga articles in order to uplift our language.

The participants' responses imply that students also agreed that something had to be done to develop the language and that they, themselves, should take the initiative. From

the above, the students mentioned projects, such as motivational classes, reading and writing clubs and notices, written in Xitsonga.

4.8.2 Data Segment 2: Participant Observation

4.8.2.1 General Observation

In the introduction to this chapter, the researcher highlighted the fact that the following themes: attitude towards the use of African languages, motivation for language learning, prestige enjoyed by English, existence of language policy and the developing of African languages, seem to interrelate to assist in the discovery of the perspectives of the participants under study on their views about their language. The following data shows that environment (context) can influence the language in use, at a particular time, by a particular group of people.

Firstly, in one of the surprising conversations with a lecturer in the space of UL, the researcher met with a lecturer who was almost arrogant about the notion that Xitsonga is very easy and students should not be subjected to having study the language at tertiary institutions because it is an everyday spoken language. However, the lecturer seemed amazed and claimed the same student would be able to teach Xitsonga in any grade should they be given a platform to do so. These Xitsonga students come from different rural background with variety of dialects, as alluded to in the previous sections. During the discussion, the lecturer was informed of the language skills and competences that students must be equipped. This brought in the element of standard language, which some of the Xitsonga students are battling to comprehend. Because of a failure to grasp comprehension, English becomes the constant fall-back language. This connotes that Xitsonga students often codemix and codeswitch during social interactions, teaching and learning, group discussions and consultations. The practice is not limited to their assessments.

Consistent with the above, the following are some of the spoken remarks by the lecturers and the students that the researcher gathered from within the spaces of UL:

Lecturer: N'wina moes ma tiphina hi ntirho. Mi dyondzisa ririm i ra le kaya. Mi ti dlayela yini? [But you enjoy work. You teach home language. Why kill yourselves?]

Swo tikisa ku yini? Mo va feyirisa vana lava. [How difficult is it? You fail these kids.]

Va tshikeni va pasa moes va ta swikota ku dyondzisa any grade loko va ya tirha. Mi nga va tikiseli. [Allow them to pass 'cause they will be able to teach in any grade when they are employed. Don't be too hard on them.]

Student: Mina ni lo hlamula ni nga yi hlayanga buku. [I just answered the book without reading it.]

Swilo leswi is not a problem. Hi ta khopa aspanini. [These things are not a problem. We will cope when we are at work.]

Mhani loyi o lava ku hi khomeleta. Mina a na ha ri kona laha sgele. Ni le spanini. [This woman just want to delay us. My mind-set is no longer on this campus. I am at work.]

Eish.... Mara na swiyisa leswiya swin'wana swa tikisa hey! [Eish.... But those other guys are difficult also, hey!]

To some students and lecturers, it is not important to develop an African language as they are convinced that it is a waste of time and resources to do so. To some students its time wasting and they see themselves working, not being delayed. Moreover, in response to this section, insight was drawn from what is stipulated in the Language Policy of UL, which affords the Student Representative Council the responsibility of contributing towards the university's multilingual policy. As stipulated in the policy, this council must strive to attain multilingualism through the creation of social and cultural activities, and through religious and cultural boundaries.

In response to the above, a Vatsonga social cultural group was established, as stated in section 4.5.2.1, and the club is doing well. In addition to this, students participate in various religious affiliations. Most of these religious organizations are mother tongue or HL oriented. Xitsonga is also represented in these organisations, where some of the

Vatsonga students get an opportunity to interact in Xitsonga. This practice also concurs with what was said in 4.5.2.1, namely, that implementation of the UL Language Policy is visible at a social level because, support relating to infrastructure is granted. Some religious gatherings take place within the space of UL and the students are given permission to utilize UL venues, especially after hours, during normal working days and in weekends.

4.8.2.2 Classroom observation

In terms of this theme, participants displayed different behaviours and attitude. The data was mostly collected during class presentations. What prevailed was students' unpreparedness. There were rare cases where members of the group would rotate presenting in class. They made sure that, in order for them to obtain better marks, they chose somebody who is conversant with the terminology and whose speaking skills were up to standard. During these presentations, the audiences would make funny comments when they heard a Xitsonga term that they never knew before and they would tell the presenter to say it bluntly in English for them to understand what the presenter was trying to say. After devising a plan that each member of a group must say something regarding the work given, the researcher observed that only a handful of the students showed an interest and who were committed to what they were doing. On the other hand, other students were explaining to each other in their dialects, what they thought the lesson (on language structures) being taught to them meant. Other students tried to make judgements, in English, saying that they understand best if they first used English. While others claimed that they were misled by trying to search for translation equivalents.

4.8.3 Data Segment 3: Document Analysis

As alluded to in the previous themes with respect to this tool, students, lecturers with special reference to Xitsonga assessment tests and examination scripts and question papers; and the UL Language Policy contributed to the theme of the development of indigenous African languages by justifying the necessity of language development in overcoming some of the challenges faced by the Xitsonga community at UL.

With reference to the above, some cover papers of the Xitsonga exam question papers from both the School of Education and the Language and Communication Studies Department bear familiar features within the template of the university folders, in general. Both Xitsonga and English languages are used haphazardly. Surprisingly the practice of bilingualism on the cover pages prevails only in the indigenous African language modules. Such practices do not occur in modules in which the medium of instruction is English. Those cover pages are strictly monolingual, meaning that there was never a time where the template would be presented in any of the SOVENGA languages. During the submission of question papers, no question paper in a SOVENGA language will be turned down based on the fact that the cover page does not represent the module name. Some students seem not to care about furnishing their personal information as required on the cover pages of answer booklets. Again, to the students, ignorance might be the root cause of incomplete information.

Furthermore, as seen from the discussion of the UL language policy in Chapter 1, this language policy ostensibly promotes the use of English because it is the language that dominates the UL landscape. In asserting this, the university is trying to align its practices with a number of legislative frameworks that govern the language practices of the Republic of South Africa. In support of the above, in the aims section, the UL Language Policy (1996:3) states that:

To uphold the legislative provision of multilingualism as define and laid-out in section 6 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the Language Policy and Plan for South Africa (2000), the National Language Policy Framework (2003), and the Ministerial Committee's Report on the Development of Indigenous African Languages as Mediums of Instruction in Higher Education (2005).

In addition, the UL Language Policy affirms that the university shall create an environment and make technological facilities (including simultaneous translation and interpreting) available in meetings and gatherings on campus. In addition, human power resources available to all staff and students for the acquisition of additional languages should be drawn on, especially from the university's linguistic hinterland.

Based on the above, the promotion of indigenous African languages is simply a paper exercise in the language policy and a word of mouth by its possessors. The talk is simply and acknowledgment that the SOVENGA languages are recognized at policy level but implementation by both the university and the bearers is very slow. What is at the core of the issue is finger-pointing behaviour. The language bearers are blaming the university, while the university is blaming the language bears.

4.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

In conclusion, at the preliminary stage of this study, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was identified as possible means of data analysis, though it overlapped with thick description, as thick description revealed more insights into the perceptions of the participants. The presented data supported Weber and Horner's (2012) language hierarchy discussed in Chapter 1, section 4, where the authors argue that some languages are more privileged than others. This chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of data obtained from interviews, participant observation and document analysis within the context of the University of Limpopo. The analysis investigated the different perspectives underlying the expressed language attitudes at the University of Limpopo, in particular, and in South Africa, in general. Given this, the analysis of this investigation was not only suggestive of the phenomenon of perceptions of students and lecturers on the use of Xitsonga as a language of learning and communication at the University of Limpopo, but also appeared to propose groundwork for the interpretation of the Language Policy of UL. The influence of the UL Language Policy, and its implementation or lack of thereof, was analysed. As Baldauf and Kaplan (2006) noted, language in education remains the major area where the language policy of a country is seen. It is to this effect that one may say that the multilingual language policy of the UL reflects that of South Africa. As a narrative, the presentation and analysis has provided the researcher with an opportunity to view things from the point of view of the participants. The major perspective to emerge from this data was that English was the dominant language at UL and the language was unchallenged in most domains by other SOVENGA languages.

The researcher has faith that the metaphorical categorisation used to select the themes that appeared in the data analysis, and in the categorization of the participants into

students and lecturers, brought with them justifications from the different perspectives of both the Xitsonga students and the lectures on their indigenous African language usage.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter analysed and presented data from the interviews, observation and document analysis. Excerpts from participants were displayed in responding to the emerged themes. This chapter is a continuation of Chapter 4 in that it deals with the analysis of the researcher's understanding of perceptions on the use of indigenous African languages as languages of learning and communication especially Xitsonga in institutions of higher learning, as seen through the understanding of the participants. In other words, all that the researcher proposes to do in this chapter is to build up a chain of narratives and interpretations. This presupposes the construction of analysis, where the narrative should be seen as an interpretation of their interpretations. In order to achieve this, the researcher needs to reinforce her beliefs that underlie this study and interpret the findings in terms of the participants' lived experience (Foncha, 2013). As a sequel to chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 of this study, the researcher focused on the role of interpreting the interpretations of participants, which signified a perspective of unrest and underlined the researcher's attempt to raise her thinking and practice to a higher level of understanding through interpretation (Sivasubramaniam, 2004; Foncha, 2013). In view of this unrest, the researcher now understands how her stance appears to position herself against a positivist view, based on her acceptance of the context of this research as a means of constructing and interpreting knowledge. The chapter discussed the following issues in order to reinforce the research perspective: the problem of objectivity, rejection of objectivity, rejection of interventionist approaches to language learning and communication, thereby reinforcing re-telling as a way of experiencing the experience (Sivasubramaniam, 2004:356). This, the researcher wishes to point out, is the rationale for the discussion of findings.

5.2 SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY

For the purpose of this study, the researcher found it necessary to look at objectivity and subjectivity, though they are intricately connected. Data analysis involves the pursuit of,

or a search for, patterns or forms or significances in data within the context of the research situation. Interpretation involves explaining these patterns or significances within a wider context by applying relevant theory. While analysis interrogates or questions what the data says, interpretation, on its part, questions what it means (Foncha, 2013). According to Foncha, in both cases the potential for objectivity hinges on the subject-researcher interaction, although similar factors are tangled at the two levels, the difference is critical. In view of this, Sivasubramaniam (2004:356) argued that the term objectivity is a set of characteristics that represent experience or knowledge, which is independent of any one individual. This independence is an outcome of stating a set of rules and the permissible operations that are needed to activate them. Knowledge that is derived as a result of such activation is not influenced by personal feelings or opinions, but only by facts. As this knowledge is seen to exist outside the mind, many researchers tend to think that it is objective and it can, therefore, be proved.

This investigation argued against the above notion of objectivity right from the outset and referred to the need for subjectivity and a constructivist approach to knowledge, as discussed in the literature review, methodology and data analysis chapters. In view of this, this study rejects language development at UL, as students, lecturers and policy are in opposing directions on language usage, without any regard to the context of origin (Abongdia & Foncha, 2014). Therefore, this investigation appears to resist the positivist notion that is based on hasty generalizability, universality and replicability, by focusing on context at a given time and place, involving particular participants (Kepe, 2018).

In respect of the literature review, this study has emphasized the notion of language as a social construct, both socially shaped but also, in turn, shaping societies (Blackledge, 2005). The advocates of this kind of method do not only turn a blind eye to diversity but they also appear to contemptuous of participation and interaction in language learning and communication. In view of this, the participants in research are seen, as being incapable of generating knowledge and that there is no need for them to engage in the process of knowledge generation since, they cannot be beneficial to their society (Foncha, 2013). It is against such a position that the researcher decided to embrace the principles of ecological and a constructivist view of language learning and communication.

In the preceding chapter, the researcher presented data as a narrative of a developing design and understanding through which socially constructed realities, local generalizations, interpretive resources, knowledge, inter-subjectivity and reasoning can assume substance and prominence (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Through this lens, substance and prominence appear to tally with a constructivist view of language learning and communication (perception and motivation), the core for this investigation. In principle, this meant that the researcher must share her experiences and insights with readers because this study is located within the context of human experience. Although the researcher is aware that locating perspectives and experience might produce an imperfect or flawed fit (Foncha, 2013), as an ethnographer, she intends to communicate to the reader the confirmatory evidence and the context in which perspectives is understood. This is to suggest that the researcher's own experience has a particular impact on the investigation as a whole.

5.3 NARRATION AS A WAY OF EXPERIENCING THEIR EXPERIENCES

The study results pointed to the direction that all knowledge is perspectival and has led to the understanding that knowledge cascades within the ethical practice of ethnography. The constructivist approach to learning, as noted in the literature review, data analysis and methodology chapters, suggests that the stories and experiences of the participants' notions should be relived and retold in this chapter, as a way of experiencing the participants' experience. In view of this, Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 160) asserted that we imagine that, in the construction of narratives of experience, there is a reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story. As researchers, we are always engaged in living, telling, reliving and retelling our own stories. Our narratives of experience are always ongoing narratives. We live our stories through our experiences and tell stories of those experiences, modifying them through the retelling and the reliving of them. The research participants, with whom we engage also live, tell, relive and retell their stories.

In light of the above, this chapter can be seen as a retelling of the stories of the participants, where the researcher has attempted to describe, explain and theorize in order to qualify this study as a creative act of enquiry. Therefore, the researcher intends,

through retelling the participants' stories, to propose meaning and knowledge through an interpretative explanation of what lecturers and students experienced within the context of the study. In the narratives that were presented in Chapter 4, the researcher's lived experiences were related to the participants' lived engagements within the 'ideational' context of foreign language (English) (Krasmsch, 1998: 24). As such, the narratives suggest how the participants made sense from learning and communicating; and also, how they made sense of how their views were enmeshed (entangled) in the epistemological, ideological and theoretical perspectives of this study. In the view of Lehtovaara (2001:147), perspectives, if they are truly human, unfold and take shape all the time, as we move along. There is no need to define and name these perspectives in advance in exact terms. This point is meant to favour the constructivist approach against the rationalist's view (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

It is in the sense of the constructivist that the researcher deemed it necessary to use this chapter to explore and explain theoretical possibilities that can relate to the knowledge of her experience. Essentially, this motivated the researcher to use Weber and Horner's (2012) language hierarchy, where the authors argue that some languages are more privileged than others. It is also common to see that the privileged languages would easily form varieties, given that most people would prefer to speak this language in order to distinguish themselves from others (Abongdia, 2013).

5.4 CONCEPTUALIZING WEBER AND HORNER'S LANGUAGE HIERARCHY

Weber and Horner's language hierarchy was used because this hierarchy appears to be universal and can be applied to different contexts of interactions, such as that of the University of Limpopo in respect to people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As mentioned earlier in chapters 2 and 4, the language hierarchy is embedded in the belief that the status of any language is a social construct. Thus, power relations are at the fore where life is about the survival of the fittest. Power relations appear to be in congruence with the data that was presented in Chapter 4 and further fall within the ecological and constructivist views which underlie the rationale for this study. What follows is a discussion of findings per theme:

5.4.1 Attitude towards the use of Indigenous African languages

The data collected for this study indicated that prevailing attitudes towards indigenous African languages, Xitsonga in particular, among the majority of this research population is a major challenge that might affect their attitude towards learning the language and, ultimately, their ability to attain the required proficiency in Xitsonga. In turn, this attitude, particularly the negative attitude, may have been affected by the prevailing language ideologies around UL (Lehtovaara, 2001).

The theme discussed in section 4.4 of Chapter 4 appears to be the theme which provided the most prominent data. In this regard, the researcher is inclined to commence with an attempt to give meaning to this theme first. Thus, the researcher will shortly illustrate how the prominence of this theme seems to have emerged. In view of this, the researcher believes that such eminence of attitude towards the use of African languages in pedagogy is not a mere coincidence and, thus, will attempt to interpret the interpretation of the participants as a way of retelling their story (Kepe, 2017).

As revealed by the data, as presented in sections 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.2.1, participants seemed comfortable with the notion that language usage at UL disregards other SOVENGA languages. This is revealed in the distribution of situations where these languages are used. English is commonly used as an international language and a medium of instruction in most schools, universities and in the work place (Abongdja & Foncha, 2014). Most of the participants appeared to agree that, concerning indigenous languages, appraisal needs to be incorporated in order to attract custodians of these African languages.

Apart from the role played by indigenous languages as far as individual identity is concerned, participants were questioned about a greater role for these languages, even at the level of tertiary education. In section 4.4.1.2 one can see that the students emphasized the fact that they would not have chosen to study Xitsonga had they have been given a chance to make their own choice (Mabila, 2007). They indicate that their scores in Grade 12 determined their future in terms of career path as they were only eligible for admission into the university schools/departments where Xitsonga was one of the modules. They did not have a voice in choosing modules and accepted this situation

out of desperation so as not to lose a year of study. The data collected from this study indicates that the prevailing attitudes towards Indigenous African languages, and Xitsonga in particular, among the majority of this research population is a major challenge, a challenge that might affect the attitude of the participants towards learning the language and, ultimately, their ability to attain the required proficiency in Xitsonga (Makamu, 2010). These attitudes, particularly the negative attitudes, may have been affected by the prevailing language ideologies around UL (Abongdia, 2013).

The above interpretation of remarks from students indicate that they had no interest in studying Xitsonga. They emphasize the fact that, were they able to choose modules, Xitsonga would not have been their choice. Yes, they performed well in their Grade 12 but that meant nothing to them in furthering their careers as language practitioners. In practice, their performance in grade 12 played a major role in determining their career paths, which were not their areas of interest. It is important to note that the university simply chose modules for them, based on departments into which they are admitted. As documented in section 4.2.2.2, students stressed their lack of interest in studying Xitsonga through their choice of modules/ subjects. Their choice also showed that they did not care about specialization as they associate a linguist in African languages with what Abongdia (2013) saw as an ideological position that branded such people as uneducated and their languages as having little real value. Should they have been given a chance to choose their modules, they would have chosen modules that they wished to study for as long as they were studying at university level. Baker (1992) articulate such an action as the readiness for action parts, that is, a plan for action concerning to a language. In other words, what people intend to do about such languages, whether they would be happy to learn them or not.

In section 4.4.1.1 the mixed feelings encountered by lecturers teaching Xitsonga was presented. The challenge faced by the lecturers was a lack of linguistic resources to support the teaching of those languages. As a result, they fell back to English, having to undergo a translation process, which was time consuming on their part. Here, one is tempted to agree with the notion of ‘linguistic imperialism’ (Phillipson, 1992) through which education in Africa is dominated by English and the idea of integrating and teaching in the African languages is dominated by criticisms of the weaknesses of using these languages (Banda, 2009: 2).

Furthermore, in 4.4.2 the students indicated that they were ashamed to publish their subjects/modules because fellow students would undermine them. This affected them negatively and they developed the attitude towards the use of their African languages. Makamu (2010) attested that most students were afraid to use their source languages. This is confirmed by the lamentation made by some of the custodians of the indigenous African languages, as Makamu investigated the usage of all Indigenous African languages at UL. The above comments indicate that this is a state of undermining indigenous African languages that can perform better as the majority language, in place of English. Understatements, such as semantic interference due to translation or embarking on multilingual projects, appear to be of great concern.

As long as the use of home languages carries overtones of the user being inferior and uneducated, this situation is unlikely to change. People will feel discouraged to use their home languages, except in very informal domains (Myers-Scotton, 2006). An element of ignorance is, more often than not, displayed by the students when, as documented in 4.4.2.2, they blame history on languages for the status quo of Xitsonga as in possession of variety of Xitsonga dialects and are convinced that, after university, they will go back home and work there. Because of this, they do not understand why there is a need for the teaching of a language, which, in this regard, is standardized Xitsonga. A major concern of the students was that Xitsonga terminology is too hard to master. There was also an indication from the students that, since there is some integration across subjects, they could more easily catch up topics in English than in Xitsonga. The attitudes expressed here are indicative of the underlying ideology that English is the only language suitable for higher education (Abongdja, 2013), an ideology which is clearly visible at UL, in particular, and South Africa in general.

5.4.2 Motivation for language learning

Stirling (2014) regarded motivation as highly individual and individually constructed. In the situated view, motivation is seen to come about largely because of socio-cultural constructs and interactions with the environment. Baker (1992) concurred by stressing that the emphasis is on how people behave towards their own languages, what they do

and how they plan to preserve them. It should be noted that, although these lecturers are from two disciplines, namely the SoE and LANCOM, as mentioned in Chapter 1, both their targets are teachers from Grade R-12 (those teachers in the field and the prospective teachers) in alignment with the current curriculum, i.e. the CAPS document. The objective of both schools within the university is to ensure that the Xitsonga taught at school is home language Xitsonga, and is standardised accordingly.

Both lecturers and students concurred that the Mol during Xitsonga lectures is Xitsonga. Even though both lecturers from the above-mentioned disciplines paint a picture that suggested that they do not have challenges in teaching Xitsonga as a module, the students, on the other hand, contended that they had challenges learning and studying the language as a module. Their major concern was the lack of study material in Xitsonga. Sharing the same sentiment with their lecturers the students said that, for most of their learning content, they rely on foreign language resources and apply them to the Xitsonga language.

The argument is that they spend a lot of time translating resources, which, in most cases, is challenging because they end up with different meanings, known as semantic interference, based on their understanding of the language and the regional dialects they possess. To a certain extent, some students felt superior to others within the same language group. Foncha (2013) asserted that people attribute meanings to the spaces that they know and use and that these spaces are filled with symbols and attributes, with these symbols carrying indexicalities with them. Foncha also indicated that language varieties used by the participants being studied does not only tell us where they come from but could also be indicative of their class. This can be evidenced from the data from sections 4.5.1.1 and 4.5.1.2 in the previous chapter.

Apparently, when there is semantic interference, as documented in section 4.5.1.1, there is a communication breakdown and lecturers have to intervene to do damage control by correcting the misconceptions that might have been caused as a result. When such happens, the communication climate changes and such corrected students tend to withdraw from classroom interactions because, at some point, other students make fun of such utterances. In this manner, trust is compromised. Students tend to undermine

themselves because they no longer trust the judgement of their fellow students, hence Langa (2005) argued that learners of a particular high school believed that they would gain more knowledge if they did their studies in English, instead of in their source language, because there was room for competition where they can easily engage in English with other learners and different people outside the school.

Although most of the students thought that it is unfair to subject them to the standardized Xitsonga, they still appeared to be in agreement that the environment did not help them to learn Xitsonga as a language of teaching Xitsonga HL, in and outside of the university environment. Abongdia (2013) attests to a similar case, in a comparative study where much concentration was on the linguistic landscape and these linguistic landscape roles in language learning in institutions of higher learning.

The collected data demonstrates that the general usage of Xitsonga at the UL leaves much to be desired. An indication of this is the fact that Xitsonga is only used during Xitsonga lectures and during group discussions, if the topic to be discussed is for Xitsonga. At this point, there is an indication that the students codemix and codeswitch to English because, in most instances, they confirmed that they run out of concepts and replace those concepts with English concepts. The concerns of the students were that they had challenges regarding speaking, writing and using their dialects in a HL class, which they expected to be formal or standard. It is important to note that Xitsonga is mostly used informally in gatherings for greeting purposes, as confirmed by the data presented in sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2. Madadzhe and Sepota (2007) contended that, instead of promoting languages theoretically, some practical input should be evident, because English remains dominant in different settings in the institution.

Moreover, the participants felt that the university environment is not a good environment for learning Xitsonga. Vesely (2000: 71) contended that the more accessible African languages are in the public environment, the higher their status will become, and the negative impact of the hegemony of English will be minimized. Participants raised concerns that the university appeared to be biased as far as language usage is concerned. Of the SOVENGA languages, only Sepedi is recognised alongside the dominance of English. Participants agreed that a diverse environment does project strengths and weaknesses for language learning. In terms of the strengths, the environment offers students a

platform to be multilingual while, at the same time, it prevents them from expressing themselves well, as non-Xitsonga speakers do not want to learn Xitsonga. They are compelled to speak the person's language if they want to be assisted. Madadzhe and Sepota (2007) perceived it as undeniable that African languages should be beneficial to their speakers, but they were, nevertheless, perceived to be of no value.

For interaction to take place in the lecture halls, lecturers agreed that they acknowledged regional dialects during teaching and learning. The reason for doing so is to make their students to feel free and comfortable so that they can be productive. They achieve productivity through developing knowledge from what is known to the unknown (CAPS, 2011) which, in this instance, is to capacitate students to speak and write using standard language. Elements of codeswitching and codemixing are encouraged as a way of accommodating students from different language backgrounds. Of significance is the fact that, in a Xitsonga class, there are some students for whom their HL is not Xitsonga. They enrolled as Xitsonga students and are expected to teach Xitsonga HL in high schools. Their enrolment was due to the fact that they scored well in the language as a subject, as mentioned in section 5.4.1 above. They had no choice to make, as the admission policy is Admission Point Score (APS) bound.

There were mixed attitudes towards language acquisition, as evidenced from the collected data. It is a matter of concern to note that, while other participants are eager to learn other South African languages, there are still some people who do not see the necessity of learning other languages. Some participants are comfortable with their language background, and using English as a second language. This comfort zone is not in agreement with what is believed to be that language learning needs to be seen as contextualized and socially constituted in what (Block, 2003:64) refers to as interactional and interpersonal communication at the service of the social construction of self-identity, group membership, solidarity, support, trust, to name a few. The focus on language learning in this study rests on doing, knowing and becoming part of the greater whole as attested by (Lantolf, 2000:156). The concerns that the students raised included that they were not motivated enough to use Xitsonga to communicate, hence they withdraw from participation in Xitsonga discussions at some point in time. Other students raised issues regarding the dialects, indicating that they were being discriminated against based on what dialect they speak in relation to the regions they come from. The geographical

location of the university plays a major role in language discrepancy because, as the students lamented, they are forced to use Sepedi and English most of the time. Of all the SOVENGA languages, Sepedi is the majority language and it dominates a great deal.

Subject to the student ignorance as outlined in 4.5.1 to some extent, they further accented that there is less exposure to terminology emphasis during teaching and learning with special reference to language usage in group discussions and during teaching practice. This then seems to point to the need for a culture of reading to be inculcated and promoted, not only in English but also in Xitsonga, in view of standardization and a text-based approached, as stipulated in the CAPS document. Engagement in a target language and culture takes place when it is perceived as an expansion and an exploration of a learner's sense of self, rather than as a threat to identity or imposition of unwelcome cultural practices (Brown, 2007:47).

It is evident that perfection in language usage, with special reference to Xitsonga, is not an issue to some of its users. Most students complained that, when they wrote assessments, the assessor read every single word with compassion and penalize them when they use their regional dialects. Adhering to the standard form of the language was a challenge to most of the students. To most of them what mattered was that the gist of the matter is understood by those for whom the message as meant. For the students this was sufficiently satisfactory. They were against the norm of standardization, as indicated by Moloto (1964), that people should be allowed to speak the way they want to, according to their dialect but, when they write, they must allow themselves to be led to write in the same way.

Socially, Xitsonga is recognised at UL for leisure and entertainment purposes. As indicated in the previous chapters, the Tinyungubiseni Cultural Society (TCS) is a Vatsonga cultural group that aims to preserve the Xitsonga language at UL through the organisation of Xitsonga cultural activities. From the utterances by the students, as documented in section 4.5.1.1, one can spot that there were students from Giyani (Limpopo) and Bushbuckridge (Mpumalanga), where Xitsonga is mostly spoken. These areas are characteristic of the dialectical features that Xitsonga possesses. It is evident from the screams that the participants made that they were happy and felt welcomed in this cultural group. To them the events organised by this society were the only twig that

attracted most of the other cultural groups, and their visibility on campus is portrayed in this regard.

Based on the above, the data documented in section 4.5.1 confirmed that the university acknowledges multilingualism as the foundation of its operations, a base from which something good can stand or be built. The policy provides a platform for language learning and language acquisition in the battle of building an institution, which acknowledges and uses its diversity as a means of attracting and accepting languages that are spoken within the vicinity of the institution. ‘Charity begins at home’, an idiom that, in a sense, means that a platform for development of language is available at UL, however, the policy does not match the actual language usage patterns at the institution. This is what Mabule (2011) and Abongdia and Foncha (2014) regard as a mismatch between policy and practice.

5.4.3 Prestige enjoyed by English

There were mixed feelings from lecturers about the prestige enjoyed by English. From the excerpts of the interviews captured in sections 4.6.1.1 and 4.6.1.2, two views emerged. In one view, English was seen as a superior language, while the African indigenous languages remained inferior. Some lecturers were of the view that it is good that English dominates because if one of the SOVENGA languages dominate as this could introduce an element of inferiority among the other indigenous African languages. Gora (2014) upheld that there is a very close relationship between functions that a language performs and its status. Language functions determine the status of a language. The more function a language has, the more prestigious it is. Some of the lecturers interviewed believed that there is a need to accept the status as is. Though intimidated, as the status quo dictates, the Vatsonga at UL should seek avenues to develop their own language. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000: 15) lamented that one of the most successful means of destroying or retarding the development of languages has been, and is, education. The educational curriculum decides the importance of a language.

During the teaching and learning of Xitsonga, the participants attested to the fact that they sometimes code-switch and used English in order to express themselves and to

understand different concepts. Surprisingly, the students also indicated that they used English with non-Xitsonga speakers whose home language is not English. The participants, in this regard, did not bother to converse in either of their indigenous African languages. English dominates in this regard. Excerpts in section 4.5.1.1 attest to this practice. As indicated in the responses, some students appeared to agree, to some degree, with the notion that they sometimes experience an inferiority complex when participating in class because of their language background. Again, English is acknowledged as a source language from which they can draw knowledge, as most resources are written in English. In section 4.6.1.1 participants were not happy with the state of affairs regarding the language usage on campus, and said that the government was to be blamed for how languages are being used in different domains. Gora (2014) maintained that languages should be viewed positively in language planning and policy, and in curriculum planning. This is mainly because different institutions draw the framework for their language policy from that of the government.

In section 4.6.1 the documented feeling was that the university was copying from the government, as far as an alignment of the practices of government regarding its language practices is concerned. Although the government is to be blamed, there is also a caution that, if the status quo persists, African languages will die, which will also affect the culture of these languages. Mutasa (2003) reasoned that language planning does not take place in a vacuum. It is a process that is government authorized. Language issues should be considered and handled within the fuller social context, UL in this instance.

When students asked about their choice of modules, should they have been given a platform to make the choice? It is surprising that, as indicated in the data presented in section 4.6.1, there were some students who, instead of the two modules they asked for, have provided three modules, with Xitsonga included. Although their desired combination of choice was not offered, as such. The admission criteria only cater for two majors per qualification. An example is the science stream, which is not diluted by any language. Most students feel that, if one has done a science subject at high school, one must be given an opportunity to enrol in any of the languages, based on the geographical areas where one comes from. Their reasoning is the notion that they will work in rural communities and it is, therefore, vital for them to have background knowledge of the basics of a vernacular, as they cannot divorce translanguaging (Code mixing and code

switching) from their teaching and learning activities. Derhemi (2002:151) maintained that linguistic attitudes are historical and cultural constructions that relate directly to the prestige of a language. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:249) accused politicians, and some researchers who argue against maintenance of endangered languages, by saying that the move to do so is a primodalistic dream, creating employment for the world's linguist. Politicians and some researchers argue that including African languages in the curriculum is very costly. This study argues that there is no educational programme that does not consume money.

Consequent to the above, students also indicated that English dominates within and around UL. They indicated that, even when they are in a mix of different indigenous African language speakers, during consultations and group discussions they resort to English in order for them to understand each other better. Even though they possess different indigenous African languages, when they meet, is not for a Xitsonga topic, to them they do not see it as an opportunity to learn other varieties. To them, the lingua franca is already available to fall back to, which is English. Webb (1992) emphasized that this can only mean that most Africans are not proud of their languages, hence the shift to English. Most of the students indicated that it was easier for them to participate in classroom interaction, since they preferred to use English to convey messages. Most students went ahead and mentioned English or Sepedi worked for them because of the multiracial environment the institution embraces.

The data captured in section 4.6.2.1 indicates that, within the UL, there were Xitsonga speaking lecturers who were almost arrogant, who lamented that Xitsonga was very easy and that students should not be subjected to the study of the language at tertiary institutions because it is an everyday spoken language. Lecturers also played a parental role, as enshrined in the seven roles of educator (Norms and Standards, 1998) which, based on the above, the opposite prevails. Mabila (2007: 29) went on to note that what is interesting is that it is not only the learners who project negative attitudes towards learning their mother tongue. Some black parents want English to be used for teaching their children and vocally oppose to the introduction of African languages. Nevertheless, those lecturers seem adamant and claim that the same student would be able to teach Xitsonga in any grade should they be given a platform to do so. Little do they know that these students come from different rural backgrounds, with variety of dialects, as alluded

to in the previous sections. During the discussion some lecturers were cautioned about the language skills and competences that students must be equipped with. This brought in the element of standard language which some of the Xitsonga students are battling to comprehend. This resulted to English becoming a constant fall-back language. This then indicates that Xitsonga students code mix and code switch a great deal during social interactions, teaching and learning, group discussions and consultations.

Most of the students and some lecturers do not put a great deal of effort into the study of the Xitsonga language. Some indigenous language lecturers are criticised when ensuring quality regarding the languages. Failing Xitsonga, to some students, is taboo. Students, on the other hand, are very careless with their Xitsonga as language specialists. To them, the language is so easy that they can teach it in any grade without mastering the content. Some students also struggle with their academic development by answering questions, which they did not bother to study. They rely on guesswork, which makes them underperform. Prinsloo remarked that African learners can already speak an indigenous language (Northern Media, 2006), which is an indication that he sees no significance in learning to read and write an indigenous African language. Prinsloo's viewpoint can also be criticized on the basis that expertise is also recommended in the teaching of indigenous African languages.

In addition, some Xitsonga students and lecturers make efforts at the cultural level as documented in section 4.6.2.1. At a social level, some participants felt that English was concise and they understood it far better than their home language. Some lamented the programme directors, dwelt too much on their regional dialects in order to make the function as humorous and entertaining as they possibly could. Other than displaying their culture and language practises to demonstrate who they are, some students viewed this as time wasting and just playing games. Even in some of their utterances, those students demonstrated ignorance in using their own Xitsonga only by mixing Xitsonga and English when they speak. Those students cared less about the word structure in Xitsonga, as long as meaning in what they want to convey was attained. In the same vain, Gumede (1996) established a complex situation in which Model C school pupils were more positive towards indigenous African languages than their counterparts in schools in the rural areas. This is definitely contrary to the expectations of the majority of researchers, who

make the whole question of attitude a complex phenomenon to deal with. Gumede's findings revealed that the rural pupils regard indigenous African languages as useless and hence, they should be done away with. It is ironic that pupils who use indigenous African languages often do not value their languages. The responses by those students confirm this, as they condemned their own languages.

5.4.4 Existence of language policy

Excerpts captured in section 4.7.1.1 draw responses about the language policy of UL and its implementation. Based on the responses, participants seemed to appreciate the fact that Xitsonga is acknowledged in the Language Policy of UL. However, little is done relating to its implementation and, as a result, it is difficult to establish what can be done to improve the situation. Phaswana (1994) confirmed that African languages continue to be marginalized. He highlighted the fact that African languages will only serve as subjects that students choose for completion of their curricula. Abongdja (2013) concurred with Phaswana and lamented that there is a mismatch between policy and language practices in most of the institutions where such language policies exist. To a certain extent, students are blamed because, despite the fact that they have been given a platform on which to use their own home languages, they some harbour negative attitude towards their own indigenous African languages, especially Xitsonga. Issues of incentives and recognition at all levels of the university seemed to be of concern. If language students could be offered bursaries and employment, they would be motivated.

Regardless of the level of study, most participants did not know that there was a language policy that should govern language usage at the institution. Those participants who did know of its existence, did not know its content. As a follow up the researcher asked the participants that, since they now knew about the policy, what would they do about it. Responses given were that this was an awakening call. The students said that they would look for a copy of the policy and read its contents. On the other hand, to some students, the issue of multilingualism was something that they did not care about. This was evident from the non-verbal expressions displayed by the participants during the interview process. Gestures, such as frowning and shaking their heads, portrayed their negative attitude towards the questions. Most participants were ignorant of the fact that

multilingualism has to do with a multilingual approach to teaching and supports the goals of equity, access and improved throughput with respect to an institution of higher learning (van der Walt, 2004: 143). According to Biseth (2009), multilingualism ensures additive bilingualism, where both languages are supported, developed and maintained.

Subsequently, it is, expected that the promotion of multilingualism through the concurrent use of English should, rather than perpetuate the marginalisation of indigenous African languages, foster the creation of a new order of social power and social relations that enables the growth of the indigenous African languages and a cultural renaissance (Madiba, 2010). Most of the participants were of the notion that the policy provided them with an opportunity to use their indigenous African language, Xitsonga, for communication purpose only. Brumfit (2006: 39) further saw multilingualism and multi-dialectalism as having always been the norm for most people, and views policy as a way of controlling or managing linguistic diversity. However, Baldauf and Kaplan (2006) thought that there is a discrepancy between the language policies put in place and actual practices. Instead, they contended that most policies are diametrically opposed to reality, driven by political rather than linguistic forces. This is in line with Kamwangamalu (2000) who said that there is a mismatch between language policy and language practice in South Africa, where official policy promotes multilingualism, but practices are shifting towards English monolingualism in all higher domains of use. Students were also aware that the medium of instruction in UL is English. From the above one can indicate that students respected that the university acknowledges the diverse languages that shape its environment as illustrated in section 4.7.1.2.

With reference to section 4.7.2, the data indicates that motivation for language learning context can influence the language in use at a particular time and by a certain group of people. In the same vein, the data was composed through informal participation with the participants either in the classroom or in other spaces around UL environment. Moreover, the data presented in section 4.7.2.2 indicates that most students were ignorant of standardization as one of the language varieties, which play a control measure role, in a case where a language has more than one variety. Their responses suggest that the desire to learn Xitsonga as trifling. Although, in view of responses documented in section 4.7.2.2, most of the students believed that it was unfair to subject them to the standardized Xitsonga, they still appeared to agree that the environment did not help

them to learn Xitsonga as a language of teaching, learning and communication in and outside of the university environment.

The alignment in developing the language policy of UL as hinted at in responses documented in section 4.7.3. reinforces the notion that the institution's Language Policy is premised on the guidelines provided by the Department of Education's Language Policy for Higher Education (2002), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), the Ministerial Committee's report to the Minister of Education in The Development of Indigenous African Languages as Mediums of Instruction in Higher Education (2005) and the Conference on Language Policy and Implementation in Higher Education Institutions (2006), (UL Language Policy, 2006). The university's Language Policy was developed to correct the status of previously marginalised indigenous African languages within the university, which was previously informed by the apartheid regime. The prestigious status of English is quoted in Moyo (2006: 123) who averred that those proficient in English had access to better education and economic opportunities, and other prestigious positions, while those not proficient in the language, were relegated to the status of fewer opportunities and lower positions in the social order.

The treatment that participants received based on their English language proficiency might have contributed immensely in their neglecting of some indigenous African languages, a case with Xitsonga. There is a mismatch in terms of practice and evaluation, though Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that everyone has the right to receive education in the official languages or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. The use of the phrase 'reasonably practicable' shows that the status quo is not definite. Each institution can have a language policy and practice that suites the institution, where people can be discriminated against based on their language and culture. Putting its stance, against this backdrop, the UL Language Policy positions itself in a way that it is crucial that the University of Limpopo situated in rural area adopts a language policy that is in touch with language developments in the country and, at the same time, promotes and facilitates multilingualism in teaching, learning and research.

The above serves as a greenlight that, by regarding implementation and yielding of better fruit, the university is ready to take the bull by its horns and ensure that disadvantaged

indigenous African languages are serviced and developed. The practicality of the word ‘in touch’ implies that the university dances to the same rhythm as that of the government by not stipulating clear instructions as to how the processes of language development and multilingualism must unfold. This is based on the responses by participants when they made mention of the practicality of language usage, and the maintenance thereof, that lags behind.

5.4.5 Developing Indigenous African languages

Lecturers do acknowledge regional dialect but at a minimal level, as the Xitsonga that is taught should be formal, uniform and understood by all, hence the standardisation of language. To some of the lecturers, dialects only assist in provoking prior knowledge of the students in order for them to understand what is taught. Section 4.8.1.1 exhibits data that indicates that something was done, and still can be done, to ensure that the Xitsonga language does not die or vanish completely.

It was important to ask a question, as presented in section 4.8.1.2, about the student’s official language in order to comprehend the responses by their lecturers, as discussed in section 4.8.1.1. To some students a question was, how did it happen that the Xitsonga dialects spoken among Vatsonga tribe was subjected to be written formally, in the same way because a person can only write what s/he speaks? This was, in a way, a defence mechanism that these dialects be treated as formal for teaching, learning and communication, even in formal settling constituted by variety of dialects. After some explanation, most of the students seemed to understand and wished to practice, even when they communicated among themselves. Consequently, from the same pool of students, one student indicated that his official language was Sesotho. When asked how come he was doing Xitsonga, his answer was that, after birth, he was forced by circumstances to live with his grandmother. The village where they stayed had no Sesotho as a subject offered at nearby schools and he was, therefore, bound to learn and study Xitsonga. Xitsonga had to become his mother tongue. He learned and studied Xitsonga until Grade 12, which automatically gained him admission into teacher-education with a major in Xitsonga.

South Africa is a multilingual country, as indicated in Chapter 1, as is the UL, hence this study about language perceptions and attitude towards an indigenous African language. It was important to establish the multilingual status of participants as, socio-linguistically speaking, indigenous African languages are said to have sprung from one common origin (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2018). Some of the participants were proud to mention other indigenous African languages as languages that they could interconnect in. IsiNdebele was mentioned as one language that they did not know. This is understandable because the language is not one of the SOVENGA languages and is not taught at this institution.

In the same light, interaction through a language that is meant for MOI is fundamental to this investigation of language perception regarding language of teaching and communication, as premised by Weber and Horner's (2012) language hierarchy, as indicated in Chapter 1. The language hierarchy is used in this study as a parameter for measuring perceptions and attitude of Xitsonga lecturers and students towards their language. Some participants were eager to learn from others and develop themselves while others did not bother, because a lingua franca is readily available to them in the form of English, to rescue them when they lag behind in their Xitsonga. This is in disagreement with what (Kepe, 2017) regarded a lingua franca, i.e. a language that is a contact language, used among people who do not share a first language. Towards this, most students are Xitsonga speaking, but are convinced that the language is difficult and they easily forget concepts for smooth learning and communication. Foncha (2013) concluded that, in such instances, expression and communication seemed to be powered by English.

In keeping with the idea of language development, developing the Xitsonga language also troubled students as present and future language practitioners. Different activities to name a few, are outlined from motivational talks, reading clubs, rearranging the section in the library, where Xitsonga resources are packed as a sort of stocktaking, incorporation of Xitsonga in the linguistic landscapes of the university to enhance communication, teaching and learning of Xitsonga, which matches what is enshrined in the university Language Policy (UL Language Policy, 2006).

Participants brought in the element of monetary value in relation to the reflection of multilingualism in the languages used during teaching and learning in their responses as presented in section 4.8.1.1. Monetary value can be seen as one of what Langa (2005) perceived as an effort for elevating indigenous African languages to the same level as English. Strategies such as this can assist to fight a notion that the indigenous African languages are economically weak, or that no economy can be sustained through the use of these languages as speakers can be motivated one way or another. Another concern is that, for the indigenous African languages to stand their ground regarding curricula, their documents are drawn from that of English and, at some point, the two languages and their content components are not the same. This has led to the misrepresentation of activities and actions because of the translation process.

Furthermore, the researcher has drawn up some concepts that the participants seem to be intimate with, in contact with students and other speakers of other Indigenous African languages. Abongdja (2013) conceded that the students' openness to acquiring other South African languages may point to a desire to embrace the identity of 'South African' beyond its ethnic boundaries. In view of this, participants agreed that there is a need to develop indigenous African languages through activities like holding seminars and debates, for example. However, constant consultation with older people could also boast and make a difference in preserving these languages. The saying that goes as '*Rihlampfu lerintshwa ri tiya hi lera khale*', [*The new branch gains its strength from the old one*], supports this idea. Concepts such as "cross-fertilization", "heavy pound" and "revolutional", as presented in section 4.8.2, were brought into picture to stress this suggestion. Again, participants appeal to the custodians of indigenous African languages not only to speak these languages frequently but also to be revolutionary by making things happen through the medium of indigenous African languages. It is evident from the data presented in section 4.8.1.2 that students were concerned with the development of Xitsonga and they were eager to do something about this. Most of their ideas were on a long-term basis, with the concerns raised that Xitsonga resources are not available in most bookshops and that their starting point would be ensuring the accessibility of these resources everywhere.

Other reasons raised with regard to developing indigenous African languages, as presented in section 4.8.1.2, are that they acknowledged that South Africa is a rainbow

nation and they needed to communicate with others who are not Xitsonga speakers. Consequently, some students mentioned that it was easy for them to learn other languages, while most did not see the value to learn Xitsonga. In other words, they have sacrificed their futures by studying the language in order to survive. Their argument was that, at this point, it was not difficult for teachers to get employment as the demand for teachers is high. Consequently, from the pool of students interviewed, there were some who indicated that they did not communicate in other South African languages because they did not see the need, while others said that they did not waste their time to do so.

There is a great deal of lamentation, presented in section 4.8.2.1, from some of the custodians of the indigenous African languages who occupy high positions as language practitioners and pillars of strength in support of people at grassroots level. The comments indicated the state of undermining that says that indigenous African languages can perform better as the majority language, like English does. Understatements, such as loosing resources for translation or embarking on multilingual projects, appear to be much of a concern. The blame for the lack of development of indigenous African languages was shifted to the government while, even if platforms are offered to act upon, nothing comes from the custodians these languages. Once more, the fact that the participants, on this occasion, seemed to bemoan social gathering as a practice contrary to developing African languages, seemed to be in contradiction, given the concept of multilingualism, as enshrined in the Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). Furthermore, in response to the above, insight has been drawn from what is stipulated in the Language Policy of UL, which states that the Student Representative Council shall, as part of its contribution towards University's multilingual policy, encourage and promote social and cultural activities, religious and cultural boundaries (UL Language Policy, 2006: 3).

Consequently, the argument behind the data presented in section 4.8.2.2 is that students are convinced that Xitsonga is very difficult. They blamed the element of variety of dialects and were convinced that they will go back home after university and work in the area. Their major concern was that Xitsonga terminology is hard to master. There was also an indication that, since there is some integration across subjects, they could more easily follow such topics in English than in Xitsonga. For this reason, they did not see why they should be penalised and fail to get many distinctions in the module.

In view of the above, and although most of the students acknowledged that the university offers African languages as modules, they still appeared to be in agreement that the choice made for them disadvantaged their teaching and learning. Some students did not put an effort into the studying and learning of Xitsonga to the best of their ability. To some extent the students did not attend their lectures regularly. Some students simply availed themselves during formal assessments only (test and examination) and therefore, they underperformed or failed at the end of the course. Their voice was that it is easier for them to make a quick reference in a Xitsonga lectures using an English version. To some students, the development of the Xitsonga language is like a dream that will never come true.

The reviews, presented in section 4.8.3, highlight the commitment that the university entered into regarding its language practice. However, the practice on a daily base is parallel to its commitment. This is a policy on paper, and its practicality that of a crab movement. Just a brief, a mother crab will scold its baby crabs to walk straight. When the baby crabs ask the mother to demonstrate the correct movement, the mother walks crookedly. The baby crabs will again follow suit. This is how until today crabs walk the way they do. In the same vain the good views of developing the Xitsonga language in the UL are not put to practice to yield positive results.

The baby crab movement is practical as portrayed by documents such as assessment templates. There is very little information furnished with regard to the languages in which the information furnished must be written in. Over and above, the templates are not translated in any of the SOVENGA languages, as highlighted in the previous chapter. On the other hand, some students did not feel comfortable when the cover pages of their answer books were marked with indicators that point to the errors and glaring omissions, especially when these cover pages do not provide all the information or misrepresented information given. In most cases, the space for surname and names would be miss written with that of the signature, while they would mostly leave out the name of the degree, module code and module name. Most importantly even the student number is sometimes left out.

5.5. EMERGING THEME: The role of environment in language learning

According to all the evidence presented in Chapter 4, English is the most used language to communicate information within the UL community at large, regardless of its language background. Kepe (2017: 206) viewed the eminence of the role of environment in pedagogy as not a mere coincidence and, thus, attempted to interpret the interpretation of the participants as a means of retelling their story. To this effect, sections 4.5.1.2 and 4.6.1.1 provide data that exposed the fact that a human being does not possess language, but is capable of learning and living it in any given context (Sivasubramaniam, 2004). Furthermore, the environment in which human beings live lacks language repertoires that provide opportunities for learning and for the active participation of students. This is to suggest that, if students were exposed to linguistic landscapes (LL) in Xitsonga, they would definitely make strides in the learning of Xitsonga. Kepe (2017) summed this up by arguing that the linguistic world to which the learner has access, and in which the learner is actively involved, is full of demands and requirements, opportunities and limitations, rejections and invitations, enablement and constraints – in short, affordances.

To understand the role that the environment plays in the use of Xitsonga as language of learning and communication within this research, it is necessary to reinforce its relevance and the competence in the context where interaction takes place (see sections 4.4.1.1 and 4.5.2). From this perspective, the meaning obtained from language should not be seen as static and objective, but rather as a dynamic and a discursive structure that the researcher has constructed as an insider (Sivasubramaniam, 2011: 53). Language, in this regard, is not just the grammar or native speaker proficiency, but rather an agent through which any culture is portrayed (Foncha, 2013). Hence, an ecological view of language looks at every phenomenon of a language as an emergence and not as a reduced set of components that present phenomena in simplistic terms (van Lier, 2004). In agreement with van Lier, the Xitsonga students and lecturers interacted mostly during teaching and learning, consultations and group discussions and these were instances where challenges curbing the use of Xitsonga as a language for teaching, learning and communication were uncovered.

The above appears to tally with the constructivist and ecological views of language learning which maintain that meaning making is more fundamental than putting too much emphasis on syntax and phonology. For this reason, Shanahan and Neuman (1997) postulated that, when adolescents share their feelings with their partners, teams, their teacher, or the classroom community, they become passionate learners and, as soon as they develop a sense of belonging to a group, their sense of self-determination increase. Foncha (2013: 19) concurs that language learning needs to be seen as an interactive and a social process. Language should not be seen as a channel for information only, but rather as a tool for higher mental processes, such as reasoning, belief, critical and creative thoughts in contrast with the traditional reductionist notion of grammar.

5.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter focused on a discussion of findings of data presented in Chapters 4. The discussion revealed the different perceptions underlying the participants' expressed language attitudes in Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo, in particular, and in South Africa, in general. The influence of the UL language policy, particularly its implementation or lack thereof, was analysed. As Baldauf and Kaplan (2006) noted, language in education remains one of the major areas where the language policy of a country is seen. It is to this effect that one may say that the multilingual language policy of the University of Limpopo reflects that of South Africa.

The major perception to emerge from this data was that English is the dominant language in UL, and that the language was unchallenged in most domains by the SOVENGA languages, Xitsonga in particular. Political ideology might have imposed a multilingual language policy at national, provincial and university level but, in practice, these policies have very little value. This discrepancy between policy and practice is in line with the findings of other studies, for example, Beukes (2008); Brumfit (2006); Baldauf and Kaplan (2006); Kamwangamalu (2000); Spolsky and Shohamy (2000); and Abongdja (2013).

The assumption that seems to have been held by the Xitsonga students is that English is empowering, but that other indigenous African languages should also be used when necessary and helpful (Banda, 2000). Hence, students codemix and codeswitch as they wish during Xitsonga lectures. However, one may say that the perception of the Xitsonga

lecturers was to see a language as something to be explored in all ways possible, with everyone having a right to explore and use their mother tongue as much as they wanted to. The UL policy, as it stands, sets out the basic principles of the use of language as a resource which, according to Ruiz (1999), reveals a strong belief that the diverse linguistic and cultural systems at UL are assets which can benefit the institution in areas like translation and interpretation if put into intensive practice. However, UL fails to take account of the recognition of Xitsonga, even at the level of its linguistic landscape, regardless of its rural setting. It may very well be that the ideological positions regarding English by those who could have imposed loose implementation policy guidelines to promote the other indigenous African languages had crippled any possible moves towards the effective implementation of the UL language policy.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the findings base on the emerged theme as premised by Weber and Horner's language hierarchy. This chapter is a summary of the study of the language perceptions examined in this thesis, with reference to the use of Xitsonga as a language of learning and communication at UL. The study was done in order to obtain a sense of language ideologies at UL, where the research was carried out against the background of the country's language policy, the institution's language policy and the type of Xitsonga teacher to be produced who will be expected, by the CAPS document, to teach Xitsonga as a Home Language in schools. This chapter reviews the research aims and objectives, as well as the contribution of the study to the field of language perspectives and ideologies.

6.2 REVIEW OF RESEARCH AIMS

The principal aim of the study was to investigate the perceptions of students and lecturers about the use of the Xitsonga language in teaching, learning and communication at the University of Limpopo. For purpose of reflexivity, the researcher also decided to investigate what could be read from the linguistics landscape (LL) of the institution. In addition, the findings of the research conducted at the university were related to the dominate ideologies in the country. The study considered how these perspectives converged and diverged and how conflicting perspectives were expressed.

A further aim of the study was to provide clarity on the concepts of language attitude and perspectives. In this regard, the results of the study showed that attitudes and perspectives can both be visible and invisible (Abongdia, 2013). Attitudes were explicitly expressed by most of the participants and showed the clear influence of more visible underlying perspectives, where perspectives were most visible in the actual practices, such as respondents' choices and the LL of the UL. In this regard the study differs from

earlier studies by Myers-Scotton (2006: 110), as well as Dyers and Abongdja (2010: 132) who described attitudes in terms of their being “often unconscious, covert assessments”. Nevertheless, the study affirmed Dyers and Abongdja’s assertion that attitudes are shaped by pervading language ideologies in any given society or communities (2010: 119).

It is also necessary to point out that the analysis and discussion chapters (chapters 4 and 5) of this thesis affirmed the hypothesis that the students’ environment, in terms of parents, government policy, friends, i.e., the socio-cultural context, can either help to develop a negative or a positive attitude in the student and, to a certain extent, would determine their motivation in the learning of a particular language (Spolsky, 1989).

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

The study argues that there is some form of evidence that each environment has a role to play as far as the learning and usage of a given language is concerned. Thus, language learning should be socio-culturally oriented. In light of this, the researcher observed that an environment could be very important for understanding how language learning takes place. Therefore, using the findings documented in this thesis, one can safely conclude based on the data collected, in conjunction with the relevant themes and the literature consulted.

6.3.1 Attitude towards the use of African languages

Data collected showed mixed feelings towards the use of Xitsonga. Emphasis is that the language is used effectively during its teaching only where the standard of usage and competence is low, based on aspects of codemixing, codeswitching and ignorance. Most students are not committed to the language aspects and ignorant to embark on exercising the correct language structure and use in listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing skills as the CAPS document dictates. The lecturers do as they wish when they develop assessment cover pages because there are no standards set for the use of indigenous African languages. The presented template is in English. Not even once was an attempt made by the university to present the template in any of the SOVENGA languages and

see the responses by the UL community. Owners of the language mocked those majoring in Xitsonga, accusing them of being lazy, wasting funds and time. Of importance to note is the fact that, should students have been given a chance to choose modules for their studies, only a handful would have chosen Xitsonga. Based on the above, participants portrayed a negative attitude towards their HL and a major subject, for that matter.

6.3.2 Motivation for language learning

The study showed that lecturers do use Xitsonga as MOI during classroom interaction but, to some extent, the environment does not motivate the participants to teach and learn the language. Some students displayed negative interpersonal values as they withdraw themselves during teaching and learning because the issue of dialects was found to be problematic. Within a language, there are those dialects that are more superior than others. Most of the participants displayed their language background at a cultural and religious activities level. Lastly, there is a mismatch between the language policy and practice because, as it stands, postgraduate students in Xitsonga have to present their thesis proposals in English and then translate their work during the writing up process. What an exercise! Furthermore, there are no translation equivalents of important documents, as mandated in the university language policy.

6.3.3 Prestige enjoyed by English

The data presented appears to propose that English dominates in a Xitsonga lecture and is used by most of the students. English invades as a subject and as a language in gatherings that can do without the use of it. This means that, during teaching and learning, codeswitching and codemixing take place, as indicated earlier, also in group discussions when students interact. Most of the participants are worried about the job market. According to them it is ideal to be well conversant in English. This supports Foncha's view that English is a passport that could provide the visa for employment, travel and communication (Foncha, 2014). Students emphasized the fact that, had they have been awarded the privilege to choose modules, they would have chosen only modules in which the Mol was English.

6.3.4 Existence of language policy

A language policy is defined by the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (1996: 218) as an official decision/decreed on the status of various languages spoken in heterogeneous/multilingual communities. For example, a policy will determine which language will be the national or official language, which languages will be used as regional languages and what their status will be. Relative to this, UL, as a community embraced by multilingualism setup, as discussed earlier, has a Language Policy to the guide daily operations of the institution, which aligns with Milroy and Milroy's (1998) ideology of one-nation-one language. Milroy and Milroy's ideology of one-nation-one language applies to the findings of this study. Additionally, Anchimbe (2007) expressed the notion that most African countries followed the European blueprint in the design of their language policies. These policies often conflict with the actual social practices of the people (Pennycook, 2010). The Language Policy of UL is not implemented sufficiently. The most important reason for not implementing the Language Policy of UL sufficiently is ignorance, hence the mismatch between policy and practice. A major concern is that, for a post graduate student in an African language, there must be a translation of the research proposal for it to serve and approved in various committees. The question is, why a structure that represents the SOVENGA language not promote these languages and, in that way, these languages can be utilized at an optimal level to encourage students to progress, both vertically and horizontally, in their languages. However, in as much as the policy aligns with the document that governs South Africa as a country, the practices will always be the same because it is policy on paper and less implementation and review is executed.

6.3.5 Developing Indigenous African Languages

The research findings revealed that there is a need to step up the development of African languages in terms of literary corpus. In order to catch up with the technological advancement, there is a need to work on the lexicon and literature of Xitsonga. Gora (2014) stressed that, once the languages are ill-equipped, it follows then that even the human resource pool would be ill-equipped too. This means that the product produced after four years of study will be malfunctional. If a radical improvement has to be realised,

there is need to have intensive and extensive research into the development of African languages vis-a-vis technological advancement. Such would improve even the learning materials for the teaching and learning of Xitsonga in educational institutions, even if it means translating books written in English into the respective African languages as a starting point.

6.4 THE GENERAL FINDINGS

Concerning the themes of the study that were presented, the researcher believes that the synopsis of the study presented in the previous sections of this chapter can serve as a capitulatory function. The researcher highlighted the captured themes of the study, explaining briefly, what the study discovered. However, it would be useful to relate the objectives of this study to what has been pointed out and discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

6.4.1 Objective 1: Explore different motivations with which Xitsonga students at UL approach the study of Xitsonga.

The results revealed that students blame the system in place for admission because it forced them to be where they are today. They also indicated that, based on the nature of financial assistance they receive, they thought of getting work as soon as they complete their teaching degrees and certificates because, when the Department of Education has vacancies, they are just placed in schools without any difficulty. Passion is not their motto. To some students, their poor family background forced them to study teacher-education because of the ideology that teaching is in the market, because human resources are needed because many teachers are leaving the profession to seek for 'greener pastures'. They stressed that they did not anticipate a gap year, hence they settled for Xitsonga as one of their major subjects because the space for enrolment is forever available, regardless of the closing date for registration. If the quota for the subject is not reached, something has to be done. This is how some were lucky to escape the gap year. Their grade 12 results caged them into the programme as they do not make their own choices regarding modules that need to be registered for. These attitudes concur with Shearin's (1994) factors that affect motivation in language learning.

6.4.2 Objective 2: Establish different motivations with which Xitsonga lecturers at UL approach the teaching of Xitsonga

Regardless of the schools where Xitsonga is offered as a module in the university, lecturers indicated that they use Xitsonga as Mol in teaching this language. Lecturers also expressed the notion that they do not have a problem teaching the language. However, their frustration is the fact that students do not seem to care about the lexicons and other grammatical aspects of the language, unlike in English, let alone the standard part of it. To the lecturers their efforts to teach these students is like inflating a tyre that has holes, instead of patching it first. Students in this regard do not care that they are being patched as the lecturers try to accommodate them by allowing interjections of codemixing, code-switching and the use of dialects to spark teaching, learning and communication. To lecturers, allowing the usage of dialects is a way of promoting inclusivity during teaching and learning so that what students know can be transformed into the standard form of Xitsonga. In a way, there is transference of basic informal information to the formal and standardised form.

6.4.3 Objective 3: Describe what the Linguistic landscape say about the University's language policy

The outcome of this study observed the visibility of language ideologies at the University of Limpopo, by attempting to answer the question on how useful is the environment of the university as a good tool for learning Xitsonga? Most responses explored the presentation of the SOVENGA languages, together with English, and an analysis of the LL of the institution. Participants' responses were that a few of the billboards around the university are translated into some African languages, but English remains in a dominant position. English is almost the only language seen around the campus, with an insignificant number of Xitsonga notices observed. The findings here support the language hierarchy ideology of Weber and Horner (2012), with Afrikaans and English clearly ranked as the most important languages at the university. Even though Afrikaans is no longer taught as a module at UL, it does appear in most of the surrounding displays. In addition, this common sense positioning (Ricento, 2006) of the two languages as the most visible ones in the LL of the university also reflects Kroskrity's first dimension of language ideologies: "...language ideologies represent the perception of language and

discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group" (2000:8). Once more, the linguistic landscape of the University of Limpopo revealed a mismatch between its language policy and actual practices, and hence showed evidence of the dominant language ideologies in environment, particularly those of the people in charge of the signage – administrators, sign-writers, lecturers and many more.

6.4.4 Objective 4: Determine how the language of teaching and learning influence planning, policy and implementation in the University of Limpopo

The results of this study revealed that most of the participants knew English was the Mol. While some lecturers acknowledged the fact that this policy affected the students negatively, others held that English, as an international language, was advantageous to the students to can adequately face the world academically and professionally. However, it was realised that most of the participants did not know that UL had a language policy and how to access this policy. There was also no implementation plan accompanying the policy, and no official body to ensure such implementation occurred. Although UL indorsed the use of Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga in the teaching of these languages as modules, this study showed that this was impossible, given that the students generally preferred to use English, even in settings of these languages.

Furthermore, the wider use of indigenous languages was not greatly encouraged. Most of the students believed that Xitsonga could not be used as a Mol because of the variety of dialects it possesses, since some dialects tend to dominate others and custodians of those dialects become superior to the less disadvantaged dialects. Students are convinced that there was a lack of resources in this language. In addition, most students were negative about the use of standardized Xitsonga during teaching and learning. They held that Xitsonga is very difficult to master and use appropriately. Though a slight indication of choice of Xitsonga with sciences, their language loyalty to their own home language appeared to conflict with their preference for English as Mol at UL.

The results of this study also showed that students give Xitsonga less attention, compared to other modules, because of the belief that, when they complete their degrees, they will work in their own home areas, hence to them standardization is not an issue on

their side and on the side of the future learners whom they will teach. This then results in the reinvention of the same wheel because the university will admit learners who are not skilled in their literacy aspect.

The outcomes of this study further revealed that the UL is seen to escape some of its responsibilities towards the development of Xitsonga as one of the SOVENGA languages because it is modelling the national policy which is burdened with limitation clauses such as, ‘where possible’, ‘where practicable’, ‘may’, and many more. Xitsonga, as one of the indigenous African languages, is granted permission to be used officially as Mol during its teaching but limited in the research component, where the presentation and documentation should be in English.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Allow Students to choose their major subjects in order to deal with those that have passion, even if it is a handful.
- Xitsonga students be encouraged to love the language and be exposed to other job opportunities such as editors, reviewers, lexicographers, material and curricula developers, interpreters and translators, etc. of good quality.
- Bursary funders to consider indigenous African languages when planning their recipients’ categorization.
- Lectures should set the stage, stimulate, intrinsic motivation and that desire to read for pleasure in a literate environment.
- Lecturers should do expressive read-aloud. In this activity students would be able to expand their imaginations, provide new knowledge, support language acquisition, build vocabulary, promote reading as a core to access information, just to name a few.
- As renovations take place at UL infrastructures, attention must also be channelled into the LL, taking into consideration translation equivalents not only size of these boards as the same error of language inferiority is repeated. UL boards that name different infrastructures have been changed.
- Populated notices in one spot still prevail with the language usage still the same as the old ones, English dominating. The money should be channelled to translation projects and furnish necessary resources in buildings meant for languages like the

Language laboratory which is only populated with computers which are in English. No efforts are made to ‘sovengalize’ the computers and populate with resources that would better represent SOVENGA. This does not differ from a computer laboratory. An ideal language laboratory should at least have translation booths, desks with mounted sound system to enable audience to switch from one language to another and multilingual dictionaries.

- Finally, UL Language Policy be implemented, monitored and evaluated thoroughly.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study recommends the following areas for further research:

- i. Comparison of Xitsonga teaching and learning with special reference to Home Language and First Additional Language.
- ii. Investigation of how the text-based approach aid in the teaching of grammar to enhance the process of standardization.
- iii. Assessment of practices for promoting the use of indigenous African languages as languages of learning and communication in an institution of higher learning.
- iv. An investigation on an indigenous African language teacher in both schools and institutions of higher learning.
- v. African indigenous resources in the 21 Century
- vi. Teaching and learning materials' impact and effects: A case of Xitsonga.

These cited areas for further research can contribute to the literature on the use of indigenous African languages as languages of learning and communication and, specifically to the literature on the teaching and learning of indigenous African languages in South Africa. These areas of further research can also be used to support important findings of the study.

6.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with a summary of the study findings, implications of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research. The chapter also opened a new field for the study of perceptions on the use of indigenous African

languages as languages of learning and communication and has provided contributions to international literature in this area of study.

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APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLARENCE



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TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 05 September 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/177/2018: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Perceptions of students and lecturers on the use of Xitsonga as Language of Learning and Communication in the University of Limpopo.
Researcher: WS Nxumalo
Supervisor: Prof MW Maruma
Co-Supervisor/s: Dr NE Nxumalo
School: Education
Degree: PhD Language Education


PROF TAB MASHEGO

CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:

- i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
- ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

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APPENDIX C: EDITOR CERTIFICATE



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Date: 21 October 2019

To Whom it May Concern

I hereby confirm that I have proof-read the document entitled: "Perceptions of Students and Lecturers on the Use of Xitsonga as Language of Learning and Communication in the University of Limpopo" authored by Ms. Wendy Shihlamariso Nxumalo (Chauke), and have suggested a number of changes which the author may, or may not, accept, at her discretion.

Each of us has our own unique voice as far as both spoken and written language is concerned. In my role as proof-reader I try not to let my own "written voice" overshadow the voice of the author, while at the same time attempting to ensure a readable document.

Please refer any queries to me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scholtz".

Andrew Scholtz

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

Dear.....

My name is Wendy Shihlamariso Nxumalo I am currently a PhD student in Language Education at the University of Limpopo. I am conducting a study on "**Perceptions of students and lecturers on the use of Xitsonga as language of learning and communication in the University of Limpopo**". I would like you to share with me your understanding and experiences of the usage of Xitsonga in various interactions. My role would therefore be to ask you questions and to make follow-ups where necessary. Everything that we are going to discuss will be treated with utmost respect and confidentiality. Your names, phone numbers and other personal information will not be released to other people or be presented in the research without your consent. A recorder will be used in order to capture all the issues that we are going to discuss. The interview discussion will not take more than one hour. Should you agree to assist in this research, please kindly sign below the following statement of consent.

Statement of Consent

The researcher, Ms Wendy Shihlamariso Nxumalo has explained what she needs from me clearly. I understand that my name will not be used in this thesis and that I can withdraw from the interview and have the recording deleted at any time. I hereby give my permission to be interviewed and recorded and or / for my assignment to be used by her.

Signed:

Date: Place.....

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND GUIDELINES REVIEW

APPENDIX E1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS

1. What is your official language(s)?

To establish if the student is a native Xitsonga language speaker.

2. Do you communicate in other South African languages?

To find out if they speak and use any language other than Xitsonga and in what occasion.

3. Do you know whether the university has a language policy?

To see if they know and understand a language policy.

4. Did you choose to study Xitsonga?

To find out how they made choices of their modules.

5. What two modules should you have chosen?

To establish their streams and specialisation.

6. What language is used during consultations and in your group discussions?

To establish if students who are not proficient in Xitsonga and who are shy to participate in collaborative work could have an opportunity to contribute to the group work.

Also, to see some challenges encountered by participants and the place of Xitsonga as their major module.

7. Is it easy for you to participate in classroom interactions?

To know if a student is comfortable or not and what could be the possible barrier if any.

8. How useful is the environment of the university a good tool for learning Xitsonga?

To find out if they understand the importance of the environment as a means for language learning and also if they understand the importance of multilingualism.

9. How does the diverse nature of this environment help/hinder communication?

To see if the environment help/ hinder communication in Xitsonga.

10. In your opinion, is the awareness of multilingualism reflected in the languages for teaching and learning?

To find out if they know about multilingualism and reflect on their environment.

11. What can you do to develop the Xitsonga language?

To establish whether there are efforts made to develop the language

APPENDIX E2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LECTURERS

1. Where do you come from?

To determine their place of origin which has a bearing on the regional dialect.

2. Which is your medium of instruction when teaching Xitsonga?

To establish the mode of teaching Xitsonga whether Code-mixing, Code-switching, Xitsonga as MOI during the periods, or combination of all.

3. Which other languages are used in this university and in what situations?

To find out if they understand the language policy of the university and also if the policy matches practice.

4. Do you know whether the university has a language policy?

To determine knowledge of the existence of the language policy in the institution.

5. What is the content of the UL Language Policy?

To see if the lecturer understands the language policy.

6. Does this policy help or hinder students in achievement of learning Xitsonga?

To establish support gained by students.

7. What is your opinion of the language policy of this university?

To establish the shortcomings of the language policy as a barrier to learning. The students and the lecturers need to understand the policy in order to be competent in the language.

8. Do you have any suggestions on how the language policy can be improved?

To establish inputs on how to improve the language policy.

9. Is this policy being implemented successfully in UL?

To see if the policy works or if it needs adjustment or it is another situation where the dominant group imposes a language on the majority.

10. Does this policy meet the students' needs?

To establish a sense of belonging and a type of learning environment.

11. Do you have any problems teaching Xitsonga?

To establish experiences and challenges if there any.

12. Do you acknowledge regional dialects during teaching and learning?

To establish the infusion of regional dialects during lectures.

13. How do you deal with regional dialects?

To establish regional dialects are converted standard language in the formal setting.

14. How do you feel about the dominance of English in public spaces?

To establish attitude and responses to the dominance of English in public spaces.

15. Is this dominance of English positive or negative?

To gain insight of the state of dominance and correctional measurers if there are any.

16. Is the awareness of multilingualism reflected in the languages for teaching and learning?

To see if target language immersion is effective.

17. What are you doing/can do to develop the Xitsonga language?

To determine projects that can enhance with the development of the language.

APPENDIX E3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE COMMITTEE FOR FORMULATION OF LANGUAGE POLICY

1. Which of the eleven official languages are you most comfortable in?
To establish the most used language by the participant.

2. Do you speak some other SA languages?
To understand the language status of the participant.

3. Is UL Language Policy a written document or one that is tacitly understood?
To establish the shortcomings of the language policy as a barrier to learning. The students and the lecturers need to understand the policy in order to be competent in the language

4. Which other languages are used at this university?
To find out if they understand the language policy of the university and also if the policy matches practice.

5. Under what circumstances are these languages being used?
To find out the status of language usage and the circumstance that informs the usage.

6. What suggestion/s can you give to the improvement of the language policy?
To establish inputs on how to improve the language policy

7. Is the awareness of multilingualism reflected in the University Language Policy?
To establish their observation within the institution's departments as far as multilingualism is concerned.

8. How do you feel about the dominance of English in the space of the University of Limpopo?
To establish attitude and responses to the dominance of English in public spaces.

9. What needs to be done to give all other languages the same status?

To establish ways in which minority languages can be developed.