Student multilingualism in office consultations: Implications for tertiary institutions in South Africa

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Abstract

The debate on the use of African languages in education in South Africa is not new but has been going on for decades (Madiba, 2014; Heugh, 2013; Probyn, 2009; Desai, 2001). Even in higher education, the use of students' languages remains a contentious issue (Maseko, 2014; Kaschula, 2016; Hlatswayo & Siziba, 2013, Khumalo, 2016). The contentious matter is the issue of implementing the language policies of the different universities in South Africa, which all acknowledge multilingualism as a given in the country. Implementation of policy has thus also been keenly discussed because it seems hard to achieve (Heugh, 2015).

The study investigated the way in which participants used the languages in their repertoires to deepen their understanding of tasks that they had to perform in an academic literacy module that was taught in English. This study was conducted at the North-West University Potchefstroom Campus (NWU-PC). The North-West University (NWU) has a language policy (2022) that acknowledges and aims to promote Setswana and Sesotho as academic languages (alongside English and Afrikaans) while simultaneously allowing other South African languages to be used through functional multilingualism. The study was undertaken among first year Academic Literacy module (ALDE) students who mostly had just entered university from high school. This study was a mixed method study that used recorded consultations, questionnaires, interviews and a focus group. The main data set was the recorded consultations, and all the rest of the data sets were used to ask students about their use of language and how it makes them feel. The other datasets were also used to investigate their attitudes towards multilingualism. Therefore, in general, the study was conducted by answering the following questions 1) What is the language repertoire of participants, b) How do students use their languages to make meaning and deepen understanding and c) What are the attitudes of participants towards multilingual education.

The findings of the study are that the participants are highly multilingual, reflecting the landscape of South African universities. Furthermore, the study proves that the participants used their languages when they came to consult either in the office or in class to deepen understanding and make meaning. To analyse the use of the student's language during consultations, firstly, the language repertoire of the students was established, and the participants were highly multilingual. Setswana and Sesotho were the main languages that the students used during consultation. The reasons why students switched during consultations were analysed, and it seems that indeed students use their languages to deepen understanding by asking relevant questions, constructing arguments and making a point while not making mistakes. The use of African languages supports students learning and it helps them to achieve higher order thinking

skills (HOTS) and support for Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) as explained in Bloom's (1956) taxonomy.

With the above established, participants' attitudes towards the use of African languages were investigated and some of them were welcoming. Some were more open to the idea, especially those participants who had come for consultations using their languages as opposed to those who only filled in a questionnaire but did not consult in their languages. The study also found that although the participants were welcoming the idea of multilingualism in higher education, they were also conflicted about the use of their languages in higher education. Participants who came to consult using their languages were more inclined to the idea of multilingualism in higher education, but they also voiced out the negative side of doing such. They therefore presented ambivalent attitudes towards the use of their languages in higher education.

In summary, students use their languages effectively in higher education in some settings more than others. If the intellectualization of African languages is to be achieved, the languages need to be brought more into academic settings. Students' language attitudes have not changed much, even when they see the benefits of multilingual education and more needs to be done to address this.

Key words

transformation of higher education, consultations, multilingualism, language policy, language attitudes, LoTL, academic literacy

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Chapter 1

This study focuses on how students use their African languages alongside English to deepen understanding for tasks. In this chapter, the topics that will be discussed include a brief description of the sociolinguistic situation in South Africa, as well as the use of languages in education at various levels in the country, with a special focus on the language policy of the North-West University (NWU). The section also includes research questions and objectives of the study. The research approach of the study is also discussed in this chapter as well as the contribution of the study. The last section will focus on chapter divisions for the study.

1.1. Contextualisation

As the linguistic landscape of South Africa has proven to be more multilingual than monolingual, the call for the transformation of higher education advocates for the intellectualisation of African languages in a multilingual and inclusive higher education system (Prah, 2017; Mkhize & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2014; Madiba 2013). As a result, different teaching and learning pedagogies are needed to address the issue of large student numbers now entering higher education; particularly those who are additional language speakers of English, which is the language of tuition for most universities (Hughes, 2008).

Currently, the language policy of the North-West University (NWU) supports a broad, multilingual approach that recognises English, Afrikaans, Setswana, and Sesotho as the official languages that will be used and developed at the university (North-West University Language Plan, 2018; 2022). Presently, the language policy recognises only four of the official languages of the country. The rationale behind the current NWU language policy is geographically motivated as this university has three campuses in Mahikeng, Potchefstroom, and Vanderbijlpark. The context of this study is the NWU Potchefstroom Campus (PC), which previously had a dominant Afrikaans home language student population but now has an increasing student population that uses African languages as home languages (NWU Student Headcount Enrolments & Graduates, 2020). Considering the multilingual landscape of the NWU-PC, it would be unrealistic to expect Setswana or Sesotho to be the only indigenous languages that are represented among the indigenous South African students on the PC as universities are opened to students from all places in the country who are speakers of all the Black South African languages. However, it is the commitment of the NWU to promote and intellectualise those specific two Black South African languages and to use them alongside English and Afrikaans as languages of tuition.

Afrikaans used to be the language of teaching and learning (LoTL) of the NWU-PC as it is a Historically White University (HWU) and it remains an influential language of tuition and operation on the campus, while English as a language of tuition has gained momentum on the campus, especially since the merger of between the Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys (*Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education*) (PUCHE) and the University of the North West (UNW), as well as the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University that legally took place in 2004 (Eloff, 2007). One of the recommendations of the Council on Higher Education's (CHE, 2018) was that language issues needed to be attended to because of the potential exclusion in the LLB programme offered at the NWU-PC in both Afrikaans and English and the same programme offered at the NWU-MC in English only. This was deemed as problematic. Very little use of Setswana as LoTL is evident on the NWU-PC. The NWU-PC context of this study is ideal for investigating the role of languages to support multilingual education in the South African higher education context, because the recommendations from the study could assist the campus to advance the implementation of the multilingual language policy of the institution.

Students who come to institutions of higher education in South Africa possess language capabilities that should be used to help them in their studies. The general trend in South African universities is a drift towards the use of English only as the LoTL despite the multilingual realities of their students, and this inhibits epistemological access (Boughey, 2014). Multilingualism should not be the topic of elegant language policies alone. Multilingual realities should extend to the teaching and learning context, where pedagogies can be created, worked on, reformulated and adapted to suit the needs of the multilingual students that enrol at universities in South Africa. Furthermore, it should extend outside the university context where issues of employability, viability and continuity are addressed in relation to multilingualism in the country.

Owing to the context mentioned above, this study focuses on how students' multilingual abilities are used to strengthen the learning processes that they are involved in and the quality of the knowledge that they produce in the LoTL, which is English. The problem this study seeks to address therefore is how students use the other languages that they know to strengthen the production of language artefacts like written essays, and how this can then promote the use of Black South African languages as LoTL at the NWU as espoused by the language policy. Furthermore, the study seeks to investigate how this practice (of using Black South African languages for epistemological access) is perceived by students that are targeted for language development and for academic development, which affects their perception on potential employment and success outside the academe.

The NWU adopted a functional, multilingual language policy approach since its inception (North-West University Language Plan, 2018; 2022), whereby the university recognises four of the eleven official South African languages (Afrikaans, English, Sesotho, and Setswana) for development and use in different functions and accept the use of all other South African official languages as part of an approach termed "functional multilingualism". The university further explains that ""functional multilingualism" means that the choice of a particular language in a particular situation is determined by the situation or context in which it is used" (North-West University Language Plan, 2018; 2022).

In the South African context where there are twelve official languages, English has long been regarded as the dominant LoTL, especially in mathematics and the sciences (Granville *et al*., 1998; Klapwijk & Van der Walt, 2016; Probyn, 2009). Afrikaans has a long history as a LoTL – also in mathematics and science – but it provides limited access to education because it is not as widely spread as English as a LoTL. The South African language in education policy (1997) states that children in their first years of learning have the right be taught in a language of their choice, and that language can be any of the official languages, including Black South African languages. The policy further states that the onus of the choice of medium of instruction for the school rests on the school governing body (SGB) to not only decide on the language of instruction, but to ensure multilingual practice. Most learners in South Africa attend schools that use their home languages (mostly the language of the region-Black South African languages) as LoTL and switch to English as LoTL in Grade 4 according to most schools' language policies. However, most first language speakers of Afrikaans are taught in Afrikaans from Grade 1 and have access to an Afrikaans-medium school even at some universities (Stein, 2017). The switch of LoTL in Grade as part of most schools' policy has a detrimental effect on learners who use an African home language. The switch to English as LoTL after Grade 3 affects learners' academic success (Boakye, 2015:137; Hibbert, 2010; Desai, 2001). Because of this sudden switch from their home language to English as LoTL, learners perform poorly from then onwards. Desai's (2001) findings are that primary school students performed better in a task written in isiXhosa than they did in the same task written in English when they were tested in reading, writing and comprehension; whilst Manyike and Lemmer's (2014) analysis of the South African Grade 4's poor performance in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011 results proved their reading and comprehension to be well below the international average scores. Leaners performed better when tested in their languages (Desai, 2021). The PIRLS (2021) results when compared to the PIRLS (2014) still shows that South African grade 4 and grade 6 learners struggle to read for comprehension when compared to their counterparts from other countries. Furthermore,

Afrikaans and English learners' ability to read for comprehension at grade 4 and grade 6, show that the Afrikaans and English learners respectively, perform better than learners who use indigenous South African languages (PIRLS. 2021). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2024) the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS):

> ...is an international comparative assessment that measures student learning in reading. Since 2001, PIRLS has been administered every 5 years. PIRLS documents worldwide trends in the reading knowledge of 4th-graders as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction.

South African learners, as stated above, constantly perform below average in the PIRLS.

Heugh (2013: 222) puts it succinctly when she states that literacy as construed in terms of reading and writing texts related to the school curriculum is hard to achieve for learners who have neither the spoken vocabulary nor practice-based use of the LoTL. Unfortunately, this becomes a problem for a lot of the South African learners who speak home languages other than English and begin their learning through those home languages. The Census (2011:24) report indicates that English is spoken as a home language by 9.7% of the South African population, and it is the fourth most spoken home language after Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans respectively. According to Coetzee-Van Rooy (2014:122):

> The Census [2011] data also indicate growth among the African population who reportedly now use English as home language. In 2001, 183,631 African people allegedly used English as home language in South Africa and in 2011, this number increased to 1,167,913. However, when seen in the context of the numbers of users of almost all the other African languages reported in 2011, the number of African people who use English as home language is still small.

Census (2022) still shows English as a self-reported home language is the language of about 8.7% of the population and it is still fourth on the list after isiZulu, isiXhosa and Afrikaans respectively. Setswana is reportedly 5th on the list with about 8.3% of the population speaking it (Census, 2022). With such a relatively small number of South Africans who are home language speakers of English, a lot of learners who are additional language speakers of English are at an obvious disadvantage when English is used as the LoTL in school (Kamwangamalu, 2000; Manyike & Lemmer, 2014). Although language is not the only reason for academic difficulties, it is regarded widely by scholars like Hibbert (2010) as a contributing factor because it is through the language that one is taught, that one learns and demonstrates understanding through assessment, and that one accomplishes the set outcomes.

There is a plethora of socio-economic issues encountered by learners in South Africa, and those who bear the brunt are mostly from rural and township schools. Township and rural schools in general have fewer resources and infrastructure than urban schools; and learners are often socio-economically disadvantaged (Banda, 2003). Speakers of African home languages often attend township and rural schools where English is taught by teachers who are additional language users of English as well (King & Chetty, 2014), and where teachers often switch to languages other than English to assist their students with understanding (Desai, 2001; Probyn, 2009). There is some concern about the quality of English teaching in township schools (Banda, 2003), as there is also a concern about the content (often taught in English) knowledge of South African teachers; especially in rural areas (Spaull, 2013).

It is also well-known that there is a lot of code-switching that occurs in classrooms that are supposed to be carried out in the English medium; and some scholars argue that some of this code-switching does not support the development of English language learning (King & Chetty, 2014). Codeswitching, which means switching or alternating between the use of different languages, tends to treat languages (codes) as separate. Setati *et al.*, (2002: 13) say that:

> code-switching occurs when an individual switches between two or more languages. Codeswitches can be deliberate, purposeful, and political. There are important social and political aspects of switching between languages, as there are between switching between discourses, registers, and dialects.

Heugh (2003) and Probyn (2009) attest that codeswitching is often used to facilitate learning in schools but is viewed as wrong by teachers who often switch from English to other South African languages. In as much as teachers codeswitch to help their learners during lessons, Madiba (2013: 7) also concurs that "students often make use of codeswitching to master the discourse of the target discipline" at university level. However, the switch from one code to the other whereby languages are treated as separate and named (Setswana, Chinese, isiZulu, etc.) is being challenged by recent scholarly research. Even though this is not the focus of this study, it is important to elaborate on what is meant by the previous statement.

Of late, "translanguaging" has gained momentum in the South African education landscape as a process used to explain the multilingual pedagogy of employing learners'/students' languages in the process of meaning making (Carstens, 2016; Charamba, 2020; Makalela, 2015; Mwinda & Van der Walt, 2015; Probyn, 2019). While previously codeswitching research abounded, now the new terminology of the pedagogical implications of using the learners' or students' languages to

improve their understanding called translanguaging is more prevalent. This study uses both terms to further its theoretical understanding and when necessary, will refer to any of the two strategies. What is the difference between codeswitching and translanguaging then? To answer this question, understanding is drawn from the explanation below.

Otheguy *et al.* (2015: 294) state that "no one really speaks a named language" but rather that people have idiolects that make up their repertoire. An idiolect is the languages the speaker knows and is unique to the speaker (Hall, 1996; Barber & Garcia Ramirez, 2004). Therefore, Otheguy *et al.,* (2015) argue that because of going to and fro between one's idiolects, translanguaging explains this move better as a process whereby one employs all the resources available in their linguistic repertoire and that this skill is what makes bi\multilinguals different from monolinguals as they move from lots of idiolects in the process of languaging (Otheguy *et al.,* 2015). Makalela, (2015: 278) says that:

> Ideologically, code-switching tends to be hearer centred (i.e., what the hearer thinks is going on in the speech) and monolingual in orientation in that it recognises languages as separate forms or structures that are either mixed or switched at the point of speech (hence switching or mixing). Fully fledged translanguaging, on the other hand, does not recognise boundaries in that it entails a large speech repertoire that overlaps between administratively assigned languages which speakers use flexibly as part of their everyday way of making sense of the world around them…translanguaging is speaker-oriented; it focuses on what speakers do with the languages. It also includes processes of going between and beyond languages and encompasses all other meaning-making semiotic modes …

Translanguaging as a phenomenon has thus become prominent in recent education research with its proponents advocating that it is more than switching between languages as codeswitching is, but more of a fluidity of codes merging and transforming the way language was previously understood. Translanguaging has its roots in the classroom, whereby it tries to draw on all the linguistic resources of the child to maximise literacy. For this study, the most prominent terms in the current debate (code-switching and translanguaging) are incorporated in the discussion. This is of immense importance to the study because such debates serve to illuminate the nature of the language debate not only in South Africa but across the globe.

In South Africa, higher education has faced major challenges in its transformation as a sector from apartheid to the current democratic dispensation. Fourie (1999: 276-277) highlights the importance of the transformation agenda of higher education when she states:

> In South Africa the transformation of higher education is part of the broad political and socio-economic transition to democracy characterising the country and its people. Essentially, it is about the transformation of the organisational culture and the development and acceptance of new, shared values. This can only be achieved through fundamental changes in the mindset ("cognitive transcendence") of all stakeholders and role-players…

A lot is expected to change when we speak of the transformation of higher education, but at some universities the change is slow-paced or defrauded, resulting in continued inequalities in the education system (Heugh, 2015; Beukes, 2009). Letseka and Maile (2008) explain that part of the inequality in the higher education system of South Africa during the apartheid era, which contributed significantly to the dropout rates of black students in institutions of higher education, included an issue such as the distribution of grants and study subsidies among racial groups. Such an issue not only contributes to the inequality in higher education but also to the number of graduates per racial group in society. Black South Africans who have always been the majority in the country were the most affected by this system. Thus, one of the main issues that transformation aimed to redress was the number of previously disadvantaged groups being allowed to access knowledge especially in places where they would have been previously denied (Akooje & Nkomo, 2007: 385; Smit, 2012). As such, two key elements of transformation in higher education - massification and mergers - took place to allow access to anyone to attend higher education at any institution of their choice, to increase participation of previously marginalised individuals in higher education as well as to eradicate the division caused by classifications of institutions as either black or white institutions. The NWU has also undergone change as two previously separate universities became one.

> The NWU officially came into being on 1 January 2004 as part of the South African government's plan to transform higher education. The former University of North-West merged with the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. A third party was the Sebokeng Campus of another mainly black university, Vista… (NWU, 2020).

Akoojee and Nkomo (2007) state that because of significant changes in higher education, there are significant improvements in the enrolment of the population of previously marginalised students (black students and female students) in relation to the previously advantaged students (white students and male students). Smit (2012) argues that because of this change in the student demographics of institutions of higher education, institutions need to address this diversity in a way that reflects the true nature of their realities.

Thus, the issue of relevance is an important one in the transformation debate, more so today where the focus of higher education is on 'redesigning the curriculum' and the 'intellectualisation of African languages'. Lebakeng *et al.* (2006) and Ramoupi (2012) asserts that African universities remain outposts of Eurocentric knowledge production and fail to consider the students' cultures and their languages. Again Hibbert (2010: 211) says the continued use of "universal standards of literacy, especially those which equate literacy with "standard" English, are globally inapplicable" and thus undermine other ways of knowing such as what Mgqwashu (2014) refers to as "indigenous ways of being and knowing" and what Makalela (2004; 2013) terms "bantu logic" amongst South African students who might not meet those international standards. Both Mgqwashu (2014) and Makalela (2004; 2013) argue that black South Africans have a way of understanding and expressing themselves which is not in line with the standard English or universal standards of language, and that they use this form of logic or knowledge to navigate studies and everyday life. Though these forms of knowing and expression are deemed natural and prevalent, they are often ignored in institutions which still hold the standard use of English as equivalent to being knowledgeable. Similarly, Kaya and Seleti (2013: 13) argue that the exclusion of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the canon of knowledge production in higher education is largely due to the ignorance of what constitutes education (as that continues to be Eurocentric) and the inability of African scholars "to provide their own clear understanding of the concept "knowledge" based on Africa's own history of ideas and intellectual development".

Elsewhere, Winberg (2006: 160) points to the disjuncture between the higher education curriculum of the country and society when she argues that change is indeed necessary as "disciplinary based curricula tend to be isolated from 'real world' problems". She argues that what constitutes traditional discipline based academic knowledge is far removed from society-based knowledge and that this gap produces students who cannot function in their own society (Winberg, 2006), a point also articulated by Hibbert (2013) and Kaya and Seleti (2013). This problem remains because the knowledge production at institutions of higher education continues to follow a Eurocentric approach. Thus, at the helm of South Africa's debate on language issues and the curriculum remains issues of relevance of the curriculum to the South African learners and the issue of language in this debate is pivotal. It is in the fact that South African languages are side-lined at the promotion of western languages (in this case English) and that this has become acceptable in the community. Indigenous South African languages are only promoted at the level of policy and resume the position of 'other' and tokenism in the debate of the promotion of these languages that the issue remains.

The history of language in the country and especially as it was used in the education system through the language in education policies of the past, makes the language and transformation issue one of great importance. Heugh (2015), Madiba (2013) and Maseko (2014), amongst many, avidly write on how the lack of attention to language policy in education continues to render the education system unequal, even today. Conversely, Cross *et al.* (2002: 186) highlight the fact that "very often in educational reforms political concerns are made to prevail over educational and pedagogical concerns in order to mediate conflicting interests in the political domain". This is also the case in the context of education and language policy matters. According to Hibbert (2010: 208), "psycho-social and socio-political factors have prevented literacy and language development from meeting the challenges of educational transformation". These are some of the many issues that the South African education system is battling with and need to overcome for teaching and learning to effectively take place and for the empowerment of a transformed democratic nation. As it has been shown above, the language issues of South Africa do not end at school level but persist even at the higher education level.

The issue of language and ultimately of literacy is important to this study because very few people in the world speak and understand one language only (Hornberger & Vaish, 2009: 309). The African continent is where multilingualism and bilingualism are a norm rather than an exception "with approximately 2500 languages (or 30 per cent of the world's living languages)" (Ndlovhu, 2008:137) used on the continent. In South Africa, there are twelve languages declared official by the country's constitution apart from additional heritage languages that do not have official status. According to Madiba (2013:386), "[i]n South Africa, the term 'multilingual education' implies the use of at least two languages as media of instruction". According to Ndlovhu (2008: 138) this language diversity should be seen as an asset rather than an obstacle. However, the reality is that English is the most popular LoTL in South Africa; even though other official South African home languages are encouraged as LoTL in the early years of study of a learner and included at policy level of higher education institutions.

Numerous researchers have argued that the South African education system has failed to recognise and promote the other official languages of the country (Heugh, 2003; Hibbert, 2010; Ndlovhu, 2013 & Hlatshwayo & Siziba, 2015). According to Jansen (2002), Madiba (2014), and Heugh (2015) the language in education issue of South Africa is caused by the disparity between policy and implementation in what Beukes (2009:36) describes as the gap between "intention and performance" and this persists even today (Siziba, 2024). Many other language policy critics in South Africa argue that although language policies in the country advocate for the promotion of all the indigenous official languages in teaching and learning, these policies have not been well

implemented in the different places and phases that they needed to be. Beukes (2009:36) in her critique argues that a lot has been done for the promotion of other South African languages such as the creation and establishment of Acts and the establishment of language boards such as PanSALB and the National Language Policy Framework (NLPF); but she states that these have not reached their potential or completely failed; partly because of lack of clarity on the roles of African languages in the post-apartheid dispensation.

Despite the inclusion of African languages in the language policies of different universities, most institutions of higher education in the country continue to use English and Afrikaans as languages of tuition and African languages remain relatively underused, underdeveloped, and enshrined in policy only on paper. Hibbert (2010:215) argues that in the South African context:

> In order to address the stigmatization of African languages, recognition of their symbolic capital is crucial in terms of the psychosocial benefits of their users. In order to do this, these languages need to be brought into the educational mainstream. In this way, some recognition of tacit knowledges (those knowledge bases embedded and embodied in cultures and linguistic features) will emerge. Coded knowledges, often synthesized and available in textual form in non-community or global languages, whether electronically or on paper, cannot accurately express the concerns and affective attachments of African language speakers. The difficulty of translating tacit knowledge into foreign languages is that often there is no indigenous equivalent concept to express accurately what is being conceived of. Tacit knowledge is present in the minds of individuals and may not even be recognized by them as knowledge, which feeds into the continued marginalization of African knowledges.

Indeed, all languages have value in the role they play in society, but that role continues to be undermined by the education system and even the employment sector of the country. Thus, it comes as no surprise that institutions of higher education in South Africa are facing a mammoth task of having to implement their impeccably drafted language policies. According to Turner and Wildsmith-Cromarty (2014: 297-298), who advocate for the teaching of Academic Literacy differently, the promotion and use of Black South African languages by various intuitions of higher education can be applied at different levels such as; status, corpus and acquisition planning; usage planning; prestige planning and "in terms of a bilingual/multilingual language policy, [which] would mean academic literacy in more than one language, especially if they are to be used as languages of teaching and learning (LoLTs)".

It is within this context, that the research questions of the current study are situated. South Africa is a multilingual country that recognises twelve languages as an official language. The South African education system embraces multilingualism as espoused in the constitution. However, the implementation of a multilingual language policies is hard to achieve. A lot of work already

takes place whereby teachers and students use their languages academically to advance multilingualism in education. This is normally driven by the fact that South African learners who are mostly in public schools learn in their home languages in the first three years before learning in English from grade 4 onwards, the system persists from primary schools to university. Most public schools in rural and township teach the first three grades of primary school in an indigenous language or home languages or learners (As a result, South African teachers and students alike use educational pedagogies such as translanguaging and codeswitching to mediate the struggle experienced by learning in English as LoTL. Whereas it is easier to implement such pedagogies in schools, implementation remains difficult in universities. South African universities are trying to transform in order to cater for the students who struggle to use English only as LoTL.

1.2. Research questions

This study is situated within the broader field of applied linguistics with a focus on the language issue in multilingual higher education in South Africa. In general, the study will grapple with the question of the use of multiple languages in the repertoires of multilingual students and how they deploy all the languages in their repertoires to advance their academic success. In this study, the main research question is:

- How do students in higher education effectively use the Black South African languages that they bring to university (especially as demonstrated in office consultations) to improve their own learning and how can these practices be incorporated into language-in-education policies?

At a more detailed level, the following sub-questions will be addressed specifically to provide answers to the main research question of the study:

- What do we know of the use of multilingualism in higher education in South Africa, especially in the case of multilingualism in consultation sessions between lecturers and students?
- What is the nature of the language repertoires of students at the NWU-PC, with a focus on the African home languages students?
- How do students use different languages during consultations to deepen understanding of concepts or of tasks?

- What are students' attitudes towards the use of multilingualism (especially the use of African languages) in higher education?
- What are the implications of these findings for the university's language in education policy?

1.3. Research objectives

The research objectives of the study are aligned with the research questions:

- To compile relevant literature on multilingualism and its place and role in higher education.
- To investigate the language repertoire of participating students and investigating how the students use these languages for better understanding of their studies.
- To gather and analyse naturalistic conversations of students using many languages during consultation sessions as well as individual interviews; and to analyse the use of language by students in a bid to inform teaching and learning.
- To investigate what language attitudes are held by the students towards the use of their African languages that are supported by the university policy.
- To use the information and data gathered to write recommendations on policy with the aim of ultimately informing classroom pedagogy.

1.4. Central theoretical statement

In order to better assist student throughput, there is a need to find inclusive teaching pedagogies which recognise students' linguistic repertoires or the languages which they know and use outside the lecture halls in the South African context. Codeswitching, code-meshing, bi-literacy, and translanguaging are some of the different strategies and approaches to teaching that have captivated debates and research in multilingual contexts over time. Often, their advocates argue that because of the different and complex multilingual contexts, no single approach applies to all instances. Thus, a variety of teaching approaches should be used to accommodate all the students to access information in the languages they know in addition to English as the LoTL to understand and comprehend better. Furthermore, students can participate in the intellectualisation of their Black South African languages and the promotion of South African languages at the NWU can also be advanced and eventually achieved if we apply multilingual approaches to the teaching of Academic Literacy. In the quest to promoting South African languages, how participants use the Black South African languages that they bring to university during consultations with their lecturer in the office or in class after a lesson has ended for the

students to make meaning is investigated. Their attitudes about their languages being promoted in academic settings is also important to investigate in order to ascertain if this is beneficial for the students and whether they would make use of such an opportunity. Investigating their attitudes will also help to avoid investing in something that no one will benefit from and very few people will appreciate.

1.5. Research approach

The broad research approach, role of the literature review and the planned empirical part of the study (including the planned research methods) will be discussed in this section. The details of the instruments, participants, data gathering and data analysis conducted in the study will be described comprehensively in Chapter 3. The aim of this section is to provide a broad overview to readers to explain the research approach implemented in this study.

1.5.1. Transformative paradigm as a broad approach

From a broad transformative research paradigm, this study is an investigation on how students use their languages other than English to deepen understanding. A transformative paradigm as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 is one that considers the struggle of the marginalised in a view to implement solutions. Mertenes (1999: 4) says that a transformative paradigm places "central importance on the lives and experiences of marginalized groups, such as women, ethnic/racial minorities, people with disabilities, and those who are poor''. In the case of this study, participants who are taught through the medium of English only at university, who find ways to bring in their home languages in transforming the higher education landscape is what the approach speaks to. The participants in this study are agents of change as they use languages to negotiate meaning and space in a place where the system previously did not allow. A transformative paradigm is a quest to social justice (Mertens, 1999; Romm, 2015).

1.5.2. Literature review and the transformative paradigm

A transformative paradigm is in line with the language in education debate as the focus of this study, hence the study's approach to use a conceptual literature review that draws on transformation as espoused in the South African Higher Education Framework (1996). The conceptual framework in the literature review process whereby theories related to the study are synthesised to answer the research question is multifaceted in that it looks at literature that has discussed language planning and policy, transformation in South African higher education, codeswitching, translanguaging and related multilingual concepts, and academic literacy to arrive at this study's conceptual framework. Firstly, a review of relevant language policy and language management literature (Mazebenza, 1985; Tollefson, 1991) will be presented. This is

followed by a review of language policy in education literature (Shohamy, 2003; Bamgbose, 2004, Anchimbe, 2006). The study then uses the Academic Literacies model (Lea & Street, 2006) to draw the connection between students' inability to cope with language in the domain of higher education and a need for a transformed approach to literacy and learning in higher education.

The acknowledgment and use of languages other than English in teaching embracing the multiliteracies of students speaks to concepts of translanguaging and multilingualism in the participants' use of languages. A multiliteracy approach (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015: 3) "sets out to address the variability of meaning-making in different cultural, social or domain- specific contexts". Thus, the study embraces the inclusion of students' languages in meaning making as important and allows for a transformative approach to academic literacy teaching. Translanguaging (Makalela, 2015; Otheguy *et al*., 2015) as well as transliteration (Nhongo, 2024) are important concepts that speak to the transformation of language use as we know it.

This study therefore also includes a constructivist paradigm approach to research which moves from the premise that meaning is socially constructed. Thus, "constructivism maintains that what is real is intangible and mentally constructed and is, therefore, 'socially and experientially' based" (Bisman & Highfield, 2012:5). Meaning in this context is dependent on the student's everyday use of languages and their social experiences play a role in meaning-making. The qualitative and quantitative data gathered and analysed in this study provide different ways to an investigation of the participants' language experiences. The language context of the participants is considered.

1.5.3. Mixed methods for data collection

This study takes a mixed-method approach to research, with recordings, interviews, a focus group discussion, and the use of two questionnaires. This kind of approach (mixed method), using both qualitative and quantitative methods, is known to enhance the validity of a study, and it fits perfectly with a transformative paradigm (Mertens, 1999). The qualitative data includes an analysis of the audio-recordings of consultation sessions between the participating students and the lecturer (also the researcher in this study), the analysis of individual interviews with the consultation participants, and a focus group discussion with the participating consultation students. By documenting and analysing students' use of language use during consultation sessions in the office of the lecturer (also the researcher in this study), the research aims to make students aware of their practices and thus ask them questions regarding those practices. Once the students are themselves aware of their language use, further questions on how that can be

used to inform teaching and learning, whether the students deem it necessary and plausible, and how that can be achieved, will be tackled.

The quantitative data included the use of two questionnaires with mixed questions that comprised Likert scales, closed questions, and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions from the two questionnaires were included in the analysis on ATLAS.ti. The quantitative data will be analysed by reporting and interpreting frequencies as indicators of central tendencies, as well as presenting cross-tabulations where applicable to investigate the individual experiences of home language users of different languages. For the recorded audio recordings (consultation, interviews and focus group discussion) ATLAS.ti (2024) will be used for the analysis. By relating the findings from the qualitative and quantitative results reported in the study, data triangulation will be done. Thematic analysis of data will be compared between all the datasets to answer research questions of how the participants use their languages to deepen understanding and if such a practice can be extended beyond consultations.

Based on the broad research approach discussed in this section, the details of the empirical work done in this study are presented in Chapter 3.

1.6. Literature review

There has been research conducted on the NWU's students' language attitudes. In a study conducted by Ngwenya (2012) students from the NWU Mafikeng Campus (MC) - another campus of the NWU – stated that Setswana very was poorly represented. Even though they recognised the promotion of Setswana through signage and posters, the students in the study said that very little Setswana is visible in the classroom setting and thus argued that it should be promoted alongside English. Ngwenya's (2012) findings also suggest that students on the NWU-MC stated that the other campus of the NWU (NWU-PC) had far more resources and advancements in the language of that campus (Afrikaans). The participant in Ngwenya's study also said that the development of Setswana on the NWU-MC was caused by among other reasons the inequality in the distribution of resources and his findings reported nothing about language at the NWU's Vanderbijlpark Campus (VC). The students who participated in Ngwenya's (2012) study also pointed out that Setswana as a language was underdeveloped for academic use and that its development would be helpful in advancing marginalised people's culture and their status in society. Because of reasons such as the ones mentioned above Ngwenya's (2012:232) findings

report that 62 percent of the respondents said that they would be willing to use Setswana as LoTL if it were academically developed. Ngwenya (2012: 235):

> Some participants (17%) expressed dissatisfaction with what they said was insufficient use of indigenous languages in public signage on the Mafikeng campus. Of that percentage, 83 per cent said they would like to see Setswana being used more by administration/management and support staff, and at graduation ceremonies.

The NWU Language Directorate annual report (2021) also conducted research on the three campuses of the NWU. When the students were asked during this study whether they would like to be taught in their home languages or the languages promoted on the three NWU campuses, participants' attitudes towards learning in their languages are shifting to become positive. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that the current study will investigate whether students would like to use Setswana and other South African languages as LoTL and what students' attitudes are towards these languages in academia.

Hilton (2010) also conducted research on the language attitudes of students at the NWU and reported in her findings:

> The results from the language preference questions show that English is the language given the highest preference rating by students at NWU, with a mean score of 1.38. The Bantu languages and 'other' category were rated fairly low with a mean of 3.03 for Setswana, 3.01 for Sesotho and 3.27 for 'Other' ('4' was the lowest possible score). Afrikaans was rated somewhat higher, with a mean score of 2.34

Previous research conducted has shown that students at NWU prefer to be taught in English. The results also vary dramatically from one campus to another with the students at the PC showing a high preference for being taught in Afrikaans (ILA, 2011; Hilton, 2010). The students at MC showed very little preference for being taught in Setswana as the language of the majority there (Ngwenya, 2012) and this was also reflected in the overall results of languages across the campuses where Setswana received little preference (ILA, 2010; Hilton, 2011). These results are of great importance since the current study seeks to investigate why students who use their home languages do so during consultations and whether they bring awareness to the attitudes they hold towards language use.

More universities have reported on how students' first languages or home languages such as IsiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, have been used in academia where they were previously excluded. The results of some of the research that has been conducted at institutions of higher education

on language attitudes indicate varying responses from participants. Concerning language attitudes, Greenfield (2010: 530) explored students' perceptions on language policy at the Central University of Technology and concluded that "affective factors related to cultural identity could be playing a more salient role in the achievement gap in South African tertiary education than previously identified". He also states that students' awareness of cultural loss and displacement associated with language often made them rebellious to Afrikaans as a LoTL, although the same attitudes are not reported for their attitudes towards English (Greenfield, 2010). Van der Walt (2006; 2014) has focused on students' use of Afrikaans in a changing context where the university of Stellenbosch (once an "Afrikaans only" institution) is beginning to use more English than previously, and these studies report that students preferred a more bilingual approach to their learning, and, in addition to these attitudes, there is the view that Afrikaans should not to be scrapped off on the basis of promoting multilingualism and accommodating black non-Afrikaans speakers.

Mgqwashu (2014) in his investigation of the role of isiZulu for teaching and learning University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) discovered that there was "a lack of academic discourse of isiZulu" and this often compromised rather than improved students' output. He also found that simply translating material from English to isiZulu compromised epistemological access as English translations often lacked the deeper meaning carried through a language's culture, values, and beliefs (Mgqwashu, 2014). By this, it means that when it comes to translating material from English to an African language such as isiZulu, English words were often found to be simple and thus translating them to isiZulu was difficult as words in isiZulu often carried a deeper meaning than a surface meaning. Hibbert (2010:215) reiterated that "difficulty of translating tacit knowledge into foreign languages [because] often there is no indigenous equivalent concept to express accurately what is being conceived of". It is thus issues such as the one stated here that make the translation difficult as isiZulu words often became narrative and explanative rather than a simple one word.

Khumalo (2016) reported on an ongoing project of including isiZulu at the University of KwaZulu Natal and how that was achieved through a compulsory isiZulu module and the creation of an isiZulu word bank. The bulk of the studies on the use of African languages in institutions of higher education in South Africa has mainly focused on Nguni languages; particularly isiZulu. Very few of the other Black South African languages in South Africa received widespread attention in research of the language issue in higher education. Thus, the study of how to use Setswana to strengthen students' Academic Literacy output in English is not only relevant but also necessary in contributing to language studies in higher education institutions of South Africa. Ngcobo (2009)

focuses on first year students using different languages to understand the Academic Literacy module and the findings show that students who used material available in both English and isiZulu reported that they benefitted largely from the biliteral approach that the module was taught in. The students also reported that the biliteracy approach helped them to improve their skills in the targeted language of English as they used their isiZulu alongside English (Ngcobo, 2009: 218).

The research that has been conducted at many universities across South Africa will be compared to the attitudes that the students who will participate in this study will exhibit. These attitudes that have been recorded will be assessed in relation to student's responses to their own use of other languages like Setswana during consultation in order to understand why students prefer to use other languages than English outside the classroom such as during consultation sessions and whether the students believe that this technique that they used can be brought into the classroom. Of course, language attitude studies show that students prefer using English, but the studies also show that students benefit from other languages than English. As part of empirical research, a questionnaire will be administered to ascertain whether the language attitudes of students might have changed with the passing of time. Furthermore, the research on how other universities have implemented multilingual pedagogies with different plans and outcomes will be reviewed in order to see if any of those implementation methods can be applicable to the NWU and future endeavours by this university when it comes to the implementation of multilingual pedagogies. This can help policy makers and the university to find ways that can curb such criticism observed at South African universities, with regards to language issues.

1.7. Ethics

The researcher obtained ethical clearance to conduct the study from the NWU Ethics Committee for Language Matters (ECLM) (ethics number NWU-00724-21-S7) and the data was collected from May 2022 until October 2022 (Appendix H). Since the participants are university students, the study also obtained gatekeeper clearance NWU-GK-21-072 to conduct the study (Appendix I).

Students' consent forms are added as Appendix E, F and G. Some are reflected under Chapter 3 as pie chart to indicate consent to participate for the 1) Language Repertoire Questionnaire, 2) Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire and 3) Consent to use recorded consultation information. Consent was also secured for the recording and analysis of the individual interviews and the focus group discussion.

The main ethics care issues in this study involve the principle of respect for the participants, protecting the anonymity of the participants as well as reporting the data only after de-identification.

1.8. Contribution of the study

Failure to acknowledge the deep-rooted language issues that have brought about language stigmatisation through exclusion will not yield intended results such as that of language promotion if issues of language attitudes as voiced out by language research are not addressed. As a character in a fictional South African novel once stated "Sepedi [in the case of this study, Setswana and Sesotho] will not take me anywhere" (Matlwa, 2007), and this remains one of the most common attitudes of the African language speakers whose languages are still not languages of employment or economic advancement in South Africa. Such attitudes cannot be ignored if we are to speak of the promotion of African languages in higher education and expect students to believe that this is in any shape or form beneficial to them.

Currently, there are a lot of language intervention methods aimed at the previously disadvantaged students' languages being included in institutions of higher education for tuition. However, research as shown in previous sections 1.1. above has shown that students' attitudes towards using other languages for tuition are not always welcoming. Taking these complex language attitudes in mind, together with the difficulty of implementing language policies by institutions of higher education, make this study relevant in adding to the current debate. Thus,

this study will contribute to providing students with a voice about their attitudes towards language use on their campus, and it will also show the students the strengths evident in their language practices. By so doing, the study will contribute towards language affirmation and recognition and not only on the current state of redress whereby languages are written into policy in a move that seem like a mere act of tokenism. This is because literature has shown that merely including languages into a policy do not guarantee that the target users of the language will use the languages being included, and this results in failure of policy being realised (Heugh, 2015). Making students aware of their own language practices may result in them feeling different about the current held assumptions that indigenous African language has no place in the teaching and learning in higher education.

Previously, studies have reported on the language attitudes of students and their attitudes towards multilingual education. Most of the students are indeed multilingual with English as a first additional language. Although the students agree that they are not comfortable using English as a medium of instruction, they insist that it should continue as the language of instruction and their languages should be included as additional languages if possible. Most of these kinds of studies use questionnaires to collect data, but this study will use that in conjunction with interviews as well as an analysis of audio recordings of office consultation sessions where participating students used their languages when they consulted with the English Academic Literacy lecturer about that module. By so doing, students will be made aware of their use of multilingualism and asked questions based on their reasons for doing so, their attitudes towards multilingualism, and how that affects implementation at university and beyond.

Because there appears to be no research on multilingual practices during consultation sessions that has been recorded and analysed, particularly the use of Black South African languages during consultations, this research which use such data will bring insights to other spaces of multilingual use that might entirely rely on the lecture's relationship with the students. This kind of multilingual practice is socio-linguistically motivated by virtue of the lecturer being black and conversant in other Black South African languages in addition to English. This shows that students capitalise on their multilingual capabilities and thus bring them into spaces where they are hardly recognised. This study further explores the participants' thoughts on how this beneficial practice can be incorporated into their modules, whether doing so will help them perform better in their studies and complete their degrees successfully and use it beyond their educational journey into employment.

1.9. Chapter outline

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an introductory chapter providing the context and the background of the study. It poses research questions and the aims of the study which the research attempts to answer. A central theoretical statement and problem statement of the study are also outlined in the chapter. Furthermore, the research design, and the methods of data collection and ethical care are briefly explained in this chapter.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the available literature on Language policy and plaining. This is followed up by a discussion on multilingual education and Language in education policy. For context, the African and South African multilingualism in education and the policies thereof are discussed. A thorough discussion on the South African context with regards to and multilingual education bilingual education. The review of the literature departs from a global view (general) to the South African view (specific). This chapter focuses on what we know of multilingual education in higher education; how it is implemented, what the language attitudes of higher education role-players are, the progress that has been made with the implementation of multilingual higher education policies and suggestions are provided on improving the status quo according to the literature that is available out there.

Chapter 3: METHOD OF RESEARCH

In Chapter 3 the research design of the study is discussed. The research methodology is also discussed and how the samples have been drawn, the justification for the purposive sampling as well as the limitations of such sampling. This chapter also move on to the methods that will be used to collect data for the study which included questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion, and audio-recorded consultation sessions. The section will also elaborate on the instruments of the study that will be used such as a recorder for the interviews and consultation sessions, the types of questions on the questionnaires and the interviews.

Chapter 4: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the empirical findings of the study. In this chapter, the findings from the five data sets (consultation recordings, Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, Language Repertoire Questionnaire, individual interviews as well as the focus group) are presented. This is done in the form of frequencies reported in tables and figures as well as excerpts from the

transcribed data, and this information is explained and crosstabulation and thematic analysis is done. The recordings for the consultations and the interviews are transcribed and presented.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

Chapter 5 discusses the data that is presented in Chapter 4. It also incorporates the literature review and uses Bloom's taxonomy to evaluate some of the findings and argues that indeed, the languages of the participants can be used alongside English for teaching and learning.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter synthesise the results found in Chapter 4 and discussions in Chapter 5 and arrives at a conclusion. This chapter also includes recommendations based on the results presented in chapter 5 as well as the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will look at the existing literature on the theories of Language Planning and Policy (LPP), Language in Education Policy, Transformation (particularly of the South African Higher Education institutions), and academic literacies in a bid to conceptualise the study. Theories of LPP and LiEP globally, continentally in Africa, and the context of South Africa with reference to NWU and literature surrounding these areas will be dealt with. Furthermore, literature on academic literacy as a concept of language and literacy will be incorporated to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

2.1. Language planning and policy concepts used in the study

Language Planning and Policy (LPP) or Language Planning and Language Policy (LPLP) are some of the concepts used to describe the processes that lead to or include Language Policy (LP) as used in this research. LPP and LP are often used interchangeably or differently in the literature depending on the user (Bambgbose, 1999; Spolsky, 2012a). Kadenge and Mugari (2015) say that they are “inseparable”. Nekvapil (2015: 11) in his use of the term Language Policy and Planning (LPP) also states that "Language Policy and Planning is currently a significantly diversified research area and thus it is not easy to find common denominators that help to define basic approaches within it”. Ricento and Hornberger (1996) also stress that a lot of research with differing frameworks on the concept has been formulated by different scholars. Not only is there no common understanding of what constitutes this field, but the terminology used is often flawed and conflated. Others prefer to use different terms to discuss the process of LPP and its influence on policy; terms such as Language Management (LM) are proposed as examples (Mwaniki 2004; Spolsky, 2004 & 2009). There is often a conflation with the order of planning and policy. It is not clear whether policy comes before planning or planning before policy (Bambgbose, 2004). Assuming that policy and planning can happen concurrently, or any of the two can come first, Bamgbose (2004) states that the process cannot be easily described. He says it happens on a continuum with planning on the one end and policy on the other end.

2.1.1. Origins of the concept of LPP

The debate related to the nature of LPP as some have previously stated is that it is a concept that evolved through decades post-World War II (Ricento, 2006; Spolsky, 2012; Wright, 2016). One of the pioneering thinkers on LP, Haugen (1965:188), states that “[p]ractical problems of communication in new and developing nations have stimulated linguistic thinking ever since the

late eighteenth century." The idea of LPP developed to solve problems post WWII whereby the problematic nature of languages associated with a nation-state was blurred because of migrations, refugees and displacement that continued to blur the once straight lines that demarcated languages in places called nations (Wright, 2016; Ricento, 2014; Spolsky, 2012). The term language planning and policy is said to have originated from the time when Norway gained independence from Denmark around 1814 and the idea of nations was changing (Haugen,1959; Fettes, 1997; Ferguson, 2006; Wright, 2016); and today, the notion of language itself has changed (Bokamba, 1980; Bamgbose, 1994; Shohamy, 2003). Blanco (2010) credits not only Haugen for the introduction of the term "language planning" but also Weinreich who at the time was dealing with the issue of immigration's impact on the English language in New York. Therefore, in its origin, language planning and policy was a direct response to the issue of language as it was disrupted in several contexts.

Literature on Language planning and policy from around the world abounds. (LPP) or LP is not easy to define (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Masebenza (1985: 98) affirms that language planning "entails evaluating and identification of problem areas, followed by the establishment and implementation of strategies calculated to solve or reduce them by effecting behavioural changes". Tollefson (1991: 16) sees language planning as "[all] conscious efforts to affect the structures of language varieties". Kadenge and Mugari (2015: 23) state that "In most instances, language planning is usually a response to language policy. That is, the type of planning has to march in step with the goals spelt out in the policy". This means that efforts are made, consciously through planning to promote the use of a certain language identified in a policy; and that plans are then proposed to affect the implementation of the proposed policy. Moving from the views of language planning given above, the understanding is that language planning is deliberate in its effort to promote a language in a society through policy.

2.1.2. Planning: Status, corpus and acquisition planning

Planning is central to the process of promoting a language. Spolsky (2004) thus agrees that because language planning is intentional in the promotion of a language, there are different stages or areas to consider in this promotion of languages. When it was conceived, language planning focussed on status planning and corpus planning, and later incorporated acquisition planning (Makiti, 2001; Wright, 2016: 47-48). Corpus planning is one element of language planning that entails the conscious decision to promote the use of a language in its written form. Corpus planning implies aspects of language that have to do with standardisation, grammar, lexicons and so forth (Hornberger, 2006; Kadenge & Mugari, 2015; Makiti, 2001; Ricento &

Hornberger, 1996; Wiley & Garcia, 2016; Wright, 2016). This aspect of LP deals with the language and its conventions, and what is promoted through the school system, determining what constitutes a language through grammar, phonetics and so forth. Some researchers argue that there is an interconnected and blurred line between status planning and corpus planning in language planning and research (Johnson & Ricento, 2013; Tonkin, 2015).

The language that has an official status is privy to promotion, such a language is bound to be promoted. The two (status and corpus planning) therefore influence one another. However, the focus of this research study, however, is on the status of official languages in South Africa, and the problems of implementation that are often influenced by corpus planning of those languages. This problem has spilled into higher education where policy implementation is not easily achieved. This study therefore acknowledges the status of the languages of the policy of the NWU and concerns itself with the implementation process of the policy.

Acquisition planning as an aspect of language planning came at a much later stage after corpus and status planning had long been used to define the aspects of language planning. Acquisition planning is more concerned with how languages are acquired and are often centred in the realm of school (Makiti, 2001; Kadenge & Mugari, 2015; Wright, 2012). The language acquisition aspect of language planning is often concerned with how language is taught and learned. All three aspects of language planning as stated here are important to this research study and this will be elaborated further on.

Much of the research on language planning has focused on language planning at a macro/national level (Fishman, 1973; Gafaranga *et al.*, 2013; Hamid, 2019; Matiki, 2001; Tollefson, 1991; Wright, 2016). This typically includes language policies of nations that promote a certain language or languages as languages of the country. There are ample studies and real-life examples of this. In this study, the language and nation will be discussed thoroughly under multilingual language policies in Africa. Omoniyi (2007) argues that language planning should move from macro to micro level. There is also the meso level of policy that does not receive as much attention as the macro level does. Hamid (2019) states that because micro-level LPP is a new genre that has received considerable attention from scholars, there is an imprecision in terminology distinction between micro and macro language planning and that maybe micro-level language planning is more suited under the label of Language Management (LM). Nekvapil (2006) elaborates on the distinction and characteristics of the macro and micro level planning as what gives rise to the use of other alternatives such as Language Management (LM).

2.1.3. Language management (LM)

In their introduction and differentiation of the term language planning from language management, Jernudd and Nekvapil (2012: 16) state the following:

> Scientific linguists who collect and dissect utterances and from such data generalise to construct grammars represent one trend of study in the linguistic discipline; scientists who study how people behave towards language and utterances, how people manage their discourse, how they evaluate languages and their features and think about adjusting them and occasionally do, another. Language policy and planning belong to the second trend of study…We view this trend of study as language management behaviour…

Language management and language planning are seen as related but not entirely the same processes (Kadenge & Mugari, 2015). Nekvapil (2006) sees Language Management (LM) as a great alternative to the use of the term language planning because of the historical origin of the latter term and its limitations as discussed in the previous section. Spolsky (2012) therefore chooses the term language policy with language practices, language ideologies and language planning as the components of language policy/management. Building onto the use of the term by Spolsky, Nekvapil (2006) uses the term language management over language planning. Hamid (2019:51) states that:

> This comprehensive theory focuses on linguistic, communicative (discursive) and socio-cultural (socio-economic) phenomena. Two types of management constitute LMT: simple management, which usually aligns with the micro context, and organised management aligning with the macro context.

Language management as stated by Hamid (2019) and Spolky (2012) deals with language planning at a micro and macro level. Therefore, in this study language management and language use in office consultations will be analysed. The study will also delve into the language policy at the university level, which this study deems as the macro level of policy.

2.1.3.1. The micro level of language management

Here, the issue of language management is seen to address the prevalent issue of language planning that does not take into consideration the micro level planning. Thus, Nekvapil (2006) prefers the term and use of LM over LPP because he sees it as "a reorganisation of an entire field of study" which might be seen as necessary. Researchers who are proponents of the term language management theory see it as a broader theory that includes but is not limited to language planning (Kadenge & Mugari, 2008, Nekvapil, 2006; Spolsky, 2012).

The distinction between LP and LM centres on the levels of management. While LP focuses on the macro level language plans, which can be distinguished as the top-down approach to

language planning, LM focuses on the macro level plans and other domains that are not macro level domains. Ferguson (2012) states that the other domains of LP that are outside the control of the government or nation-state make for a very compelling case of the LP debate and deserve greater attention. Spolsky (2009) says language management focuses on other domains of society such as the family, church, and so forth where the official language policy of government may not apply.

While language planning is normally seen as a macro-level planning activity, the theory of language management is seen as encompassing both the macro and micro levels of societal language planning which were hard to be accounted for by a macro-level policy plan. Liddicoat (2020) states that "While the terms macro-, meso- and micro-level have come to be widely used in LPP studies, the distinction between the levels is not fixed, and what any particular author may mean by a term often has much to do with the context and point of view of a particular study" Micro level language planning is planning that is smaller in scope and focus, whereby Spolsky (2012) uses the word domains to account for language planning in small places like the home as states that "a domain of language planning that cannot be accounted for by a government. Meso level as will be used in this study refers to planning at the organisational level of a university. The government cannot impose which language is to be used in the comfort of a home or in smaller places like the church and others where the language of the country that is included in policy may not be applied and practiced. This notion of language planning that is outside the domain or the control of the state/government as a ruler is what is considered language management.

People manage languages without the interference of a government; they have always done it and always will. That is what the theory of language management tries to account for. Language planning as a government initiative is then seen as a sub-structure of language management. It is part of, and it is not the only management of language that there is. This critique and divergence from a language planning framework that might not always fit all categories of society is pervasive in society today. In what Hornberger (2006) views as an integrative framework, she distinguishes between LPP types and approaches. Hamid (2019: 51) in comparing an alternative theory state that "The domain approach, ethnographic LPP and LMT take integrative, holistic and inclusive views of contexts including macro and micro settings". Since there are few terms used to describe the process of language planning and policy making in this regard, in this study, the term Language Policy (LP) will be used for the official policy of the NWU, and Language Management for the language in the office during consultations. Language management in this study will be used to refer to the language used during office consultations between the lecturer and the participants.

2.1.4. Language policy

National policy legislations including those on language do not always come from a linguistic point of view but from a political one (Shohamy, 2006; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). The politicised nature of policy will be elaborated on in the context of Africa. Baldauf (2004:1) simplifies it in this way:

> Language policy (statements of intent) and planning (implementation) (LPP) is defined as planning – often large scale and national, usually undertaken by governments – meant to influence, if not change, ways of speaking or literacy practices within a society.

Thus, Language Policies are declarative statements as Baldauf (2004) above uses the term "statement of intent" and in the context of this study the policy of the NWU, a meso level of governance is studied. Not all language policies are explicitly stated or declared; some are overt (Bamgbose, 1999; Schiffmann, 2006). Schiffmann (2006: 113) states:

> It is important to view language policy as not only the explicit, written, overt, de jure, official and "top-down" decision-making about language, but also the implicit, unwritten, covert, de facto, grass-roots, and unofficial ideas and assumptions, which can influence the outcomes of policy-making just as emphatically and definitively as the more explicit decisions.

The status planning of LPP involves the position and status which a language holds in the community such as an "official", "national" or "minority" language for example. This status of the language is often conferred by the government as part of the language policy declaration (Kadenge & Mugari, 2015; Wright, 2012). For example, the NWU has declared Sesotho and Setswana the languages of policy when it states that:

> 5.3 within the parameters of the principle of functional multilingualism, employ English, Setswana, Sesotho and Afrikaans as the University's languages of choice;
> 5.4 without diminishment of the use of English and Afrikaans, develop Setswana and Sesotho as languages of communication, engagement teaching and learning, understanding that:
>
> > 5.4.1 as part of the development of Setswana and Sesotho, the NWU must develop regional, national and, where practicable, international partnerships and collaborative language development programmes with other universities and language bodies; and
> > 5.4.2 such partnerships will aim to assist in the sharing of information and data relating to language and terminology development for various disciplines among such institutions and bodies, and
>
> 5.5 view the intellectualisation of African languages as a development concept that is given effect in an organised and organic manner. (NWU Language Policy, 2022).

This declarative position that the NWU has taken is what Language Policies are known for because policies are declarations of intent (Baldauf, 2005). The NWU states explicitly in 5.3 that Sesotho and Setswana which are black South African languages will be promoted alongside English and Afrikaans. This is what is called status planning in LPP. The policy aims to take a

declarative position on an issue and work on upholding the implementation end of the bargain. However, when it comes to implementation or holding the end of the bargain, the promotion of language policies is problematic.

2.1.5. Language policy to translanguaging

Much research does point to the failure of language planning as a language problem-solving tactic because the argument is that this approach was too optimistic (Rubin & Jernudd, 1979, xiv) and it fails to account for the nonconforming nature of language (Spolsky, 2009; Tollefson, 1991; Wright, 2016). Others argue that this view of languages as concrete objects is an unrealistic modern view of the world, and it fails to realistically capture the postmodern world and language challenges of today (Pennycook, 2006; Tollefson, 1991; Wright, 2016). This is a post-structural view that rejects the notion of language as concrete. Saying people speak one language in these global multilingual times is what language policies as a national imperative are seen as striving for and irrelevant in their approach because nation-states are slowly dissolving. Thus, terminology on concepts such as language/linguistic repertoires of a person or a community (Blommaert & Backus, 2013) and Dominant Language Constellations (DLC) meaning the most prominent languages used in the repertoire (Aronin, 2021; Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2018; Melo-Pfeifer, 2021) are more relevant to this study. Others speak of the super-diversity of languages (Blommaert & Backus, 2013).

Jørgensen (2008: 164) in the use of the term "polylingual languaging" states that "... [c]ounting languages is an endeavour in which linguists involve themselves when they label speakers as 'monolingual', or 'bilingual', or 'trilingual', or even 'multilingual' ...". The idea of "polylingual languaging" challenges the structuralist view of languages whereby a language is seen as a fixed static thing (Asfaha, 2020; Blommaert, 2014). So, to other scholars, language is seen as an everchanging phenomenon which some scholars refer to as a process of languaging (Jørgensen, 2008). Therefore, the view of language planning that solves language problems by naming languages becomes challenged. Thinking of this in the context of the synopsis of the NWU languages policy, the challenge here would be the fact that the university has explicitly named languages like Sesotho and Setswana as their languages. This research acknowledges this criticism, and it does play out in the data in that the way people speak is not confined to bounded languages, but it is a much more fluid process. However, in line with the policy, the structural view of the named languages will be taken into consideration. The above criticism of language planning and policy and its structural view of language as challenging has been widely debated

(Asfaha, 2020; Blommaert, 2014; Blommaert & Horner, 2017; Jørgensen, 2008; Makoni, 2012; Makoni, 2013; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010).

The idea of language itself has thus been heavily criticised. Makoni (2012) argues that even constructions such as "native language" and "mother tongue" are misleading as naming a language is indeed a myth and a construction that does not reflect reality. Translanguaging as a linguistic phenomenon has thus gained great impetus in recent research studies that do not see language as a structural uniform construct, but rather as a fluid concept that cannot be boxed (Makalela, 2015; Otheguy *et al*., 2015; Wei & Garcia, 2022). According to Wei and Garcia (2022: 313) the term language is absolute because "the trans- in translanguaging connotes the transcendence of named languages, the going beyond named languages as has been socially constructed". This argument by nature challenges the very notion of language planning and policy, with Blommaert (2014) referring to the "post Fishmanism"; a period which was the very essence of what has become known as the birth of language planning and policy studies. This post-structural[1] view of language challenges the very notion of language and language policy. For this study, this notion of the realities of languages as fixed entities will be used and the effect of that on policy implementation will be touched on. This is because the study looks at the named languages according to policy documents of the NWU and some data sets are used that specifically name a language according to its status on the policy documents (i.e. Setswana, Sesotho, English, Afrikaans). The study adopts the linguistic/language repertoire approach to account for the many languages in one's arsenal of languages and how multilingual participants deploy their linguistic resources at different or similar times.

Several studies in the South African context have looked at the use of both codeswitching (Maluleke, 2019; Mtsatse & Combrink, 2018; Probyn, 2009) and translanguaging (Hurst & Mona, 2017; Makalela, 2015; Sefotho & Makalela, 2017) in teaching differently using South African languages or the language repertoires of students. The phenomenon of codeswitching in South African primary schools is widely researched (Maluleke, 2019; Mati, 2004; Probyn, 2009). Other studies have looked at both codeswitching in mathematics in schools (Chikiwa & Schäfer, 2016; Maluleke, 2019) and translanguaging in secondary school (Mgijima & Makalela, 2021; Uys & van Dulm, 2011). Further research has looked at the use of translanguaging in universities' higher

[1] This research study adopts a structural view of languages with references to languages whether as codes or languages as set and used by a particular group of people. It also implies that languages are named entities such as Setswana, English and Afrikaans as included and referred to in the language policy of the NWU for example and particular references are given to those languages.

education or adult learning (Nhongo, 2024), and in group work discussions (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016; Paxton, 2009). In the South African context, therefore, codeswitching and translanguaging have been researched in most aspects of the school environment, and they are both deemed effective methods of teaching.

Because of the above summary of what language planning started as and what it entailed, the critique that this field of enquiry has endured over the years has changed how it was formerly conceived and how it is understood today. Hence, some scholars choose not to look at the field as language planning but as language management instead.

2.1.6. Status planning: Official, national, minority, endangered, indigenous languages

Languages have been given many statuses depending on their use and position in society. The status that this study mostly concerns itself with, is the status of identified languages that are named in a policy at an institution as official languages. the word 'official languages' as discussed above is mostly a name given to a language because of its status as a language of policy. The policy will dictate which language is official and which is not. Shohamy (2006: 61) states that "officiality" grants or takes away power to certain languages. The official language is usually used officially as the language of communication between the government and its citizens, and formal schooling takes place in that official language. Above, a point was made on how language policy as part of language planning or management promotes a language's status as official or otherwise.

Maja (2007) states that in Africa, of about 2000 languages that are named national languages, only 29 languages are regarded as official languages, while the rest are minority languages without official status. There has been very little change in the status of many African languages on the continent. The status of African languages always comes second to that of former colonial languages in most African countries. As mentioned before, many African countries are multilingual (Bello & Mafara, 2019) with challenges on how to affirm these many languages. Prah (2006) further problematises the notion of the many named languages in Africa, stating that most of these languages can be grouped through orthographies to even fewer languages than those that are currently accounted for. Orekan (2010: 19-20) mentions that "the few monolingual or bilingual countries in Africa, such as Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, have found it relatively easy to promote either a single or a few interrelated languages to national status within education". Therefore, in a quest for literacy African languages are often side-lined. This is a common

phenomenon in African countries whereby Anchimbe (2006: 97) on the status of official languages in Cameroon and in other African countries states that literacy in African countries such as Cameroon is "based on the ability to read and write one or both official [French & English] languages. None of these is based on the indigenous languages … because they have no place in official transactions and the literacy map of the country".

Criticism such as the one above of the status of a language has often been written about in literature. However, Anchimbe (2006:95) focuses on the status in African countries, particularly in Cameroon whereby he states that for example:

> The functional delimitation has come up with such appellations as official language, home language, national language, indigenous language, local language, and vernacular language, some of which carry with them certain degrees of derogation. For instance, the notion of home language presupposes that it is a type of makeshift, uncouth and 'frightful' language meant to be spoken only in the hideout of the home… This negative impression is opposed to that reserved for the official language whose name gives it the pride of place in official, national and international transactions.

Anchimbe (2006:96) further states that because of clauses contained in most language policy declaration documents, there is very little binding authority that ensures that language policies are implemented. This has been observed often in literature concerning African language policies that they lack implementation and there are no clear reporting and monitoring strategies to ensure the implementation of such policies. The situation is even worse in Africa where the languages of most of the people are discouraged because they do not hold the status of official languages and that status is often if not primarily held by former colonial languages such as French, English and Portuguese. Orekan (2010: 18) further states that:

> In most African states, there is the mother tongue, which is the medium of informal education in the home and of socialization processes among families. There are also the languages of the immediate or wider community which serve as local or regional lingua franca and are therefore mastered by every member of the group. In the majority of African states, the colonial language (English, French, Spanish or Portuguese) is the official language but this has little impact on day-to-day communicative situations.

This shows that there are so many statuses that a language can hold amongst people and this status is influenced by a variety of things. The status of a language as valuable or not is therefore also determined by the speakers of the language and can also apply to languages that do not have a status at all in the community or are not recognised as official or as languages to be promoted (Ditsele, 2014b; Ditsele & Mann, 2014; Ndlangamandla, 2010; Ravyse, 2018; Wagner *et al.,* 2020). Languages such as Sepitori and Fanakalo in South Africa (Ditsele, 2014b; Álvarez-Mosquera *et al*., 2018; Ravyse, 2018), as well as Creoles and Pidgins in places like Cape Verde, Nigeria,

Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon (Akande & Salami, 2010; Amado; 2015; Handem, 2015; Yakpo, 2015) often do not hold a high status in the society such as 'official language' status, but they have a huge influence on the inhabitants and speakers of a region or in some cases the economy and social life of an entire country. Sometimes they are the main language of the majority.

The mother tongue as mentioned by Orekan (2010) above is often used to refer to the language one uses in the home. There are also other terms used to describe the language used by one at home, especially in language education research where the name first language or Language 1 is used. So, the status of a language is often conferred by the government in language policy declarations or is not made explicit in any documents.

Besides the above language statuses, a language may assume the status of a national language. The status of a language as a national language is often used in Africa alongside the status of official language/s. In some instances, the national language is often assumed to be the official language or the two are implied to mean the same thing. However, most African countries distinguish between an official language and a national language. Mputubwele (2003: 274) stated the following concerning the status of national languages in the DRC:

> It should be stressed, however, that for a language to achieve national language status, it must also be recognized as such by a government body or the constitution. The four national languages in Zaire are Kikongo, Lingala, Swahili, and Tshiluba.

This phenomenon of naming languages as national languages has been thoroughly critiqued, especially by scholars whose concern is in the way that national languages are treated and promoted (Anchimbe, 2006; Mputubwele, 2003), or the lack of promotion thereof. In Africa, the debate has been a wide one considering the state of many national languages on the continent with Anchimbe (2006:96) reflecting on national African languages by stating that:

> The politics of naming these languages reflects squarely the limited and irrelevant domain of exercise to which they are confounded. They are simply home languages or better still, native languages or rather Indigenous languages or ironically national languages of no portfolio. This insidious naming pattern still has with it the hangovers of colonialism.

In Africa, most languages that are given the status of national languages are not promoted as much as languages given the status of official languages. Alimi (2016) states that in Botswana, Setswana occupies the only position of national language with English as the only official language of the country, despite there being other languages spoken in the country. Although Setswana is afforded a higher status compared to other African languages in Botswana, it however does not have a similar status as that of English which is the official language of the

country. The same can be said of Siswati in the Kingdom of Eswatini or Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland), the nine national languages of Ghana and Sesotho in Lesotho. These national languages are therefore almost always seen as part of the problem when it comes to the promotion of other non-national languages of their countries. Most African countries have languages that they recognise as national languages. The state of a language as a national language almost guarantees the promotion of a single or few indigenous languages of the country at the expense of others. The national languages are also always secondary in role to the official languages, which are often the former colonial languages.

Other language statuses include minority languages, endangered languages, and indigenous languages. Some of these terms are often used interchangeably or in a manner that does not delineate their use and functions. Hanafi (2009) writes on how the constant ignorance of African countries and lack of interest in using minority and indigenous languages is costly to those who do not know the official ex-colonial languages even in the judicial systems of these African countries. In African literature especially, the use of both national and official languages has been confused on some occasions.[2] Indigenous language is a status often given to a language only spoken in a certain area by people of a certain place. It is indigenous to that place because it is found and used in that place; it is a product of that place. The confusion in the many terms used for languages in Africa is astounding and an example is how in South Africa the indigenous Black South African languages are also the official languages according to policy and in some other parts of the continent, the indigenous languages are the national languages or just indigenous languages. In some instances, the indigenous languages are the minority languages. Muthwii (2004: 47) also mentions that Indigenous languages that are declared official languages by the policy are often foreign to a lot of indigenous people of a country such as how "Kiswahili or Amharic, though indigenous, [are] still foreign to the many communities that [are] expected to learn and use them as a second language". Such conditions of indigenous languages and in other cases, national languages are often cited as reasons why former colonial languages such as French and English are used as official languages to avoid ethnic conflict and promote unity in a nation (Ferguson, 2006).

In contrast, minority languages are seen as languages that are spoken by a small number of people and are at threat of being consumed by most languages (Dube, 2020; Mathangwane, 2016; Mumbembe, 2016). Maja (2007) also states that there is no clear definition of what

[2] See Bello and Mafara's (2019) definition of South African national languages.

constitutes a minority language. Maja (2007: 11) thus defines minority language as "a language different from the official language(s) of the state traditionally used by part of the population of a state that is not a dialect of official languages of the state or artificially created languages and includes languages of foreigners, migrants and visitors". Wright (2012: 65) in decrying the failure of status planning as a type of language planning states that the term "linguistic minority" is a creation of the nation-state system that bestows minority status to a people by first elevating some languages as 'official' and others as a minority. Minority language as a status is often used for languages that are spoken by a few members of the population of the country or the minority such as Ikalanga in Botswana or Chewa in Zimbabwe (Mathangwane, 2016; Muchenje & Gora, 2016). In places like the Americas and others, the term minority language is used to describe languages that are thus spoken, and the minority people are often people from the same country who are few compared to others or are migrant labourers and asylum seekers who came in a large number to be noticeable but do not surpass the number of those who are the national members of the country. There has been ample research done on minority languages and it has brought attention to such languages in places such as New Zealand, India and China to name a few (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Dobrushina, N. & Moroz, G. 2021; Fase *et al*., 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2013).

Often indigenous or minority languages are endangered and thus the term 'endangered languages' is used in the literature. Endangered languages are languages that might be considered in danger of disappearing or dying (Akpanglo-Nartey & Akpanglo-Nartey, 2012). These languages are languages which have a smaller number of speakers when surveyed and whose number continues to dwindle. These languages are often encouraged to be resuscitated or rescued from their apparent doom and encouraged with a lot of programs geared towards their promotion. Before language endangerment is apparent, there is a language shift whereby the speakers of a language gradually cease speaking a language by replacing it with one of the popular languages (Akpanglo-Nartey & Akpanglo-Nartey, 2012). Chebanne and Moumakwa (2017) argue that language shift may lead to an undesirable outcome. A lot of Indigenous and minority languages, especially those that are not promoted through language policies in and out of Africa are considered endangered.

As shown in this section, the status of a language in a country can be determined by a lot of factors. Official languages receive attention to be promoted as languages of a country. The language policies of different African countries are determined by the history of language policies

in the different countries. A lot of African countries have former colonial languages as the only official languages of the country. Most have other indigenous languages as the national languages of the country. Those that have indigenous languages as official languages struggle to make use of and promote these languages in comparison to the former colonial languages which happen to be official languages as well. These facts will be extrapolated in the sections to come. Often, there are more languages in the country than those included in the language policy. The promotion of one indigenous language over another has become problematic because it ensures the survival of one at the expense of others. Therefore, there is always tension in the promotion of African languages because there is never an easy way to promote all of them and as a result, some languages become extinct, endangered and or the minority in a country.

In the South African context and the context of this study, one can ask if the status of a language as 'official' helps in promoting the language at an institution of higher education in South Africa. It does so by interviewing and researching the students who are speakers of official Black South African languages. The other important question about the adoption and promotion of a policy rests on the knowledge of the policy. Do participants in the study know about the policy declarations of their university and what do they think of multilingual education? These are very interesting questions to ask in promoting the identified and selected languages as part of the policy of the institution successfully as LoTL. This sheds light on how the speakers of the languages view their languages and how the languages can be used and promoted further in domains of higher education.

2.2. Multilingual language policies in Africa reflected in language in education policies (excluding South Africa)

UNESCO (2003) agreed that multilingual education in Africa should be accepted as the norm because of the linguistic tapestry of the continent and because studies have shown that it is used in education contributes to academic success. The African Union Charter for the African Cultural Renaissance (2006) states that:

> African States should prepare and implement reforms for the introduction of African languages into the education curriculum. To this end, each State should extend the use of African languages taking into consideration the requirements of social cohesion and technological progress, as well as regional and African integration.

Because of such strong support for the promotion of African languages, most African countries have been trying to encourage the use of African languages at different paces. Some progress in

this regard has been made, and mostly, the use and recognition of African languages in influential areas such as education has been documented and proven. However, the official language policies of most African countries do not reflect the lived realities even today as ex-colonial languages remain the most promoted languages of these countries at the expense of the African languages. Countries in Africa are multilingual, but not all the countries have multilingual language policies to reflect the status quo. Kamwendo and Dlamini (2016: 299) rightly state that "South Africa's LPP in universities has taken the lion's share of scholarly publications on language issues in African universities, one notices that some African countries are almost non-existent or invisible in the available scholarly literature". Therefore, this section attempts to reflect on some of the literature on African language policies.

There is paucity of research as most African countries have not published extensively on their multilingual state and/or their research is not available in the languages that most researchers use, which in this case is English. As such, this is a limitation to this section as some studies from the African continent only have their abstracts in English and the contents of the rest of the study in other common languages in Africa such as French. In cases where research is reported in other languages than English, very few journals have their materials available in more than one language to choose a translation that will most likely be understood by the reader. Some researchers write in other African languages such as Arabic and French, and the reality is that such research is limited to those who can read and understand those languages while English remains the language that has a further reach than other languages spoken in and out of Africa and in different disciplines and this may lead to research bias (Konno *et al.*, 2020; Nuñez & Amano, 2021; Ramírez-Castañeda, 2020). Berlitz (2023) writes that English is the most spoken language in the world. Research in this language reaches a lot more people than other languages and this is one of the reasons that encourages the hegemony of this language in Africa. This very limitation also presents a conundrum considering the stance that this study has taken, which is that Black South African languages can be used effectively in academia.

Considering the status of a language as a point of departure therefore, Bamgbose (2007) attributes the need for language development of African languages because of the low status of the African languages as compared to their European counterparts in the African continent. This issue of the status of African languages when compared to European languages, specifically in the African continent is one also raised by Wright (2012: 65) who argues that this language issue faced by formerly colonised states is because of the lower status indigenous or minority languages were accorded during colonialism. Therefore, status planning is concerned with how the status of a language is elevated in society (Muthwii, 2004), to enable it to thrive and to allow

it to be used, especially in places of power and dominance. If a language can be promoted through language planning and language policy, a language can also be demoted or neutralised by the same means. Status planning as an offshoot of language planning and policy is very important to this study as the study focuses on the language policy of one institution of higher education in South Africa and the implementation thereof.

As stated under LPP above, African languages continue to occupy a lesser position when compared to former colonial languages on the continent (Anchimbe, 2006; Bello, & Marafa, 2019; Nhongo & Tshotsho, 2021). Colonialism has long been discussed as one of the reasons for the linguistic fragmentation and the current language policies that reject African languages on the continent (Anchimbe, 2006; Bello, & Marafa, 2019). These policies deny African languages the significant position that they should hold, especially with the naming of the languages as official, national, endangered, and so forth. The legacy of colonialism is felt through the language policies of different countries as will be extrapolated below and most of this is reflected in the education systems of different countries.

2.2.1. The colonial roots of the language policies in Africa

The colonial history of the African continent has a huge impact on the language policies of the countries on the continent. Indeed, the history of the continent is not entirely the same but there are similar traces of colonialism in the continent that influenced the history of the countries and continues to influence the present situation. Therefore, this section will focus on the last language situation before independence in African countries. The reason for this is to limit the scope of the thesis and place more emphasis on the language situation in Africa today and the inheritance of colonial languages as languages of the countries in discussion. It is clear however to acknowledge the fact that the language situation of African countries has its roots also in pre-colonialism and a lot of scholars critiquing the language policies of their different countries do trace the history of language used in education back to pre-colonial times. Makoni *et al*. (2006) trace the history of language in Zimbabwe as far back as prehistorical Zimbabwe and show how languages survived tough conditions. Spolsky (2018) elaborates on the history of language in former French and Portuguese colonies to name a few scholars who give historical context on languages in African countries.

Most of the language legacy of African languages today is rooted in the colonial roots of the countries. Most of Africa was colonised by European countries since the turn of the 19th century and this is still reflected in the language tapestry of the countries today despite these countries having gained independence from their colonisers for a while now (Araki, 2013; Spolsky, 2018).

To talk about the language policy of African countries today, it is important to talk about the history of the language policy of the continent as well. Much of the continent was divided and colonised after what was known as "the scramble for Africa" during the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 (Ingwe *et al.*, 2010; Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016; Ngunga, 2011). During this period, the future of Africa was decided upon by the European countries that met to discuss how they would divide/share the continent to avoid conflict among European countries themselves. The scope of this section is only limited to language, the present time, and history.

2.2.1.1. Colonialism in Africa

Education existed before the colonisers set their feet on African soil. Precolonial education was said to be communal and transferred through forms such as agriculture, different laws, rituals, and folklore; and it was transmitted orally rather than in written form (Mgadla, 1986; Seroto, 2011). Children were raised in communities that encouraged communal living and concepts such as ubuntu and humanity were placed at the fore. Meanwhile, European education in Africa has been accused by African scholars of propagating individualism, assimilation, and fragmentation. African knowledge used to be carried from generation to generation through African languages long before colonialism.

Education has always been used to teach and in the case of colonisation, the education was carried out through the coloniser's language. When considering the colonial history of Africa in stark contrast with the European countries that colonised it, Rodney (2018) states that "colonial schooling was an education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment". The school system was used extensively to propagate the use of colonial languages on the continent, and this is hard to erase even today. Rodney (2018) argues that language played a key role in developing Africa as he states that "the French and English that is so widely used in Africa is more for African communicating with the exploiters rather than African with African". In Rodney's critique, colonial education was used by the colonisers to disrupt an already existing system of education in Africa and create individuals who could no longer function in their communities because of this education.

The lack of a written form of African knowledge is believed to be its shortcoming and the onus that has long rested on colonial languages to promulgate Western education in Africa is seen as the advantage of Eurocentric knowledge over African knowledge (Prah, 2002; Seroto, 2011). African communities are usually not educated in some of the systems that currently pervade the education system and the world systems in general, and because of such, the inclusion of African knowledge in the mainstream continues to suffer. Apart from the fact that African knowledge is

considered unscientific (Mawere, 2015); learners and students in most cases have to learn science in English, French and Spanish as they remain most used LoTL on the continent and seldom encounter knowledge about Africa in African languages. Perhaps the fact that when colonial education started in Africa, European languages were placed higher above African languages and continues to be the case even today is the reason why African knowledge remains lagging in comparison to European knowledge even today.

2.2.2. Francophone Africa

2.2.2.1. French is the official language in Africa

Yates (2018) states that in Africa today 17 countries still maintain French as the only language of politics, administration, and education. What are known as Francophone countries in Africa today have many inhabitants who grew up in a French language environment and some of those people also have other languages that they speak. In Senegal for instance French remains the official language even though this language is a home language to a very small percentage of the population, the country received its independence more than 30 years ago, and there are more than 30 languages spoken in the country with some nearly extinct (Benson, 2020; Diallo, 2011; Sall, 2009). Benson (2020) argues that even though French is the official language of Senegal and there are about fourteen national languages, very few people speak French as their first language. Interventions in the form of bottom-up language promotion of African languages have helped a lot in the use of these languages for educational purposes (Benson, 2020; Diallo, 2011; Sall, 2009). Similarly, Togo has French as the only official language of the country (Lawrance, 2001; Albaugh, 2005). The Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly known as Zaire) also has French as its only official language and four other languages (Kikongo, Kiswahili, Lingala and Tshiluba) as their national languages among many other languages of the country (Mputubwele, 2003; Mumbembe, 2016).

French serves as the official language of the Ivory Coast, despite the country being a multilingual one (Djité. 1989, 2000). French continues to dominate as the official language of the countries of Mali and Burkina Faso (Spolsky, 2018). Most former Francophone countries have French as their 'only' official language, with other languages delegated to the status of national languages or other statuses that do not encourage their use, and thus, French remains the only language of formal education. According to Igboanusi (2014) in Gambia French is still used as the official language and it excludes most of the population who are not speakers of French and are not educated from participating in the economy. French official language policy seems to be working for the country of Gabon because in a critique of the status of French in Gabon, Ndinga-Koumba-Binza (2011) argues that there are other African languages spoken in Gabon and the speakers of

these languages do not consider French as their first language despite it being the official language of the country.

Yates (2018) writes how France during colonisation sought to not only colonise the people but to remove them from their African cultures and turn them into "African Frenchmen". In the process of assimilation, the French would assimilate the Africans into a French culture, allowing the assimilated citizens to benefit, and calling them progressive or modernised and civilised people. A clear explanation of how France and its counterparts through the education system sought to assimilate the inhabitants of the countries it colonised is explicated in the quotation below:

> The French, Portuguese and Belgians made it clear that education at any level was designed 'to civilise the African native', and of course, only a civilised native could hope to gain worthwhile employment and recognition from the colonialists. According to the French, an African, after receiving French education, stood a chance of becoming an *assimilée* — one who could be assimilated or incorporated into the superior French culture. The Portuguese used the word *assimilado,* which means the same; and Portuguese colonial law distinguished sharply between a native and an *assimilado*. The latter was sometimes called a *civilised* ('one who is civilised') because of being able to read and write Portuguese. (Rodney, 2018: 72-73)

French colonies did not only seek to conquer the people they colonised but also to make them completely forget about their cultures and become French. Manuel (2015) stresses that because of the assimilation tactic applied to African people by France, they did not allow their colonised to believe that they could learn through their language. France sought to eradicate the African languages and promote French in all spheres of public life, especially in education. As a result, there are many countries whose official languages are just French even today, as their policies inherited from colonialism still recognise French as the only language of the country after independence (Salhi, 2002; Yates, 2017; Spolsky, 2018).

Burundi, a former French country still prefers the use of French, the former colonial language at the cost of the language of the majority and Kirundi as a language of the majority is marginalised (Rwantabagu, 2011; Eyssette, 2020). English has even overtaken both French and Kirundi in popularity (Nduwimana, 2020; Nizonkiza, 2006) propelling the debate on the hegemony of English, especially in education. In Cameroon, two former colonial languages (French and English) are the only languages promoted as the official languages of the country (Chiatoh, 2014; Takam & Fassé, 2020). Cameroon is home to an estimated 280 local languages and none of them are used for formal education, but French and English are, and this is called bilingualism from a Cameroonian perspective (Chiatoh, 2014). Takam and Fassé (2020) argue that the use of these two languages as languages of policy and of teaching and learning not only undermines the freedom of the country but further enhances inferiority over minority indigenous languages. In the

same way, Chiatoh (2014:323) argues that the assimilation of the Cameroonians into French persisted even decades after independence because of the colonial history of the language. In Mali, Lüpke (2020: 383) states that French continues as the official language of the country because "languages of colonial provenance (French, English and Portuguese) have the status of official languages and are de facto the only ones used in writing in formal contexts and equipped with strictly enforced standards".

This issue of language use in schools has impeded the promotion of African languages, especially past primary school and into higher education. This aspect will be dealt with in the paragraphs to come.

2.2.2.2. Maghreb regions, Arabic, French, and other languages

In the Maghreb region which comprises Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Mauritania (excluding Libya) Arabic is mostly the official language of these countries. French colonised most of the Maghreb region and thus French was the official language for some time there. However, after the independence of these countries, Arabic replaced French as a language of power. Arabic, which is the language of a culture, and a religion (Muslim) was introduced in Morocco in the year 1956 (Spolsky, 2018), in Algeria in 1962 (Benrabah, 2007; Le Roux, 2017), in Tunisia in 1956 (Aouina, 2013), and Mauritania in 1960 (Pettigrew, 2007) after the fall of the French empire. Similarly, to Morocco and Algeria, Tunisia underwent French colonialism whereby the French language became the language of policy and education during the time. However, after gaining independence in 1956 (Gonzalez-Calvillo, 2020; Marley, 2004) Tunisia, like Morocco and Algeria, underwent a period of Arabisation. This cannot be covered extensively in the context of the study, but the researcher understands that even in these former French colonies mentioned above French remains part of the official language. Languages of the majority such as Berber/ Tamazight languages in the Maghreb region play second fiddle to French and Arabic (Batternburg, 1997; Errihani, 2017; Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). English as a global language and a language that is said to be the most modern language of the times is also contesting for a position with French and Arabic in these Maghreb countries (Barkia Boussabah, 2007; Errihani, 2017; Smari & Hortobágyi, 2020). English is seeping in and threatening to take over as the language of progress global reach.

2.2.3. Lusophone Africa

2.2.3.1. Lusophone colonial rule

Lusophone African countries are those countries which are former Portuguese colonies. Manuel (2015), when writing about the language issues in Mozambique, a former Portuguese colony writes that:

> The Portuguese and Spanish had always shown contempt for African language and religion. Schools of kindergarten and primary level for Africans in Portuguese colonies were nothing but agencies for the spread of the Portuguese language. Most schools were controlled by the Catholic church, as a reflection of the unity of church and state in fascist Portugal. In the little-known Spanish colony of Guinea (Rio Muni), the small amount of education given to Africans was based on eliminating the use of local languages by the pupils and on instilling in their hearts 'the holy fear of God'.

Manuel (ibid) agrees with Rodney (2018) about the assimilationist view that was carried out by former French, Portuguese, and Spanish colonies. These colonies sought to completely eradicate the status of the Africans that they colonised by turning them into "civilised" African people. Their languages were used in an assimilation strategy that did not allow for the use of indigenous African languages of the people they colonised (Handem, 2015; Orekan, 2010; Rodney, 2018). The logic behind this was that if the colonised learned not only the language but also the culture of their coloniser, they would become like them. Coonan (2007: 25) states that it was done to uproot the colonised Africans and to "convert Indigenous Africans *(indígenas)* into subjects fully assimilated into Portuguese culture *(assimilation*)". Again, school was the tool used to teach the colonised the language and thus the language in education policy always favoured the colonial master.

2.2.3.2. Portuguese and Spanish as official languages in Africa

Portuguese is the sole official language of Mozambique even though the country is a multilingual one with several languages spoken of which the number differs depending on the ethnolinguistic data used (Chimbutane & Benson, 2012; Terra, 2021; UNICEF, 2017). This language situation implies teaching and learning because previously it has been stated that language policies through the statuses accorded to languages such as official or national and so forth, perpetuate the promotion of a language in educational settings. Portuguese is therefore the sole language a learner is supposed to learn even though it is a language of the minority; it is the language of education, government, and business (Terra, 2021; Chimbutane & Benson, 2012; Chimbutane, 2017, UNICEF, 2017). Similarly, in Angola, which is also a former Portuguese colony, Portuguese is the only official language of the country (Albaugh, 2005; Manuel, 2015; Manuel & Johnson, 2018) and the sole official language of education policy (Manuel, 2015). Guinea-Bissau is also a former Portuguese colony and just like the countries previously mentioned in this section, it has Portuguese as the sole official language of the country (Albauch, 2005; da Silvaa & Oliviera, 2017; Handem, 2015). Handem (2015) in a dissertation argues for the promotion of Creole over Portuguese as the official language because the latter is spoken by most of the inhabitants of the country and would ensure greater participation by the people of the country.

Cape Verde is also a former Portuguese colony that gained independence in 1975 and deals with a lot because of the language policy of its former colonisers (Amado, 2015; Coonan, 2007). In Cape Verde, Portuguese continues to be the official language and there is a contention between the language and Cape Verde Language (a creole) that is spoken widely by the inhabitants of the country in comparison to the Portuguese language (Amado, 2015; Macedo, 2003). Amado (2015) argues that the official language of Portuguese limits the participation of all citizens and does not encourage political input as most of the population who are non-speakers of Portuguese are excluded. Coonan (2007) when speaking about Cape Verde states that the Creole language is spoken by the majority but there remains an ongoing debate in the country on whether to make it the official language or not, with the latter benefitting the minor population of the country. Likewise, the academic work reviewed from Guinea Bissau and Angola has the writers arguing that bilingualism in their countries is more viable than a monolingual policy that discourages the use of other languages than the official language of their countries, especially Creoles (Coonan, 2007; da Silvaa & Oliveirab, 2017; Handem, 2015).

The above paragraphs prove how the history of colonialism still permeates African society in ways that affect and belittle the independence of these countries. All the countries above which are former Portuguese colonies still maintain Portuguese as their only official language. This occurs even though there are other languages in the abovementioned African countries, spoken by most of the population that can serve as official languages with a wider reach than what Portuguese can do. The assimilation tactics that were used by French and Portuguese colonisers are still intact today after decades of independence.

African languages can be useful in the different functions of the country, including the education sector. Terra (2021:19) states that "Bilingual education in Mozambique was adopted in 2002 based on the linguistic reality of the Mozambican population". Bilingual education allows for the use of the learner's home language in the education system. Thus Terra (2021: 20) states that:

> Although the bilingual modality was created, the Ministry of Education adopted a transitional model. In the current Mozambican educational system, bilingual education comprises a system of mother-tongue education for the first two years, as part of the first cycle, where 60–80% of the allocated time is given to the Mozambican language, while Portuguese is taught as a subject. In third grade, students begin the transition into Portuguese, learning to read and write in the official language ...

While Terra (2021) on the other hand concurs that indeed the government has pledged to promote bilingual education, factors such as teacher beliefs and education support in terms of training of educators are some aspects that hinder successful implementation. Even though most of the

populations in former Portuguese colonies lived in a place where Portuguese was the sole language of the policy, they were mostly not first-language speakers of Portuguese. Chimbutane (2017) writes that in terms of the education of the people of these former Portuguese colonies such as in Mozambique, there is a shift that aims to include other languages than the official languages in the education system. Most of the promotion of multilingual or bilingual education has been from foreign investment or bodies that promote the use of indigenous education as access for all (Chimbutane, 2017; Nguga, 2011). Equatorial Guinea, which was lastly colonised by Spain, also considered a Lusophone country gained its independence in 1968 (Lipski, 2000; Luque, 2019). This country has Spanish, Portuguese and French because the three colonies of Portugal, Spain and France had a direct impact on the country at different times (Luque, 2019) and with their independence gained from Spain, Spanish is the most spoken of the three. The country does not recognise any African language as part of official languages by policy. It has Indigenous languages such as Bube, Fang and Benga to name a few. These languages are not official languages by policy, but they have a lot of speakers. Thus, the speakers of these languages enter a school system whereby they are taught mostly in Spanish as the country's most spoken official languages. Their languages are not encouraged for use on school premises and thus are erased from a very early stage for learners entering the education setting. There is also a huge number of speakers of Pichi, a creole spoken in Equatorial Guinea and not recognised by policy or encouraged for education (Lipski, 2000; Yakpo, 2015).

2.2.4. Anglophone Africa

2.2.4.1. The British colonial rule and education

Unlike the French, the Spanish, and the Portuguese, the British in their colonisation efforts mostly did not seek to assimilate the people they colonised but they exercised an indirect rule over their colonised (Khan *et al*., 2021; Mamdani, 1996; Perham, 1934). The British sought to make clear to the colonised that they would never be equal to them and that they would always assume a sub role overall, with the British being above the colonised natives. Education was thus divided across racial lines with the colonisers receiving an education viewed as superior to that of the native. The British would also allow their colonised to use their indigenous languages in education (not always in the South African case) and they divided the countries they colonised through languages and tribes and used chiefs and other native figures of authority to rule over the colonised (Crowder, 1964; Khan *et al.*, 2021; Mamdani, 1996). This became problematic because of the way Indigenous education was seen as an inferior education made for furthering the inequality between the colonised and the coloniser. Therefore, in former British colonies, indigenous people came to view their indigenous languages as a means of exclusion and did not

prefer them in educational settings, but rather aspired to learn the English language and saw it as symbol of power. This history of colonial education is still persistent in former British colonies and will be discussed below. However, there is great resistance by the former colonised black people to believe that their languages can be used as the languages of education because of how they were used to make them inferior during colonialism (Anchimbe, 2006; Brock-Utne, 2014).

2.2.4.2. English is the official language in Anglophone Africa.

Although Ghana received independence from British colonial rule as the first country to do so in 1957, the legacy of colonialism through language continues even today. Ghana has English as their only official language of policy today. In Ghana for instance, English is promoted as the official language of the country and nine other languages are promoted as the national languages (Davis & Agbenyega, 2011; Ansah & Agyeman, 2015). If a language is promoted as the national language, it means that the language should receive promotion and backing from the government. A lot of resources are put in place to establish and promote such a language. That is the reason why in Ghana, which is estimated to have 85 local languages, only a few languages (nine) are promoted as national languages and must be taught and used in schools throughout the country, even in places where the majority of the speakers are not first language speakers of these languages recognised languages by the government (Ansah, 2014; Ansah & Agyeman, 2015). These languages are considered the languages of the locality and were intended to be used locally. However, the reality is that in some instances most of the speakers are not speakers of the said local languages promoted by the government.

In Southern Africa, neighbouring countries, South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Eswatini were all formerly colonised by the British colonial empire. Because of this phenomenon, they all have English as their official language. South Africa will be dealt with separately as it is the backbone of this study, and its context is important for the research undertaken. Lesotho, Botswana, and Eswatini by their names implying the language of the country - Eswatini and the Siswati language, Lesotho and the Sesotho language as well as Botswana and the Setswana language - are often thought of or imagined as monolingual countries where only Setswana, Sesotho and Siswati respectively are the only indigenous languages spoken by the population of the country and promoted. Boikhutso and Jotia (2013) problematise the notion of national homogeneous identity in the case of Botswana and Setswana as a national language, and the exclusion of other languages. As discussed above under LPP, the problematic nature of language policy as a declaration is that it excludes some languages and prioritises others. It also leads to the marginalisation of languages. Recently, however, research has begun to focus on the implication of the language policies of these countries where English is the official language

alongside Setswana, Sesotho, and Siswati. These language policies are exclusionary because there are other languages spoken in these countries. Those languages are never acknowledged in policies even though they are the realities of lived experiences of the populations in these countries.

In Eswatini, the official languages are Siswati and English (Dlamini, 2014; Gamedze, 2015; Mbatha, 2003). Even though the language policy of the country recognises two languages as the official languages, English receives a favourable amount of exposure and use in comparison to Siswati (Mbatha, 2003). IsiZulu is another language spoken in Eswatini and therefore the country is not monolingual as it is often assumed (Dlamini, 2008). Although isiZulu is spoken in the country, because it is not recognised as part of policy it is not promoted, especially through the education system (Dlamini, 2008). Although Siswati is recognised as part of the language policy of this country, it is seen as an impediment to learning through English. According to Dlamini (2008:7), "The Swaziland education system follows a transitional bilingual-education policy with a weak emphasis on isiSwati". The critique on this is also emphasised by Dlamini (2014) that because of this transitional bilingualism, students at university struggle to use language one (Siswati) to inform their language two (English) and the university system produces students that are incompetent in both languages.

In Zimbabwe for instance English is and has always been the language of policy alongside other languages which are Shona and Ndebele (Kadenge & Mugari, 2015; Maseko, 2021). For the longest period, the three languages were officially recognised according to policy, however, minority languages were excluded. This meant that people who spoke languages other than the two mentioned above had their languages excluded and their children went on to learn in other languages at school (Shona and Ndebele) (Dube, 2020; Kadenge & Mugari, 2015). It was only in 2014 that the language policy of the country recognised other languages (Chewa, Chibarwe, Kalanga, Koisan, Nambya, Ndau, Shangani, sign language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa) than Ndebele and Shona to be promoted as official languages of the country and allowed them to be used as languages of policy (Kadenge & Mugari, 2015; Maseko, 2021). Despite having an upper hand as African languages are included in policy in their country, Gudhlanga and Makaudze (2012) write about how Shona and Ndebele are still marginalised when compared to English in the country, especially in the education system. However, with the post-2014 language policy declaration by the Zimbabwean government, Dube (2020) laments the situation of a minority language Kalanga and its recognition in the face of Shona, Ndebele and English, particularly in school. Dube (2020) argues that Kalanga remains unlikely to be used in education when compared to Shona and Ndebele The promotion of languages that are not official is often

fostered by people from a bottom-up approach (Maseko, 2021) and not fostered by the government (Dube, 2020). This goes back to the issue of language policy (LP) and language management (LM) as discussed in the previous section. Language policy at a macro level seems to not prevail as much as it does at a micro level.

The language policy of Botswana recognises English as the official language of the country and Setswana as the national language even though the country is a multilingual one with an estimated twenty-five or more languages present (Chebanne, 2016; Chebanne & Moumakwa, 2017; Kamwendo *et al.*, 2009; Kamwendo, 2013, Maja, 2007). This is despite the existence of many languages that are used in this country where proper research and documentation of these languages have been done in scholarly research with little to no change in the country's language policy (Batibo, 2013; Bello & Mafara, 2019; Chebanne & Moumakwa, 2017; Kamwendo *et al*., 2009; Kamwendo, 2013). Thus Batibo (2013: 106) has this to say about the state of Setswana as a national language in Botswana:

> As such, parents and other stakeholders would argue that what an African learner needs is an international language such as English, and not the so-called 'good-for-nothing' African languages. Such people would normally press for more English in the school curricula so that schools can produce learners who can face the globalised world from a point of linguistic strength and/or advantage. In addition, there is also a fear that mother tongue education would frustrate learners' efforts to gain competence in English. In addition, there is fear that the use of mother tongue education would lead to the lowering of standards in education. Such fears have been expressed in Botswana, Malawi and other African countries concerning English and mother tongue education.

Setswana, which is a language of Botswana spoken by the Batswana people, is promoted at the exclusion of other indigenous languages such as Kalanga and the San languages. The view of language policy in Botswana as reported here is almost like the one in Lesotho and/or Eswatini. Just like Botswana, Lesotho recognises two languages in their policy; namely, Sesotho and English (Backman, 2009). Whereas Botswana recognises Setswana as a national language in Botswana, Lesotho reconises Sesotho as an official language. Regarded as the official language of Lesotho, Sesotho is highly used and accepted, but there are other languages spoken in the country such as isiXhosa and Siphuti (Ekanjume-Ilongo, 2015; Kolobe & Matsoso, 2021; Koloti & Jita, 2021; Makumane & Fru, 2021; Matsau, 2007) and they do not receive the same attention. Learners who are the official speakers of these unrecognised languages are often forced to learn through an additional indigenous language (Sesotho) which remains the only recognised language besides English. The same situation applies in Ghana where the majority language is taught in education because of its recognition as a national language and this impacts the teaching of other minority languages (Koloti & Jita, 2021).

A similar case can be observed in Malawi where English is the official language of the country and Chichewa receives considerable attention as the national language of the country at the expense of a plethora of languages (Moyo, 2001). Malawi has an English-only language in education policy (Kamtukule, 2019, Kamwendo, 2016). In Zambia the official language is English and there are languages designated the status of national languages (Marten & Kula, 2008). Indeed, Anchimbe (2006) states that African languages that are declared national languages do not receive the privilege accorded official languages, which mostly happen to be former colonial languages.

The language policy of Nigeria recognises English alongside three national languages, namely, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. These three local languages are promoted as languages of the nation even though Nigeria is home to more than 240 local languages (Olagbaju, 2014). The implication of promoting three languages at the expense of others is that as mentioned above, speakers of other languages are expected to learn the promoted languages. The implication is that in school, children who come to school are encouraged and expected to learn through a local language in the first years of their learning and they end up learning through a second or even third language rather than in their home language. The same can be observed in Kenya and Tanzania where Swahili as a language has been promoted as a language of the nation alongside English. Swahili is promoted as the LoTL while other languages in the country are not used as LoTL and their users have to learn through Swahili over their own language (Swilla, 2009; Tibategeza, 2010; Lauwo, 2022; Jasińska *et al.*, 2019). The local languages other than the ones promoted suffer at the expense of the ones promoted by Tanzania as the language of the nation or the country (Wedin, 2005). Tibategeza (2010) writes that there is no bilingual education in Tanzania; it is not envisioned in the policy and is not practised by the schools, to the extent that learners are punished if they use Kiswahili on high school grounds. There are signalling boards written “speak English” on high school grounds. The language situation of Tanzania might have changed but the dominance of English is still very high in the country that recognises Kiswahili as a national language. Just as Tibategeza (2010) writes about pupils being punished for speaking a mother tongue on school grounds, Hanafi (2009) writes this about a school in Accra the capital city of Ghana where English is the only official language of the country:

> The teachers taught them only in English, beating those who spoke 'vernacular' (i.e. Hausa) with a stick. In six months, I did see some of them improve - the pupils who perhaps had a stronger desire to learn, or who were innately more academic than others. Most, however, fell asleep, or lost interest - to the detriment of the rest of the class - and were beaten as a result.

The insistence on English by those in power such as politicians and teachers has created a continuous state of the promotion of ex-colonial languages over African languages. This is

language policy from the top down and this approach has persisted for very long. The African elites who are the product of an education system that privileges the speakers of some languages over others have been accused of also using the ex-colonial languages as the languages of exclusion to keep most of the people from participating socio-politically and socioeconomically (Hanifa, 2009).

2.2.5. Challenges of implementation of multilingual language in education policies

Language in education policy struggles are real and to better understand language in education is important. Language in education is a part of the language policy of a country (Tsui &Tollefson, 2014). Shohamy (2003: 279) argues that "in most situations, the LEP serves as the legal means for carrying out national LP agendas". Language in education policies of different countries are often used to push the language policies through formal education of the countries. Language in education policies are political agents used to serve political interests (Bokamba, 1980; Bamgbose, 1994; Shohamy, 2003). Bamgbose (1994: 3) further states that "the choice of languages depends on several factors including historical, political, demographic, economic, religious, and linguistic. The historical factor includes practices that have been in existence for a long time". According to Tsui and Tollefson (2010: 25):

> Choices made in the medium of instruction are not purely about educational efficacy but also about social, political, and economic participation, social equality, and human rights. They determine who has access to resources, power, and control, and who does not. They are vehicles for the political subjugation of minority groups by dominant groups and the masses by the elites, both at the intranational and international levels.

Bokamba (1980:1) states "While this is true, it is equally important to point out in this respect that although the language is an inherent characteristic of the human species, the use of a particular language or dialect in education is almost always a political decision". Multilingual educational language policies are hard or impossible to implement in African countries according to literature.

In conclusion, this section dealt with language at the policy and planning level and its implications for implementation in African countries excluding South Africa. It explored some of the issues that hinder the true use of African languages in the education sector. The problems are varied but most researchers point at the same issues throughout the literature, which are that of exclusion and lack of implementation. The history of the African country exacerbates the problem

because the legacy of colonial language policies reverberates in the African continent even today and the implications are dire for the speakers of the minority or indigenous languages in Africa. The literature discussed in this section shows that the use of languages in school is affected by the current language policies that remain the adaptation of colonial systems in different African countries. African languages are hardly promoted, but in places where they are promoted, it shows that the use of bilingual education as shown by literature is indeed beneficial to learners and students alike (Chimbutane, 2017; Nguga, 2011). African countries are now changing their language policies in some places to include and recognise other languages than the ex-colonial languages that are spoken there. The school system is the main way that language and literacy in multilingual settings are realised in different African societies. An understanding of the broader history of the development of LoTL policies in Africa is necessary to also contextualise the specific case of South Africa that is discussed in the next section.

2.3. Multilingual language policies in South Africa reflected in the language in Education policies

2.3.1. Contextualisation

South Africa like some of its African counterparts is now a democratic country since 1994 after the end of the apartheid regime (Louw, 2004). Noteworthy though is the fact that colonisation happened in South Africa way before the apartheid when the Dutch first colonised South Africa, particularly the Cape (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007; Oliver & Oliver, 2017). This was followed by the colonisation by the British Empire in 1899 (Coetzee-de Vos, 2019; Louw, 2004, Mhlauli *et al*., 2015) and the transition to an apartheid regime in 1948-1990 (Angogo, 1978; Louw, 2004; Mhlauli *et al*., 2015) are still felt today. During the British colony, English became the language of colonisation and the language of administration (Lovell, 1956; Louw, 2004). Black South African Languages were used and encouraged during the British colonisation and apartheid (Chimenya, 2022; Motsaathebe, 2011), albeit with ulterior motives that led the speakers of this language to have an inferiority complex regarding their languages and very limited resources. This is still a stigma that surrounds the use of Black South African languages in the country today, even though they are protected and encouraged by law and policy. Education was used as one of the driving forces to stigmatise indigenous South African languages.

Education in Africa existed long before the British and Dutch came to South Africa, and the missionaries who came to the country during colonisation were trying to educate the blacks to convert them to Christianity (Msila, 2007; Zungu, 1977). Before the arrival of missionaries, education amongst African people was carried through folklore and oral traditions such as

storytelling and poetry and was not written down (Angogo, 1978). The British colonial rule in the country coincided with the period of the "scramble for Africa" as discussed in section 2.2 of this chapter whereby Africa was divided into parts and conquered by different colonisers.

According to Badat and Sayed (2014: 128) "colonialism [just like] apartheid was predicated on a racially based system in which [the majority of black people] were denied equal educational opportunities and outcome". The British created a system that subjugated Black people, and English was used to exclude most black people from participating in the economy. Unlike the French, Portuguese and Spanish which as discussed in section 2.2. above thought to assimilate their colonised through their languages and culture, the British through an indirect rule used the very same language and culture to separate themselves from black people and to allow them to use their languages and practice their culture (Crowder, 1964; Khan *et al*., 2021). The language was a tool of exclusion from participation on the hierarchical stage and the British did not only exclude black people through language, but the Afrikaans people were also excluded, leading to them fighting to replace the British government with their own language and systems. As a result, Afrikaner nationalism was born and the language, Afrikaans, was used as one of the driving or mobilising forces of the apartheid movement.

Afrikaans, a language that was first regarded as a "kitchen language" and an offspring of Dutch from the colonial settlers were born (Webb, 2011). According to Angogo (1979) and Marjorie (1982), in the early 1900s, Afrikaans contested for a space to be a language of instruction alongside English (which was then the only language of instruction) and ultimately won in 1925. Apartheid, which is not yet a distant memory in the minds of the South African people remains the era that is treated as the most disturbing when it comes to the intersection between languages of instruction and educational reforms.

With the focus on language in this thesis, it is important to note that during Apartheid, the national government used the Afrikaans language to exert power and dominance over much of the population who were non-speakers of Afrikaans (Angogo, 1978; Webb, 2011). Afrikaans came to being from the Dutch language (Alexandra, 2010; Steyn, 2016) and is a language spoken in South Africa and Namibia, and it became synonymous with the apartheid government in what was regarded as "Afrikaner nationalism" (Dubow, 1992, Lovell. 1965; Louw, 2004). Afrikaans is the "language of the oppressor" (Webb, 2011: 356). This is what Afrikaans is still remembered for, especially by Black South Africans.

As a result of Apartheid, in 1976, students took to the streets in what is known today as the Soweto Uprising to protest being forced to use Afrikaans as a LoTL (Masebenza, 1985; Zungu,

1977). It is important to note that because the country was divided along racial lines, tribal lines were also enacted to keep the speakers of South African languages within their tribal areas. In what was known as Bantustans, Black South African languages were used to separate speakers of one indigenous South African language from the other as there was a concentration of one language in one place and this allowed for teaching using African languages and for these languages to thrive. People who were not native speakers of a certain language had to carry passes and get permission to visit another Bantustan which they were not a part of. This ensured the separation of languages and enacted borders that were very difficult to transcend even among Black South African speakers who wanted to travel to neighbouring Bantustans. As such, even today, there still exists a trace of tribalism amongst the different language speakers in the country (Slabbert & Finlayson, 2000).

In 1993, before the first democratic election, the Interim Constitution South Africa accorded 11 languages: namely, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Siswati, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi, Tshivenda, Xitsonga the status of official languages. The languages were then declared official languages and entrenched in the constitution in 1996. The status of South African official languages has since changed to 12 languages with the addition of Sign Language on 19 July 2023 (Patric & Bengu, 2023).

As mentioned above, during apartheid Black South African languages were used to divide people into Bantustans. There was a high concentration of a specific language in a specific area such as Setswana in Bophuthatswana and isiNdebele in KwaNdebele and isiXhosa in Transkei and Ciskei. The Bantustans have long been dissolved, and apartheid has ended. With democracy also has come the free movement of people and there is hardly a place where one can find a concentration of an indigenous language as much as it used to be during apartheid. However, in the current democratic South Africa, one is still likely to find a huge population of speakers of a certain language in a certain place, albeit not as highly as they would have been during apartheid. This has meant that while a Bantustan such as Bophuthatswana (meaning, the gathering of the Tswana people) would have been densely Setswana-speaking. Nowadays, the Batswana people can live anywhere and the same goes for other languages as languages are widely spread across the country instead of concentrated in one place.

Therefore, in line with the changing conditions of the country, South Africa has put in place policies that address such diversity and encourage unity. One such policy is the policy of transformation which is discussed in the next sections and forms the bedrock of the language

policies of South African universities. But firstly, a discussion of the language policy of the country as background to the study will be presented below.

2.3.2. Language policy in South Africa

This section discusses the research on language policy in South Africa. Indeed, South Africa is one of, if not the most researched African country on language policy and language in education debates. For the scope of this study, the researcher will only focus on research that directly relates to language policy and language in education, even though these are not the only areas covered in the research concerning language policy in this country. After gaining independence from the apartheid regime in 1994, the South African government adopted a multilingual policy that recognises 11 official languages but, since 19 July 2023, South Africa recognises 12 official languages. Parliament released a statement that:

> The National Assembly (NA) has, during its plenary on Tuesday afternoon, approved the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development on the Constitution Eighteenth Amendment Bill [B1 – 2023] to amend section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The amendment is to include South African Sign Language (SASL) as an official language to promote the rights of persons who are deaf and hard of hearing (South Africa National Assembly, 2023).

The Language Policy of South Africa in its recognition of multilingualism has been hailed as one of the most progressive language policies when compared to other African countries. The issue of implementation, especially of previously marginalised languages is always a constant reminder of how policy declarations are sometimes unattainable. There has been enough literature written on critiquing the implementation of the language policy of South Africa and most of it has been geared towards the language in education policy. Most of the research has come from linguists and educational practitioners and while much of it has been on the education landscape, the school education has been the most researched area. There is a huge increase in the number of publications on the higher education landscape, especially following the trend that higher education institutions are adopting multilingual language policies. The section below attempts to showcase some of the research and debates concerning language use in the education setting of the country.

The school environment from as early as primary school promotes the use of English over other official languages, and Afrikaans to a small extent is also encouraged. The use of indigenous South African languages is encouraged by policy, as it is stated that every child has a right to receive education in his/her language. However, most Black South African children receive education in their home language from Grade 1 and switch to English in Grade 4. The language policy of South Africa in its boldness to adopt eleven official languages has been criticised as a

glamorisation of policy, due to a mismatch between policy and practice and lacking implementation (Cele, 2004, Koch & Dornbrack, 2008; Yu & Dumisa, 2015).

When speaking of policy implementation regarding mergers and transformation in HE, Kraak (2004: 244) argues that "policy is never implemented in any straightforward, linear way. Policy is almost always mediated in the realm of implementation by political (discursive), economic (or structural), and institutional constraints". Problems arising from implementing language policies in South Africa can thus not be seen as small and easily surmountable. Efforts are required from different levels to work together to achieve implementation, otherwise, they will remain paper-based and never achieved. The country's language policy is promising and advanced in what it endeavours to do, but it is hard to meet expectations. Thus, Yu and Dumisa (2015) argue that one way to make the policy a reality is if communities help in promoting indigenous South African languages. Indeed, the LiEP of South Africa (1997) states that communities in the form of SGBs should be involved in the language choice for the school and the promotion of multilingualism. Some research argues that SGBs seems to be playing a lesser role in the promotion of Black South African languages (Chitapi, 2018; Holmarsdottir, 2005; Kretzer & Kaschula, 2021). This shows that language policies as discussed under the LPP, LP and LM section above, require all stakeholders to be actively involved in the realisation of a policy declaration.

2.3.3. Language in education policy in South Africa

The education system of South Africa is beset with many issues, and the language of instruction is one of the many (Makhubele & Baloyi, 2018; Visser *et al*., 2019). The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) (1997) promotes learners being taught in the languages of their choice and encourages multilingualism, but that reality is not realised for many Black South African children who end up learning in a language foreign to them as early as primary school (Nomlomo, 2019). The school system is divided into different phases, namely: primary school, secondary school under the Department of Basic Education (DBE), and Higher Education and Further Education under the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). Research from as early as pre-primary and primary school (du Plessis & Naudé, 2003; Saneka & de Witt, 2019) has shown how the language of the child such as the language of play and the language used in preschools has a bearing on the development of the child academically. If the home language is not used for childhood development and primary school, learners will struggle to achieve literacy in the home language and English as an additional language. This problem then persists through the school system where most of the South African population continues to be taught through the first additional language. Issues of equity, transformation, and redress seem to be lacking when learners are forced to learn through a language that they do not know from as early as Grade 4

(Boakye, 2015:137; Hibbert, 2010: 209; Desai, 2001 Ntombela *et al.*, 2020; Tsebe & Scherman, 2020) and this also goes against what the policy advocates for through additive bilingualism as opposed to subtractive bilingualism (Saneka & de Witt, 2019). The lack of ability to read and write or competency in the first language of the students as well as in English has been discussed as contributing to the problem of language in South African schools, especially in primary school. Early transition into English (Sibanda, 2017) seems to be one of the problems that fuel language incompetencies of learners and general problems with academic success.

Besides the introduction of English as a LoTL from as early as Grade 4 contributing to subtractive bilingualism, some research has pointed out how multilingual, former model C schools perpetuate a subtractive bilingualism learning cycle instead of promoting multilingualism (Desai, 2001). The dichotomy between suburban schools/private schools versus the public schools also problematises the issue of language choice with Makoe and McKinney (2014) and Babane and Maruma (2017) arguing that Black South African Languages are not promoted and taught in these institutions of learning. Makoe and Mckinney (2014) argue that isiZulu voted by the parents as a language that they wanted taught to their children, played second fiddle to Afrikaans as a first additional language and English as the language of teaching and learning at a multiracial school in South Africa. On the other hand, Babane and Maruma (2017) wrote on how indigenous South African languages are taught with English because the learners in a private school are not competent in these languages, thus again making English overpower African languages.

It is pertinent to acknowledge the disruption of South African learners and students suffering to the extent of using English as a LoTL. Often when the LoTL is discussed, the choice of a language such as English is attributed to English as a language of globalisation. Zano (2019) in a study conducted at a South African secondary school found that students report that they would benefit a lot if their mother tongue/home languages were to be used in teaching and learning but they still advocate for English as the language of teaching and learning. This is because the learners claim to recognise the importance of English as a language of greater gain and do not want to be excluded from that. This study is one of the many studies that have been conducted in South Africa that showed how learners in schools wanted to be taught in English but also acknowledged the benefits of being taught in their mother tongue. Students in South Africa are reportedly saying that they prefer the use of English over their mother tongue for various reasons, believing that they are competent in the English language (Brock-Utne, 2014; Mutepe *et al.*, 2021).

Another highly documented aspect of the language policy and language in education debate in the country is that of the language attitudes of South Africans. The global reach of English is also seen in South African studies on language attitudes among students. Studies on language attitudes have covered a broad spectrum ranging from the attitudes of the learners/students themselves (Ditsele, 2016; Mbatha, 2016; Mbatha *et al.,* 2018; Zano, 2019), the attitudes and preferences of other stakeholders such as parents (Hugo, 2020; Teane, 2019), and the attitudes of institutions and those in places of power (teacher/ principals). Some of the research on attitudes toward South African languages being used in higher education settings has been discussed in Chapter 1 section 1.5. When it comes to the attitudes of the students in higher education, the language attitude studies always point to the fact that English receives a favourable preference mainly because the students consider it an enabling language for upward economic mobility that will afford them job opportunities and make it easier for them to navigate the global landscape (Ditsele, 2016; Lombard, 2017; Mbatha, 2016; Zano, 2019). The findings also report that students are aware of and in favour of promoting Black South African languages but point to the fact that their languages are not yet fully developed as languages for use as LoTL in higher education (Ditsele, 2016). They supported the promotion of their languages as languages of teaching and learning, being cautious of the fact that, unlike English, their languages did not have a global and market reach. Lombard (2017:30) encapsulates the language attitudes of South Africans - which is similar to the discussion of the elitist value of English in the previous section - by stating that:

> English is perceived as a very important international language that is spoken by the elite and the successful in South Africa, and its domination of science, the media, the Internet and education is unquestionable. This language is associated with power and financial prosperity. African languages, on the other hand, are considered to be low in status and mainly functional for social and cultural interactions.

This problem of language attitudes held by the populace has led to the widespread acceptance and advocacy of an English-only curriculum by students at some universities. The same case has been recorded in African countries discussed above whereby French or Portuguese and Spanish are being replaced by English only, instead of the inclusion of African languages as most advocacies would assume to be the case. As such, Antia and Van der Merwe (2018: 422) state that it is often unclear why Black students who are not speakers of English advocate for English only as a means of teaching and learning. They state that:

> Given these academic performance hierarchies, often reproducing the hierarchization of (dis)advantage immanent in broader society, it is enigmatic at least from an educational standpoint that the students' campaign would canvass support for English. It arguably amounts to complicity in self-harm, one that is borne out of some misrecognition or displaced understanding, for students who are non-home

> users of English (typically African and Coloured) to do the following: (1) support a position on language of instruction that is mute on their languages; (2) assume that that the use of English is a leveller, disadvantaging White Afrikaans-speaking students as much as themselves. (Antia & Van der Merwe, 2018: 422).

Such a stance by African language speakers to equate being taught in English as a leveller has come up a lot in the attitudes of non-Afrikaans speakers at Historically White Universities (HWUs) advocating for removing Afrikaans as a LoTL. This shows the hegemony of English in South African universities as encouraged by the students. Joseph and Ramani (2012: 32) explain hegemony as "when people consent to something hegemonic because they see no realizable possibility for an alternative". To the dismay of many, most South African Black students do not advocate for their languages with ease but do so easily with English. This is despite universities enacting policies that encourage them to use their languages. For HWUs which used Afrikaans as a LoTL previously, there is a complex language situation because of the dichotomy between English and Afrikaans. Non-speakers of Afrikaans, especially Black students always call for the removal of Afrikaans as LoTL in these HWUs, citing that Afrikaans is a part of their language struggles. Coetzee-de Vos (2019: 50) indicates this argument at the University of Pretoria (UP):

> In early February 2016, it also experienced disruptions to its academic programme when students demanded a review of policies so that Afrikaans could be scrapped as a language of instruction. In response, on June 22, 2016, UP adopted a new language policy. In terms of this, English is to become its primary language of instruction and assessment and Afrikaans is to be phased out gradually as a language of instruction.

This has however prompted the Afrikaans students and academics to fight to keep their language as LoTL despite not having as much influence as Afrikaans previously had. This also contributes to the debate of Afrikaans as a South African language that is included in the policy and deserves to be preserved and promoted as other South African languages.

However, there is research from South Africa that also points to how students who are non-speakers of certain Black South African languages are being taught in a language that is not their first language because of regional and official language policies and language dominance in a certain area (Ramothwala *et al*., 2021; Zungu & Pillay; 2010). Apart from the pull to use English as LoTL in schools, one should also consider the complexity of using the mother tongue as LoTL in contexts where there are many varieties or dialects. Sepedi, for example, has a lot of dialects and that is a contentious issue (Khweyane, 2014; Rakgogo & Mandende, 2023). Ramothwala *et al*. (2021), bemoan the struggle of the Khelobedu-speaking learners who are taught in Sepedi in South Africa because Sepedi unlike Khelobedu is an official language. This problem was discussed in more detail in 2.2. above whereby African learners are forced to learn in the national and official languages in schools at the expense of their local languages. It has been highlighted

that non-speakers of a language are often taught in a regional language that is promoted as the language of policy at the expense of their language; a case in point is the use of Setswana in Botswana (Chebanna, 2016; Boikhutso & Jotia, 2013) some Black South African languages in Ghana that are not part of the national languages (Ansah, 2014; Ansah & Agyeman, 2015) as well as Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe (Dube, 2020; Kadenge & Mugari, 2015) to name a few. This area of the promotion of some languages over others in South Africa has not received as much attention as the debate of English as the most preferred LoLT that hinders the use of the official Black South African languages as LoLT in education.

Another area of research in multilingual education in South Africa has focussed on the difficulties experienced by students because of language in secondary schools (Maluleke, 2019; Mthembu & Pillay, 2021; Teane, 2019; Zano, 2019). A lot of issues are discussed as contributing to the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) in secondary schools in the country. Codeswitching as a strategy is or can be implemented by teachers and learners in class when communicating and when teaching and learning occurs (Maluleke, 2019; Meyer 1995; Zano, 2019). Several scholars of codeswitching (Probyn, 2009; Mabule, 2015; Makgato, 2014; Setati *et al*., 2002) and translanguaging (Makalela, 2015; Maluleke, 2015; Motauning, 2024; Probyn, 2019) in South African secondary and higher education agree that these are helpful strategies that teachers and lecturers employ because of the language barriers of their learners and students. Teachers often bemoan the difference between scientific language and the mother tongue when dealing with implementing LiEP in secondary school education.

The issue of language in education therefore persists from as early as preschool and continues to higher education. This has a bearing on student performance and ultimately student throughput at universities in South Africa. This study was conducted against the backdrop that the participants are products of the abovementioned school system whereby they studied through their home and first language alongside English in classrooms where translanguaging and code-switching occur regularly. As the products of such an education, they managed to achieve entry into university and how they continue to use their linguistic capacities as they have been doing throughout their school years is the focus of this study.

2.4. Transformation

Transformation as a theory is used here to argue that the multilingual languages of South Africa as discussed above can and should be used as resources rather than a barrier to educational success. The use of black South African languages contributes to creating epistemological access (Boughey, 2005; Morrow, 2009; Xulu-Gama & Hadebe, 2022) redress and justice. Much of

the debates in South African universities under the DHET have taken a transformational perspective. Transformation as a word means change of the existing structure, and Cambridge online dictionary (2024) defines it as "a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved". In the South African university, transformation has meant a radical change in the look and character of the universities in the country. Le Cordeur (2013: 2) explains that:

> In the context of higher education [transformation] is a term that has been used concerning changes that the modern university is undergoing in a rapidly globalising world and also concerning challenges such as language, access, diversity, equity and (e)quality.

Massification, access and redress are some of the common words used in the transformation debate. This thesis uses transformation in line with the South African government's definition of the word, which is used to mean change, especially redressing past inequalities to create better lives for all citizens (Musonda *et al.*, 2019). In this research, the transformation of higher education is expressed in formal government documents that guide the direction of this study such as the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE, 1996).

Other paradigms have been used in the higher education landscape of South Africa such as that of decolonisation. Decolonisation as used by Wa Thiong'o (1998) around 1986 means undoing the effects of colonialism, especially in the mindset of the people. In the South African higher education landscape, the transformation debate is often conflated with other terminology that calls for the change of the institution such as decolonisation (Wa Thiong'o, 1998) and Africanisation (Lebakeng *et al.*, 2006). Mthembu (2019: 67) states that "the concept of transformation has become synonymous with that of decolonization, which has been central to discourses on social equity in learning and social landscapes in South Africa". By decolonising the curriculum, the implication is that the curriculum changes from the former colonial orientation and the process is to undo the colonisation that has permeated the minds of many and introduce African perspectives (Chikoko, 2021; Du Plessis, 2021; Keebine-Sibanda, 2021). Thus, Keebine-Sibanda (2021: 183) states that "The decolonisation discourse seeks to ensure the link between epistemological and ontological access, where access to knowledge (epistemological access) is a function of the congruence of that knowledge with the nature of being of the recipients (their ontology)". Previous researchers note a lot of focus on the "decolonisation of the curriculum" (Du Plessis, 2021; Fataar, 2018; Lumadi, 2021; Makhanya & Zibane, 2020; Keebine-Sibanda, 2021) and this speaks a lot to the idea of Africanisation of the curriculum as discussed below. This term gained a lot of attention during and after the #FEESMUSTFALL movement whereby students called for the decolonisation of the curriculum.

There is also a call for the Africanisation of the curriculum. Africanisation is rooted in Afrocentricity, a term coined by Asante (1991) in the eighties which advocates for the focus on the inclusion and return to an African worldview and its incorporation in the canonical and higher landscape of education (Letsekha, 2013). This is often expressed in ideologies such as Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) or African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) (Kaya & Seleti, 2013; Lebakeng, 2018; Letsekha, 2013; Mthembu, 2019). The Africanisation of the university in South Africa takes into cognisance how African identity and experiences shape perspectives and how these should be inclusive and form the bedrock of the African/South African university (Letsekha, 2013).

There is plethora in the field of study mentioned above, hence this study aligns itself with the concept of transformation as it is espoused in the higher education framework of South Africa (NCHE, 1996). This position is taken because the South African Higher Education sector has taken a firm stance on transformation and declared it a national imperative. From the method of this study described in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, this study undertakes to use a transformative research paradigm (Mertens, 2007) to the research question because such a paradigm takes into cognisance the social struggles and marginalisation of a people, and advances to remedy the situation by bringing solutions and advocacy for the right treatment of the marginalised. This thesis will focus on the transformation debate because it is what the South African higher education sector aspires to and it is the driving force behind the language policy of higher education institutions in the country, including the NWU which is the site for the research study.

2.4.1. Transformation in Higher Education

The institutions of Education in South Africa comprise “the National Department of Education (DoE), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and Further Education and Training colleges (FETs)” (Beharry-Ramraj *et al*., 2020: 14606). This sector (the higher education (HE) sector) is significant for this study as it is the sector that facilitates education post-school. The sector of HE is responsible for the training of a skilled labour force for the marketplace and qualified members of the community that compete in the labour market, locally and globally.

In South Africa, most universities or institutions of higher education were established by colonial settlers as outposts of learning. According to Lebakeng (2018) universities in South Africa still carry the legacy of apartheid and pre-apartheid colonialism. Lebakeng (2018) further argues that this does not mean that the colonial settlers introduced education to Africa, but that they introduced a Eurocentric education that had a total disregard for African worldviews, villainizing and disregarding them. The new dispensation of 1994 brought in a transformation agenda that

called for the transformation of the higher education sector. A lot of change took place, and the higher education landscape was not immune to the change. Van Schalkwyk *et al*. (2022) state that:

> ...the public university system in South Africa is transforming given the increases over time in the number of black students and staff. However, without an articulated idea of what constitutes change, one cannot claim a transformed system, and the political narrative of no transformation is likely to prevail.

The transformation of the institution speaks to a lot of issues, particularly issues related to the legacy of education as a Eurocentric concept in Africa (Ramoupi, 2012). The legacy of this Eurocentric concept is entrenched in the legacy of the colonisation system. As discussed above in language policy issues in Africa, the language policy debate in Africa hinges on the legacy of colonisation as shown in the African countries mentioned above. Thus, as mentioned in section 2.2 above in this study, the African higher education system is riddled with colonial legacies that continue to plague the system even years after the system of colonialism has been dismantled. South Africa is no stranger to the same legacy of colonialism. Some scholars have traced the South African colonial history, especially how apartheid as a system of separation was used by the then government to perpetuate division amongst people based on their race and how this has led to the current state of transformation of higher education that is an ongoing feat even today (Kaya & Seleti, 2013; Woodrooffe, 2011).

Transformation is not only a South African phenomenon (Van Schalkwyk *et al.,* 2021) as other countries around the globe aim to transform especially their higher education sector. According to Seabi *et al.* (2014: 69):

> The term "transformation" can assume multiple meanings and definitions depending on the context from which it emerges. Within higher education, it may imply either transformation of the student via learning, transformation of the institution to enable transformative outcomes or both.

The term transformation in this study is about the higher education's plan to transform itself into an accommodating system that allows previously marginalised citizens into its fold. In South Africa through transformation, higher education institutions aim to transform the student demographics to reflect the South African populace and change ranks of academic employment to include marginalised people, black and/or female citizens; transformation in terms of formal and epistemological access as well as curriculum/knowledge

There are some barriers to education that the higher education sector must overcome to become a transformed site. Most South African universities are still not transformed, not transforming or are in the process of transforming according to critics. While the demographics of the student

and staff body has achieved some transformation, structural transformation seems to be difficult to attain. Lack of structural transformation means that the system has remained the same or is slow to change at a structural level, which involves employee and race ratio, the curricula (Albertus, 2019; Heleta, 2016) and for this study, the language of teaching and learning (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; Antia *et al.*, 2021). As a result of unchanging structures at universities with a changing student demographic, the country saw tension break whereby university students protested in what is known as #FEESMUSTFALL in 2016, which was a push back to the lack of structural transformation and that showed the escalation of an ongoing problem in South African universities.

The transformation of institutions of higher education in South Africa was instigated after the end of the apartheid regime. South Africa became a new democratic nation elected in 1994. As such, the country decided to remedy the social injustice caused by the apartheid system which had been separated through racial lines (black, white, Indian & Coloured). The ramifications of this system are still felt in the country today and the democratic government has initiated programs and ways to try and remedy the situation. The Department of Higher Education through the White Paper (Department of Education, 1997; Hall *et al.,* 2004; Menon, 2015) outlined that one way that the transformation of higher education (HE) was to take place was through the system of massification and mergers. As Smit (2012: 369) also states massification of higher education is not a new thing, nor is it a South African thing as higher education globally is grappling with the realities of opening their systems to allow greater access for previously marginalised students.

Transformation of institutions of higher education also took place in the form of mergers where some Historically White Universities (HWUs) and Historically Black Universities (HBCs) were merged to deal with not only the large numbers of universities in the country but also to get rid of divisions between universities via racial lines (Hall *et al*, 2004; Jansen, 2004, Jansen, 2003; Mzangwa, 2019). The mergers would also help to cater for the large numbers of previously denied students to enter institutions of their choice to learn. Because of this, the number of universities in South Africa was reduced from 36 universities at the time to 26 (Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2004; Hall, 2015). According to the Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2004):

> The merger is taken to mean the combination of two or more separate institutions into a single entity with a single governing body and chief executive body. Incorporation refers to the process whereby a subdivision of one institution is incorporated into another institution, without affecting the latter's legal status.

Research on the mergers of universities in South Africa has come from different scholars with different perspectives, however, one outcome that emerged from the research is that the road to

the mergers, the merger process and the post-mergers, have been difficult for most universities (Badat, 2015; Baloyi & Naidoo, 2016; Jansen, 2004; Woodrooffe, 2011). There has also been research done on the results and implications of the transformation through mergers on the different universities in the country such as the implication on curricula of the merged universities (Mfusi, 2004). Another aspect of transformation that has received considerable attention is the transformation of the leadership of higher education institutions (Breetzke & Hedding, 2018; Chipuza & Gwarinda, 2010). Furthermore, during the processes of transformation through mergers, it is noteworthy that most mergers happened despite intense opposition from universities (Chetty, 2010; Eloff, 2007) as this was a directive from the minister (Jansen, 2002; National Plan for Higher Education, 2001). The NWU, particularly NWU-PC is an Historically White University (HWU) that merged with an Historically Black University (HBU), and this is discussed in this chapter, under section 2.4.4.

In South Africa, the massification of the higher education process has allowed for the number of black students to rise exponentially through access to education and has increased the number of women in the Higher Education (HE) settings. HE in South Africa was previously a white, male-dominated space. Hay (2008) commented on the then-lecturing staff of most universities still being white. However, Breetzke and Hedding (2017) also noted that the academic staff in universities has seen immense progress in the employment of Black South African academics, especially black women. They however caution that this has come at a cost with the decline in the employment of white male academics. Breetzke and Hedding (2017) further state that although the employment of black African women has increased, they are still the most marginally represented in the academic employment spaces. Thus, through transformation, the higher education sector of South Africa has undergone a massive overhaul since the democratic dispensation in 1994 and it continues to change over time.

2.4.2. Transformation of the curriculum

Although some structural changes have been made to South African universities such as the adoption of mergers, massification, and free education provision after the #FEESMUSTFALL protests, Heleta (2016: 2) argues that "institutional cultures and epistemological traditions have not considerably changed", a point reiterated by others scholars, especially the lack of change in what is deemed the Eurocentric nature of the institution (Chikoko, 2021; Lebakeng, 2018; Mthembu, 2019). One of the arguments for the transformation of the South African education curriculum has been its Eurocentric roots and how far removed it remains from the African context in which it is taught (Lebakeng *et al.,* 2006; Postma & Postma, 2011; Ramoupi, 2012). This problem is not uniquely South African, as it has also been argued that the curriculum in other

African schools and universities remains divorced from the African context in which it is taught (Kioko & Muthwi, 2001; Kiramba, 2016). Postma and Postma (2011) revealed that the curricula itself were often divorced from the learner's reality. This has been stated timeously that the use of former colonial languages created a cognitive dissonance because the culture and the essence of the society are often carried in the language. Bamgbose (1992: 32) thus argues that "underlying any curriculum design and methodology is a theory of language acquisition". So, for African languages to be developed they need to be used and acquired in formal settings such as the school environment.

Teaching African students in a curriculum that is situated in their context has been in constant debates on issues of transformation of higher education, with the argument being that the current curriculum is ethnocentric or Western-oriented and it does not align with the student's context (Ndawonde & Gazu, 2021).

2.4.3. Transformation and the Language Debate

Language in higher education in South Africa is a highly debated topic, especially the use of Black South African languages in higher education. Language seems to be one of the issues mentioned concerning curriculum teaching and learning, and the argument is often made that the language of teaching and learning is divorced from students' reality and surroundings (Mbatha, 2016; Spencer, 2019). It is also one of the most written-about aspects of transformation and is the focus of this study, and this section is an attempt to give context to this issue, thus leading to the overall argument of this study on the language in higher education; particularly language policy implementation at the NWU.

As mentioned elsewhere concerning language policies in South Africa, including language policies of higher education, implementation seems difficult (Heugh, 2013; Madadzhe, 2019; Maseko, 2014; Mtsatse & Combrink, 2018; Phaahla, 2014). Cele (2004:39) argues that "Besides creating a hypnotic policy effect that defeats policy implementation, policy glamorisation challenges the very political consent to develop Black South African languages that are espoused through the values embodied in the South African constitution." Hlatswayo and Siziba (2013) explain that what Cele (2004) means by "policy glamourisation" is that "the policy is over-emphasised, and people are concerned with the public buy-in to the policy and neglect the implementation process". The policy looks good on paper, however, there seems to be little thought that went into the implementation process of the policy.

The case of the language policy of the NWU in this research, particularly that of the NWU-PC is pertinent because of the role of language in the education system. As previously mentioned, the

NWU-PC is a formerly Afrikaans-only university and must shake itself from this history and embrace a multilingual language policy. This is not to deny the history of Afrikaans at all but to accept that the acknowledgment, and promotion of South African languages, especially as espoused through the NWU's language policy document, should also take precedence at this former Historically Afrikaans University.

2.4.3.1 Language policy in Higher Education

Given the realities of the transformation of HE in South Africa above, language policy debate related to the HE sector is rife and this study is situated in this policy debate. The admission and teaching of students in higher education have been scrutinised for only being done in two languages, English and Afrikaans and not the "other" nine languages listed as official languages in the constitution (Coetzee-de Vos, 2019; Koch & Dornbrack, 2008). A study done by Ngwenya (2012) looked at how a university in the Western Cape by outrightly stating that Afrikaans is the LoTL still maintained that it aimed to advance multilingualism, but this was however a contradiction and exclusion of non-Afrikaans speakers. In interrogating the perpetual insistence of institutions of HE to enrol black students, classifying them through 'lack' in academic practices and literacy continues the legacy of apartheid (Boughey & McKenna, 2016; Hurst, 2015; Smit, 2012). Mabokela (1997: 431) states that universities should "interrogate the critical questions related to the issue of standards; namely, what standards, and whose standards?" Smit (2012) argues that universities need to adapt to the students who come to learn instead of forcing students to adapt to a university standard that does not speak to the realities of the students and the country.

Research on academic literacy programmes has touched on the language issue from varying linguistic perspectives including reading, writing, and understanding (Chimenya, 2022; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2023). This shows that it is impossible to disregard language when dealing with the academic literacies of students, especially in a multilingual South Africa. Thus, Van Rooy and Coetzee-Van Rooy (2015) studied how language influences academic performance and found that language was indeed a strong predictor of academic excellence and poor academic performance. Hurst (2015) therefore argues that to adequately assist students through the language challenge, institutions of higher learning should consider the languages of their students apart from the language of teaching and learning and come up with academic literacy programs that recognise students' multilingual capabilities and backgrounds. These studies are relevant to this current research because it focuses on the academic literacy of students and their use of multilingualism to improve their understanding of concepts.

Furthermore, research has pointed to the problem of implementing multilingual language policies at different South African universities (Letsoalo, 2021; Madadzhe, 2019; Nkwashu *et al*., 2015; Somlata, 2022). There has also been research covering multilingual innovations in some South African universities such as the innovative multilingual degree (Bachelor of Arts in Contemporary English Language and Multilingual Studies [BA CEMS]) at the University of Limpopo (Joseph & Ramani, 2012; Mashatole & Makgoba, 2022; Tlowane *et al*., 2021). There has also been a lot of research coming from UKZN which offers a compulsory isiZulu for beginners' module to all students and staff (Naidoo *et al*., 2018; Ndebele & Zulu 2017; Otu, 2014; Rudwick & Parmegiani, 2013). These studies and many more reports by scholars on the already existing African language courses or modules in South Africa speak of their successes and challenges. Of the BA CEMS degree that has been groundbreaking at University of Limpopo (UL), Tlowane *et al*. (2021) report on how a multilingual course taken by students where Sepedi and English are used concurrently seems to not adequately prepare students for other languages spoken in the province such as Afrikaans, Tsonga and Tshivenda. Yet, the study reports on how well this degree has been received and the great accomplishments it has at UL.

Babane and Maluleke (2020) have looked at how students use multilingualism to understand better at the University of Venda. Students also acknowledge the fact that using their language would improve their academic performance, but they are against their language being used as a LoTL (Bam, 2016; Nkwashu *et al*., 2015). Other scholars have pointed out how students' lack of competency in the LoTL affects their performance in different modules such as accounting and so forth (Papageorgiou, 2017). Research has also shown that types of multilingual education programmes are applied in different universities as part of policies such as code-switching (Madiba, 2014) and translanguaging (Heugh, 2015; Madiba, 2018; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2023) are reported as strategies; with translanguaging research dominating the bulk of recent research outputs (Adekunle *et al*., 2019).

However, it is always important to note that the promotion of multilingual education is contested between individuals (lecturers) and the institution (the university/college) (Madiba, 2018). Coetzee-de Vos, (2019: 56) states that "Language policy implementation resides with lecturers and the implementation thereof is optional (i.e., at the discretion of the lecturer) at Nelson Mandela University, as is the case at most other universities in South Africa". This goes to show the dichotomy between language policy as a bottom-up approach or a top-down approach, or it indicates the importance of micro-level language policy implementation by lecturers in their classrooms despite meso-level policies of institutions. Most of the time, the bottom-up language policy is more effective and yields quicker results than the top-down. There is a lot of research

that reports on strategies that students who are not speakers of the LoTL, such as those who do not speak English, mediate their surroundings at universities (Coetzee-de Vos, 2019). There are ample reports on individual lecturers reporting on the concerted effort they put in to make a multilingual classroom come to life (Mbiri-Hungwe, 2019; Papageorgiou, 2017). This is often because the individual saw the struggle the students encountered and opportunity to do more to assist the students through languages they are familiar with.

Another area of research in South African higher education has been on the development and intellectualisation of South African languages. The use of South African language dictionaries to enhance students' understanding or meaning-making as well as terminology development has received some attention (Khumalo & Nkomo, 2022; Nkomo, 2019; Yafele, 2021). Another aspect of terminology development has been the use of multilingual glossaries to help students understand better (Batyi, 2018; Coetzee-de Vos, 2019; Jonker, 2016; Manashe, 2022; Nkomo & Madiba, 2011; Nomlomo & Katiya, 2018; van Stryp, 2018). Most of the research points to the fact that multilingual resources when used effectively can enhance meta-cognitive understanding of concepts in different fields ranging from Humanities to Engineering. However, Nomlomo and Katiya (2018) caution that if the students' language 1 or home languages are not thoroughly developed, the multilingual glossaries are ineffective. Whether it is multilingual glossaries or dictionaries, research points out that students can benefit a lot from the intellectualisation and promotion of their languages. The availability of such materials and platforms of access has also been receiving attention with projects that encourage access to the existing language resources, especially online accessibility in a digitally fast-paced, changing world (Griesel *et al*., 2019; Mlambo & Matfunjwa, 2021; Setaka & Trollip, 2022; Sibeko, 2023; Sibeko & Setaka, 2022). Higher education in South Africa is doing a lot to encourage multilingual language access and use through online open resources. This area may not be the focus of this study, but how the NWU uses technology to encourage multilingualism at this university will be provided briefly. This is because participants in this study were asked how they view the university's efforts to promote multilingualism through online materials and their responses are presented in Chapter 4.

2.4.4. South African institutions of higher education language policies

As explained above, institutions of higher education in South Africa began to merge around the years 2002-2004. Owing to the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions, (LPHE, 2022) universities in South Africa had to adopt multilingual language policies in line with the ethos of transformation which are redress and equity. As a result, most South African institutions of higher education aspire to a multilingual language policy that recognises some if not all the official languages of the country. The language policies of previously

monolingual Afrikaans-only universities had to change and there is a lot of research documented on the process undertaken by different institutions to do so such as University of Johannesburg (former Randse Akademiese Universiteit) (Pienaar, 2006), University of Pretoria (Zikode, 2017), Stellenbosch University (Hubbell, 2002; le Cordeur, 2013; Rudwick, 2022), North-West University (Pretorius, 2017; Van Rooy, 2005; Wittezaële, 2008). Other institutions also adopted multilingual language policies but have continued with English as the language of teaching as they had before, promising to promote African languages in their endeavour to promote their policies. These can be seen in the language policy declaration of such institutions such as The University of Johannesburg's (UJ) Language Policy (2022) which recognises:

> Designated Languages: Given the University's geographical context and reflecting our commitment to promoting multilingualism in the context of higher education, Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho), English, isiZulu (Zulu) and Afrikaans are designated as primary languages (Article 9, UJ Institutional Statute, 2017)".

Enough research has been done on most of the language policies of the institutions of higher education in South Africa. In most of the research done, the critique points to the benefits of the implementation of the language policies (Mashatole & Makgoba, 2022). Some studies have looked at the policies of the universities simultaneously (Nudelman, 2015; Zikode, 2017). Those that have looked at the history of the policies of the institutions of former Afrikaans universities in implementing multilingual language policies and interpreting is one of the most researched areas when it comes to how former Afrikaans-only universities use English to include non-Afrikaans speaking students (Booysen, 2015; Pienaar, 2006; Pienaar & Cornelius, 2015). Others have looked at other ways in which HBUs implement their language policies (Kaschula, 2016). The complexities of those universities that are HWU in implementing multilingual policies have been heavily influenced by the history of these Afrikaans medium universities working towards including English and the cost of maintaining Afrikaans. Most research has touched on the dynamics of English and Afrikaans and very little has been said of the development of African languages as the languages of teaching and learning.

The above observation has even led to some of the universities being controversial enough to move from a bilingual approach of teaching (Afrikaans and English) to a monolingual approach. As such, the University of Pretoria is the only former Afrikaans medium universities to declare a monolingual language policy in English and relegate the once very instrumental language of Afrikaans to the other language of the university together with Sepedi and isiZulu without the official status of teaching and learning (University of Pretoria language policy, 2022). The University of Johannesburg (former RAU) has also decided to use English as its language of

business when the policy states that the medium of instruction is English, and plans will be made to include other languages through a "multi/translingualism" approach (UJ Language policy, 2022). This comes mainly because of the large number of African language speakers who are not speakers of Afrikaans entering these university spaces because of the mergers and massification of higher education in South Africa post-1994. The results, however, have not translated into the use of African languages, but rather in the use of English as a universal language that is seen as a language that can cater to the majority. This is despite the language policy of such institutions being multilingual and despite the constant research that shows that learning takes place better if one learns in one home language.

Regarding HBU universities, one would assume that because they have their roots in African places and were initially created for black students, they would have made great strides in implementing multilingual language policies. However, this has not been the reality as most of the HBUs are monolingual universities focusing on tuition in English. However, much of the research that has come from universities that attract a large portion of the black student population has shown that students use their African languages to study and get through their degrees. There has been a lot of research coming from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) because of how progressive their language policy is in promoting the isiZulu language (Mbatha *et al*., 2018; Ndebele & Zulu, 2017; Otu, 2014). The University of Limpopo which created a bilingual degree in English and Sepedi (Ramani & Joseph, 2012) has also produced some interesting findings on the implementation of multilingualism at this university (Mashatole & Makgoba, 2022; Tlowane *et al*., 2021). The NWU has also been lauded for a progressive language policy that they are working very hard to implement and it will be discussed further below.

Thus, despite the dream or quest for multilingualism at universities in South Africa expressed in policy documents, the implementation of multilingualism has at best been uneven. In a published speech by the then Vice Chancellor of University of Cape Town (UCT) Mamokgethi Phakeng, South African universities remain monolingual despite having multilingual policies, with "Mother-tongue instruction has a bad image among speakers of African languages" and "Access to English means access to social goods, such as higher education, jobs, international opportunities, status, etc." (Swingler, 2022).

2.4.5. Language in education policy at the North-West University (NWU)

Since the merger of the North-West University, the university has always adopted a multilingual language policy in 2004. The institution has always followed a functional multilingual policy outlook (Verhoef & Venter, 2008). Currently, the institution has not changed its approach to a

multilingual language policy that is functional and that recognises and aims to develop the use of Setswana and Sesotho as Black South African Languages alongside Afrikaans and English.

The NWU-PC is situated in the North West Province where there is a high population density of Setswana speakers (Census, 2022). Sesotho is also highly spoken in Potchefstroom because of the closeness of the border between the North West and the Free State province which is a mostly Sotho speaking province (Census, 2022). Sepedi speakers are mostly found in the Limpopo province (Census 2022). Considering the discussions in Chapter 2 on LPP, the status (Makiti, 2001; Kangira, 2016; Wright, 2012) of two Black South African languages, namely, Setswana and Sesotho as official languages alongside English and Afrikaans is a bold and transformative stance taken by the NWU. Now, the acquisition and corpus planning remain underway, and issues of implementation cloud these two aspects of LPP.

Most South African Universities have undertaken to promote African languages, as is required by (Siziba, 2024; Turner & Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2014). As stated elsewhere in this study, the NWU as a unitary institution was established in 2004 during the period in South African higher education characterised by mergers. During this time, the former vice-chancellor of the NWU wrote:

> The merger between the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PUCHE) and the University of the North West (UNW), as well as the incorporation of the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University into the new university, was one of several mergers that legally took place on 2 January 2004 (Eloff, 2007).

Therefore, the NWU has a very peculiar history as a university that merged between a Historically Black University (HBU) and a former Historically White University (HWU). With this context in mind, the language policy of the NWU and the discussion that follows hereafter points to the challenges and achievements of the NWU in their language policy implementation and then proceed to discuss the issues of implementation as is experienced by the students today and some interventions in place.

2.4.6. Language in Education on the NWU-Potchefstroom Campus

Arguably, language policy implementation as one of the most difficult aspects of policy has received great attention from the NWU. The NWU has constantly worked on policy adoption and implementation with attention given to the issue of language of teaching and learning.

Educational interpretation has been one of the major ways through which the NWU sought to deal with the language of tuition problem. Students who were non-Afrikaans received interpretation

via headsets into English in class (Van Rooy, 2005; Wittezaële, 2008) with some research on the challenges such as finding suitable interpreters (Blaauw, 2008) and students' perception of interpretation (Wittezaële, 2008). Though educational interpretation at the NWU has been hailed as the most consistent and prominent feature of multilingual progress in higher education, there are problems as students complain of various issues about the interpretation. One of the issues students complained about was the type of headsets they had to use for interpretation as students argued that they were not very comfortable (Wittezaële, 2008). Another issue that students brought up as a point of disapproval concerning the use of headsets is that there is meaning lost in translation when classes are being interpreted. During a race week (an open discussion that was held at the NWU-PC Gallery) (Facing Race week, 2022) students remarked that when headsets are being used for interpretation, often the interpreters do not interpret the small talk conversation between lecturers and students such as when students ask questions, and the lecturer elaborates on a point or explains a point further. This results in Black students losing out on valuable information that could have otherwise improved their understanding of a topic or is helpful towards a test or examination. The students further stated that when a question is asked in Afrikaans, the lecturer answers in Afrikaans and makes no mention of it in English for the other students (Facing Race Week, 2022). This was added as a reason why Black students often felt that they were imposters at the NWU-PC, being accommodated rather than welcomed (Facing Race Week, 2022). This issue was also raised in Wittezaële (2008) whereby students who listened to class using headsets said they did not feel as though they were part of the class.

Similarly, another valuable point used by students to argue against the use of headsets, is that it perpetuates the cycle of inequality as the dividing line is always between Black and White with the Black students being the ones that must sit uncomfortably and compromisingly at the comfort of White students. Pienaar (2006) in a study done at UJ at the time mentioned that students who used headsets during a class in Afrikaans interpreted into English stated that the headsets do become uncomfortable after a while. This is because as previously mentioned, the interpretation is mostly if not entirely done from Afrikaans to English and never from English to Afrikaans or an African language to either English or Afrikaans. In cases where Afrikaans students are told that if they cannot hear English classes, they are welcome to use headsets for interpretation purposes, almost no one uses them, and everyone listens to the class in English without accessing the interpretation. Students argue that they pay the same amount for a course as their White peers and should be treated equally and with respect.

Coetzee-de Vos (2019: 50) does well in detailing how the 2015/2016 #FEESMUSTFALL protests forced former Afrikaans-only medium universities like Stellenbosch University and the University

of Pretoria to adopt new language policies that accepted the use of English as the language of teaching and learning and a lesser role for Afrikaans. These universities also accepted the promotion of other African languages such as Sepedi at UP and isiXhosa at Stellenbosch University. It is worth noting that during the same period, students at the NWU, especially the NWU-PC were also striking against using Afrikaans as the main language of teaching and learning. The students contended that when they enrolled at the NWU-PC, they enrolled to be taught English as the language of teaching and learning. The students also bemoaned the use of headphones for interpretation during classes, demanding to be taught not through interpretation, but through English.

The NWU-PC as a campus formerly Afrikaans only has undergone a shift in the wake of the massification of higher education. The campus which used to be attended by mainly White Afrikaans students, compromised of a student demographic of more than 50% black students in 2023 (NWU Quick Stats, 2023|2024).

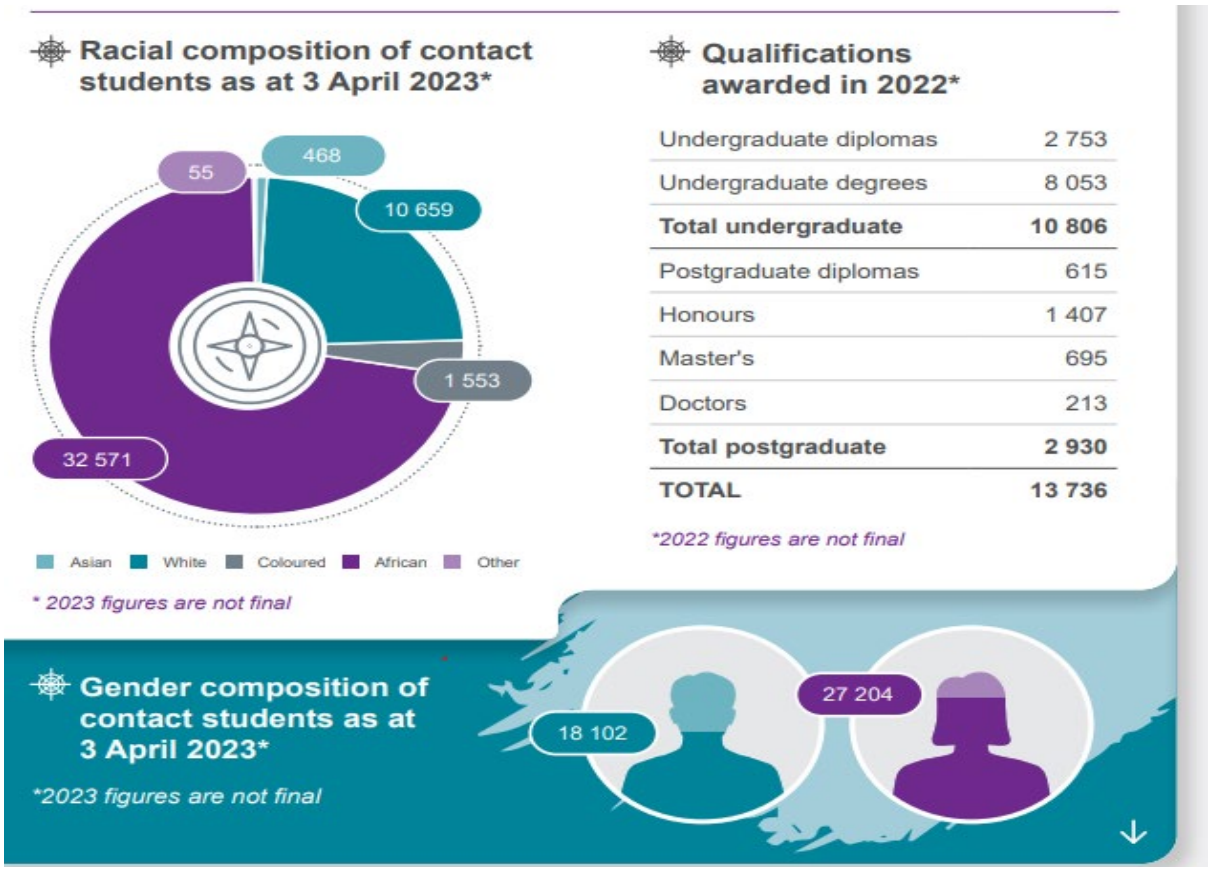


Figure 1: Racial composition for NWU 3 April 2023 (Quick stats, 2024)

The figure above is the racial composition of students at the NWU reported for 2023. The NWU in general (three campuses) is composed of 32 571 African students, 10659 white students, 1553 coloured students, and 468 Asian students. Most of the student body of the NWU is black students. Proving that the merger and massification of higher education in terms of bringing black students into the fold of higher education is working.

Despite the changes in the student demography and the multilingual language policy that was developed from the start of the merger, the participants are of the view that transformation in the form of the active use of languages other than Afrikaans and English at the NWU-PC at a structural level has not yet progressed substantially.

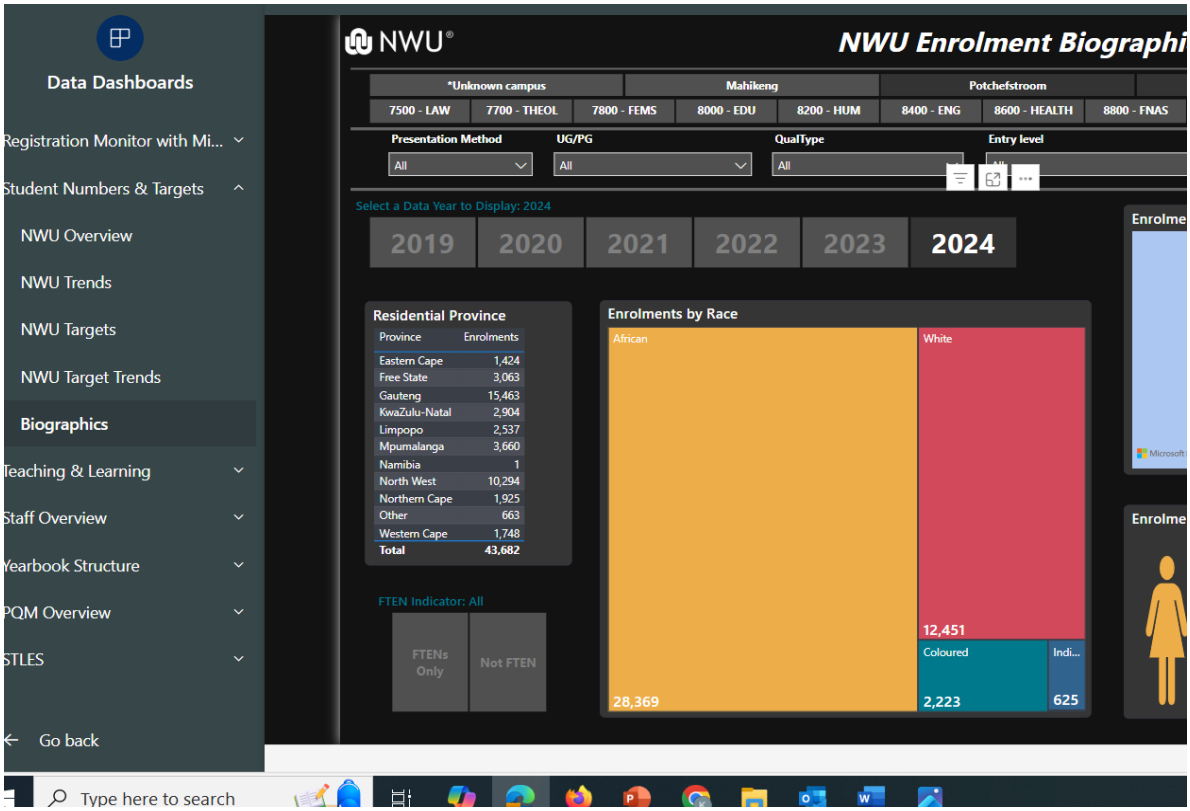


Figure 2: NWU Student numbers 2024

The information above taken from the NWU Strategic Intelligence-Information Portal (2024) shows that the number of African students registered on the NWU-PC is 28 369, white students are 12451, coloured students are 2223 while Indians are 635. The site does not show the demographics in terms of the languages of the students. However, more black students registered at the NWU-PC than other races. This was not the case about ten years ago as then, there were more white students registered at the NWU-PC than there are today. The system does not show student representation by language.

This demographic data shows that in the past four years (since 2019 - which is as far back as I can access on the NWU portal) the percentage of Black students at the NWU has consistently exceeded that of the other races, and this is the case even when comparing data per campus; especially when looking at the data for the NWU-PC (Data Dashboard-Students Numbers and Targets, 2023). However, there has been very little structural change. In a workshop during Facing Race Week (2022) a panel consisting of students voiced their concerns with the lack of structural changes on the NWU-PC and language was one of the common issues that the panel voiced out, particularly the use of Afrikaans as a language on all fronts including in residences and as LoTL. The students also raised their concerns regarding the racial tensions between Black and White students on campus, and this is a recurring issue.

There has been a lot of concerns from NWU-PC Black students who claim that they are not welcomed in residence events that insist on Afrikaans as the language used at the event and an Afrikaans culture that ignores the culture of Black students who can speak Afrikaans but say that they too feel excluded (Facing Race Week, 2022). Other concerns include signs and other communicative methods that completely ignore the language policy of the University. Black students continue to feel excluded from the campus based on their language or their Blackness. This frustration is nothing new.

During the #FEESMUSTFALL movement of 2015/16 where students protested the high fees of the university and lack of support from the government, the students on the NWU-PC campus, the mostly Black group of students who participated also included language in their messages to the University. Students wanted the use of Afrikaans as a language of teaching and learning at the NWU-PC to be changed in order accommodate them. They argued that they did not want to sit in classes interpreted from Afrikaans to English, and they carried placards demonstrating against the this. According to Antia and Van der Merwe (2019: 408) North-West University students together with students from other previously Afrikaans-only universities such as Stellenbosch University for example also advocated for #OpenStellenbosch with regards to language barriers (Hlatshwayo & Fomunyam, 2019), University of Pretoria, and University of the Free State, added the demand for decolonising the language of the institution in their #FEESMUSTFALL protests. While the rest of the country's students were protesting for fees, students specifically on the NWU-PC were doing so while also advocating for the removal of interpretation for some of their modules.

There has been some transformation on the teaching front, but against this backdrop, Afrikaans students continue to benefit from a system that teaches in their home language while the same

cannot be said for Black South African Languages. This is problematic because most South African students who are now enrolled at the NWU-PC are not first-language speakers of either English or Afrikaans, and these are the two languages used mainly for teaching and learning. Therefore, when these students protest, they are just fighting for a right to be taught in a language they enrolled for (English). This is outside the ongoing debate on the use of Black South African languages for teaching and learning. This is because when students campaigned for the transformation of the language policy of the NWU, they decried the use of Afrikaans and simultaneous interpreting services while advocating for English as the language of teaching and learning, and they did not say anything concerning the inclusion of their languages as LoTL. These students never advocated for the use of Sesotho and Setswana as the languages of teaching and learning during this time, despite the constant commitment of the NWU language policy to promote these two languages as the languages of teaching and learning.

It is against this contextual background that this study wants to investigate how students use their Black South African Languages to deepen understanding, at a university.

2.5. Academic literacy

2.5.1. A working definition

Academic literacy according to Lillis and Scott (2007: 6) "signify courses intended to enable student writers to meet the demands of writing in university". Lea and Street (1998: 157) argue that the most common models of teaching literacy had been skills-centred and that there was little focus on identity and power relations among students writing from diverse backgrounds. Much of academic literacy as a course is oriented towards student writing (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Scott, 2007) and the production of written texts for assessment. Lea and Street (2006) distinguish between the different models of academic literacy which are skills-based, focusing on language and grammar at a surface level, and academic socialisation programs that focus on what Van Dyk and van der Poel (2013) refer to as academic acculturation of students in the academe by learning the ways of their disciplines and lastly, academic literacies. The academic literacies model according to Lea and Street (2006: 369):

> It is similar in many ways to the academic socialization model, except that it views the processes involved in acquiring appropriate and effective uses of literacy as more complex, dynamic, nuanced, situated, and involving both epistemological issues and social processes, including power relations among people, institutions, and social identities.

The autonomous model as opposed to the ideological model is that the former is the one described above as skills-based while the latter considers that literacy is socially and

contextually embedded (Lea, 2017; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Street,1984). The ideological model which allows for the context and prior knowledge of the learner to be incorporated and acknowledged is the approach most relevant for this study. Academic literacy in the context of this study is about how students use their languages to make meaning and deepen understanding. This study acknowledges the multilingual language repertoires of the learners as resources and valuable in the quest for knowledge creation.

At the helm of this study, an investigation of the student's use of their Black South African languages to deepen understanding in a module called Academic Literacy is brought forth. The academic literacies model as a teaching and learning pedagogy that allows for the social processes of academic acculturation while acknowledging the epistemological access of academic literacies is more relevant to the study. Academic literacy as a pedagogy views academic literacies as a development of more than just one mode of literacy but a multiliterate approach to higher education. The issue of using indigenous South African languages in the academic environment is both a socialisation and epistemological issue. This is bearing in mind that by including the languages of the students, academic access is made more viable and realistic considering the history of academic languages in the country and the use of Black South African languages throughout the school system.

The critique of academic literacies has focused on the approach of academic literacy from generic vs subject-specific lenses. While the generic approach views academic literacy as a set of skills to be taught to students, the subject-specific approach sees academic literacy as a set of skills to immerse the student into a specific field and assist the student in learning the conventions of the field. The subject or discipline-specific approach to academic literacy has received much attention in the South African context in the past few years (Jonker, 2016). Subject-specific is more relevant because it orients the student toward the field of study (Goodier & Parkinson, 2005) unlike the generic model of academic literacy which highlights general issues. However, it is important to note that the peculiar challenges faced by universities when it comes to students' enrolments, registrations, funding and other administrative nightmares do not allow for easy transition of students into higher education. This is not part of the scope of this study, but it does sometimes impact teaching and learning, especially in the context of South Africa.

2.5.2. Writing and reading

Ndebele (2024) argues that much of the academic literacy model taught in universities is that of skills-based model where academic literacies are taught as skills to help students with writing and to assist them in adhering to writing conventions. Many of the universities aspire to attain a

more ideological idea of academic literacy but in the context of South Africa, academic literacy cannot deny the voice of the many South African students whose languages are not languages of the academe, which happens to be English (Ndebele, 2024; Sekgobela, 2023). Drawing from the languages of the students can help with epistemological access and it can also help students to use their languages to attain higher order thinking with their writing.

This study uses Bloom's (1956) taxonomy to evaluate the consultations of students on the content and the level of discussion. This is discussed in Chapter 3 under the analysis of recorded consultations.

2.5.3. Academic literacy and language

When it comes to the unique context of academic literacy in South Africa, the use of languages by the students comes to the fore. Academic literacy modules could be a gateway subject where students could use their African languages to make meaning. The process of meaning-making in academic writing is very important at university and it involves cognitive and social processes in that in the deconstruction of the curriculum, participants use their languages to access meaning. Their social and cultural background plays a role in achieving this (Ndebele (2020: 49). This highlights the importance of the first language of the learner in the development of literacy in the second language. In Cummins' (2008) BICS/CALP model of literacy from as early as primary school, one cannot obtain cognitive academic language proficiency, without achieving the basic interpersonal communication skills in a language. Furthermore, the development of CALP takes a substantial period and if you do not develop CALP in the L1 it will not necessarily transfer to CALP in the L2. Cummins advocated for seven years of immersion in the home language of the learner before the switch to English – to allow enough time for the development of CALP in the L1. However, most participants in the South African education system switch to English before they have been immersed in the first language, rendering their learning of the English language and developing CALP skills in the L1 and English problematic.

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter 2 covered the theories of LPP and to a small extent LM and how these theories inform the current language debates on LP. The history of LPP, LM and LP were outlined. This history shows that LPP originated post-World War two when the idea of nations' association to language became challenged. Migration, displacements and other issues challenged the idea of nations and thus the idea of national languages which had been the norm back then. This led to a need for language planning and policies. LPP and LP are concerned with corpus planning, status planning and acquisition planning. When it comes to status planning, LPs reveal that there

are a lot of languages in the world, but they do not share the same status. Language policies differentiate the statuses of the languages from official languages to minority languages, national languages and many more. The languages are treated differently because of their statues.

In Africa, the status of official language is mainly given to ex-colonial languages while African languages remain in the shadows. In Francophone Africa, French occupies the status of official language even though the countries have African languages spoken by many of the citizens and have gained independence from France for a while now. French is the official language in countries such as Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon and many more former French colonies while the languages of the majority remain sidelined. This case is similar to the one in Lusophone countries such as Equatorial Guinea, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau which were colonised by Portugal or Spain and Portuguese and Spanish remain official languages of these countries. This is despite the presence of languages spoken by the locals, and these languages remain unrecognised by policy. This has a detrimental effect on the language in education policies of the different African countries as many learners and students go through the education system in a language that is not their first language. The problem persists even into universities.

In Anglophone Africa, which was colonised by the British, African languages also continue to be marginalised when compared to English. The status of the African languages in some Anglophone African countries such as Lesotho, Ghana and Botswana are that although there are some African languages recognised there, their statuses is as national language or even if they are official languages, they are used lesser in their official role than English. South Africa as a former British and Dutch colony is unique because of the effects of apartheid before it became a democracy in 1994. Apartheid which was a movement that separated people along racial lines was carried out by the Afrikaner regime of the time, and the Afrikaners are descendants of the Dutch. Apartheid prioritised Afrikaans as a language. As such the country has a history of both English and Afrikaans as official languages, and the latter occupies a lesser role in academia nowadays when compared to the years before democracy.

What democracy brought to South Africa is the idea of transformation whereby the aim is to transform areas that were previously reserved for whites only and include black South Africans. This transformation is particularly spoken and written about concerning schools and universities. Because of transformation, mergers took place around the year 2004 and this led to the formation of the North-West University. This institution is a merger of two historically divergent universities whereby the University of the Nort West (HBU) and “Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys” (*Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education)* (HWU). As a result,

the newly formed university has a unique language history, particularly the NWU-PC which is the context of this study. The NWU-PC used to be "Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys" and it was an Afrikaans only university. Due to transformation, the NWU-PC now has a lot of young black South African attending here and the languages of teaching and learning are English and Afrikaans. The NWU has a language policy that recognizes English, Afrikaans, Setswana and Sesotho as its official languages, and is committed to promoting all the South African official languages through functional multilingualism. It also wants to promote Setswana and Sesotho to the level of LoTL as they are currently not LoTLs.

Research has shown that learners struggle to learn in multilingual contexts because the LoTL is mostly not the same as their language 1. As such, students also struggle in university because of their struggle with English at university as LoTL. Research in academic literacy at most universities points to the under-preparedness of students at university. The same is the case for the participants in this study as they struggle and mediate their language barriers in English as LoTL by using their own languages alongside English to make meaning and deepen understanding. Therefore, the research question that this chapter has answered is what we already know about the use of multilingualism in higher education.

The chapter has shown that although students struggle with English as LoTL, they do use their languages to make meaning in different contexts. Furthermore, research has shown that although students use their languages to make meaning at university, they have negative attitudes towards the use of their languages as LoTL. Academic literacy as a university module used to bridge the gap between high school and university has shown constantly that language is one of the reasons students come underprepared for university amongst a few other reasons. Therefore, this study advocates for an academic literacies framework that acknowledges the students' prior knowledge, including the students' use of their first languages as beneficial and potent. Therefore, this study uses a new data set of students using their languages during consultations (mostly in the office); there seems to be a lack of findings of students using their languages during consultations. Therefore, the participants who use their languages during consultations' attitudes towards the use of multilingualism in education will be investigated to ascertain whether the findings in this study will be similar to other studies on language attitudes concerning the use of African languages as LoTL.

This review has outlined previous research that shows that students struggle with English as LoTL at universities, they use their languages at university in various ways to deepen understanding, but they have negative attitudes towards the use of their languages as LoTL. Chapter 2 has shown

the issues of languages in the world, in Africa, in south Africa and at the NWU. This therefore has set a foundation for investigation carried out in Chapter 3. In the next chapter, the empirical projects that were executed to investigate the use of Black South African languages in consultation sessions with an English academic literacy lecturer will be described.

Chapter 3: Research methods

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the research methods used in the study will be described. The different methods utilised in this study are aimed at answering the research questions posed in the study. This study seeks to answer the following main research question:

How do students in higher education effectively use other languages they bring to university (especially as demonstrated in office consultations) to improve their own learning and how can these practices be incorporated into language-in-education policies?

In this chapter, the research methods used to answer the research questions presented above will be described, starting with a description of the research paradigm.

3.2. Broad research paradigm

A research paradigm is "the framework into which the theories and practices of your discipline fit to create the research plan" (Ulz, 2023). This study seeks to address inequality and social injustice through a transformative research paradigm (Mertens, 2007; Omodan, 2022). A transformative research paradigm seeks to bring to light the inequalities people face regarding an unjust or unfair system while trying to find solutions to the problem. This study therefore adopts a transformative paradigm in line with the South African Higher Education mandate of transformation of institutions of Higher Education. The vision expressed in the South Africa Department of Education's document, *Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation* (1996: 4), defines the aim of transformation as to "[e]nsure equity of access and the possibility of success to those - irrespective of race, colour, gender, creed, age or class - seeking to realise their potential through higher-level education and learning". This means that the transformation of higher education should open possibilities for access and success for students who are not necessarily regarded as the traditional higher education population. Concerning language policies, institutions of higher learning should seek to promote previously marginalised South African languages, bearing in mind the dominance of English and Afrikaans as languages of teaching and learning in the pre-1994 higher education dispensations in South Africa (South African Department of Education,1996).

Within this context, language is a contested area in the transformation arena, particularly in higher education in South Africa. As is clear from the discussion of language-in-education policies in higher education in Chapter 2, access to the dominant languages used in higher education (English and in some contexts Afrikaans), as well as broadening the use of indigenous African languages in higher education, are equally important language imperatives related to the

transformation of the post-1994 higher education context in South Africa. It is against this background that this study presents a description of the case of students studying Academic Literacy at the North-West University Potchefstroom Campus (NWU-PC) from the perspective of how Black South African languages are used to make meaning during consultations about academic work with their lecturer (also the researcher in the study). The aim of the study is to use the knowledge gained about the use of Black South African languages in academic consultations to inform recommendations for the improvement of the implementation of a multilingual language policy at the NWU. Research on how the participants used Black South African languages during consultation with their English Academic Literacy lecturer is the crux of the study. In addition to the description and analysis of the use of Black South African languages during consultation sessions, the study gathered several other datasets to explain the case of the study. Thus, a transformation paradigm to research is relevant to use in this study because with it one can present the inequalities hidden in the fabric of society whilst attempting to bring solutions to the issue to ultimately advocate for a socially just society.

3.3. Conceptual framework

3.3.1. Language planning and policy and Language management

This research uses language planning and policy theory to explore the LPP at a meso level of the university to language management at the micro level of individual competency in and out of the classroom. LPP and LM guided the use of language during office consultations. Most of the foundation work on LPP and LM has been thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2. The tenets of these theories are necessary in interrogating the way policy can and is being used at the NWU because policies give power and voice to the languages included. The languages included and explicitly mentioned in the LP of the NWU are Setswana, Sesotho, English and Afrikaans as languages that receive priority while the other official South African languages are functionally recognized (NWU Language Policy, 2022). Knowledge of the policy is of the utmost importance to advance the rhetoric of the NWU's language policy. Lack of knowledge for policy on the other hand is problematic and knowledge of the policy, the benefits of implementing the policy and policy awareness are some areas that demand attention and will be discussed.

3.3.2. Transformation of higher education – Language and literacy

According to research in South African higher education, most students come to universities unprepared or underprepared for the challenges ahead of them (Khumalo & Maphalala, 2018; Madadzhe, 2019; Schutte & van Zyl, 2023; Weideman *et al.*, 2020; Van Rooy & Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2015). Though this is attributed to the socio-economic inequality that prevails even after 30 years

of democracy, some point blatantly to the issue of language of tuition at high school as a factor (Antia, 2021; Batyi, 2018). This has created a need for an intervention to accommodate the students that are otherwise deemed underprepared, thus giving rise to modules such as Academic Literacies. Using academic literacies as a teaching pedagogy aimed at dealing with the unpreparedness of students, universities try to bridge the gap between intent in the form of language policies and practice in the form of language in education in the South African context. A gap exists between what students bring to their classroom in the form of the richness of their languages and what is practiced in the classroom. As such, Van Dyk and Van der Poel (2013) speak of the acclimatization or "acculturation" of students into the academic environment through academic literacy.

Sebolai (2022) and Khumalo and Maphalala (2018) explain academic literacy as the ability to meet the demands of higher education. Literacies allow for the inclusion of languages other than English, which is the language that the module is offered in. Other languages are embraced under the umbrella of literacies. In South Africa, on academic literacies in higher education, much research has focused on the issue of language. There is no doubt that the exclusion of South African languages is problematic to the term literacies. Other important issues that have been included in academic literacy at universities are the Fourth Industrial revolution and academic literacy, digital literacy and the pervasive use of AI such as ChatGTP by university students (Roestenburg *et al.,* 2024; Schutte & van Zyl, 2023). The context of this study however is on multilingual literacies and their inclusion in higher education in South African universities. As a merged University that embraces functional multilingualism, how students use the languages they bring from high school to make meaning at university is the focus of the study. Researchers have pointed to the benefits of using one's language at university through pedagogies such as translanguaging (Madadzhe, 2019; Makalela, 2015) and this is explored further in this study.

3.3.3. Transformation: Equity, access and redress

When it comes to transformation in South Africa, the transformation of higher education and language policy speak to one another. To achieve social justice, equity and redress as pointed out in the transformation agenda and policy of higher education (Le Cordeur, 2013; Mthembu, 2019), acknowledgement and promotion of previously marginalized languages in South Africa is imperative. Language policy and awareness is necessary to encourage inclusion and to foster access and equity. This element of equity and access through language is still problematic in the higher education landscape of South Africa, also at the NWU. What does this mean in practice?

How does it inform policy? The study attempts to answer these questions in the discussion presented in Chapter 5 and in the recommendations proposed in Chapter 6.

3.4. Research design

A research design refers to "the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring you will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data" (Sacred Heart University Library, 2024). Wright *et al.* (2016) states that a well-articulated research design shows an alignment between the worldview, the methodology and the methods of data collection to be used in the study. A case study design that looks at how students consult in the office or use their languages after a lesson when they consult with their lecturer will deepen understanding of the use of Black South African languages in higher education in South Africa. This phenomenon called for a variety of methods in collecting data.

In this study, a mixed method design was implemented. A mixed-method design refers to using more than one research design to conduct research. In collecting the data, the qualitative data was used to collect mostly audio recorded data which was consultations, interviews and the focus group discussion, for an in-depth understanding of the issue. Conversely, quantitative data was used to collect the numbers and frequency data through two administered questionnaires. Both methods were necessary to answer the research questions.

3.4.1. Data collection

3.4.1.1. Ethics

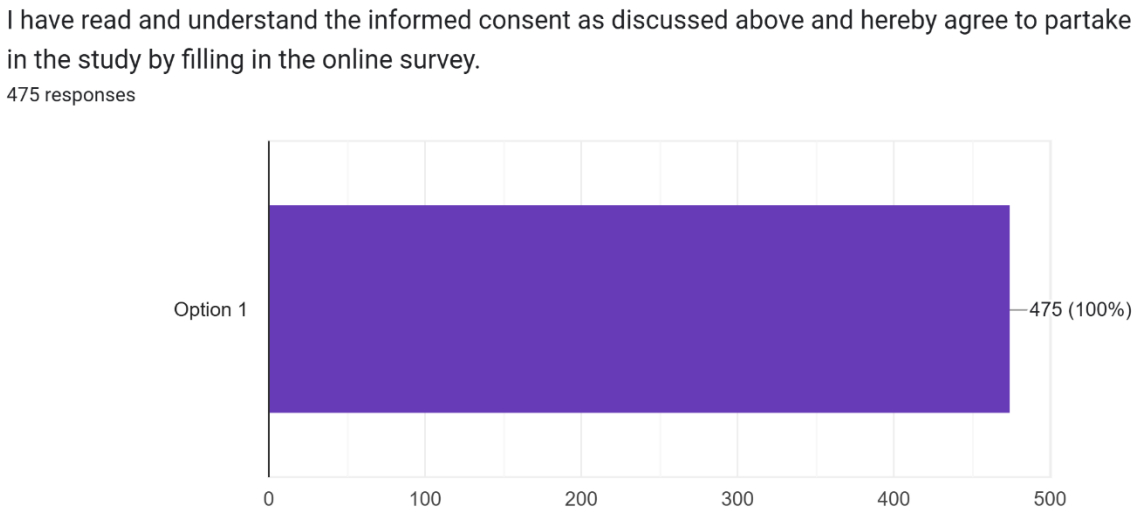
For the study to collect data and, it had to pass through an ethics committee and a gatekeeper committee. The study is demarcated in the NWU; only students enrolled in the Academic Literacy (ALDE) module at the NWU-PC in 2022 participated in the consultation recording, interviews, and focus group, and Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, while students enrolled at the NWU-PC who attended ALDE classes or knew of ALDE, participated in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire. The researcher obtained ethical clearance to conduct the study from the NWU Ethics Committee for Language Matters (ECLM) (ethics number NWU-00724-21-S7) and the data was collected from May 2022 until October 2022 (see Appendix H). Since the participants are university students, the study also obtained gatekeeper clearance (gatekeeper clearance number: NWU-GK-21-072) to conduct the study (see Appendix G). Other secondary data were collected or included in the analysis to a small extent, such as selected references to the

linguistic landscape of the campus, as well as re-visiting already existing data and documents such as the NWU language policy document of 2018 and 2021.

Furthermore, to adhere to the ethics requirements as set out by the NWU, and adhere to research standards, all participants had to complete a consent form giving authority for their study responses to be used. The consent form questions are included under Appendix E, Fand G.

There were other participants who filled in the questionnaire from the NWU-VC and NWU-MC, but they were automatically eliminated from carrying on with the questionnaire.

Figure 3: Consent to complete the Language Repertoire Questionnaire



Only the data from the participants who gave consent to participate is included in the analysis of the study. Those that did not give consent were automatically removed from the study and did not continue with the questionnaire posed on Google Forms. The consent form is presented in Appendix G. Initially, there were 481 responses, after the data set was cleaned and quality assured the responses of participants under 18 (6 participants) have also been removed because it is unethical. Therefore, only 475 participants' responses are used for the current study.

The consent form for the 'Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire' was also administrated through Google Forms and the consent form for the use of participants' work is as follows:

Figure 4: Consent to participate in the PhD study by completing a questionnaire

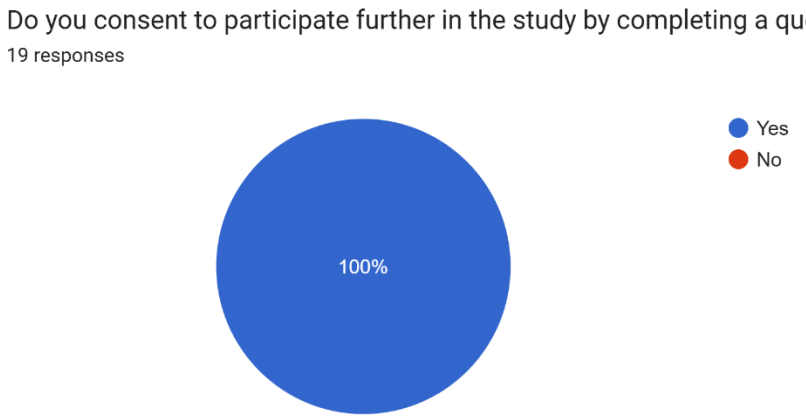
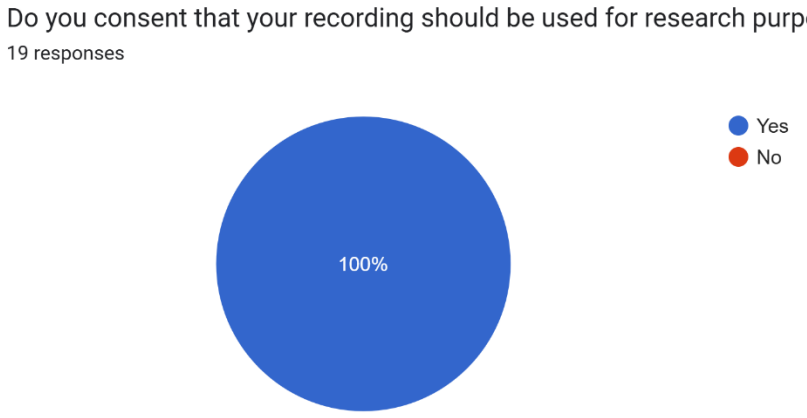


Figure 4 above is a representation of participants who filled in the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire online. Those participants are also listed under consultation recordings (Table 3). Participant 13 gave his consent manually when he first came to consult individually for Assignment 1, but his consultation that is used in the study is the one where he came with Participant 14 to consult about the summary class assessment and other assessments like the group assignment mentioned. Therefore 20 participants allowed their recordings to be used in the study. The participants were students taking the Academic Literacy (ALDE) module in the second semester (July- December 2022) and the researcher was their lecturer as well. There are 11 consultation audio-recordings used in this study. Some participants came to consult individually while most came to consult as a group.

Figure 5: Consent to use the recording for research purposes

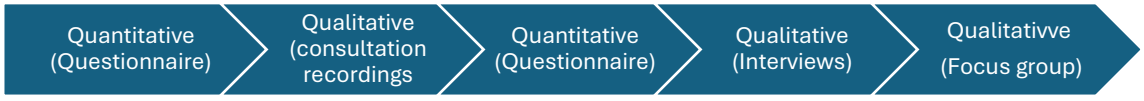


Although most of the participants received an email requesting consent to use their recordings and their participation further in the study, only 19 participants as shown above gave consent electronically and only one participant gave it via hard copy. It became better to ask participants to sign their consent online than to get them to the office to sign it. During the cleaning of the data, there were 20 responses, and only one participant who completed the consent form stating that their consultation could be used was one individual and the participants' data set was deliberately removed from the data to be analysed. Participant 13 came to consult alone and before coming with a peer (participant 14). When he came alone to consult regarding assignment 1, he signed the consent form manually. His recording alone was not used for the study but the one where he came with a peer was consulted as budget constraints made the translation and quality assurance of the participants' contributions in the Black South African languages selected impossible. The recording where Participant 13 came to consult alone was not transcribed and translated and only the one where he came to consult with Participant 14 to minimize costs. It did not interfere or impact the quality of the data translated because Participant 13 was very vocal when he came to consultation concerning a class assessment that had to be submitted (Consultation 7).

3.4.1.2. Integrative data collection strategies

3.4.1.2.1. Instruments, timelines and sampling

Akerblad *et al.* (2020) explain that for the reliability of a mixed method study to be enhanced, the mix can occur during any period of either the data collection, the analysis or the interpretation of data stages. Since this study uses a mixed method approach, and both qualitative and quantitative data were collected, the study uses integrative strategies in all the three stages mentioned above. The sequence during the data collection was integrative because the study started with the 'Language Repertoire Questionnaire', which was a quantitative instrument aimed at all Academic Literacy (ALDE) students who wished to participate. This was followed by consultations recordings as a qualitative instrument. Thereafter, the participants who had been recorded using the languages during consultation were invited to complete another questionnaire named 'Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire' and it was a quantitative instrument. Afterwards, the participants who had consulted in their languages, most of whom had completed the 'Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire', were invited for interviews and a focus group discussion. The latter two instruments are qualitative in nature. Thus, the integrative strategy used in the study were instruments that followed the following sequence:



The quantitative methods used in this study include two questionnaires; namely, the Language Repertoire questionnaire (one for the ALDE population enrolled in 2022) and an Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire for the participants who made use of consultations. The qualitative research methods included the analysis of the transcribed office consultation sessions, interviews, and a focus group discussion with the office consultation participants in the study; as well as a qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions in the two questionnaires.

The language repertoire data was collected with a "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" (see Appendix A) that was distributed to the broader ALDE population to ascertain the language repertoires of students in the ALDE module at the NWU-PC at a macro-level. Additional data about the language repertoires of the consultation participants in the project was gathered after the participants came to consult with the researcher in her office. Those consultation participants whose sessions were recorded (and transcribed), and who agreed to participate in the project and provided written consent that their data may be included in the project then received the "Individual language repertoire questionnaire" (see Appendix B). This questionnaire was included in the project to ascertain the language repertoires of the individual students who became part of the project and who used languages other than English during consultations. Further than these two data sets, the individual consultation participants were also interviewed. In these interviews, their language repertoires were experienced in action, and they were also asked direct questions about their use of languages in the consultation sessions and at the NWU-PC (see Appendix C for the interview items). Finally, the researcher conducted a focus group discussion where 5 participants from the 10 individual consultation participants were asked questions about their language repertoires and how they use languages at the NWU-PC (see Appendix D for the focus group discussion questions). The findings from these four data sets provide a rich and detailed account of the language repertoires of the participating students from a macro-level perspective (providing an overview of the language repertoires of the typical ALDE programme students at the NWU-PC at a point in time) to the more micro-level experiences of the individual participating consultation students.

As a mixed method study, the empirical data for the study was conducted along the following timelines (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009: 138):

Table 1: Timelines for the gathering of the empirical data sets for the study and participant numbers

Date of gathering the data set	**Research method used to gather data**	**Number of participants who provided data linked to this data set**
23-05-2022 until 30-08-2022	Language Repertoire questionnaire	N=475
01-08-2022 until 23-09-2022	Audio-recordings of consultation sessions with participants	N=20
01-08-2022 until 05-10-2020	Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire with consultation participants	N=19
19-09-2022 until 05-10-2022	Interviews with consultation participants	N= 9
03-10-2022	Focus group discussion with selected consultation participants	N=5

As can be seen in Table 1, the first data set that was gathered was the Language Repertoire questionnaire. This questionnaire was linked to the NWU Learning Management System for all students who were doing the Academic Literacy module to complete the form 23/05/2022 until 30/08/2022. After that, audio-recordings of consultation sessions with participants took place from 01/08/2022 onwards until about 20 consultation sessions were audio-recorded. Consequently, the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire was administered with those students who came to consult using their languages other than English. They were requested to complete this questionnaire from 01/08/2022 until 05/10/2022. The interviews were held in the lecturer/researcher's office. One interview by participant 24 and 25 was held on the campus but not in the office because the interviewee bumped into the researcher on her way out of office.

The last data set that was gathered was a Focus Group discussion that took place on 03/10/2022. The focus group discussion initially was planned to see if participants who came for the individual interviews would change their minds when discussing similar issues in a group. There was no evidence of that happening, but instead the focus group discussion served as a platform whereby participants elaborated on what they had previously mentioned. Thus, the use of a focus group

discussion affirmed the claims made in the interviews or elaborating on them. The number of participants narrowed down as the study progressed as is typical for the nature of follow-up studies.

Intentionally, the study followed a big sample of participants in the first round of the data collection to ascertain how students generally felt about multilingualism, and it narrowed down to a purposeful sample in the rest of the data sets because in that way, the results of the bigger group that was anonymous could be compared to that of the smaller group that was intentionally multilingual. As mentioned above, the study had 475 participants from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire from the ALDE population, 20 participants from consultations, 19 consultation participants from Questionnaire 2, 10 participants for interviews, and 5 participants for the focus group. It is possible that the consultation participants also completed the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, but the data provided by the consultation participants could not be linked to participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire due to the anonymity arrangements. No student numbers or names were gathered for the Language Repertoire Questionnaire. However, all the consultation participants who took part in the focus group discussion also took part in the interviews, and 8 of the participants who took part in the interviews (excluding participants 24 and 25) all have their voices recorded in the consultations.

Table 2: Data sets, biographical information and consent and participation

Sets of data	N	Age				Gender			Self-reported home language										
		Mean	Min	Max	Std dev	Female	Male	Other	Setswana	Afrikaans	isiZulu	Sesotho	English	isiXhosa	Sepedi	Xitsonga	Tshivenda	Siswati	Other
Language Repertoire questionnaire	475	20	18	46	2.85				104	90	59	44	40	37	18	12	9	5	2
Consultation recordings	11																		
Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire	19	21	18	31	2.75	15	4	0	8	0	2	4	1	2	2	0	0	0	0
Interviews	10								6	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Focus Group	5								3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Demographic data was not collected for the consultation sessions, interviews and focus group discussions. The mean ages for the participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire were 20 and for the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, it was 21. The most prominent self-reported home language for the participants in both questionnaires was Setswana. Most of the participants in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire (15/30 or 78.9%) were female while 4/19 participants (21.1%) were male. Although it is not the aim of this mixed method study to claim that the findings are representative of the NWU-PC student population, the demographic details of the participants indicate that they are similar to that of the population of students enrolled in the NWU-PC. Findings from this study would be useful to propose recommendations for the implementation of a multilingual language policy for NWU-PC students with the same demographic profile as those of the participants.

Table 3: Participation and consent for the three data sets

Consultation recordings	***Participants***	***Consenting participants - consultations***	***Consenting participants - Interviews***	***Focus group***
Consultation 1	*1*	*Participant 1*	*1*	*Participant 1*
Consultation 2	*2, 3*	*Participant 3*		
Consultation 3	*4*	*Participant 4*	*Participant 4*	*Participant 4*
Consultation 4	*5, 6, 7, 8*	*Participants 5, 6, 7, 8*	*Participants 5, 6*	
Consultation 5	*19*	*Participant 19*		
Consultation 6	*9, 10, 11, 12*	*Participants 9, 10, 11, 12*	*Participant 9*	*Participant 9*
Consultation 7	*13, 14*	*Participants 13, 14*	*Participants 13, 14*	
Consultation 8	*15, 16, 17, 18*	*Participant 16*	*Participant 16*	*Participant 16*
Consultation 9	*20*	*Participants 20*		
Consultation 10	*21, 22, 23*	*Participant 22*		
Consultation 11	*26, 27, 28, 29*	*Participants 27, 28, 29*		
			Participants 24, 25	*Participant 25*

In Table 3 above, the number of consultations was 11 and the number of participants who consented to participate by completing the Individual Language Repertoire was 19. Some participants consulted individually (Consultations 1, 4, 5, 9), while the rest of the participants came as a group to discuss the group assignment or came as a pair. Of all the participants who came to consult and were recorded, only 20 continued with the study and 19 of those participants completed the 'Individual Language Repertoire' online. There were 10 of those that consented and took part individual interviews and those that consented by attending the focus group discussion was 5.

3.4.2. Description of instruments used in the study

In this section, information about the research methods used in the study will be presented. The information will focus on: (a) a description of the instruments used, (b) the participants who responded to each instrument, (c) how the data was gathered, and (d) how the data sets were analysed. This information will be reported on each instrument individually.

3.4.2.1. Language Repertoire questionnaire

The aim of this study was to look at how students use languages other than English which is the language of tuition to make meaning during office consultations with their lecturer. It concerns itself with how these languages are used at university, and if the students/participants think languages other than English and Afrikaans could be used for teaching and learning. The questionnaire was online on the NWU LMS and was on voluntary sampling to obtain participants.

As provision for language use is made in the NWU language policy, whether students are aware of the NWU language policy and how they feel about its implementation will be investigated. A broader perspective on the language use and understanding of language policy as well as attitudes towards languages were included in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire. The questionnaire had both open and close questions, Likert scale and 'yes' and 'no' questions.

Instruments

The questionnaire was aimed at all first-year students on the NWU-PC enrolled for ALDE in 2022. Students completed the questionnaire on Google forms. This questionnaire was included in the study to ascertain the knowledge of the NWU-PC language policy by students entering university for the first time or who are doing the module Academic Literacy (ALDE) (see Appendix A). This questionnaire has the potential to answer research questions one, two and four.

The questionnaire consists of five discernable sections which are:

1) Biographical information,
2) General language use,
3) Educational use,
4) Language Policy at the NWU
5) Multilingual education.

Some questions were adapted from already existing questionnaires designed by Coetzee-van Rooy (2016) on language repertoire questionnaire adapted in sections 2 and 3 mentioned above. These include questions on the strongest language, confidence in using English as LoTL, home languages and other languages, order and rank of use and competence in a language, rating language skills.

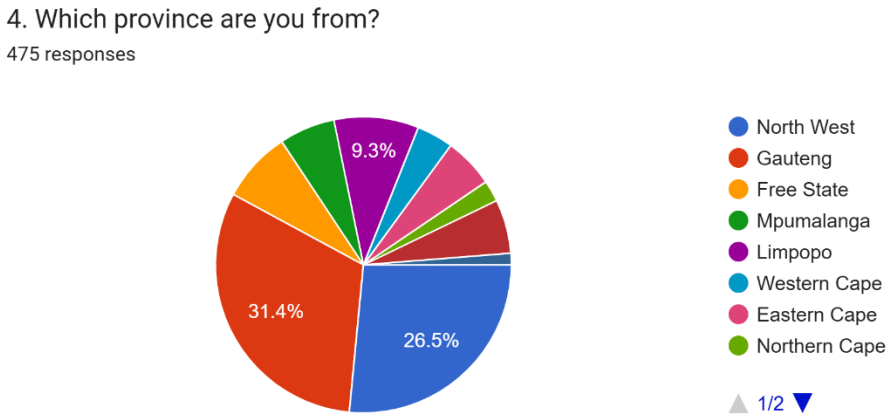
Participants

The first questionnaire was administered online on the NWU LMS known as eFundi. The questionnaire aimed to understand the languages used by first year students as well as their attitude towards using these languages for teaching and learning. The participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire were students doing ALDE as a module. The invite specifically stated that ALDE students are invited to participate in the study. This means that participants doing ALDA (the Afrikaans version of the same module, also offered at NWU-PC) were excluded from the data collection.

Therefore, the results of this questionnaire, unlike the rest of the results of the datasets, are from participants that were not purposefully selected ALDE students from the researcher/lecturer Ms Motlhankane's classes only, and that did not come for consultations. This questionnaire was administered to ascertain the general knowledge of students on the multilingual policy of the

NWU, and their attitudes towards multilingual education. The questionnaire included one item that asked the participants' attitudes towards the use of many languages during consultation sessions (see Figure 25). Below are the students' demographics to this province from where they came.

Figure 6: Participants' province



Most of the participants that completed the Language Repertoire Questionnaire came from the Gauteng province (31.4%, or 149/475 of the participants); 25.6% (126/475) of the participants came from the North West Province 9.3% or 44/475 of the participants) said that they were from the Limpopo Province with the next biggest group coming from the Free State Province with how 37/475 (which is 7.8%). Honoring the ethics arrangements approved for the study, participants who were younger than 18 years were excluded from the study.

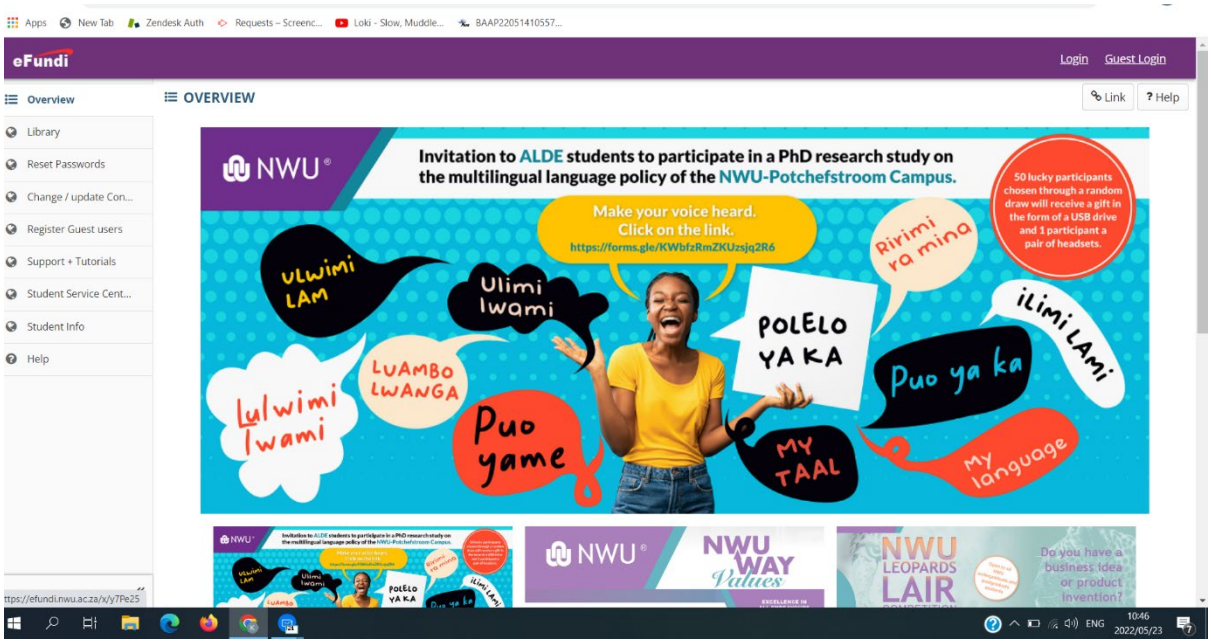
Figure 7: Campus registration

As indicated in Figure 7 above, all participants who completed the Language Repertoire questionnaire are from the NWU-PC.

Data gathering

Through a poster invitation posted on the NWU LMS (eFundi), students were asked to participate in the questionnaire:

Figure 8: Poster-Invitation to participate in the study



ALDE (English module) were asked to participate in the study and 475 responses were received. The responses were initially 481 but after removing 6 responses from participants under 18, the responses of 475 participants were used for this study. Afrikaans participants also completed the Language Repertoire Questionnaire for the ALDE population also, although the study was aimed at students who were enrolled for ALDE and used Black South African languages. The module Academic Literacy is offered in Afrikaans, and it is called ALDA, while the English version of the same module is called ALDE. However, Afrikaans students also can choose to do ALDE instead of ALDA, and in some modules, they do not have a choice but, the choice is made for them by their faculty and they must do ALDE, the English version.

As such, Afrikaans participants are only included in Language Repertoire Questionnaire for the ALDE population and excluded in the other parts of the study (the audio-recordings of the office consultation sessions, the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the interviews and the focus group discussion). This study focused on the responses of the students who use their indigenous South African languages. However, because of the intricate nature of the languages of teaching at the NWU-PC where Afrikaans and English are used as languages of tuition, it is

impossible to divorce Afrikaans from the study. It features prominently as a language of teaching and the presence of Afrikaans on the campus is discussed where relevant.

Data analysis

The frequencies for the Language Repertoire questionnaire items were calculated by the NWUs Statistical Consultation services and a report was presented to the researcher. Some cross-tabulations were done using Statistica. The open-ended questions' responses were coded through ATLAS.ti (2024) and the frequencies of the themes were recorded and interpreted. Findings from the dataset will be presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5.

3.4.2.2. Audio-recordings of consultation sessions with the lecture/researcher

The study uses recorded office consultations between the lecturer and students as an anchor dataset to describe how the ALDE participants used their Black South African languages for academic advancement at the NWU-PC. In this study, most of the recordings (10 of the 11) took place in the lecturer's office and one was done immediately after class whereby participants approached the lecturer to ask questions or enquire about something. The consultation between lecturers and their students can be described as a proactive move by students, taking the initiative to approach the lecturer to ask questions about the academic work that they are involved in. This action as pertains to this study took place in the lecturer's office or at the podium in the classrooms, after lectures had ended. The enquiry could be on any issue ranging from personal issues in relation to classes and assessments, what was discussed in class, participation as well as upcoming tasks. It can also extend to discussions about missing a class and other personal issues that affect class attendance, class participation or completion of tasks. It shows urgency on the side of the students and is constructive in nature in that not only was it the students who took their time to come and consult, but they also started conversations/discussions using their Black South African languages to necessitate and orient the nature of the communication as multilingual. The lecturer continued the multilingual conversations started by the students where the use of Black South African languages in her repertoire was relevant. This practice therefore rendered the nature of the consultations as multilingual, and one could probably infer that the students felt that it was legitimate to use their Black South African languages. Therefore, the choice of language by students who came to consult sets the mood for the language choices used during the consultation sessions.

Instruments

The consultation recordings constituted the most important dataset in the study that focused on students' use of Black South African languages for academic advancement at the NWU-PC. Students came to consult concerning an assignment they had to submit. This assignment (see

Appendix J) counted 20% of the participation mark for the semester. The instructions for the assignment were on misinformation in their field of study and the students had to write an assignment based off the comments that they received on the individual assignment they had previously submitted. The instructions for the assignment were one of the biggest reasons why participants came to consult.

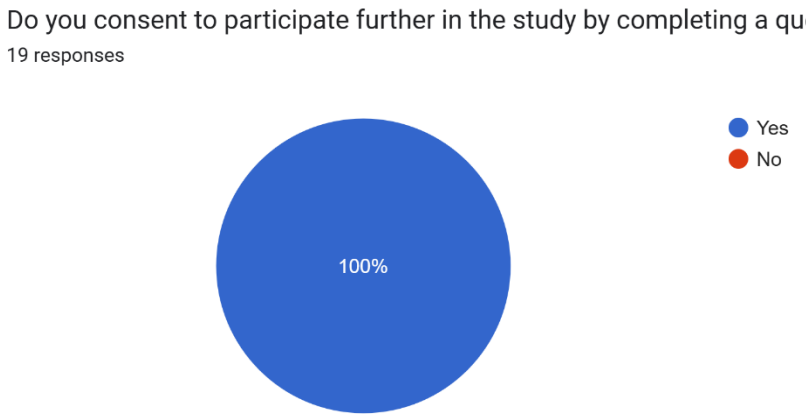
As students entered the office to consult or approach the lecturer to consult after class, they purposefully and intentionally chose to use their languages other than English to communicate. This prompted the lecturer to ask them for permission to audio-record the session under the guise of doing research on teaching and learning. The important thing here is that the participants walked in or approached the consultation session by using Black South African languages and English. They were thus purposefully selected because of their use of Indigenous language. They also had a right to decline to be recorded, yet none of them declined. However, several of the students who were audio-recorded during consultations did not give consent for the audio recordings to be used in the study. These participants did not complete the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire even though they were invited to via email. As such, not all consultations were transcribed and used in the study as the right of participants to not provide consent for the use of their audio-recordings were respected by the researcher.

There is no "instrument" as such that guided the progression of the consultation sessions. The consultations developed naturally, working from the questions that the participants asked about the academic work that they came to consult about.

Participants

The following participants' recordings will be used: Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 ,10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, 27, 28 and 29 as they gave consent for their recordings to be used further in the study.

Figure 9: Consent to participate in the PhD study by completing a questionnaire



Participants 1 and 4 and came to consult about the introductory paragraph, participants 2 and 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, 15, 16, 17 and 18 as well 21, 22 and 23 as well 26, 27 28 and 29 all came to consult as a group for the big assignment. Participant 20 came to consult alone on behalf of the group for the submission of the same big assignment. On the other hand, participants 13 and 14 as well as Participant 19 came to consult on the class assessments that were due.

Data gathering

The consultations occurred during the time participants came to consult regarding Assignment 1, Assignment 2, and Class assessments while they were enrolled for ALDE at the NWU-PC in 2022. Assignment 1 was an introductory paragraph that students had to individually write, on the theme of misinformation in their field of study. It carried a final mark of 5% towards the participation mark (the mark they went into the examination with). Conversely, Assignment 2 was a group assignment that was a continuation of Assignment 1 in that the students had to combine their ideas and write an academic essay of 800-1000 words on the same topic in their field of study. Assignment 2 weighed 20% and a lot of participants came to consult during this time. The class assessments were open throughout the semester for students to submit online, while some assignments were done in class, and they carried a final module mark of 20%. These assessments carried a hefty number of marks.

Data analysis

The audio-recorded consultation sessions of the consenting participants were transcribed, translated, and quality-assured. The quality-assured transcriptions were then added as documents to ATLAS.ti (2024) for coding. To answer the relevant research questions posed in the study, the following matters in the transcriptions were coded:

Coding the nature of the consultation discussion

Participants did not come to consult about the same thing. The topics of discussion were the assignment or other class assessments. The topics for each consultation session were coded. Furthermore, the researcher coded the consultations to document the "educational" reasons for consulting. In other words, did the participants come to consult about the conceptualisation of the written work they were doing, or the structure of the written work; or did they come to consult about more administrative matters like submission arrangements or arrangements related to marks?

1. Coding the switches between languages

The switches between languages were also coded in the transcriptions. This is how the switches were counted.

- Only the participants' switches were counted and not those of the lecturer.
- Switches were counted only once a person switched to another language. If they remained speaking in the same language, the same code was documented once. When the participant switched again (even if it happens after a while or after one word), a code was added to indicate this switch.

In other words, if a participant was speaking in Sesotho, then switched to English, the English word was coded as a switch. If the participant switched back to Sesotho again and continued in Sesotho, that would be coded as another switch. That is how the switches were coded. This way of coding the switches allowed the researcher to calculate the frequencies of switches.

2. Coding the types of switches

The researcher identified different reasons for switching and coded these reasons as follows:

- Switch type: explaining/clarifying
- Switch type: asking a question
- Switch type: Reply
- Switch type: Repeat

The recorded interviews were transcribed and translated. Because this dataset was the main contribution of the study and not a lot of research on consultations were available, the researcher had to create a framework for coding and analyzing the data. The decisions for the establishment of the codes discussed above were taken bearing in mind that the study is not a micro linguistics study but rather a study on language policy implementation and how policy meets practice.

Because the consultations were impromptu, there were a lot of conversational markers that are found in the data that are not easy to translate. This mostly presented itself in the form of South African slang. South African slang has a lot of inflection and sound expressions. Words such as *Ijooo!*, *Mos, Yerr, Neh, Aha* are some of the words that are found in the data that are not easily translatable. *Ijooo!* for instance can be used to express regret or in some instances used to express excitement or even shock. It depends on the context of the entire utterance, and it was difficult to translate such words. *Mhm*, can mean agreement or wonder, and it is sometimes used to indicate disagreement or to agreement. The meanings of these conversational markers all depend on the context. Therefore, there are instances where these sounds are translated with different meanings, considering the context in which they were used. The context is clearer in the recording because it is sound and not a word.

- Mm = yes (agree)
- Mm mm = No (disagree)
- Mhm = prompting someone to continue by also agreeing or giving them a chance to explain further.
- Er= hesitation/pause
- Mos and neh= affirmation and rhetoric question.

Moreover, since the data was audio recorded and then transcribed, there are also instances where instead of words or even expressions or sound made as mentioned above, a person made use of gestures or signals. That fact that audio-recordings were used made it impossible to document these gestures and other communicative signals in the transcriptions. For example, a person could have raised and lowered their shoulders during the data collection when the audio-recordings were made to show that they do not know, and that way of meaning-making would not be recorded and transcribed in this study. Similarly, a person could have nodded their head to show agreement or lifted their thumb up to show approval and that would be missing in the transcribed data because the data was audio recorded and not audio visually recorded. Furthermore, the participants were not told beforehand to express themselves in words only, as the data collection methods used aimed at collecting data from the students in their most natural state. Simultaneously, there are instances in the data where sometimes the participants or both the participants and the interviewer burst out laughing or other sounds and noises such as coughing are made. These instances are not mentioned in the transcriptions. They are included in the sound files of the audio-recordings, but the researcher only focused on what was said out loud in words.

In the data also, there are instances where the audio is inaudible. This is indicated by an ellipsis to show that something that was said has not been included or transcribed. The interjection *er* is

used throughout the data as well as explained by dictionary.com (2024): "[er is] used to express or represent a pause, hesitation, uncertainty". In most of the data, it is used to represent all three and this is clear in the context in which it has been used in the sentence.

There are also a lot of borrowed words in other South African languages by speakers of one language to another. Often one would hear a Sesotho speaker adding and using some isiZulu words when speaking. Some are popular phrases and expressions. **Mos** is an Afrikaans word that has been adopted by many South Africans as part of their slang. **Nton ton**, **eng eng** and **what what** are some of the slang that is often used by South Africans and can be understood in the context that they are being used. This South African slang is common throughout the data with words in English and in Black South African Languages.

These are some of the words that one will come across a lot when reading the transcripts and they are not easily translatable. **Akere** and **angithi** are used to ask a question, but depending on the way they have been used, they have been translated as either 'isn't it?' if it is at the beginning of a sentence or as 'right?' if it is at the end of the sentence. The word can also mean 'do you agree' but for the sake of the study, 'isn't it' was the translation used. It is often used as a rhetorical question. There are a lot of slang words that are used in conversational data that is unplanned, and the research managed to capture this well because the recording of the data was meant to be conversational whereby the participants are themselves and relaxed.

There is also common English slang such as **cos**, **wanna, gonna** and a lot of contractions in the spoken data. The module that is being discussed here (academic literacies) advises students to use formal writing which does not include slang and contractions. However, because this is conversational data, such words are common in the transcripts and have not been altered to adhere to formal academic standards in order to capture conversational data and be true to the meaning and spoken utterances of the participants. In the context of the data, **cos** in South African slang stands for 'because' and as commonly known, **wanna** is 'want to', **gonna** is 'going to' and the likes.

The study focuses on the meaning carried through in the conversation instead of the use of words. This can be a separate micro-linguistic study that one pursues to investigate how such conversational consultation or speech by the students affects their production of formal written work. Here, the focus is only in showing that students use conversational language during consultations and these practices included common slang and slang particular to a certain language group and slang used widely in South Africa. However, what is important is that in these conversations, important information is conveyed, and understanding is facilitated.

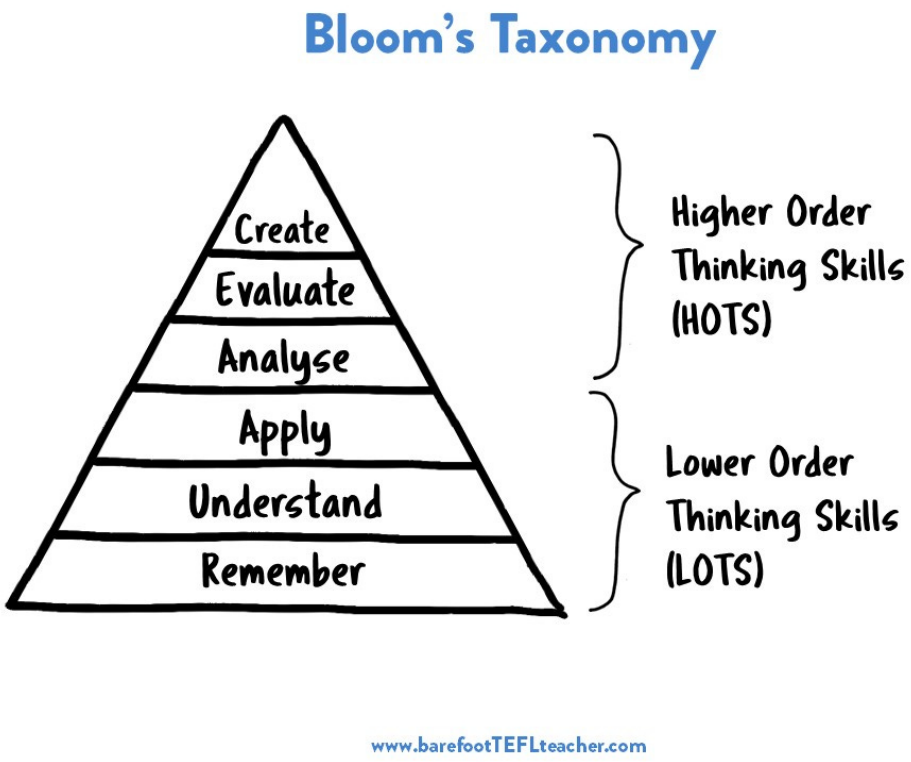
Since the sentences that were transcribed and translated came from multilingual repertoire conversations, it is often difficult or impossible to do a direct translation of African languages into English without having to alter the structure of the sentence itself. The two languages are not mutually intelligible. Black South African Languages as used by the participants in the study are from the Bantu language family. As such, one had to alter structure in terms of the verb, noun, preposition and so forth as used in the language for the sentence to make sense when translated into English and for the clarity. Otherwise, meaning is lost and translations become ungrammatical.

This data was also gathered in 2022 when South Africa still had eleven (11) official languages. This has since changed as South Africa now has twelve official languages. There are a few references therefore in the data to the eleven South African official languages, but thus status has since changed.

Bloom's taxonomy

Since the recorded consultations form the gist of the study, Bloom's taxonomy is used to analyse the recorded data in Chapter 5. Bloom's taxonomy was developed in 1956 and hierarchical in measuring learning. It is a curriculum design tool that helps the teacher to adequately measure the learning process of the students, in reading and writing and cognitive development by measuring progress from "knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation" (Bloom, 1956). Wilson and Narasuman (2020) explains that taxonomy helped with the ordering functions of human learning hierarchically from simple to complex. It is also useful for educators in assessments and curriculum design.

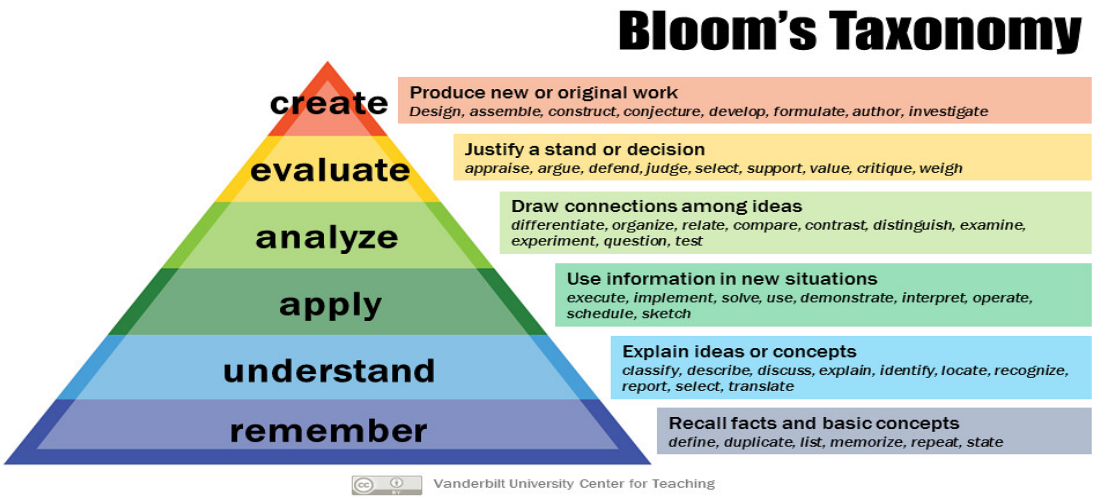
Figure 10: Bloom's taxonomy by www.barefootTEFLteacher.com



The taxonomy is old as it was developed in 1956 but it remains useful and influential even today. It has been adapted and revised from how it was originally crafted by Anderson and Krathwohll (2001) into Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy (Wilson, 2020). The revised taxonomy Krathwohl (2002: 212) changed in that "[t]he categories were ordered from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract" and became two dimensional. It had been designed to measure the lower level or Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) through the students' ability to apply, understand and remember information as opposed to Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) through the ability to analyse, evaluate and create (Kastberg, 2003; Prakash & Litoriya, 2022, Radebe & Mushayikwa, 2023; Muhayimana *et al.*, 2022). The fact that the taxonomy has been revised and adapted shows that it is not without criticism. Some critics have argued that it is not always applicable to all fields (Pring, 1971; Youmei & Yi, 2019).

Bloom's taxonomy by Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching.

Figure 11: Bloom' revised taxonomy



Bloom's taxonomy above illustrates that there are different levels involved in performing academic texts, and thinking or constructing an argument is a level higher, involving application all the way up to creation. Writing is also a process that starts with the conceptualization of the assignment, thinking it through, mind mapping and formulation. These processes involve thinking and participants used their languages to consult with their lecturer while they were going through these cognitive processes.

South African languages can serve a great deal in helping students to understand and this should not be taken for granted. This is because as shown in Figures 17-18 most students who attended township and village schools learnt through their languages alongside English. This is a testament that in secondary and primary schools, the data has consistently shown throughout the years that African languages are used for teaching and learning to make the students understand (Probyn, 2009; Dyers, 2008; Desai, 2001).

Bloom's taxonomy, particularly the separation of higher-order and lower-order thinking skills is often used in teaching contexts at university (Mokgwathi *et al*., 2019; Sebolai & Huff, 2015; Sekgobela, 2023). The reason why Bloom's taxonomy is used in the evaluation of the consultation sessions' contents is that in this study, "In particular, the higher order thinking skills covered by Bloom are crucial, as they lead to problem-solving skills that can be transferred to the students' surroundings" (Sebolai & Huff, 2015: 344). Participants coming to the office to consult are proactive and their use of all languages in their repertoire to connect the dots in their writing process is commendable. It shows that given the right support (language support), students can perform those tasks that they are sometimes deemed unable to do because they have more meaning making resources at their disposal. Limiting them to only use English takes away their agency and voice in as much as it renders them handicapped because they are made to pause

an aspect of their brain or language function that could be instrumental in them making meaning of the task at hand.

Mokgwathi *et al.* (2019: 146) state that Bloom's taxonomy "was created to promote higher forms of thinking in education, such as analysing and evaluating concepts, processes, procedures, and principles, rather, than just remembering facts". Higher-order thinking (HOT) skills as used by students during consultation with the lecturer are important in developing the framework for the assignment. HOT skills can help in consultations for conceptualisation and structure. Shabanza (2019:253) writes that when it comes to consulting in writing centres:

> consultants are trained to assist students in addressing the higher-order concerns (broader issues, such as answering an assignment question or addressing a topic), first, before moving on to the middle (such as text unity, organisation or structure) and lower order concerns (grammar, spelling and punctuation).

LOT skills are also important because remembering, understanding and recalling are necessary to the processes of project management meeting deadlines, setting goals and so forth. As it will be used in Chapter 5, the taxonomy will help in examining the level of cognitive demand that African languages help to fill in the consultation discussion. This will help in separating how Black South African languages are used to advance HOT skills and LOT skills during the consultation session.

3.4.2.3. Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire

Instruments

After the students had been recorded, those that agreed to participate further in the study were asked to complete an Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire online. This questionnaire was similar to the Language Repertoire questionnaire, but there was an extension of questions based on consultations and the participants' use of their African languages. The researcher also wanted to see if the beliefs, perceptions and attitudes held by the larger group as seen in the Language Repertoire questionnaire were like those of the few students who were recorded using their languages during the consultation sessions.

It was sent out to participants who had been recorded during consultations. This means that all the participants were ALDE students in the class of the researcher and not necessarily all first-year students even though the question was not asked. Some first-year students fail ALDE in their first year and the module is often carried over to the second, third or fourth year of students' studies because of failure to complete it the first time. Apart from documenting the nature of the language repertoires of the consultation participants, additionally, the purpose of the

questionnaire was to also to elicit participants' attitudes about their practice of switching languages.

The questionnaire had four sections. These sections are:

1) Biographical information,
2) General language use,
3) Languages used on campus
4) Language Policy at the NWU and implementation

Some items were included from existing questionnaires such as Coetzee-van Rooy (2018) language repertoire questionnaire.

Participants

There were 19 participants who took part in consultations who agreed to their recordings being used in the study and furthermore completed the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire.

They were purposefully selected after coming to consult and using other languages than English during the consultations. Of the 10 participants, 6 were Setswana speakers, 2 were Sesotho speakers and 1 participant was Sepedi and the other participant was an isiZulu home language speaker. The participants were recorded and asked later if they agreed that their recordings can be used and to participate in the study further. Only the data of participants who agreed to their recording being used and to further participate was used.

The majority of the 19 participants that participated in the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire were female:

Figure 12: Sex of participants in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire

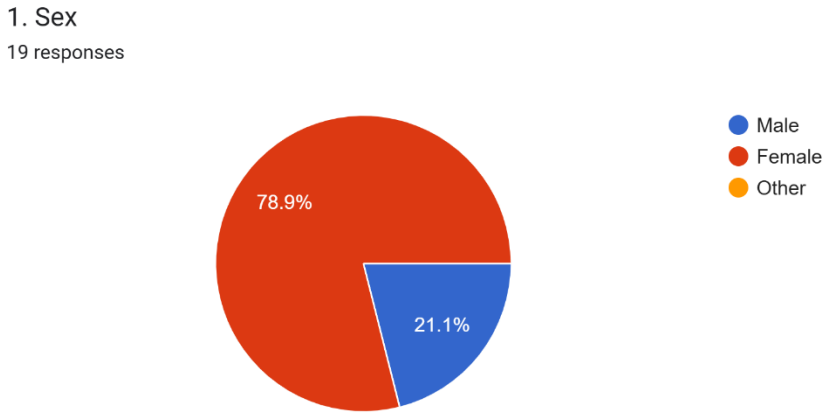


Figure 12 above shows that most of the participants in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire were female.

Data gathering

Similarly to the data collection for the Language Repertoire Questionnaire mentioned above, the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire was a technique used to gather data from participants who had come to consult. The purpose of the questionnaire focused more on their experience as speakers of indigenous South African languages who use their languages to deepen understanding in academic contexts. There were close-ended questions, open-ended and Likert scale items in the questionnaire.

Data analysis

The data gathered was analysed inductively by looking at the frequencies for the closed-ended items and identifying the emergent themes that are most common in the open-ended questions in the questionnaire data. The data was coded in ATLAS.ti (version 2024).

The same pattern of analysis as that in the first questionnaire above was used. See 3.4.1. above.

3.4.2.4. Individual interviews

After the completion of the questionnaire, the participants were further invited to individual interviews that aimed to unpack their attitudes on their use of Black South African languages in the higher education context. The aim of the interviews was also to create a space for the participants to explain, clarify, and articulate their stance on the use of multilingualism in higher education. These interviews were pivotal to the study because they were addressed specifically to the participants who are users of African languages during consultations and thus the researcher wanted to see if their responses will be in alignment with those of questionnaires one and two.

Ten participants were interviewed as part of the set of individual interview data. The interview's purpose was to get a deeper understanding of why students use their languages during consultations and how it makes them feel. The interviews also asked further questions on how the participants felt about their practice of consulting in their languages being extended and promoted beyond the office and classroom after a lecture to other teaching and learning practices. It also sought to illicit participants' knowledge and feelings about the language policy of the NWU and the NWU-PC and the practice and implementation of those policies.

Instruments

Interviews were conducted to collect the data. The participants were invited to the interview after completing the individual language repertoire questionnaire and by word of mouth. The interview was a semi-structured interview with 6 questions. The questions were divided into the following thematic categories:

1. Background information questions
2. Experiences related to the transition from high school to university
3. Experiences related to language use during consultation hours
4. Knowledge and attitudes towards the Language policy of the NWU
5. Experiences and views related to multilingual education
6. Any other language issues that the interviewees thought to be important or interesting at the NWU.

The themes were discussed in the interview.

Participants

Ten participants took part in the individual interviews. They were participants 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, 14, 16, 24 and 25. Participants were selected after having come to consult using their languages. They were then invited individually to come and take part in the interviews. All participants were audio-recorded in the consultations and their voices were recorded except for participants 24 and 25. They were in a group with Participant 16 but he came forward to speak on behalf of the group and they did not speak at the time because their group contributed while another group was consulting after class. They then left the class with the lecturer and asked questions afterwards, but their voices were not recorded then. They further agreed to participate in the study. They came together for their interview. There are therefore 9 recorded interviews, of which 8 are individual one-on-one interviews and 1 has both participants 24 and 25 being interviewed.

Data gathering

The interviews took place in the lecturer's office and outside in an open space at the NWU-PC. Two participants (24 and 25) met with the lecturer outside the lecture room when going for lunch and the interview was held right there instead of going to the office. The other participants came to the office at different times.

Data analysis

The data was transcribed, translated and uploaded to ATLAS.ti (version 2024) for analysis. The emergent themes from the data sets were coded and interpreted in the analysis. The findings are reported in the next chapter.

3.4.2.5. Focus group discussion with selected consultation participants

Instruments

The focus group discussion was included in the study as a way of measuring whether the participants would still insist on their views when in a group or confronted by differing opinions in a group conversation. Therefore, the first question was 'why the participants came to consult and spoke with the lecturer using their own languages instead of English even though the module is in English'. This question is partly taken from the main research question which tries to find out

how students use their languages during consultations to deepen understanding (see Appendix D). The questions in Appendix D were asked, but in no particular order.

Participants

Five participants who participated in the individual interviews were invited to a focus group discussion. The focus group data was collected from participants 1, 4, 9, 16 and 25. They all took part in the interviews and were then asked to participate in the focus group. The intention of the focus group discussion was to see if participants who took part in individual interviews would answer the same way they did while in the focus group. However, what ended up happening was that the participants seemed to explain their answers more in the focus group than they did in the interviews. Their stance did not change but they elaborated on their answers. This finding is reported in Chapter 4.

Data gathering

The data-gathering process took place in a room at the School of Languages on the NWU-PC. The data was recorded through an audio recorder while the participants were discussing the same questions (see Appendix D for the focus group discussion questions) while they enjoyed pizza and some cold drinks. During the focus group discussion, a colleague at the Academic Literacy department, Mr Mpho Shoatja (a colleague) was invited to help moderate the conversation, specifically to assist the researcher to manage potential biases.

Data analysis

The data was transcribed and then translated. The transcription was uploaded into ATLAS.ti (version 2024) for coding and analysis.

3.4.3. Data analysis and thematic analysis

As mentioned under the different instruments' discussions above, cross tabulations and interpretation of visual and graphical data were done and the researcher. Furthermore, ATLAS.ti was used for the analysis of transcribed and translated data. From the interviews, open-ended questions as well as the consultation recording were coded using ATLAS.ti. Saldana (2016) describes a few steps in coding before arriving at a theme. The same approach by Saldana (2016) whereby coding happens in phases, starting with just giving a code, categorizing the codes and coming up with a theme and thus enabling the researchers to make an assertion or theorise, was used.

Figure 13: Saldana

Content analysis of qualitative data → brief notes

- **How to do a content analysis?** (Saldaña, 2016: 14)

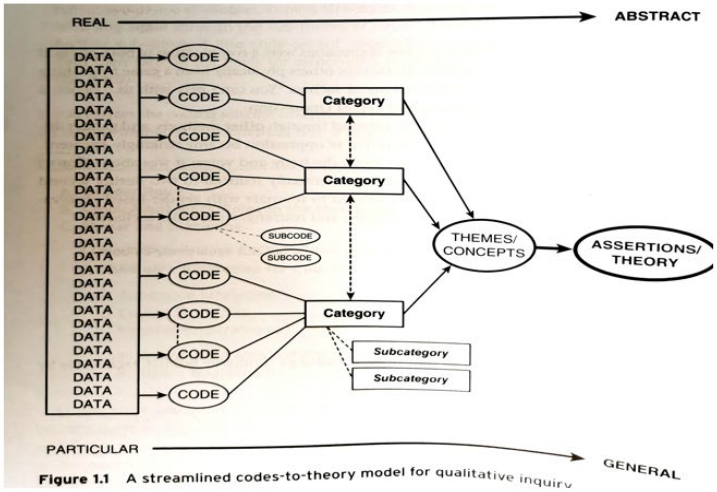


Figure 1.1 A streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry

The researcher used a bottom-up analysis process where themes that emerged from the data were coded and interpreted for analysis. The themes were guided by research questions. Two themes emerged to answer the research question:

> *"What is the nature of the language repertoires of students at the NWU-PC, with a focus on the African home languages students?*

Theme 1 that emerged from the data is the fact that the NWU-PC students are multilingual as will be shown in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, the theme is clearly stated under 5.2. and states that 'The nature of the language repertoire of the participants is multilingual'. To arrive to this theory and assertion, the nature of the language repertoire of the participants throughout the data sets were studied, coded and analysed. This was done alongside the participants multilingual language repertoires in schools and the university.

The second theme that emerged from the data was aimed at answering the research question:

> *How do students use language during consultations to deepen understanding?*

As this research question formed the core of the study and is the main contribution of the study, the analysis of the data proved that there are in did different ways in which students use their languages and the prominent themes that arose are reported in 5.3.1 and 5.3.2:

1. Reasons for the multilingual switches,
2. Description of the use of the participants' languages.

The theme one as shown at 5.3.1 shows that participants switch for multiple reasons during consultations, the prominent one being understanding (Bloom's Taxonomy). Furthermore, theme two shows that when the participants used their languages alongside English during consultations, they do so deliberately and seamlessly, using pedagogies such as transliteration and translanguaging to make meaning.

Moreover, to arrive at the third assertion of the study, the aim was to answer the research question:

What are students' attitudes towards using multilingualism (especially the use of African languages) in higher education?

The themes that arose in answering this research question were:

1. Knowledge of the NWU language policy and
2. Attitudes towards multilingual education.

Lack of the knowledge of the policy contributes to perceptions and attitudes that are negative towards the use of different languages, especially Afrikaans. The attitudes of the participants who consulted using their languages rather than those who only filled in the questionnaire was slightly more welcoming of the use of African languages in educational settings. In general, participants are ambivalent about the use their languages in higher education.

3.4.4. Validity and reliability

For the validity of the study to be achieved Zohrabi (2013: 258) states that "[t]he principles underlying naturalistic and/or qualitative research are based on the fact that validity is a matter of trustworthiness, utility and dependability that the evaluator and the different stakeholders place into it". On the other hand, the reliability of the study refers to the study's ability to be replicated. This means that the instruments used in the study would achieve similar results if used in a different study.

Content validity

During the framing and drafting of the 'Language Repertoire Questionnaire', the researcher used the services of the NWU Statistics office to help with the questionnaire. The researcher had a consultation with the first draft and after the consultation went back to editing them and rephrasing the questions as discussed with the consultant. Some questions were removed as

they were viewed as redundant or unimportant and some questions were revised to arrive at a clear form of inquiry.

Furthermore, the questions used in the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussion were replicated. This was done because the purpose of the focus group discussion was to see if the participants would still maintain the answers given during the interviews when they were in a group discussion. Mostly, participants answered the same, and used the focus group discussion to elaborate on the answers that they gave during the interviews.

Bias

Bias in research is when the research can be influenced to go a certain way to fit a certain narrative and it can occur anytime in the process of doing research (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010; Smith & Noble, 2014). Biases in research should be managed as effectively as possible to advance the trustworthiness of the findings. A potential bias to manage in this study was that the researcher also happened to be the lecturer and the interviewer. This decision was intentional for the researcher to collect the data because she was familiar with the content and the participants. As the lecturer of the participating students, there was a rapport between the students that would foster an environment for free consultation. It was the view of the researcher that the consultation sessions were free and garnered rich data for the analysis of the study. Another bias to manage was the potential influence of the power relations between students and the lecturer and how this may have influenced the collection of data. This potential bias was managed in several ways. First, no marks were traditionally awarded to students' performances during consultation sessions. The participating students would not be under the impression that they could "gain" or "lose" marks for their performances in these conversations. Secondly, the information and consent processes were thorough. When the students started the consultation process, the lecturer asked permission to audio-record the session to improve the quality of teaching and learning initially. Once the lecturer selected a particular consultation session to be included in the analysis, she approached the student participants again and informed them of the nature of the study and how their audio-recorded data would be used in the analysis. Only those participants who provided written consent during this round of information were included in the study. The potential biases related to the study were managed as best as possible.

Transparency

The lecturer in this study (also the researcher) is a Setswana first language speaker who uses English as an academic language (she is an English academic literacy lecturer at the NWU-PC) and who also knows Sesotho (socially and relatively affiliated to Sesotho) and Sepedi (done at University of Pretoria as an additional language) as language group members of Setswana. She

also knows isiZulu and isiXhosa (often conflating the two) with low speaking proficiency and moderate understanding proficiency. There is also an understanding of Afrikaans as a second additional language as she did this at secondary school and work amongst Afrikaans first language speakers.

Data triangulation

As mentioned under 'Description of instruments', the data that was collected using the five instruments in this study was triangulated to achieve validity in the study. Because in mixed methods of research, mixing can occur at any time during the research, triangulating the findings helped in achieving a comprehensive understanding of the main research question (Carter *et al.,* 2014; Zohrabi, 2013). For example, using the findings from the interviews alongside the findings from the focus group measured the consistency in the participants' responses and helped to arrive at a more nuanced stance concerning the discussions. Likewise, the responses from the 'Language Repertoire Questionnaire' and those from the 'Individual Language Repertoire' also helped in clarifying the position of participants' knowledge of the NWU policy. The two questionnaires also helped in understanding the attitudes of participants who are seen actively using their languages during consultations and those that have not been recorded using their languages and the issue of language policy awareness once again is heightened. Furthermore, the responses from the qualitative data and quantitative data merged whereby the responses such as "awareness of language policy", 'multilingual repertoires of participants', 'attitudes towards English, Afrikaans and African languages as LoTL all showed consistency in the responses of the participants.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the research methods used to collect data as well as the motives behind the decision to use certain designs over others. The research used a mixed method approach to research whereby both qualitative and quantitative data is used in this study, and thus data triangulation will be used to validate the argument made. The study, through a quantitative lens, gathered data through two questionnaires: the Language Repertoire Questionnaire was distributed to the ALDE population for all students studying ALDE in 2022; and through the qualitative lens, data was gathered by audio-recording students' consultations that took place in the office with the lecturer and some consultations that happened after class in the lecture halls; interviews with some of the office consultation student participants, and a recorded focus group discussion with a smaller group of the consultation student participants.

In conclusion, Chapter 3 has outlined the method of research for this study, the conceptual framework of the study as well as the research design. The chapter outlined the data sets that were developed, how they were used, and, in some instances, why certain instruments were included.

4. Data presentation and analysis

This chapter presents the findings from the data sets to help answer the research questions posed for the study. Since this is a mixed method study, the presentation of the findings will be mixed or presented in such a way that triangulation of the data is apparent. In most cases the presentation of the data starts with the data from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire and uses the findings from the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire and the interviews and focus group to corroborate or contradict the opinion stated. In this research study, the findings from the consultation recordings are the unique element of the research study that presents how participants used their languages during consultations.

The data presentation is divided into three sections that aim to answer the following three research questions:

- 4.1. What is the nature of the language repertoires of students at the NWU-PC, with a focus on the African home languages students?
- 4.2. How do students use language during consultations to deepen understanding?
- 4.3. What are students' attitudes towards using multilingualism (especially the use of African languages) in higher education?

After the presentation and analysis of data in a bid to answer the above three research questions, the summary and conclusion of the chapter follows under 4.4.

4.1. What is the nature of the language repertoires of students at the NWU-PC, with a focus on the African home languages students?

In this section, the focus is on answering the research question related to the nature of the language repertoires of the NWU-PC student participants in this study. Relevant data from the four data sets gathered in the study was used as framework to provide answers to two elements of the research question state above. Through an analysis of the data gathered with the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire", the "Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire", the "Individual Interviews with consultation participants" and the "Focus Group discussion with consultation participants", the following two aspects of the research question will be answered:

- What is the general nature of the language repertoires of the NWU-PC students that participated in the study; and

- What is the specific nature of the language repertoires of the NWU-PC students that participated in the study with a special focus on their language use in educational experiences?

The section therefore has two broad divisions. In division one, findings that expound the general aspects that form part of the nature of the language repertoires of the participants are presented. In division 2, findings that expand on the specific relationship between the nature of the language repertoires of the participants as related to their language use in education experiences and contexts are presented.

4.1.1 Division 1: General aspects of the nature of the language repertoires of the participants

This section seeks to answer the research question 'What is the nature of the language repertoires of students at the NWU-PC, with a focus on the African home languages students?' The context of the study is the NWU-PC students doing English Academic Literacy (ALDE) as a module in 2022. Only those who came to consult using their languages are included in data set 2 (the audio- recordings of the consultation sessions) and data set 5 (the focus group discussion). Participants in data sets 2 and 5 were all black South African students. The language repertoires of the participants are the languages and language varieties that they use and know (Busch, 2012; Blommaert, 2014). In this section, data that provide general information about the nature of the language repertoires of the participants that emerged from the two questionnaires that students completed, followed by the individual interviews with some participants, and the focus group discussions will be reported.

4.1.1.1. Findings from the 'Language Repertoire Questionnaire'

In this section, the relevant information about the nature of the language repertoires of the ALDE students (n=475) at the NWU-PC gathered in 2022 via the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" is reported. Only questions related to the participants' languages, their language use in the community as well as the language used at school are discussed in this analysis.

Table 4: Demographic data of the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" participants

Participants self-reported home languages	*Home language*
Setswana	*101*
Afrikaans	*90*
Sesotho	*59*
IsiZulu	*60*
English	*44*
isiXhosa	*40*
Sepedi	*37*
Xitsonga	*17*
Tshivenda	*11*
Siswati	*9*
isiNdebele	*5*
Others	*2*
Total	*475*

Languages of participants

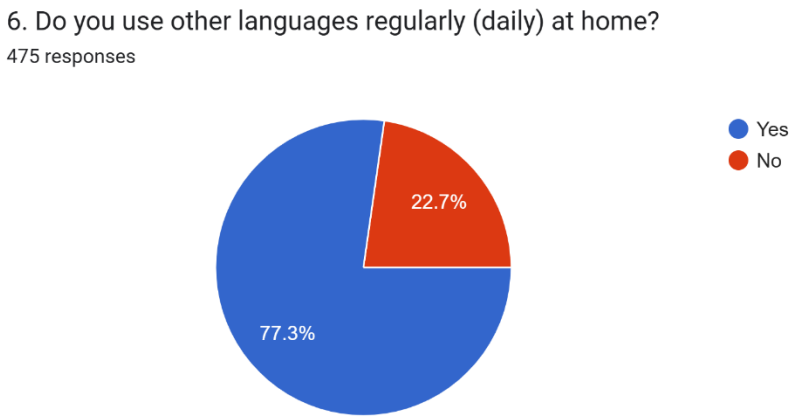
Item 5 of the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" asked the participants to indicate the participants' home language or first language, defined as the language that they use at home most of the time. Table 5 above shows that 21.3% of the participants (101/475) perceived themselves as home language users of Setswana; followed by 18.6% (90/475) indicating Afrikaans as home language; and 12.6% (60/475) indicating isiZulu as their home language and 12.4% (59/475) indicating Sesotho as their home language. This group of perceived home languages align with the home languages reported for the North West Province in the Census 2022 statistics (Census 2022) where Setswana is the most used language in the North-West Province. However, when looking at figure 1 in Chapter 3, most of the participants (31.4%) in this study said they were from the Gauteng province and it is well-known that 26.5% of the Gauteng population indicate that isiZulu is the most spoken language in the province (Khanyile, 2022; Census, 2022). A second cluster of perceived home languages include English (9.3% or 44/475), isiXhosa (8.4% or 40/475), and Sepedi (7.8% or 37/475) as indicated by the participants. Sepedi became more prominent and isiXhosa less prominent in the subsequent data sets that were collected after this questionnaire, and it will be elaborated below.

Overall, in the context of this study, when these languages are grouped, 41.7% (197/475) of the participants were from the Sotho language group (Setswana: n=101, Sesotho: n=59, Sepedi: n=n37), while 24% (114/475) of the participants were from the Nguni language group (isiZulu: n=60, isiXhosa: n=40, Siswati: n=9, isiNdebele: n=5). Xitsonga was reported as home language by 3.6% (17/475) of the participants and Tshivenda by 2.3% (11/475). From the findings reported

in Figure 9 above, the Sotho language group (including Setswana, Sesotho and Sepedi) were perceived as prominent home languages by the participants, followed by languages in the Nguni group (isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele and Siswati). For the analysis done in the rest of the thesis, these two language groups would be used to cluster language use descriptions. In other words, the concept of the language groups (Sotho and Nguni) will be used extensively in the analysis of the transcriptions of the consultations. This is done because the aim of this thesis is not to produce a micro-description of the languages and varieties of the languages used by the participants. The thesis aims to provide some direction and recommendations to the NWU-PC in how to use the Black South African languages brought by their students to foster a climate where a multilingual pedagogy could be implemented even more effectively to deepen understanding and learning. For this purpose, references to the Sotho cluster of languages used and the Nguni cluster of languages used are adequate to inform language policy and implementation plans at the institution.

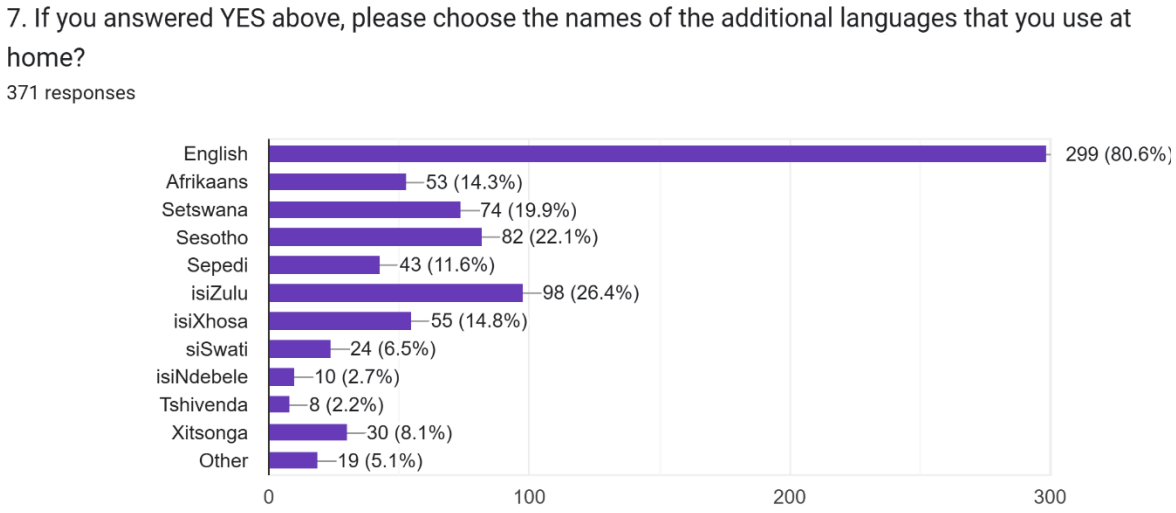
Item 6 of the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" asked participants if they use additional languages in the home language context regularly, defined as daily.

Figure 14: Other languages spoken by participants regularly at home



When asked if they use languages other than their self-reported home or first languages in the home, 77.3% (367/475) of the participants said 'yes', while 22.7% (108/475) of the participants said 'no'. Those that answered 'yes' had to elaborate on their answers by providing the names of additional languages that they use in the home. Participants could indicate more than one additional language at this question. The participants' responses to item 7 where they had to select the other languages that they use are presented below.

Figure 15: Additional languages used by participants at home



The participants' responses are arranged in language clusters (English and Afrikaans, the Sotho languages, the Nguni languages, Xitsonga and Tshivenda, and Other) in Figure 15. Furthermore, one should note that participants could indicate more than one language that they use at home regularly in addition to the home language. In total, there were 371 participants who responded to the question and 104 participants did not answer it. English was the language indicated by most participants (English: n=299) as a language used at home in addition to the home language. Although English is a smaller home language among all the participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire (44/475) (see Table 4), the prominence of English as an additional language, even in the homes of the participants, is visible from the findings in Figure 15. IsiZulu was the second prominent language that participants indicated that they use in addition to home languages at home with 26.4% (98/371) of the responses; and Sesotho was the third most prominent additional home language with 22.1% (82/371) responses and Setswana (19.9%, or 74/371) was the language used as second language after Sesotho with 22.1% (82/371). Considering that Setswana and Afrikaans were indicated by the participants as the most prominent home languages (see Table 4), it is not surprising that they are ranked a little lower as 'other languages' in this section. Afrikaans was thus the sixth most spoken 'other language' with 14.3% (or 53/371) participants indicating it, sixth after isiXhosa which was 'other language' to 14.8% (or 55/371) of the participants. However, English as the second language most used at home far surpassed all the other languages indicated in Figure 15.

Figure 16: Languages ranked according to participants from strongest to third strongest

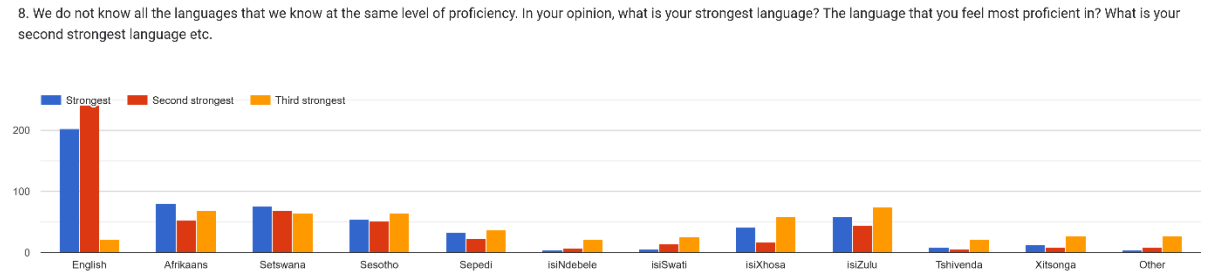


Figure 16 above shows the frequencies when participants were asked to rank their languages from strongest to third strongest language in their repertoire. The figure shows high frequencies for English perceived as a strongest and as a second strongest language. The other prominent languages (in addition to the home languages and English) included in the repertoires of the participants (Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho and isiZulu) are also prominent in Figure 16. The next table is a further division (according to the four highest ranked strong languages) of the graph above by focusing on individual languages speakers and what they consider as their strongest to third strongest languages.

Table 5: Perception of language strengths

Perception of language strengths	*Setswana HL [n=99]*	*Sesotho HL [n=59]*	*isiZulu HL [n=59]*	*Afrikaans HL [n=90]*
Afrikaans SL	*2*	*2*	*1*	*72*
English SL	*43*	*27*	*25*	*25*
Setswana SL	*60*	*7*	*1*	*0*
Sesotho SL	*6*	*39*	*1*	*0*
isiZulu SL	*2*	*3*	*42*	*0*
Afrikaans 2nd SL	*8*	*2*	*12*	*18*
English 2nd SL	*48*	*31*	*31*	*65*
Setswana 2nd SL	*32*	*9*	*4*	*1*
Sesotho 2nd SL	*15*	*13*	*8*	*0*
isiZulu 2nd SL	*3*	*4*	*13*	*0*
Afrikaans 3rd SL	*20*	*11*		*0*
English 3rd SL	*8*	*1*	*3*	*0*
Setswana 3rd SL	*7*	*15*	*8*	*10*
Sesotho 3rd SL	*20*	*7*	*11*	*8*
isiZulu 3rd SL	*17*	*16*	*1*	*7*

Note 1: SL=perceived strongest language; 2nd SL=perceived second strongest language; 3rd SL=perceived third strongest language

Note 2: The maximum number of participants who responded to the question was used as n-value. The total number of responses are sometimes lower than the n-value for the respective home language participants, because participants did not respond to all questions.

Table 5 above stems from Item 9 of the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire", which asked the participants to reflect on their perceptions of their proficiency in the languages in their repertoires. For the discussion about the nature of the language repertoires of the participants, information about the perceptions of the proficiencies in the most prominent additional languages will be reported for the Setswana, Sesotho, isiZulu and Afrikaans home language participants.

Moreover, participants were asked about their proficiency in what they deemed their strongest language. Responses from participants who indicated that they were home language speakers of Setswana and perceived Setswana to be their strongest language are indicated in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Perceptions of proficiency for Setswana perceived as strongest language by Setswana home language participants [n=75]

Language skill	***Very poorly***	***Poorly***	***Moderately***	***Well enough***	***Very well***
Speak	*0*	*0*	*0*	*10*	*65*
Read	*1*	*1*	*5*	*14*	*54*
Write	*0*	*2*	*5*	*10*	*58*
Understand	*0*	*1*	*2*	*6*	*66*

Table 6 above shows that of the 75 participants that completed the question, 65 participants perceived Setswana as a language that they can speak very well, and 10 participants said they could speak it well enough. When it comes to reading the language, the number of those that perceived that they could read it very well stands at 54 participants while those who claim to be able to read it well enough is 14 and 5 said they could read it moderately. When it came to writing the language, 58 of the participants said they could write it very well, 10 said that they could write it well enough. Five participants said that they could write it moderately. Understanding' as the last language task had 66 participants saying they can do it very well, 6 participants saying that they can do it well enough and 2 saying they could understand it moderately. What this table shows is that for the 75 people who completed this question, who reported to be Setswana home language speakers, the majority can perform various language tasks very well with their Setswana. Understanding the language was the highest language task they could perform with that majority of the participants (n=66) stating that they could do this very well, and proficiency in reading was the language skill which the participants in the language received a lesser number than all the language tasks (n=54). However, most of the Setswana home language participants that responded to this question indicated that they could perform the language tasks asked about very well or well enough, indicating that they hold high views of the perceptions of their proficiency in these skills in Setswana.

Furthermore, the same participants who self-reported Setswana as their home language and perceived Setswana as their strongest language also went on to report English as their second strongest language. Their responses are reported on the table below:

Table 7: Perceptions of proficiency for English perceived as second strongest language by Setswana home language participants [n=48]

Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*0*	*0*	*5*	*27*	*16*
Read	*0*	*0*	*3*	*15*	*30*
Write	*0*	*0*	*3*	*15*	*30*
Understand	*0*	*0*	*4*	*15*	*29*

Forty-eight Setswana home language participants answered the questionnaire items reflecting on their perceptions of proficiency in the language skills asked about. with English perceived as their second strongest language. Thirty participants said they could read English perceived as second strongest language very well, and 30 participants said they could write it very well. Of the same 48 participants, 29 said that they could understand English perceived as second strongest language very well while a smaller number of participants (16) said that they believed that they could speak English very well. However, most of the Setswana home language participants believed that they could perform all the skills asked about for English perceived as a second strongest language either very well or well enough.

Table 8: Perceptions of proficiency for Sesotho perceived as third strongest language by Setswana home language participants [n=20]

Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*0*	*2*	*11*	*4*	*3*
Read	*0*	*1*	*9*	*9*	*1*
Write	*1*	*5*	*11*	*3*	*0*
Understand	*0*	*2*	*8*	*9*	*1*

When it came to what Setswana-speaking participants perceived as their third strongest language, Sesotho was the most prominent language chosen by the 20 participants who answered this question. Most participants considered themselves not able to perform language tasks ‘very well’ in Sesotho, but most of the participants who responded believed that they could perform the relevant language tasks ‘moderately’ and ‘well enough’ in Sesotho. When it came to speaking and writing Sesotho, 11 participants said they could perform ‘moderately’. Only 9 participants said they could moderately read Sesotho, while 8 said they could understand it moderately. Moreover, nine participants said they could read and understand Sesotho well enough, while 4 and 3 said they could speak and write Sesotho well enough, respectively. Five

participants said they could write Sesotho poorly while 1 said very poorly. Two participants said they could speak it poorly and likewise, 2 said they could understand it poorly and only 1 participant said he/she could read Sesotho poorly. Therefore, for the few Setswana participants who answered this question, they said they could speak it and write it moderately, while a noticeable amount could read it and understand it moderately.

Furthermore, in Item 8 participants who perceived Sesotho themselves as home language speakers of Sesotho gave the responses below concerning their language skills in Sesotho.

Table 9: Perceptions of proficiency for Sesotho perceived as a strongest language by Sesotho home language participants [n=39]

Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*0*	*0*	*0*	*4*	*35*
Read	*0*	*0*	*5*	*6*	*28*
Write	*0*	*0*	*5*	*6*	*28*
Understand	*0*	*0*	*1*	*3*	*35*

When participants who self-reported as Sesotho home language speakers were asked what their perception was of the use of their home language, the majority said they could perform all the language tasks very well in Sesotho. Speaking Sesotho and understanding it were two highly ranked language tasks by 35 participants each. Reading and writing in Sesotho also had the same number of participants (n=28) saying they could do them very well. Most of the participants' perceptions is that they could perform the relevant language tasks asked about very well in Sesotho perceived as their strongest language.

The Sesotho home language speakers also gave the responses tabled below regarding their perception of the use of English as their second strongest language.

Table 10: Perceptions of proficiency for English perceived as a second strongest language by Sesotho home language participants [n=31]

Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*0*	*1*	*1*	*17*	*12*
Read	*0*	*1*	*1*	*11*	*18*
Write	*0*	*0*	*2*	*8*	*19*
Understand	*0*	*0*	*2*	*8*	*21*

The perception of the Sesotho home language speakers related to English perceived as their second strongest language (n=31) is that most of the participants can understand, write, and read English very well with 21, 19, and 18 participants indicating so respectively. Of the 31 participants, only 12 participants said they could speak it very well; however, most of the participants (n=17) said they could speak English well enough, while 11 said they could read it well enough. Those who could write and understand English well enough were 8 participants each. Just as it is with the Setswana participants above, most of the participants said they could perform most tasks very well in English, except for speaking which received the highest number of participants saying they could perform it well enough.

Table 11: Perceptions of proficiency for isiZulu perceived as a third strongest language by Sesotho home language participants [n=16]

Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*0*	*1*	*6*	*5*	*4*
Read	*0*	*4*	*6*	*4*	*2*
Write	*1*	*4*	*6*	*3*	*2*
Understand	*0*	*0*	*5*	*8*	*3*

Similarly to the Setswana participants' data, isiZulu was selected as the perceived third strongest language of the Sesotho home language participants. The confidence of the Sesotho participants in using their third strongest language (isiZulu) to perform language tasks were not supported as firmly. Of the 16 participants, 6 said they could speak isiZulu moderately, 6 said that they could read and 6 said they could write isiZulu moderately. Only 5 participants said that they could understand isiZulu moderately because the majority (n=8) said that they could understand isiZulu well enough. Speaking isiZulu well enough (n=5) also had a more noticeable response. The other items (read and write poorly, read well enough and speak very well) had 4 participants stating that they could do those tasks. One needs to keep in mind that these findings need to be interpreted cautiously, because the group of respondents to these questions was small.

Table 12: Perceptions of proficiency for isiZulu perceived as strongest language by isiZulu home language participants [n=42]

Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*0*	*0*	*0*	*5*	*37*
Read	*0*	*0*	*5*	*7*	*30*
Write	*0*	*0*	*6*	*5*	*31*
Understand	*0*	*0*	*0*	*3*	*39*

When it comes to isiZulu home language participants, 42 participants went on to rank their language perceptions, and the majority ranked their home language isiZulu highly. Of the 42 participants, 39 participants said they could understand isiZulu very well. This was followed by 37 participants who said they could speak it very well. Reading and writing isiZulu had 30 and 31 participants saying they could perform these tasks very well respectively. Most isiZulu language participants, just like most of the Setswana and Sesotho participants who ranked their languages perceived that they could do all the language tasks very well. For the isiZulu participants, those said they could write it well enough, 7 and 5 said they could speak it very well. In addition, 5 also said they could write it well enough. Those that could understand isiZulu well enough were 3 participants. Furthermore, 6 participants said that they could write isiZulu moderately and 5 also said they could read isiZulu moderately. Therefore, most of the participants perceived that they could use their indigenous home language, isiZulu in this case, very well.

Table 13: Perceptions of proficiency for English perceived as second strongest language by isiZulu home language participants [n=31]

Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*0*	*0*	*4*	*13*	*14*
Read	*1*	*0*	*0*	*11*	*19*
Write	*0*	*0*	*4*	*8*	*19*
Understand	*0*	*0*	*1*	*15*	*15*

English was perceived as the most prominent second strongest language for the isiZulu home language participants. Of the 31 isiZulu home language participants who completed this item on the questionnaire, 19 participants respectively claimed that they could read and write very well in English. Fifteen participants claimed to be able to 'understand' very well and well enough in English. Moreover, 14 participants claimed that they could speak verry well and 13 said they could speak well enough in English. Speaking English very well had the lowest number of participants who claimed to be able to do it very well when compared to other language tasks that they said they could do very well. Furthermore, 13 participants who were isiZulu speakers said that they could speak English well enough. Being able to speak 'well enough' is the only item in the data set where participants who said that they could speak English 'well enough' was lower than those who said they could speak it 'very well'. In both Table 7 and Table 10 above, both the Setswana and Sesotho participants who completed this item the number of participants who could speak English well enough was lower than of those who said they could speak it very well. The difference between tables 7, 10 and 13 however, is that in Table 13 there is a difference of one participant whereby 14 participants say that they can speak English 'well enough' and 13 say they can speak it 'well enough'. This is a small margin in a small group of participants and therefore the findings should be interpreted cautiously.

Moreover, in Table 13 above, 15 participants said that they could understand English well enough while 11 participants said they could read it well enough and 8 said that they could write it well enough. Similarly to the Setswana and Sesotho participants, the isiZulu participants who completed this item perceived that they could mostly carry out language tasks very well or well enough in English than those that could perform them moderately and 1 participant who could

read English very poorly. Overall, the isiZulu home language participants who regarded English as their second strongest language were confident that they could perform all the language tasks asked about 'well enough' or 'very well'.

Table 14: Perceptions of proficiency for Sesotho perceived as the third strongest language by isiZulu home language participants [n=11]

Language skill	***Very poorly***	***Poorly***	***Moderately***	***Well enough***	***Very well***
Speak	*0*	*1*	*4*	*4*	*2*
Read	*0*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*1*
Write	*0*	*3*	*4*	*3*	*1*
Understand	*0*	*1*	*4*	*2*	*4*

Sesotho was perceived as the third strongest language by 11 isiZulu home language participants. One needs to keep in mind that this is a small group of participants and that no major inferences could be made based solely on this data. Of those 11 participants, 7 participants (which is the most) said that they could read Sesotho moderately. The results show that 4 participants said that they could speak Sesotho moderately, 4 said that they could write Sesotho moderately and another 4 said that they could understand Sesotho moderately. Therefore, as with other languages discussed above, participants can mostly perform tasks moderately in their third languages. There were also 4 participants who said that they could understand Sesotho very well, over all the other language tasks that they could do very well and there were also 4 participants who said that they could speak Sesotho well enough, more than all the other language tasks that they could do well enough. Overall, most of the isiZulu participants that responded to this item indicated that they believe that they can perform the language tasks asked about moderately, well enough or very well.

The focus of this study is on the language experiences and perceptions of home language speakers of Black South African languages that are prominent at the NWU and in the North West Province. In the case of this study, these prominent indigenous home languages are Setswana, Sesotho, and isiZulu. However, in the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire", students from other home languages that are also prominent at the NWU and in the North West Province, for example, Afrikaans speakers, also responded to the survey. Therefore, the perceptions of the proficiency

of the Afrikaans home language speakers who participated in this part of the study are also reported. Understanding the nature of the repertoires of the Afrikaans home language participants is also important if one wants to provide recommendations to the NWU for the advancement of its multilingual language policy. Furthermore, as will be reported in sections that follow, the home language speakers of Setswana, Sesotho and isiZulu held strong views about the use (or discontinued use) of Afrikaans on the NWU-PC. Understanding how decisions or recommendations about Afrikaans as one of the official languages of the NWU would affect this group of the student population is therefore also relevant to the study.

Table 15: Perceptions of proficiency for Afrikaans perceived as the strongest language by Afrikaans home language participants [n=72]

Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*0*	*0*	*0*	*5*	*67*
Read	*0*	*0*	*0*	*4*	*68*
Write	*0*	*0*	*2*	*12*	*58*
Understand	*0*	*0*	*2*	*6*	*64*

When it comes to the Afrikaans home language participants in the study (who only responded to the "Language Repertoire questionnaire" in this study), of the 72 who completed the section of the questionnaire on their perceived language proficiency, writing as a language task was perceived to be done very well in Afrikaans by 68 participants. This is followed by 67 participants who said they could speak Afrikaans very well, then 64 participants who said they could understand Afrikaans very well, and lastly, 58 participants saying that they could write very well in Afrikaans. This data is the same as the data on the Black South African languages of South Africa where most participants said they could do all the language tasks in their perceived home language very well. Very few participants said that they could perform language tasks well enough, moderately, poorly, and very poorly. In all the data, participants did not claim to perform language tasks very poorly or poorly in their own first languages, except for Setswana where there were some first language speakers who said that they could perform the task reading (1 participant = poorly and 1 participant=very poorly) writing (2 participants=poorly) and understanding (1 participant = poorly) in Setswana. For the Afrikaans participants, 12

participants said that they could write Afrikaans well enough, 6 participants said that they could understand it well enough, while 5 participants said that they could speak it well enough and 4 said that they could write it well enough. Those that said that they could perform language tasks moderately were 2 participants that said that they understand Afrikaans moderately and 2 participants who said they could write Afrikaans moderately. Overall, most of the Afrikaans home language participants believed that they could perform all the language tasks well enough or very well.

Table 16: Perceptions of proficiency for English perceived as second strongest language by Afrikaans home language participants [n=65]

Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*0*	*0*	*6*	*37*	*22*
Read	*0*	*0*	*0*	*14*	*51*
Write	*0*	*0*	*3*	*27*	*35*
Understand	*0*	*0*	*0*	*15*	*50*

When it comes to perceptions of the use of English perceived as a second strongest language, most of the Afrikaans home language participants (51 participants) said that they could read English very well while (50 participants) said that they could understand English very well. Furthermore, 35 participants said that they could write English very well, while 22 participants said that they could speak English very well. Most of the Afrikaans home language participants that said that they could perform a language task well enough in English was for speaking English (n=37). This number was followed by 27 participants who claimed that they could write well enough in English. A further 15 participants and 14 participants respectively said that they could understand and read English well enough. The rest of the participants said that they could speak (6 participants) and write (3 participants) English moderately. There were no rankings for poorly and very poorly in this item for the Afrikaans home language participants. The perceptions of the Afrikaans home language participants that they can read and understand English perceived as second strongest language well enough or very well is an important finding to note. High proficiency in these skills (reading and understanding) would make them effective in education

contexts where English is used as a language of teaching. The majority are also confident in their ability to write in English perceived as second strongest language. Similar to all the participants who responded to this item in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the language skill in English which the participants are not overtly confident about (compared to the perceptions of other skills reported in the table above) is that of speaking English. Keeping in mind that understanding, reading and writing as language skills related strongly to teaching, learning and assessment, using English as a LoTL might work well for this group of participants; especially if opportunities could be created for them to use Afrikaans when they need to ask questions about the academic work that they need to perform. One should be aware that a perception of proficiency is not necessarily evidence of actual language proficiency. However, self-reported perceptions of language proficiency are used widely as contributing data to evaluate language in education policies and plans.

Table 17: Perceptions of proficiency for Setswana perceived as third strongest language by Afrikaans home language participants [n=10]

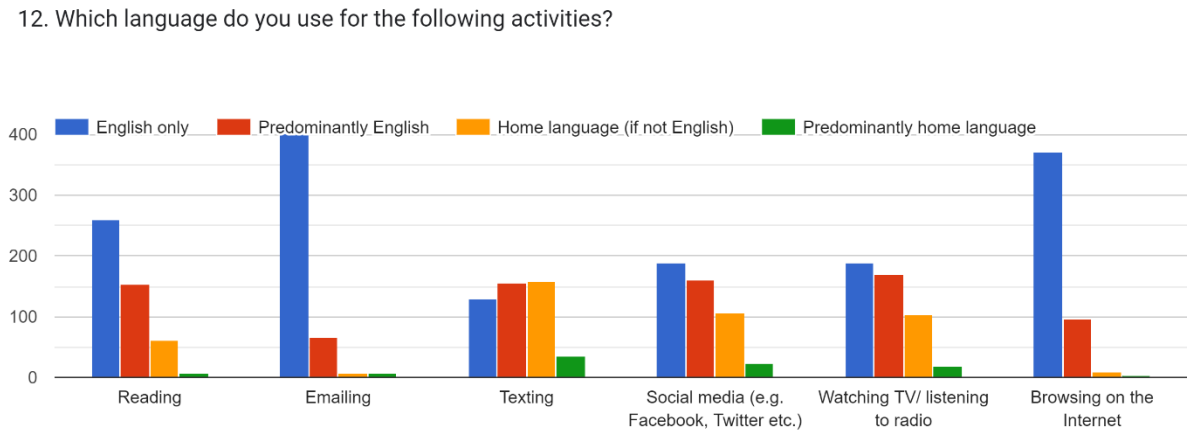
Language skill	*Very poorly*	*Poorly*	*Moderately*	*Well enough*	*Very well*
Speak	*6*	*2*	*1*	*1*	*0*
Read	*8*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*
Write	*8*	*1*	*1*	*0*	*0*
Understand	*4*	*3*	*3*	*0*	*0*

Afrikaans home language South Africans are not widely reported to know third languages. They are often perceived as a bilingual Afrikaans-English group (Watermeyer, 1996; Oostendorp & Anthonissen, 2014; Hill, 2024). There were 10 Afrikaans home language participants from the group of 72 that responded to this question who indicated that they know Setswana as their third strongest language. Furthermore, most of the participants could read (8 participants), write (8 participants), speak (6 participants) and understand (4 participants) Setswana very poorly. Moreover, 3 participants said that they could poorly understand Setswana and a further 3 participants said that they could moderately understand Setswana. Understanding was the most

prominent task the participants ranked, albeit lowly on the scale. None of the participants said that they could use Setswana very well and only 1 participant chose well enough for speaking in Setswana. The rest of the rankings were either 'moderately' or 'poorly'. This remains a small group of participants and findings should be reported with caution; but it is clear from the table above that literacy-related skills (reading and writing) in Setswana perceived as a third language, is not viewed as strong language skills in the repertoires of these Afrikaans participants.

Another Language Repertoire Questionnaire item related to the use of languages for different language skills is item 12. In this item, participants were asked in which languages they perform specific activities. The responses on the languages use by performing certain activities are presented in a graph below.

Figure 17: Language use for different activities



In Figure 17 above, most participants (396/475 or 83.3%) claimed to use 'English only' for emailing. This activity received the highest number of responses; this was followed by browsing the Internet also being done a lot in English according to participants (366 participants or 77%). Reading was also reported to be done mostly in English (reported by 258 or 54.3% of the participants). Home languages were perceived to be used more prominently in performing tasks such as texting, social media and watching TV. Some participants reported that they also read in their languages.

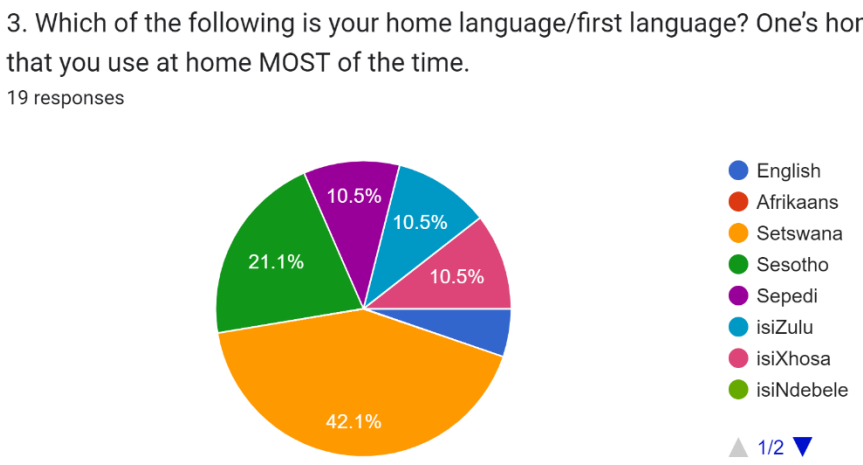
In summary, the nature of the language repertoires of the participants in the study is very multilingual. Although the number of participants ranking second and third languages decline as the ranking continues, most participants are multilingual. Participants believe that they can

perform language tasks very well and well enough in their perceived home languages. Only with Setswana did participants rank their use of Setswana as a home language in the language skills of reading to be very poor or poor for reading, writing and understanding. But this was reported by a small number of participants. The perceptions of the levels of competence in the languages in the repertoire decline as the ranking continues. Participants therefore rank their proficiency in the language skills in their home languages and English very highly in comparison when compared to their perceived third strongest languages. Thus, English is the prominent second strongest language for most of the participants. Participants, who self-reported to be home language speakers of Setswana, Sesotho, isiZulu and Afrikaans, perceived that they could mostly perform language tasks very well in these languages. Afrikaans in some institutions (such as NWU-PC) is also a an LoTL and thus, it is not surprising that most speakers of the language said they could do language skills very well using it. However, it is interesting to note that participants who were users of Setswana, Sesotho and isiZulu as first language perceived that they could also perform language tasks very well or well enough with their first languages. Participants' perception of their use of English was lower than their use of their home languages. The findings related to this part of the nature of the language repertoires of the participants are useful and would have implications for language in education policy and practice. Interpreting and discussion of these findings further will be elaborated on in the chapter that follows.

4.1.1.2. Findings from the "Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire"

The aim of the "Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire" was to ask participants who came to consult with the researcher (also the lecturer) as part of the project some of the questions that were asked in the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" to see if their responses to the same questions were similar or very different from the larger sample of ALDE 2022 students who completed the first questionnaire. The main idea was to see if the nature of their repertoires were aligned with those of the participants in the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" to make sure that recommendations for language in education policy would address needs from both groups of participants. Some of the questions from the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" were modified to suit the context of the "Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire" because the participants in the "Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire" had come to consult using their home languages alongside English. This questionnaire was completed only by the participants who were taught by the researcher and who came to consult with her using many of the languages in their repertoires. Therefore, the questionnaire was also used to ask participants about consulting in their languages alongside English and the implication of this practice for the NWUs language policy.

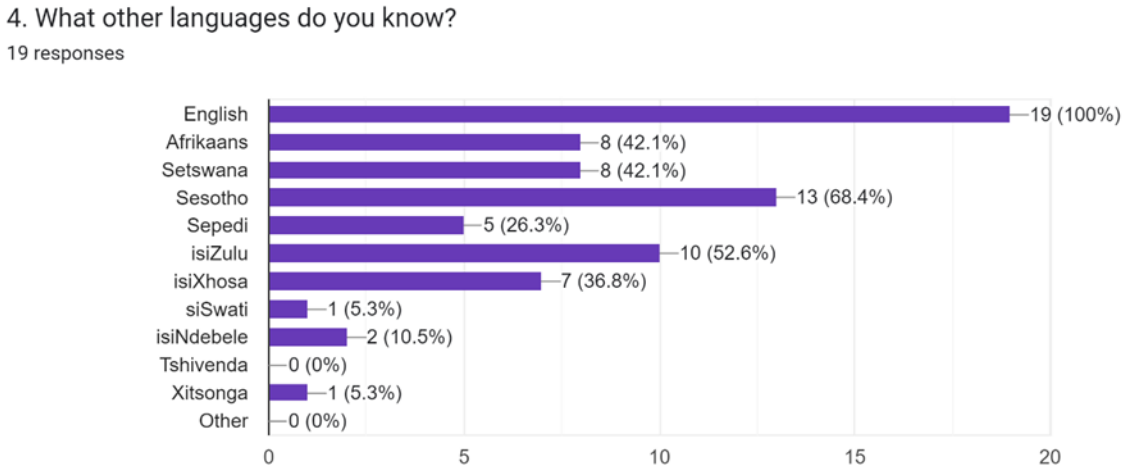
Figure 18: Self-reported home languages by consultation participants in response to item 3 on the "Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire" (n=19).



As mentioned above, Setswana home language speakers accounted for 42.1% (8/19) of the responses, thus, it was the language perceived as home language or first language by most of the participants. It was followed by Sesotho with 21% (4/19) of the participants. Sepedi, isiZulu and isXhosa were perceived a home language by 2 participants for each of the languages. There was only one participant who claimed to be a first language speaker of English; I use the word claim with caution and the analysis below will clarify this.

The consultation participants were also asked what other languages they knew. Their responses to this question are presented in Figure 19 below.

Figure 19: Other languages known by participants

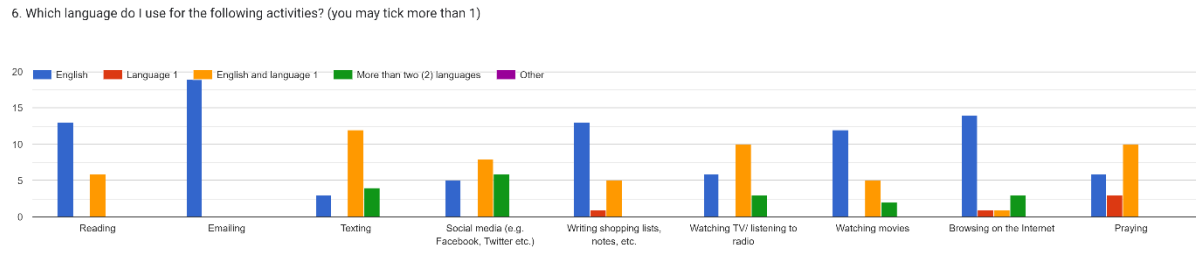


To the question “What other languages do you know”, all 19 (100%) participants self-reported to know English as a second language. However, when looking at the languages that participants claim to speak as first languages or home languages, one participant listed English as her home language. The contradiction is in the fact that all participants in this study were invited because of having used languages other than English for consultations. This participant is a contradiction because he/she lists English both as home language and another language that he/she knows. However, in Figure 19 above, the participant only lists two languages as languages that she knows: English and isiXhosa. She does not claim to know any other language. Unfortunately, this participant did not take part in the individual interviews, and this would have shed light on the questions the researchers grappled with concerning the participant. The participants indicate that they perceive themselves as multilingual. The languages that they report to know are presented in Figure 19 above.

The language repertoire of the participants reported under Figure 19 above shows that if we add Sepedi, Sesotho and Setswana together, more than 70% of the participants from the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire (a total of 14) were from the Sotho language group. Conversely, 21% of the participants (a total of 4) were from the Nguni language group and only 1 participant listed English as her home language. The participants were all multilingual and the languages that they know are presented in Table 18.

Item 6 in the “Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire” asked the participants to indicate the languages that they use for specific activities. The participants had limited options to select.

Figure 20: Frequencies of responses by consulting participants about the number of languages used for specific activities (n=19)



In the ‘Individual Language Repertoire’ questionnaire, English is the language chosen by all the participants for emailing. This group of participants therefore indicate that they use English exclusively when they email. A similar response applies to browsing the Internet, reading, writing shopping lists and watching movies. For all these activities, most of the participants use English.

When performing other tasks, English is used in tandem with the first language. This applies to texting, watching TV and listening to the radio, praying, and accessing social media platforms. This means that on some occasions the consultation participants do these activities in their first languages. In none of the activities listed, did the participants use their first language exclusively to perform a task. The languages that received a lot of attention in being used for the activities listed were English and the first language, with English having the upper hand as it features in all the activities, at a high percentage, and is used exclusively (or almost exclusively) with emailing and browsing the Internet. The use of English with emailing and browsing the Internet provides an indicator that English is used in academic contexts a lot (at least with email and Internet use). The participants in this study indicated that for social activities such as texting, praying, watching TV, and accessing social media, the African languages have a noticeable presence. From the list of activities provided in this question, the pattern that emerges is that the Black South African Languages are used mostly informally while English is used for the more academic purposes listed in this question (email and Internet use). Within the multilingual repertoires of the consultation participants, there seem to be language choices that are preferred for specific domains or contexts of language use.

4.1.1.3. Findings from the Individual interviews and focus group on language repertoires

This section will present the findings of the language repertoires of participants who came for interviews and those who took part in the focus group. As mentioned in Chapter 3 under 3.4.2.4, ten participants were interviewed, and five participants took part in a focus group discussion.

Findings from the interviews

As mentioned in Chapter 3; Table 3, the individual interviews were done with 10 participants and of those participants, 6 identified Setswana as their home language. Those that did so were participants 4, 5, 6, 13, 16 and 25. The rest of the participants identified their home languages as follows: participants 1 and 24 were self-identified Sesotho speakers, while participant 14 identified his home language as Sepedi and participant 9 identified as an isiZulu home language user.

English was the self-declared second language of all the individual interview participants. This is consistent with data in tables 7, 10,13,16 above whereby English is perceived as the second strongest language for most of the participants who completed the “Language Repertoire Questionnaire” and all the participants who completed the “Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire” in this study.

The participants in the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" and the "Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire" are multilingual. In addition to these findings, the practical language use patterns that emerged in the recorded data, the individual interviews, and the focus group discussion cemented the fact that participants in the study are highly multilingual. The data also confirms that the students use their languages to deepen understanding because they are aware of their languages and use them potently. The descriptive data for all the participants in the interviews and focus group discussion is summarized below.

Table 18: Language repertoires of participants in the focus group and interviews

Participant name	*Individual interview*	*Focus group discussion*	*Home language*
Participant 1	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Sesotho/Ndebele*
Participant 4	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Setswana*
Participant 5	*Yes*	*No*	*Setswana*
Participant 6	*Yes*	*No*	*Setswana*
Participant 9	*Yes*	*Yes*	*IsiZulu*
Participant 13	*Yes*	*No*	*Setswana*
Participant 14	*Yes*	*No*	*Sepedi*
Participant 16	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Setswana*
Participant 24	*Yes*	*No*	*Setswana*
Participant 25	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Sesotho*

Methodologically, interviews are not the most productive approach for answering questions about the number of languages in multilingual repertoires (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2016). However, interview participants did provide information in the form of lists of languages in their repertoire during the process. Yet, the strength of interviews with multilingual students is the vehicle they provide to discuss the relationships between the languages in the repertoire.

Participant 4, for example, provided the following information about the languages in her repertoire:

> [1] Interviewer: Setswana. Er, what is your language one? **E o e buang** [*The one that you speak*] …
> Participant 4: Setswana.
> Interviewer: Setswana. And then, what other languages can you speak, or have a conversation **or tse o di utlwang tse o kgonang go di tlhaloganya, motho a ka seka go cheatang** [*the ones that you can hear, that you are able to have understand, a person cannot cheat you*]?
> Participant 4: I will say English and Zulu.
> Interviewer: English and Zulu. **Di** [*These*] English and Zulu **tsena** [*these*] normally **o di dirisa le bo mang ga o bua** [*who do you use them with when you speak*]?
> Participant 4: English basically academical wise, and Zulu with friends sometimes.

Above is an example of the language repertoire of Participant 4 who states that she can speak Setswana, English and isiZulu. She further explains that these languages are not used at the

same places because Setswana is a home language that she uses with family and friends while English is her academic language, and isiZulu is the language she uses with some of her friends.

Participant 5 had this to say about her language repertoire during the interview:

> [2] Interviewer: Okay. Er, **wena** [*You*] being a speaker of Setswana and considering it as your language one, what other languages do you know and use?
> Participant 5: Uhm, obviously **Englishe** [*English*].
> Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 5: Er, Setswana **le** [*and*] Sesotho.
> Interviewer: Mhm.
> Participant 5: **Sexhosa** [isi*Xhosa*] … Xhosa, Zulu; **teng fela foo** [*right there*].
> Interviewer: Something there.
> Participant 5: **Ke a khuluma, ke a thetha, mare se broken sone. Ke a** [*I speak (Zulu word for talk), I speak (Xhosa word for speak), but it is broken. I*] … Afrikaans I can hear there and there. **Di** [*The*] basics.

Participant 5 above states that she speaks a few languages. She said she was not sure if she was Setswana by choice or by default because of attending school in Setswana, but that her family was Sesotho speaking except for her. The participant is a speaker of three languages (English, Sesotho and Setswana) that she can command strongly, but the fourth one is a language that the participant is not even sure of (a combination of isiZulu and isiXhosa), which means that in conversation, she can use a mixture of some Nguni languages and that she struggles to differentiate between those Nguni languages.

Moreover, Participant 13 stated the following during the interview:

> [3] Interviewer: Setswana. Er, **wena** [*you*] what is your language one or language **e o e buang le batho ba ga lona** [*that you speak with your family members*] or **e o e khonsidarang** [*that you consider*] on the list of my languages **ke** [*it is*] number one.
> Participant 13: **Ke** [*It is*] Setswana.
> Interviewer: **Ke** [*It is*] Setswana, same language, also language one **cos wa bona mona ga e yo** [*because you see that here it is not there*]?
> Participant 13: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Interviewer: And then **ke tse feng dipuo tse gape tse o di buang** [*which other languages do you speak*] besides Setswana?
> Participant 13: Er, Sesotho …
> Interviewer: Mhm.
> Participant 13: … er English.
> Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 13: **Ee, ke tsone fela** [*Yes, they are the only ones*].
> Interviewer: **Ee wena. Ga o mo South Africa? Ga o itse bo se… somethingnyana, seVendanyana** [*No you. Are you not a South African? Do you not know the… a little bit of something, a little bit of Venda*]?
> Participant 13: Ah, **ke itse le** [*I also know*] Afrikaans.
> Interviewer: **Ele gore why o ne o sa e bue lantlha** [*But why did you not mention it the first time*]?
> Participant 13: Eish! **Yone ga ke** [*It, I am not*] perfect, **mare yone ke a e itse** [*but I know it*] because **ke gola le makhalathi** [*I grew up with coloureds*].

Participant 13 said he is a first language speaker of Setswana and can speak Sesotho, English and Afrikaans. He may not be able to use these languages to the same degree, but he could use them. Participant 13 further states that Afrikaans is a language of his community as he grew up around a coloured community in a location in Klerksdorp in the North West Province, and said he knows Afrikaans but is not perfect. However, the participant had not listed Afrikaans initially until when he was probed by the interviewer. This means that in some cases, participants may have understated or overstated the languages they know.

As the excerpts (2 and 3) from above show, none of the participants who participated in the interview (10) were monolingual. Participant 1 said she could speak Sepedi, Sepitori, Siswati, Afrikaans and English. Participant 6 said she could speak Setswana, Sesotho, Afrikaans and English. Participant 14 says because of his upbring in Tembisa, he spoke Sepedi as a home language alongside "Sotho and English, Tswana, Zulu". Likewise, participant 24 said he spoke a few languages which were Sesotho, Setswana, Afrikaans and English while his peer participant 25 said he spoke Setswana, English and some isiZulu. Participant 16 said he also spoke a few languages which where Setswana, English, Sesotho, Sepitori and isiXhosa. All the participants could therefore speak one of the languages of the Sotho language group or Nguni language group.

The interview data therefore highlights the fact that indeed participants in the study are multilingual. During the interviews, participants got to speak about the languages that they know and none of them mentions just one language. The language repertoire of the participants in the interviews does confirm the multilingual nature of the consultations.

Findings from the Focus Groups discussions

Similarly, of the 5 participants who took part in the focus group, 3 were Setswana home language speakers, 1 isiZulu and 1 Sepedi. These were the same participants that took part in the individual interviews (participants 1, 4, 9, 16 & 25). They all corroborated their previous answers on which languages they speak from the personal interviews. The participants in the focus group discussion were not asked specifically what their home language was as it was asked in the interviews, but it came up in conversation when other things were being discussed.

> [4] Interviewer: **Kana** [*Remind me again*] what language do you speak **wena** [*you*]? I only heard it once. It was Zulu neh?
> Participant 9: It's Zulu and Xhosa.
> Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*]. Zulu and Xhosa. **Mare jaanong ke fa** [*But now here*] you are speaking English today. I'm kidding. So sometimes you feel like you'll be understood better. And then **wena** [*you*]?

Although Participant 9 here was asked what language she speaks and mentioned two languages, the conversation was with regards to her saying she speaks in her language in order to convey a message clearly. She mentions two Nguni languages when asked about her language even though in the Individual Language Repetoire she mentioned isiXhosa as her home languagae.

> [5] Interviewer: **Ene o tlo bone, ga o ntse o re motho o montsho, go na le** [*And you must see, when you keep saying black people, there is*] an array of **batho ba ba ntsho** [*black people*]. For example, she's Zulu, **o moeng** [*what are you*]?
> Participant 4: **Ke Motswana** [*I am Tswana*].
> Interviewer: **Motswana** [*A Tswana person*].
> Participant 1: I'm Ndebele.
> Interviewer: Ndebele. Tswana. Tswana, Tswana. Maybe Pedi. Eh, so which one … which black person?
> Participant 16: Eish!

Above, participants state what their ethnicity is, and both of them mention those languages as the languages they speak as indicated in Table 18 above and Table 19 below. Participant 4 who consistently in the interviews and Individual Language Repetoire questionnaire mentions that her home language is Setswana goes on to say she is Tswana, meaning she is of the Tswana people.

In conclusion, the participants in this study were multilingual. Their language repertoires as shown in the relevant data sets reported on in this section ranges from two to seven languages depending on the data set used for the collection of the information. These languages are then carried by these participants as students at a university and they form part of their experience as they navigate the complexities of their university journey. These participants use these languages and many others that they did not mention as part of their consultations with the lecturer. The language repertoires should therefore be embraced as a resource rather than a hindrance in the education setting and the way participants explain their use of languages in the educational context below will help in bringing this argument to the fore.

4.1.2. Division 2: Multilingual language repertoires and educational experiences

This section examines the nature of the language repertoires of the participants in this project in specific relation to the education system. In other words, in this section, findings related to the multilingual repertoires of the participants were connected to their educational experiences. This provided a fine-tuned contextual response to the research question about the nature of the

multilingual repertoires of the participants with specific attention of its functioning within the education system and the experiences of the participants in the education system.

4.1.2.1. Findings from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire

This section focuses on the languages students use to learn, thus informing decisions about which languages can be used to enhance understanding and cognition in the teaching and learning environment. Participants from the "Language Repertoire Questionnaire" were asked about the languages that they used in primary and in secondary/high school. The findings for 'primary school' are reported in Figure 21 below.

Figure 21: Language use in primary school

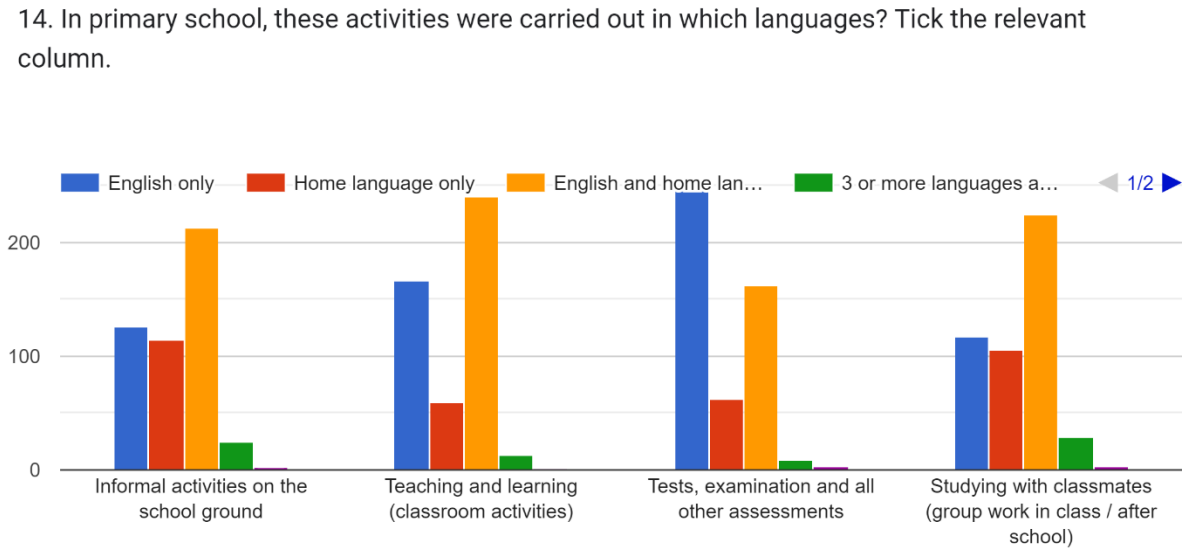


Figure 21 above shows that most of the participants from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire attended a primary school that uses their home languages together with English as languages of teaching and learning. Mostly, teaching and learning in the classroom was done through a dual or multilingual mode. Although teaching was carried out through more than one language for most participants as shown above, most of the participants (243/475 or 51%) said that assessments were carried out in English only. A sizable group (154/475 or 33%) also indicated that English and the home language were used for assessments. One would need to explore the reasoning for this answer in follow-up studies. For the moment, one can only speculate that the assessments in primary school were done mainly in English, but that some of the assessments were done in the home language and English or in the home language (60/475=12.6%). For example, participants could be referring to: (a) the fact that in the earlier grades according to the language-in-education policy in South Africa (1997) learners can learn and take assessments in their languages; (b) or they are thinking about answering informal assessments in class orally in

the home language; or (c) maybe participants acknowledge that they read their assessments in primary school in English, but also thought in the home language before they wrote the answer in English – maybe even adding some home language words to their English responses. This is speculation, but it is important to note that according to the participants in this study, they remember using English and the home language when they engaged with assessments in the primary school context.

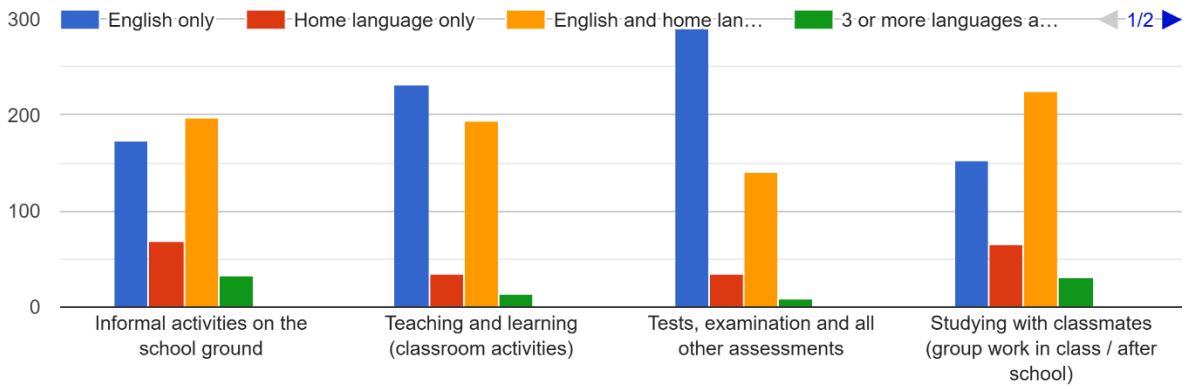
When looking at the languages spoken while studying with friends, English and home languages were the two most used languages in this category reported by 221 participants (or 46.5%). This is followed by participants reporting using English only (117/475 or 24.6%) while studying with friends; those who reported using the home language only (105/475 or 22.1%), while 29 participants (or 0.6%) responded that they used three or more languages, and 3 participants (or 0.06%) could not remember. These frequencies are very similar to those for languages used on school grounds, probably because both these contexts consist mainly of oral communication between friends. In the informal settings on the school ground, 209 participants (or 44%) said that English and the home language were used, 126 participants (or 26.5%) said that they only used English, 113 participants (or 23.7%) said that they only used their home languages, 25 participants (or 0.5%) said that they used more than three languages, while 2 participants (or 0.04%) could not remember which languages they used.

Overall, it is clear from Figure 21 and the data presented above that most participants attended primary schools where their home languages featured prominently alongside English. They have this experience of using their language repertoire fully in a multilingual setting from an early age. Although the teaching and learning and most tasks were carried out in the home language alongside English, assessments were mainly carried out in English only from as early as primary school and this feature continues even in secondary school as it will be discussed below.

Participants were also asked about their use of languages in secondary school and there appears to be a slight change in the use of languages at high school when compared to primary schools. While the use of home language remains present in secondary schools, it is at a lesser rate than in primary schools and English becomes even more prominent in secondary school.

Figure 22: Languages used in secondary school

15. In secondary school/high school, these activities were carried out in which languages? Tick the relevant column.



In Figure 22 above, the participants reported that they believe that the prominence of English as a language used in secondary schools rise higher when compared to the use of English in primary schools. This is in line with the South African language in Education Policy (LiEP, 1997) whereby learners learn in their home languages for the first three years of school and then switch to learning through English from Grade 4 onwards. When comparing the findings that report participants' experiences with the use of languages in teaching and learning in secondary schools with those experienced in primary school, the overall finding is that there is the perception of an increase in the use of English in the high school context. For the rest of the contexts, there is a view that English gains importance in high school as the language of teaching, learning, and assessment. In Figures 22, the participants (or 48.8%) stated that in high school the teaching and learning context was mainly in English, 194 of the participants (or 40.8%) said that they believe that English and the home language were used for teaching and learning, 35 of the participants (or 7.3%) believed that they used only their home language, and 13 (or 2.7%) participants said that they used more languages for teaching and learning in high school.

The same pattern emerges in the context of assessment. From Figure 22's results, assessments were carried out mostly in English as reported by most of the participants (291 or 61.2%). A sizable group of the participants (140 or 29.4%) stated that their assessments were conducted in the home languages and English, 3 of the participants (or 7.3%) claimed that they did assessments in their home languages only and 8 (or 1.6%) said their assessments were done in three languages or more. It is also expedient to acknowledge that some participants were

Afrikaans students who might have learned through their entire school years being taught and thus assessed in Afrikaans. So, in high school English was the most used language for assessment as it was in primary, but there is the perception among the participants that English gain even more prominence in secondary school.

The increase in the use of English when one compares the primary school and high school contexts is most visible when one compares the perceived patterns of language use in oral contexts in school. When it comes to informal activities (in other words oral communication) on the school ground 198 participants (or 41.6%) said that they conducted this in English and the home language, 174 participants (or 36.6%) said that they carried out informal activities in English only, 69 participants (or 14.5%) reported that they used the home language only, 33 participants (or 6.9%) said they used three or more languages and 1 participant (or 0.2%) could not remember. English and the home language remained important for use on the school ground, but the group of participants who reported to use only English on the school ground increased if one compares the contexts for primary and secondary schools.

The same trend is visible in the context of language use and studying with friends. Similarly to communication on the school ground, 221 participants (or 46.5%) claimed that they studied with classmates in their home languages and English, while 117 of the participants (or 24.6%) said that they used English only. For 105 of the participants (or 22.1%), studying with classmates was done in their home languages only while 29 of the participants (or 6.1%) said that they did it in three or more languages and 3 participants (or 0.6%) could not remember. The pattern of the increase of the use of English only when studying with friends in the high school context is visible in this data. However, in verbal communications such as studying with friends, the use of home languages is very prominent.

The two questions above on participants' use of languages in school show that participants have always been multilingual. Multilingualism is not a new concept to them and in fact it is the way of learning for most participants. The questions in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire asked the participants to report on the languages used in the previous school attended (primary school and secondary school), and in both contexts, multilingual experiences were perceived as prominent. From the data reported in Table 5, the language repertoire of the participants in the study is typical for South African university students who mainly attended schools where they learned through the medium of English (excluding the Afrikaans home language students who

might have attended Afrikaans medium schools) but using their home languages alongside English. In South Africa, the most prominent LoTL is English with a presence of Afrikaans and very little use of home languages (Figone, 2012; Makoe & McKinney, 2014; 2024); but teachers still use the African languages to assist learners and students in school during classroom interactions (Probyn, 2009).

Therefore, when at university, most students continue to use their languages, especially in the social context rather than in formal contexts. Teaching in the participants' languages becomes harder or non-existent as most universities in South Africa use English and a little bit of Afrikaans. Therefore, when participants were asked about their use of languages while on campus, the majority indicated that they do use their languages socially in most cases, and they also use it in group work where they are in the company of people who understand their languages.

4.1.2.2. Findings from the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire

As discussed elsewhere in Chapter 3, the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire was used to gather information only from participants who had come to consult about their ALDE academic work and who used English and other South African languages during the consultation sessions with their lecturer (also the researcher). Thus, there were questions regarding their language use to deepen understanding. However, there were also questions regarding the language repertoire of participants, their knowledge of the University's language policy as well as attitudes towards multilingual education. This section presents the findings for the questions on multilingual education from the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire.

Item 7 in the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire asked participants to indicate in which of the following contexts they use their home language or first language (see item in Figure 23 below) in the educational context at university.

Figure 23: Contexts for using home languages for teaching and learning

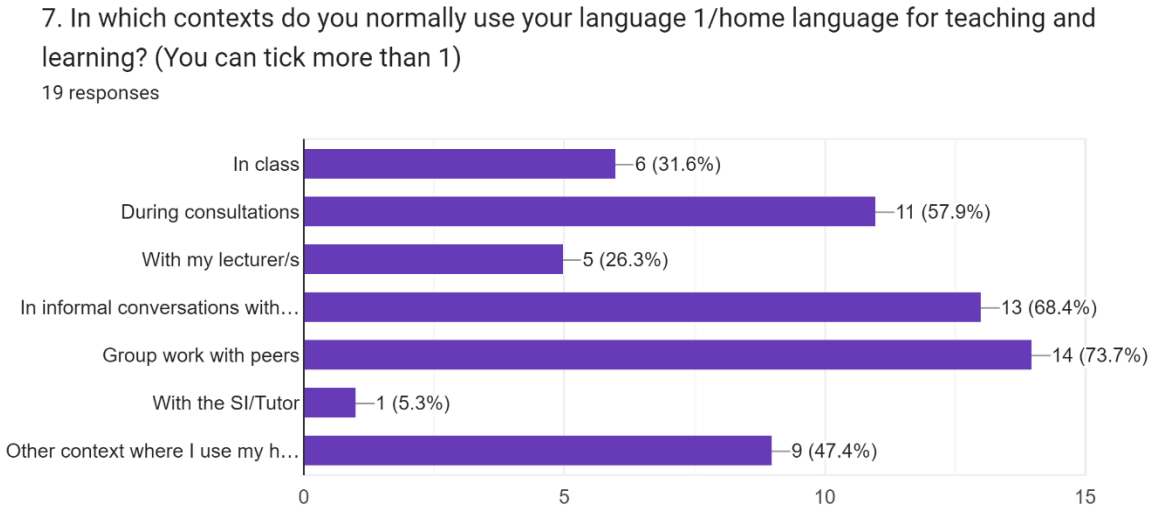
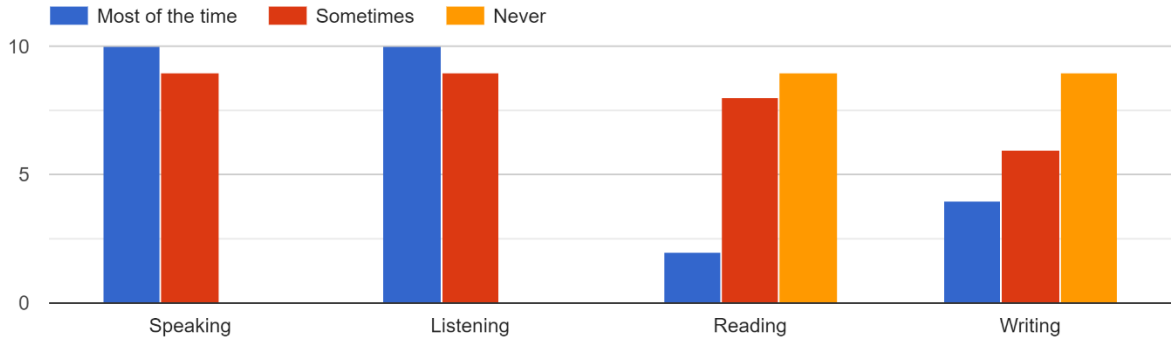


Figure 23 above shows that 14 (or 73.7%) of the participants in the Individual language repertoire questionnaire, said that they mostly use their first language or home language in the educational context at university when they do group work with peers. The home language is also used in informal conversations with their friends (reported by 13 or 68.4% of the participants), and while consulting with their lecturer (reported by 11 or 57.9% of the participants). The participants reported not using the home language in class, with their lecturers and with their tutors. It is not surprising that the home language is perceived to not be in use in class, with lecturers in general or with tutors, because these could be multilingual contexts where the interlocutors do not necessarily share a home language. However, this issue should be explored further in future research as no data was gathered to provide information about the motivations for these responses in the current study. Of the 19 participants, 9 Participants, (47.4%) said that they use their languages in other contexts that the research did not ask further on, while 6 participants said they use it in class and 5 said they use it with their lecturers. Only 1 participant said he/she uses his/er other languages with SI Facilitators/Tutors. Therefore, as evidenced above, home languages are used at university, particularly in group work and socially outside of the classroom.

Participants were then asked how much time they spend performing language tasks, i.e. speaking, reading, writing and listening in the contexts listed in Figure 23 with their language 1/home language, and below are the responses:

Figure 24: The use of home languages performing language tasks at university

8. While on campus, in the contexts listed above how much time is spent doing the following in your language 1/home language?



Ten participants (out of the 19) reported to use their home language or first language while on campus most of the time for speaking and listening, while 9 said that they use it sometimes for those same tasks. None of the participants indicated that they never used their home language for speaking and listening while on campus. However, the home language is not used prominently for reading and writing at university. Only 2 participants stated that they use their home language for writing most of the time and 1 participant said that they use their home language for reading. Most of the participants stated that they never use their home language for reading and writing at university. So, home languages are usually used for more oral tasks (speaking and listening) while reading and writing normally take place in English.

4.1.2.3. Findings from Individual interviews and Focus Group discussions

All participants in the interview and focus group discussions said that they came from public high schools to university. This question was important to ask because it laid the basis for the question on how the language used at university compared to high school, and it also aimed to investigate whether the participants who were formerly taught through both English and their home language would prefer the use of the same language and teaching strategy at university. There were 7 participants who were from public schools in rural or township areas[3], and they all

[3] Townships or locations were created during apartheid for black people and reserved for them to live instead of leave in town or suburbs that were reserved mostly for the whites. Mampane and Bouwer (2011: 114) state that "Township residential areas in South Africa originated as racially segregated, low-cost housing developments, for black labourers to remain closer to their places of employment within the cities and towns. Today, township life is mostly associated with poverty, crime and violence and it has even been equated to a 'war zone', when the safety of residents becomes compromised". Townships still exist today and are still mainly occupied by black residents. Msila (2005: 178) states that "Years after the dismantling of apartheid

said that they were taught through the medium of English and their first language or home language in high school. Thus, they experienced a great shift in the way language was used in the teaching and learning context when they compared how it occurred in high school and university. Here are some of the responses during the individual interviews on whether there is a change in the way language is used for teaching and learning at university versus high school:

> [6] Participant 14: Yes. **Mo** [*In*] university haai **dilo di chanchile** [*things have changed*]. A lot. A lot.
> [7] Participant 16: **Ee e teng** [*Yes there is*].
> [8] Participant 24: **Ko** [*At*] high school **ne go foukhasitswe** [*they were focused on*], like mostly **ke** [*it is*] Setswana **akere** [*right*]?
> [9] Participant 13: Yea. **Ko skolong** [*At school*] er, mostly **ne re dirisa** [*we use to use*] er, language **e leng gore bana ba e tlhaloganya** [*that the children understand*], in which **ke, ke** [*it is, it is*] Setswana ...

The examples above from the individual interviews show that the participants experienced a huge difference in the way they learned in high shool and how they are now learning at university. In high school, their home languages were used effectively for teaching and learning as the above examples state. However at university their home languages are not included in the class for teaching and learning. One participant summarises this mismatch between high school and univerity in the following exchanges from the interview data:

> [10] Participant 24: Even **le di** [*with the*] langu ... **di subjecte tse e leng goreng tlamehile di etsiwe ka Englishe** [*the subjects that are supposed to be done in English*] ...
> Interviewer: Mm.
> Participant 24 ... **ne re di etsa ka** [*we were doing them in*] Setswana.
> Interviewer: Mm.
> Participant 24: So, varsity everything **ke Englishe mo** [*is English here*].

Similarly to the observation and explanation made by Participant 24 above, Participant 4 from a village secondary school in an interview state that learning took place in the language of the learners in school even though classes were supposed to be taught in English.

> [11] So basically, English **e ne e le** [*it was*] just the way through, **mare rona re rutiwa** [but us we were taught] Setswana...

Most responses above pointed to the fact that there is a huge shift in teaching and learning at university because they had been taught through their home languages and English in high schools, especially languages such as Setswana as the majority of the responses state. This

education, historically black schools (also referred to as township schools in this article), continue to have an absolute black enrolment".

seems to have been a norm rather than the exception, especially for participants from rural and township schools.

However, the three participants that were from public schools in towns such as Prestige Secondary School in Klerksdorp or Mountain View Secondary in Heidelberg said that they did not experience any language shift problems when they came to university. The participants who attended schools from town stated that the teaching in high school was similar to the teaching at univeristy; participant 1 stated that [12] “There’s not much of a difference” , and participant 6 also agrees that there is no difference.

There is thus a theme of change in terms of language use at university versus that of high school when it comes to participants transitioning from high school to university as experienced by participants from rural and township schools and not so much for urban schools when it comes to the use of languages at university. However, during the consultations, both the participants from township and village schools together with those from town or urban schools used their languages to consult. The participants from town or urban schools felt just as comfortable to use their languages during consultations and this might have something to do with the fact that multilingualism is effortless and therefore should be used for the benefit of all students who can speak multilingually instead of focusing on the participants who come from townships and villages only.

In the analysis of the transcriptions of the Interview and Focus group discussion data sets, a series of themes emerged after the coding was done in ATLAS.ti that provide further insights into the participants’ experiences of the use of languages in their repertoires in the education context.

Language challenges: level of English at university

Participants from the rural and township schools explained that they experienced problems such as the level of English at university not matching the level of English that they came with from high school. This a problem is not reported by those from town or urban schools. This problems was explained as such:

> [13] Participant 13: Aee English, English eish. **Nna ga ke itse Englishe ya mo skolong why e le thata jaana** [*I do not know why the English here at school is so difficult*].
>
> [14] Participant 25: **Ai, nna mona sekgowa sa ka kwa, sa ko** [*No, me here, the English of that side, of*] primary, **se ne le mo leveleng ya rona cos e ene e le** [*it was on our level because it was*] first additional.

[15] Participant 14: Uhm, **ne ke bona gore e tloba** [*I saw that it was going to be*] easy, **o tlo nkušiša cos** [*you will understand me because*] if **ke bua Englishe** *[I speak in English*] like, **Englishe ya ka ha e, ha e** [*my English is not, is not*] that … **ha e** [*is not*] that good **wa bona** [*you see*].

The inteview participants voiced their struggles with the level of English at univerity and their preparedness to undertake tasks solely in English. In the excerpts above, they expressed that they struggled with the level of English used at university. Particpant 25 explains (see excerpt 14) that the level of English is difficult because they did English as a first additional language and not as first language or home languge at school. Participant 5 had a different language challenge in which she explains that she could not undertand the accent of her lecturer who was from overseas.

[16] Participant 5: Ijoo, it was a bit challenging.
Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Participant 5: More especially when it comes to English. **Ke ne ke nnile le a** [*I had had a*] challenge **ya di accente** [*of the accents*].
Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Participant 5: Cos there was this other lecturer, **o tlhaga** [*he comes from*] oversea, would speak **bo** *thee* instead of the.

Participants from urban and town schools claimed that they had not experienced any problems when it came to their use of language at univeristy. They transitioned seamlessly.

[17] Participant 6: It hasn't changed.
Interviewer: … like the way language is used here. Is the same as language there?
Participant 6: Yeah.

Participant 6 above stated in the interview that the language use has not changed since she left high school. Paticipant 9 Further stated that:

[18] Interviewer: Okay. You did say that last week. How has the transition been in terms of language from high school considering **wena** [*you*] personally?
Participant 9: Uh, there isn't much since I did English home, but there's some here and there.

While participants from township and village schools bemoan the level of difficulty of English at university, participants from urban schools said they were coping just fine. In excerpt 18 above, participant 9 said she was coping because she did English as a home language while participant 25 in excerpt 14 said they struggled because they did English as a first additional language instead of as home language. Thus, as mentioned previously, the focus group data was used to investigate if the themes that emerged in the individual interviews also emerged in the focus group discussion. In other words, the idea was to see if the themes that emerged in the focus group discussion corroborated what was said in the interviews. For example, participant 25 said the following in the excerpt below:

[19] Participant 16: **Nna ke fila gore ke bone ba re lomeleditseng** [*I feel that they are the ones that spoiled us*].

Interviewer: Your foundation. So, is the level of English **ya ko** [*at*] high school?
Participant 16: **Ee. Ke bone ba re sentseng** [*Yes. They are the ones that destroyed us*].
Participant 25: **Ba re sentse** [*They destroyed us*].
Participant 4: Yes.
Participant 16: **Cos ba ruta ba ntse ba tsenya Setswana thata thata** [*Because they teach while putting Setswana a lot of times*]. So **ga re tla mona** [*when we come here*] …
Participant 4: We are coming here …
Participant 16: … **ke Englishe hela. Go a senyega** [*it is English only. Then things go bad*].
Interviewer: Alright. So, if **ne ba sa tsenya Setswana thata, thata, thata** [*if they had not put Setswana a lot*], do you guys think you would have made it to university?
Participant 25: **Ja** [*Yes*].

Therefore, when it comes to the use of languages at university, participants from township and rural schools said that they struggled with the level of English required at university. The participants criticised the teaching methods at high school for not exposing them enough to the level of English required at university. Elsewhere in the interview data, participant 13 in an interview argued that some of the things taught during English class such as poetry should be removed and learners should be taught more English, relevant for the context of university.

[20] Participant 13: **Le referense ga ke e itse. Le go kwala introductione. Introductione kgale ke sa itse go kwala … ke ne ke kwala introductione ya go tlhalosa fela. Kgale ke sa itse gore introductione ena le thesise bo eng** [*Even referencing I do not know it. And also writing an introduction. Introduction I did not know how to write …. I used to write an introduction that is expository/that explains only. For long I did not know that an introduction has things like the thesis and the what*].
Interviewer: **Ehe** [*Yes*]. Until **o fitlha ko** [*you arrived at*] university.
Participant 13: **Le bo di** [*Even the likes of the*] run-on sentence, **kgale ke se** [*I was not*] aware.
Interviewer: **O kwala fela wena** [*You were just writing*].
Participant 13: Mam, **ne re rutiwa go punchuaita hela le go dira bo** [*we were taught how to punctuate only and to do the*] passive voice **eng eng** [*what what*].
Interviewer: Oh. So, **go na le phapang** [*there is a difference*] between English **ya mo** [*at the*] high school **le ya mo** [*and here at the*] university. So, you think ko high school they need to up their game, **go le prepherela** [*to prepare you*] for university.
Participant 13: **Go na le nako e ya bo dipoem bo di eng. Ba ntshe dipoem ba tsenye nako ya dibasic ya go rutiwa ko** [*There is a time of the poems and such. They must remove the poems and add time for the basics of being taught at*] university, because **mona ba bangwe batho ba ba tlo go dirang poem ga ba yo mo sekolong; ke bona yalo** [*here some of the people that are going to do the poems are not there at school; that is what I see*].
Interviewer: **Ne disena mosola** [*They were of no use*]?
Participant 13: **Di sena mosola. Ga baa tshwanela go re ruta tsone geh ko skolong** [*They had no use. They are not supposed to teach them to us then at school*].

Participant 13 further states that there are some things that they did not learn in high school that they could have learned. He says all he learned when it comes to writing an introduction was to write an expository introduction. These participants stated that high school could have prepared students better for university if they chose their content and subject matter differently. This is another reason given as participants in excerpt 19 state that the language (multilingualism in class) spoiled them and did not adequately prepare them for university. This is the reason why

the participants ended up doing the module Academic Literacy at university, to try and mitigate the gap between high school and university. Participant 16 in excerprt 19 on the other hand stated that the teachers should stop translating or codeswitching a lot in high school as it does not help them prepare for university where there is little or no such a practice. Therefore, participants are aware of the situation of under-preparedness for university, particularly brought about by the use of language, and argue that high school should be used to prepare them for entry into university.

During the focus group discussion, the three participants from village and township schools continued to stress the difficulty of English as LoTL at university. Participants 4, 16 and 25 in excerpt 21 agree on the difficulty in the following conversation:

> [21] Interviewer: In terms of the way **go rutiwang ka teng** [*teaching is done*], like the level of the English or …
> Participant 4: It's way too high for, for **nna** [*me*].
> Participant 16: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Participant 25: **Rona re tlwaetse bo first. Mo e kete ke** [*We are used to the first (additional language). Here it is like it is the*] home **e keneletseng, wa bona** [*that is deep, you see*].
> Participant 4: Like really. It's like we are doing English in Afrikaans, **mare** [*but*] it's English. It's so …
> Interviewer: It's confusing?
> Participant 4: It's so, **deermekaar** [confusing], complicated, whatever. It's, it's …
> Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Participant 4: … it's not real.
> Participant 16: Serious.
> Interviewer: It's not a real language. **Ekare** [*It is like*] English and Afrikaans?
> Participant 4: **Ekare ke Afrikaanse mare ke Englishe. E** [*It's like Afrikaans, but it is English. It is*] …
> Interviewer: Oh. It seems like a new language?
> Participant 4: Yes.

The complication of the LoTL is expressed by these participants who are first years and from rural and township schools who continued to undergo an immense struggle with the language of tuition. Participant 25 said that the language is so difficult that it feels like they are doing English as home language. Participant 4 sums it up by saying it feels like a totally new language.

Experience of additive and subtractive multilingualism

Although the advocacy for Indigenous African languages in the higher education context is rife, the use of those languages can often be stigmatised and lead to people shying away from embracing their use at university. Another theme that emerged in the interview data concerning language and university is that some participants understood that using African languages at university is a challenge because of their own experience when using their languages:

[22] Participant 14: … most of them, **ga ba ntlhaloganye. Tlameile** [*they do not understand me. I must*] like **ke, ke thome ke elaboreite** [*start elaborating*], or **ke explaine** [*explaining*] in a way **e leng hore ba tlong understanda ka hona** [*that they will understand me with*] …
Interviewer: Mhm …
Participant 14: **Go na le diterms tse e leng gore tsa Sepedi ga bo di tshwara, ga ba di kwešiše** [*There are terms that are Pedi, they will not get them, they do not understand them*]. So, **tlameile ke thome jwale ke** [*I must start now to*], like, **ke di breaike** [*to break them*] down that, **e meana** [*it means*] this **e meana** [*it means*] that.

Participant 14 identifies his home language as Sepedi. In excerpt 21, he explains how he experiences challenges with his use of Sepedi with fellow students at the NWU-PC. In this interview with participant14, he explains that he struggles with using Sepedi among non-Sepdi speakers such as his friends. As part of the language repertoire of Participant 14, he explains that during conversations with his friends at university, he uses vocabulary or terminology in Sepedi that none of his peers understands and he is forced to translate or elaborate or even explain what was said. He admits that this can be a very daunting task and he is then forced to switch to other languages that his peers also understand such as Setswana or English. This is an experience of subtractive multilingualism as the participant is forced by the situation to supress a part of his language repertoire that deals with high functions of language such as the use of figures of expression to function.

A different perspective that illustrates a subtractive multilingualism scenario is shared by participant 13:

[23] Participant 13: Er, **e mfilisa** [*it makes me feel*], eish! Sometimes, **e mfilisa** [*it makes me feel*] out because er, **mafoko a mangwe a tshwantse ke a fixse ka Sekgowa, ke batla go a dirisa ka Setswana, ene go tlo ba difficulte for batho likes, disurroundings** [*some words I have to fix it in English. I want to use it in Setswana, and it is going to be difficult for people like, the surroundings*], if **ke ya ko disurroundings tse dingwe** [*I go to other surroundings*]. So, **ga ke kgone go dirisa mafoko a mo, mo Englisheng** *[I cannot use the words that are in, in English*].
Interviewer: Mm. **Mphe** [*Give me an*] example. **Ga ke, ga ke kgone go tlhaloganya** [*I cannot under…I am not able to understand*]. Like what for example?
Participant 13: Likes … er, likes **nna ke, ke motho o ratang bo diane** [*I am a, I am a person that likes the proverbs/idioms*] …
Interviewer: Mhm …
Participant 13: … So, **bo diane tseo** [*those proverbs*] like, if **ke batla go di rileita likes** [*I want to relate them like*] …
Interviewer: **Ka Sekgowa, go di translaita ke mathata** [*In English, to translate them is a problem*].
Participant 13: **Ee** [*Yes*], eish.

During the interviews, when participants were asked how speaking their languages makes them feel, some participants said that sometimes their experiences are not good. Participant 13 says speaking Setswana sometimes makes him feel bad because he must translate what he means from one language to another. As a person who likes using figures of speech like idioms,

participant 13 said he enjoyed using figures of speech such as idioms and he finds it difficult when speaking to his peers at the university when he uses idioms because translating these idioms into more languages his peers could understand becomes problematic. The use of idioms is an indicator that the speaker is an advanced language user and in the case of Participant 13, such a great part of his language behaviour is therefore compromised, under-utilised or abandoned when using only English for teaching and learning in academic conversations with peers. This is an example of experiences of subtractive multilingualism that some students undergo at university when the nature of their language repertoires are not supported in the environment.

The issue of subtractive and additive multilingualism exhihibited above experienced by students who arrive at universities from schools that use English only as the language of teaching and learning is not a new phenomenon in the education system of the country. Subtractive multilingualism for the participants who went to schools that taught in English happened at a much earlier stage in their lives. Participant 1 details her subtractive multilingual experiences in pre-school as follows:

> [24] Participant 1: No. **Ke tsene** [*I attended*] crèche **ko** [*at*] Afrikaans.
> Interviewer: Creche was like, how old where you? And you still remember?
> Participant 1: Yes.
> Interviewer: You see how powerful our minds are? Wow! How old were you?
> Participant 1: I was, like little. Afrikaans, I think was the second language …
> Interviewer: **Ko** [*At*] creche?
> Participant 1: … that…
> Interviewer: That, that became like, like, **e o e ithutileng** [*that you learned*] …
> Participant 1: **Ee** [*Yes*]. And somehow, I ended up only speaking Afrikaans for some time …
> Interviewer: **Eh!**
> Participant 1: … because **ne ke sa tlhola ke bua** [*I was no longer speaking*] Sesotho **ke bua** [*I spoke*] Afrikaans.
> Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Participant 1: So, I had to learn Sesotho all over again.
> Interviewer: Your, your, your home language had to be learned now?
> Participant 1: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Interviewer: **Ao** [*Wow*], that's interesting. But you don't wanna speak it [Afrikaans] now?
> Participant 1: **Aa aa** [*No*]!
> Interviewer: **Ene** [*And*] you still remember it?
> Participant 1: I still remember it.

What is most profound about excerpt 24 above is that although Participant 1 learned Afrikaans in pre-school, she still remembers it. However, she does not want to use it because she saw that using it in preschool erased her Sesotho completely and now she has a negative attitude towards the language. If the language had been used alongside her Sesotho, maybe the attitude towards

the language would have been different. This theme is something to explore in further research. Many South African schools insist on monolingual education or bilingualism in the form of English and Afrikaans only. These educational contexts strip the majority of the learners in South African schools (who use African languages as home languages) of their sense of self and this becomes apparent when it comes to the university context where universities are struggling to incorporate students' languages into the teaching and learning context.

The discussion of these two themes shows that the students feel that their language repertoire is never good enough. Their English is not good enough and there are many challenges to use their home language at university. So these participants express experiences that indicate that the multilingual language repertoires that they bring to university classrooms are "deleted", definitely not optimised.

4.1.2.4. Focus group discussions

Experience of additive and subtractive multilingualism

When it comes to the issue of subtractive multilingualism, the theme appears less prominently but is present in the focus group discussion as well. The participants from the rural and township schools are the ones who feel the subtractive multilingualism at university the most. This is felt in expressions such as the one below:

> [25] Colleague: **Ka** [*In*] Setswana? Or in Setswana in class?
> Participant 16: **Re ka se e botse** [*We cannot ask it*].
> Participant 25: **Re ka se e botse. Ga re na le potso re a ichwesa** [*We do not ask. When we have a question, we just ignore it*].
> Participant 9: Or if you have an answer. You just …
> Colleague: So, what do you do in that case? Let's say …
> Participant 4: **Ga ke bona gore lekchara oo o understanda** [*If I see that the lecturer understands*] Setswana, **nna ke tlile go botsa ka** [*I am going to ask in*] Setswana.
> Interviewer: **Mo klaseng** [*In class*]?
> Participant 4: **Mo klaseng** [*In class*].
> Participant 16: **Ae, e seng mo klaseng** [*No, not in class*].
> Participant 4: And then if **ba complaina ke tla ba bolella gore ga le bua seburukaans sa lona nna ga re nke re le tshwenya** [*they complain, I will tell them that when you speak your Afrikaans, we never bother you*]

The concern in the above excerpt is that participants said that they ignore questions in the lecture halls because of English, even if they know the answer. Their lack of participation is not necessarily because they do not know, but because of the language that they cannot use. Participant 4 says she would ask in Setswana, to which Participant 16 shockingly ask "in class"? This shows that using Setswana as a language in class is an unusual concept for participants.

Therefore, in this section, the language repertoire of participants in the study was presented. The findings prove the multilingual nature of the repertoire of students and how participants are not equally competent in their languages. There are some languages that they are fully functional in, meaning that they can read, write, speak, and understand very well and these languages happen to be their home languages. When it comes to their second strongest language which is normally the additional language of English, participants point out that they can do tasks very well and well enough in their second language English. The participants also report being multilingual users of languages since primary school. Most of them attended schools were their languages were used alongside English. Participants express a shift in language use at university when compared to high school. Most participants express that the English at university is more difficult than in high school, and they are aware of their unpreparedness to undertake tasks in English because of the lower level proficiency in English when compared to their home languages.

4.2. How do students use language during consultations to deepen understanding

Building upon the findings from the previous sections, this section delves specifically into the issue raised by the following research question:

- How do students use different languages during consultations to deepen their understanding of concepts or tasks?

This is the main contribution of the thesis: a focus on the description of the use of languages during consultation sessions with the researcher as lecturer; an analysis to understand how and why different languages are used during these consultation sessions; and interpreting the findings to deepen our insight and understanding of how multiple languages are used during consultations to deepen cognition or for educational advancement. This section therefore focuses on the presentation of the findings from the analysis of language use during the consultation sessions.

Table 19: Demographic data of the "Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire" participants (n=19)

Participant number	*1. Sex*	*2. Age*	*3. Which of the following is your home language/first language? One's home language is the one that you use at home MOST of the time.*	*4. What other languages do you know?*	*Number of languages in a repertoire*
Participant 8	*Female*	*19*	*isiZulu*	*English, Sesotho, isiZulu, isiXhosa*	*4*
Participant 10	*Female*	*22*	*Setswana*	*English, Afrikaans, isiZulu*	*4*
Participant 11	*Female*	*18*	*isiXhosa*	*English, Sesotho, isiZulu, Siswati, isiNdebele*	*6*
Participant 14	*Male*	*22*	*Sepedi*	*English, Setswana, Sesotho, isiZulu*	*5*
Participant 20	*Female*	*19*	*isiZulu*	*English, Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi, isiXhosa*	*6*
Participant 29	*Male*	*19*	*Sesotho*	*English, Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi*	*5*
Participant 26	*Female*	*20*	*Setswana*	*English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Sepedi*	*5*
Participant 3	*Female*	*19*	*Setswana*	*English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, isiZulu, isiXhosa*	*6*
Participant 6	*Female*	*19*	*Setswana*	*English, Afrikaans*	*3*
Participant 22	*Female*	*20*	*Sesotho*	*English, Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi, isiZulu*	*6*
Participant 9	*Female*	*22*	*isiXhosa*	*English, Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho, isiZulu*	*6*

Participants 5	*Female*	*20*	*Setswana*	*English, Setswana, Sesotho*	*3*
Participant 20	*Female*	*21*	*Setswana*	*English, Afrikaans*	*3*
Participant 1	*Female*	*20*	*Sesotho*	*English, Afrikaans, isiNdebele*	*4*
Participant 16	*Male*	*20*	*Setswana*	*English, Sesotho*	*3*
Participant 27	*Male*	*20*	*Sepedi*	*English, Setswana, Sesotho, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Xitsonga*	*7*
Participant 4	*Female*	*31*	*Setswana*	*English, Sesotho, Sepedi, isiZulu, isiXhosa*	*6*
Participant 19	*Female*	*21*	*Sesotho*	*English, Setswana, isiZulu, isiXhosa*	*5*
Participant 7	*Female*	*20*	*English*	*English, isiXhosa*	*2*

One of the items on the "Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire" asked the consultation participants to indicate the language that they perceive as their home language or first language, defined in the question as "the one [language] that you use at home most of the time". The participants' responses are reported in Table 19 above. Setswana was a home language to most of the participants (8 participants) and that was followed by Sesotho (4 participants) as the home language to some participants. isiZulu and was indicated as home language by 3 participants in this questionnaire and Sepedi had two participants who named it their home language. One participant each named isiXhosa and English as their home language respectively. However, participants who came to consult using their languages proved to be very multilingual in that the participant who had the most languages on their repertoire was participant 27 with 7 languages in his/her command. The participant with the least languages in her repertoire was participant 7 with 2 languages, i.e., English and isiXhosa as the only two languages reported in her repertoire. Six of the participants were self-reported to have 6 languages in their repertoire and four participants reported to have 5 languages in their repertoire. There were four participants who reported to have 3 languages in their repertoire. Lastly, three participants self-reported to have

four languages in their repertoire. An interesting aspect about this self-reporting is that none of the participants claimed to be able to speak South African slang, even though that showed up in the data. Participant 1 in the data that will follow on language repertoires during interviews also claimed to be a speaker of Sepitori, but she did not include it in her language repertoire for this questionnaire. However, just as it is with the language repertoires of the participants in the Language repertoire questionnaire, none of the participants who came to consult using their languages alongside English was a speaker of only one language and this shows in the consultation data.

Thus, in general, participants are multilingual and mention that they use their languages for different contexts. When participants were asked about the different contexts in which they use their languages, again there were some activities reserved for English or mostly done in English, but participants' home languages were used for several things.

4.2.1. Consultations findings

Consultations as used in this section of the study refer to the practice whereby students come to the lecturer in the office or approach the lecturer just before the beginning of class or immediately after class in the front of the lecture room to ask questions or enquire about something (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.2.2). This section deals with the findings from data sets on how students use their languages to deepen understanding during consultations and how that practice makes them feel. Information from four datasets, i.e., the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, consultation recordings, interviews and focus group discussions will be presented and analyzed in this section. In the individual language questionnaire participants were asked about switching between languages during consultations and these findings will be reported under 4.3 below to explain what participants said with regard to consulting in different languages post the use of their languages during consultations.

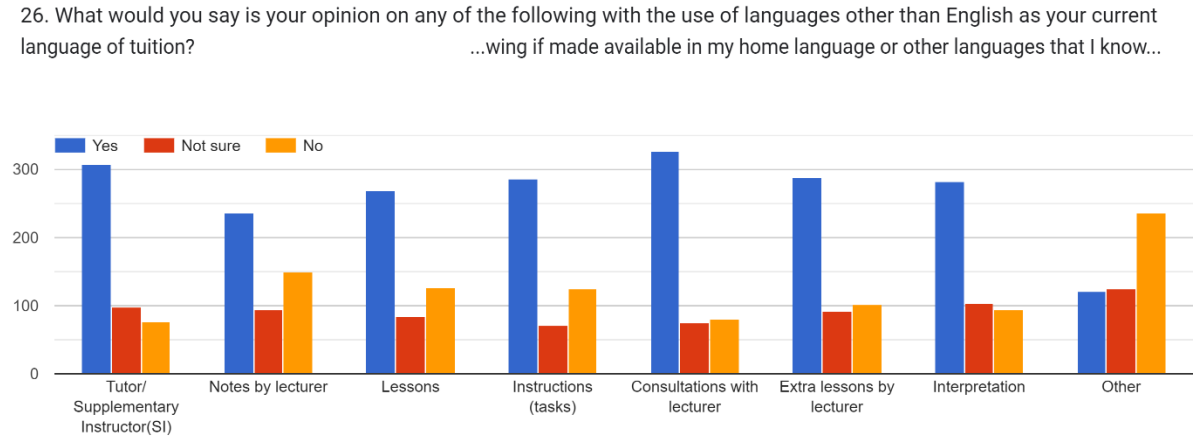
4.2.1.1. Language Repertoire questionnaire findings related to consultations and the use of language

The Language Repertoire Questionnaire was sent to all students on the NWU's Potchefstroom campus who attend Academic Literacy (ALDE) as a module to gather macro-level information about the ALDE students' language repertoire, language use patterns and attitudes towards languages (see Chapter 3 under 3.4.2.1). In the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, one question asked about language use in the context of consultations. The question asked students' opinions on using their languages for academic purposes including during consultations. Participants were asked the question below:

What would you say is your opinion on any of the following with the use of languages other than English as your current language of tuition?

I would make use of the following if made available in my home language or other languages that I know…

Figure 25: Participants' responses concerning the use of their home languages or other languages in certain domains if the option was available (item 26, Language Repertoire Questionnaire)



There were 475 responses to the question related to participants' perceptions of the use of their languages if the option was available during consultations. Of the 475 participants, 322 (or 67.8%) of the participants said 'yes', they would use their languages during consultations if it was available or possible, 79 (or 15.6%) of the participants said 'no' they would not use their languages during consultation and 74 (or 16%) of the participants said they are 'not sure'. The students who participated in the rest of the study by consulting with the researcher in her office, participating in individual interviews and focus group discussions and completing the individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire were all ALDE students in 2022 and they are proof that participants can make use of multilingual opportunities or services if made available. In the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, 68% of all the participants who responded as evidenced in Figure 25 said 'yes', they would like to consult with the lecturer using their languages. The response to this item indicates that students believe that they could use their languages during consultation sessions with their lecturers if the option was available. The findings from the other data sets related participants' use of Black South African languages during consultation sessions in order to deepen understanding will be reported next.

4.2.2. Analysis of the audio-recordings of consultations

The purpose of this section is to present the findings and analysis of the ways participants in this study used the languages in their repertoires during consultations with the lecturer (also the

researcher in this study). This section dives into the data that emerged from the recorded sessions with students during consultations. Firstly, the different reasons why the participants came to consult and how the languages in their repertoire were used during these consultation sessions were looked at. This was followed by a description of how the languages were used during consultation (focusing on which languages were used and how switches between languages were made) and then a discussion of the frequency of languages used, the switches between the languages used and the types of switches that took place as identified by the researcher are presented. Lastly, this section presented the data from the individual interviews, focus group discussion as well as the individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire to ascertain the attitudes and experiences of participants when they switched between the use of different languages during the recorded consultations.

Ten of the eleven recorded and transcribed consultations reflect that participation during consultations took place mostly in the lecturer's office. Only one recording that has been included in the study took place immediately after class. There were initially two recordings that took place immediately after class but only one participant completed a consent form, hence only one participant's data was included in the study. Similarly, not all recordings that were done in the lecture's office were transcribed as some students came to consult more than once, and if that was the case for a participant (being recorded more than once) only one of the recordings was transcribed. Participant 13 (individually), and participants 5, 6 and 7 (as a group), and participants 9, 10, 11, 12 (as a group) came to consult more than once but only one of their recordings was transcribed, translated and included in the analysis for this study.

Furthermore, one student who came to consult individually (see sentence 3 above) did not give consent for his recording to be used in the study. His recording was never transcribed and translated. Some participants agreed to be recorded in the office as well and did not sign the consent forms online. These are participants 2, 15, 17 and 18 as well as participants 23. Participant 21 was an Afrikaans first language speaker, and the study's focus is on the use of Black South African languages during consultations, therefore, her data (in particular) was not used for analysis and discussion.

Concerning recorded consultations, the study includes the analyses of 11 consultations that were recorded in 2022. There were 20 participants who gave consent for their recordings to be used for this study, and some of them participated in smaller groups during the consultation

sessions as explained above. The consultations themselves were divided into two categories: (a) consultations for class assessments (2 consultation recordings) and (b) 9 consultations on an ALDE major assignment. The table below illustrates the spread of the different types of office consultations that are included in the analysis for the study.

Table 20: Information on recorded consultations

Total number of recorded consultations	***11***	***Total time of audio-recordings = 2H45***	***Participants***
Number of recorded consultations on the academic assignment	*9*	*Total time of audio-recordings = 2H13*	*Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,16, 21, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29*
Number of recorded consultations on other assessment tasks	*2*	*Total time of audio-recordings = 0.32*	*Participants 13 &14, 19*

The data of the recorded consultations shows that most of the students came to consult because of assessments for which marks would be allocated, which ultimately could influence whether they pass, or fail the module. Of the 11 recordings, 9 were related to consultations concerning an upcoming assignment (at that time), which carried a weight of 20% of the module mark; the assignment that most students came to consult about was a group assignment, which means that in the recording there were sometimes more than one person's voice recorded. Participants also tended to make small talk on other issues that may or may not be academic and may or may not be related to what they came to consult about. The data that will be presented under-recorded consultations will address the following sub-themes:

1. The reason why the participants came to consult.
2. What was discussed during the consultation.
3. How frequently did the participants switch languages during consultations.
4. What was the reason for the switch.

4.2.2.1. The reason why the participants came to consult

The researcher coded all the reasons for the consultation sessions in ATLAS.ti (version 2024). The number of codes that emerged are presented in Table 21 below, as well as the frequencies for each reason.

Table 21: Reasons participants came to consult as seen by the lecturer

Reasons why participants came to consult	Frequencies of codes
Consultation discussion-conceptualisation	15
Consultation discussion-structure	12
Consultation discussion-submission	11
Consultation discussion-unrelated matters-academic	7
Consultation discussion-assessment/s-submission/deadline	6
Consultation discussion-unrelated matters-non-academic	5
Consultation discussion-group dynamics	4
Consultation discussion-class assessment/s mark/s	4
Consultation discussion-academic-assessment-instructions	3
Consultation discussion-structure-class assessment	1

The consultations were analysed using Bloom's taxonomy by differentiating between the Higher Order Thinking (HOT) activities and Lower Order Thinking (LOT) activities during consultations. On Bloom's taxonomy, HOT relates to cognitive skills while LOT has to do with lower order thinking skills (Makgopa, 2021; Mangwele, 2019). Makgopa (2021: 22) states that in the revised Bloom's taxonomy "the first three cognitive levels represent lower order thinking levels; remembering, understanding, and applying, while the last three represent higher order thinking levels; analysing, evaluating, and creating".

This study uses Bloom (1956) taxonomy to analyse the recorded consultations and evaluate how African languages are used by participants alongside English, particularly to deepen understanding. Bloom's taxonomy is old as it was first published in 1956 (Forehead, 2011). There is a summary of the taxonomy and how it was applied to this study under Chapter 3 (section 3.4.2). The taxonomy is helpful in the academic area in distinguishing between the Lower Order Thinking skills and the Higher Order Thinking skills. It has been revised by a few scholars from what it was originally (Krathwohl, 2002; Ormell, 2016). It has been revised a lot of times (The University of Utah's Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence, 2001). There is critique on taxonomy, for example the relevance of taxonomy in Mathematics (Ormell, 2016). However, taxonomy is so useful that it continues to be used in academic development contexts (Mokgwathi *et al.*, 2019). The aim of this study is not to critique Bloom's taxonomy, but to use this well-known and widely accepted framework as an analysis tool for the consultation sessions to indicate systematically what the reasons for code-switches during consultation sessions were. In other words, can the switches between languages be related to HOT or LOT skills and what does this mean for the use of African languages in the academic contexts of higher education in South Africa.

4.2.2.2. Consultation discussion-assignment-conceptualization

As shown in Table 21 above, the most prominent reason why students came to consult was because of the academic assignment that was due (at that time), particularly focusing on conceptualizing the assignment. The assignment was on misinformation (topic) in the field of study and or in South Africa (context). The students had to write an argumentative essay and combine the ideas from each group member to form a coherent argument (see Appendix J for the assignment details). The conceptualization of the assignments discussed during the consultation sessions involved thinking about what one is going to write about, and this cognitive activity was viewed as an instance of HOT skills aligned with Bloom's taxonomy as it is used in this study.

Understanding the reasons for the consultation sessions is important because it helps to explain an element of why and how African languages are used during consultation sessions in the university context. If we understand better why students engage in-office consultations and can link these reasons more clearly to their selection of African languages, it provides information about an aspect that explains how African languages could be used optimally to foster a supportive teaching and learning environment in higher education in South Africa.

Students used their languages during the consultations to conceptualise the assignment. This is the first step in the process of writing, whereby one thinks about what they are going to write about (brainstorming, mind mapping, discussion, creating a framework, theorizing). Participants therefore used consultation sessions to conceptualise their assignments. They used their languages to try and understand what should be done in the assignment, especially how to make an argument and how to contextualise their assignments. Thus, a prominent theme related to the use of African languages during the consultation sessions analysed in this study, focuses on the conceptualisation of the assignment. This is not a surprise because there seems to be a direct link between this theme and the themes that emerged in the individual interviews where participants confirmed that they use their languages to understand and be understood. This will be shown further as this section expands.

Table 22: How often conceptualization occurred in the discussions

Consultation number + participants	***Frequencies for the code: Consultation discussion-assignment-conceptualisation***
Consultation 10 Participants 21, 22, 23	*4*
Consultation 4 Participants 6, 5	*4*
Consultation 3 Participant 4	*3*
Consultation 11 Participants 26, 27, 28, 29	*2*
Consultation 8 Participants 15, 16, 17, 18	*1*
Consultation 6 Participants 9, 10, 11, 12	*1*
Consultation 1 Participant 1	*0*
Consultation 9 Participant 20	*0*
Consultation 2 Participants 2 & 3	*0*
Grand Total	***15***

In Table 22 above, the frequencies for the coded theme for the conceptualization of the assignment are reported as occurring across the different consultation sessions. The coded theme occurred in almost all the consultation sessions. This data was coded in ATLAS.ti (version 2024) when the reason for the consultation sessions was the students' need to discuss how the assignment should be conceptualized. The findings indicate that 6 of the 9 consultations involved an element of conceptualization to a greater or lesser extent. Of the 3 consultations that did not include any aspect of conceptualization, the focus was on submission (consultations 1 & 9) whereby Participant 1 (in consultation 1) had written on an incorrect topic and had to resubmit her work. She went further to talk briefly about her group and the group assignment, but it was only concerning their topic and the submission of their assignment. Similarly, in consultation 9, participant 20 came to discuss what she needed to submit alongside the essay, such things as the cover page and title page. Moreover, in consultation 2, participants 2 and 3 had come to explain how they clashed with a group member (coded as "group dynamics") and how they ended up submitting a separate assignment from the group (coded as "submission").

One of the main reasons for the consultation sessions therefore was to ensure that the participants conceptualized the assignment appropriately. There are several examples of using African languages during the consultation sessions that attempted to advance the conceptualization process of the assignment.

> [26] Lecturer: **…** Because **lotlhe le** [*all of you are*] sports science, so you can talk about what brings your assignment together. **Akere … O kwetse ka** [*Isn't it …you wrote about*] sports science and what?
> Participant 5: **Ke lebetse** [*I forgot*].
> Participant 6: Ijoo!

Lecturer: What a wow!
Participant 6: Supplements.
Lecturer: **Ka disupplements … Wena** [*About supplements … You*]?
Participant 7: **Nna** [*Me*] I guess I was **off-nyana** [*off a little*].
Lecturer: **O kwetse ka eng** [*What did you write about*] though?
Participant 7: Ah**, ke ngwetse ka** [*I wrote about*] like how players were misinformed about like sports and so on.
Lecturer: Ok. That's a point. Maybe you just didn't argue it right.
Participant 7: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Lecturer: Mhm! **Wena o kwetse ka eng** [*You, what did you write about*]?
Participant 6: People only take it like … they think it's only for, for males. And then they think it's only based on coaching whereas there are other jobs that you can find.
Lecturer: Okay. Interesting. **Utlwa fela** [*Just hear*]. I think guy **ole wa chomi ya lona** [*that one of your friend*] … Are you the fourth one?

In excerpt 26 above, the lecturer together with students from the sports science field of study discuss what the students wrote in the individual assignment. The specific assignment focused on the writing of an introduction and how to incorporate the introduction into the group assignment. The lecturer asked questions to ascertain what everyone had written previously to discuss with the group how each member can contribute. As the assignment topic was 'Misinformation in your field of study' (see Appendix J), Participant 6 wrote about supplements and misinformation in sports and Participant 7 said she thought she was a little bit off topic, while Participant 5 says she forgot what she wrote about. The aim of the discussion is to see how the ideas from group members can be incorporated to form one coherent argument for the group assignment that they were working on. In other words, the discussion in excerpt 26 focused on conceptualizing the next group assignment by using what each student wrote in a previous assignment as an introduction.

[27] Participant 4: No. Like, first time **ne ke nagana gore** [*I thought that*] like **o kwala** [*you write*] … like **ke tshwantse ke kwale pharagrafo fela** [*I have to write a paragraph only*] …
Lecturer: Oh …
Participant 4: **Ke sa bue** [*Not saying*] anything **ka** [*about*] misinformation. Like, like …
Lecturer: **E le** [*It being a*] heading? Yes. You need to create that link. **Mpontshe gore di kopana yang dilo tse pedi tsena. Gore** [*Show me how they come together these two things. That*] bodybuilding **ke go etsa so. Batho ba tsaya disupplente ba nagana gore ke gone go builda** [*is to do this. People take supplements thinking that that is to build the*] body. **Akere** [*Right*]?
Participant 4: Yes.
Lecturer: **Ee. Mare batho bao** [*Yes. But those people*] they are …
Participant 4: Misinformed.
Lecturer: **Ee** [*Yes*]. Who misinformed them?
Participant 4: **Ba bangwe ke Internete** [*Others, it is the Internet*].

Similarly, in excerpt 27 above, Participant 4 submitted an introductory assignment where she struggled to contextualize her argument and relate the argument to the topic. She had submitted an assignment that had all the elements that were required in the introduction, but none of it was

related to the topic and the context. Thus, the multilingual discussion here points at the conceptualization of the assessment, on how the student needs to incorporate the context and theme in her work.

> [28] Participant 21: Uhm, in Tourism? Misinformation in tourism?
> Lecturer: Yes. In South Africa yes.
> Participant 21: Okay. I'd say because tourism focuses on travelling and tourists, tourists might be misguided on the information they get from the hospitality packages, uhm, travel packages including attractions …
> Lecturer: They lie on them?
> Participant 21: Yes. I mean like what they offer mam. I might say **gore** [*that*] this is my … example, I only have a, a hospitality accommodation …
> Lecturer: **Ehe** [*Yes*].
> Participant 21: … and then **ga ke na diattraction** [*I do not have attractions*] but in the package I state **gore** [*that*] there's attractions involved while there's no attractions …
> Lecturer: … attractions. **Ha le tsena** [*When you get there*] you are shocked.
> Participant 21: Yes.
> Lecturer: And then what do they do normally when that's the case?
> Participant 21: Well, they have to take action as in like report it …
> Lecturer: Mhm.
> Participant 21: Reporting it to the, **kana ke eng** [*what is it called*]? To the tourism … I forgot the name. it's the S something something …
> Lecturer: Mhm.
> Participant 21: For, for reporting such things.

Likewise, Participant 21 in excerpt 28 is explaining the context of her argument in relation to the South African tourism industry. She explains how she will argue in the assignment about how the industry is riddled with misinformation. She had to explain how she was going to formulate an argument in relation to South Africa, the tourism industry and misinformation, and how the industry could counter these problems, or how counter arguments to a statement in the assignment could be presented. Here, theme and context are highlighted in the discussion to conceptualize before going to write.

Excerpts 26-28 illustrate that students who came to consult switched between English and other South African languages to formulate a concept or make meaning of the assignment so that they could best answer the assignment. The students switched between the languages to formulate arguments, counter arguments as well as to contextualize their arguments. This is one of the critical skills that students need to acquire in the module Academic Literacy, and they need to be able to show their ability to do so in academic writing. Thus, when looking at the reasons why students switched languages during their consultations regarding contextualization, most students switched when they had to explain further how they could create an improved logical argument whereby contextualization and the topic were easier to relay, and they used more than one language to get to this understanding.

4.2.2.3. Consultation discussion-structure

When looking at Table 22 above, listing the reasons why the participants in this study came to consult with the lecturer, the structure of the assessment was one of the three most prominent themes that were coded. Participants who came to discuss the structure of their assignment came to consult concerning different aspects of the structure. Aspects such as argument and paragraph structure were mostly covered during these discussions. Below is a table with a frequency list of codes related to the structure of the assignment that emerged in the analysis.

Table 23 below shows that 12 of the discussions about the assignment were focused on the structure of the assignment and 1 was on the structure of the assessment that was on summary writing.

Table 23: Consultation discussions that focus on the structure of the assignment

Consultations and participants related to the theme	*Structure (Class assessment*	*Structure (Group assignment)*
Consultation 6 Participants 9, 10, 11, 12	*0*	*4*
Consultation 10 Participants 21, 22, 23	*0*	*3*
Consultation 3 Participant	*0*	*2*
Consultation 4 Participants 6, 5	*0*	*1*
Consultation 11 Participants 26, 27, 28, 29	*0*	*1*
Consultation 8 Participants 15, 16, 17, 18	*0*	*1*
Consultation 7 Participants 13 & 14	*1*	*0*
Consultation 9 Participant 20	*0*	*0*
Consultation 1 Participant 1	*0*	*0*
Consultation 2 Participants 2 & 3	*0*	*0*
Consultation 5 Participant 19	*0*	*0*
Totals	*1*	*12*

Students switched between their languages to ask questions relating to the structure of the assignment and intended to figure out how they should structure their assignment. Examples of discussions about structure during the consultation sessions are presented below.

> [29] Participant 13: University.
> Lecturer: … whatever. And then what are the sub-ideas under the main idea. That's all. Four to eight lines. And then afterwards **o ntirele … a kere ke eo leina le eng, osetse o e tshwere mo letsogong** [*you must make me … isn't it there is its name, you already have it in your hand*]. Then **o nketsetsa** [*make for me a*] reference list entry **ya teng gore** [*of it so that*] if **o etsa** [*you do a*] reference list **wa go e referensa jang ntho e** [*how are you going to reference this thing*] …
> Participant 13: **Ka** [*With*] Harvard.
> Lecturer: … artikele e [this article] Hmm?
> Participant 13 : **Ka** [*With*] Harvard style.

> Lecturer: **Ee** [*Yes*]. So, **ke a e batla mo tlase ga** [*I want it underneath the*] paragraph **eo ya, ya** [*that one, of the*] summary. **Ke batla** [*I want*] this thing in that Havard reference list, which means surname comma, initials and another surname comma initials, year, the name of the article, the name of the … where you … **Wa tlhaloganya** [*You understand*]?
> Participant 13: **Ee** [*Yes*].

The participants came to consult regarding how to structure their task, and what they should include and exclude, for example, including a summary of an article, and using an appropriate referencing style they were taught in class. Issues on where these elements of an assignment should appear were topics in some of the consultations. In all consultation interactions on structure, participants used their languages alongside English to express themselves, to ask questions and to solicit information. This again shows that there is a direct link between 'meaning making' and 'understanding of tasks' as shown under conceptualization. Students use their languages to make meaning of the task at hand and ask pertinent questions such as what should be included, where it should be included etc. during consultations. Below are some of examples of how students used languages other than English to deepen their understanding about the assignment that was due, specifically the structure of the assignment:

> [30] Participant 5: Palesa **a re ga kgone go dibaita** [*says she cannot debate*] if **e le essay ya rona re dibaita ka yone** [*it is our essay, we are debating with it*], unless **a dibaita le batho ba bangwe** [*she is debating with other people*].
> Participant 6: **Ee** [*No*] …
> Participant 5: (Student name).
> Participant 6: **Ke itse kere o kgona go dibaita** [*I said that you can debate*] er, maybe points **tse pedi tse tharo** [*that are two or three*]. Maybe **ntho ya ga** [*the thing of*] Palesa **le ya ga** [*and of*] Buyi. **Eseng o dibaite** [*Not to debate*] the whole thing, its gonna, like it's gonna be long …

So, similarly, when looking at excerpt 30 above on the structure of the assignment, structural elements such as argumentation were discussed. Although the participants used the word "**dibaita**" which when translated is '*to debate*', the participants had little understanding on how to structure their argument. Participant 5 stated that Participant 6 said she does not know how to argue in their assignment if it is just one assignment, to which participant 6 replied with disagreeing that she said they would be able to formulate an argument if they have two or three points. Here, the discussion was which point would be considered a claim and how would it be countered and even go as far as writing a rebuttal to the counter argument. The structure of an argument was formulated. Again, African languages were used to express the students' thinking about the problem, linking once more the fact that conceptualisation is not independent from structure and understanding.

> [31] Participant 4: It doesn't have.
> Lecturer: Why did you … at least **mo o zamileng teng hee** [*where you tried then*].
> Participant 4: **Ke kwetse** [*I wrote an*] intro, like …
> Lecturer: **Mm** [*Yes*].

Participant 4: … and then, intro **ya ka** [*of mine*], I think **e na le, e na le** [*it has the, it has the]* problem statement, **le** [*and*] thesis …
Lecturer: **E na le dilo tseo** [*It has those things*], but the **questione ke gore misinformatione o kae mo pharagrafong? Mo mpontshe** [question is that, misinformation is where in the paragraph? Show it to me]. Which part is about … **akere thopike ke** [*isn't it is the topic*] … thesis … **ga te keng** [*what is it called*]? Theme **ke** [*is*] misinformation. **Ke parte e feng e buang ka misinformatione mo paragrafong ena** [*Which part is it that speaks of misinformation in this paragraph*]? That's the first question. Before **re, re lebella gore** [*we, we look at whether*] is this a thesis is it a problem, let's find out first: which part is talking about misinformation?
Participant 4: **Ga e teng** [*It is not there*] …
Lecturer: Okay. **Ke parte efeng** [*Which part is it*] where you tried to talk about misinformation? **Mo o zamileng, gore ai, mona ne kere ke a e kenya le ga e le gore ga ya kena hantle** [*Where you tried, that no, here let me try to insert it even though it was not inserted well*]?
Participant 4: Now honestly speaking, **ga e yo** [*it is not there*] mam. Like …

Similar to the excerpts given as examples before, excerpt 31 shows a case where a student was led to understand that a very important part of the structure of their assignment (the thesis statement) was absent. Thus, the participant realised that the structure of their assignment was flawed, and they became aware of that important fact.

[32] Participant 27: **Akere** [*Isn't it*] our point will be an argument towards the, the thingy here … the preview. The main argument.
Interviewer: The preview, the main argument are two different things. The motive of this essay is to educate people er, that certain diseases are hereditary while others may be caused by consumption of certain …
Participant 27: So **akere** [*isn't it*] people believe that this …
Other participants: Mhm.
Participant 27: … **gore** [*that*] in order to live a healthy lifestyle you need to avoid this, but not only that. So, on our points we are gonna like, counteract this main argument.
Interviewer: Mhm.
Participant 26: So, mam, every paragraph should we like have a main argument and a counter argument?
Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*]. That would be interesting.
Participant 26: I can tell. And also some examples?
Interviewer: **Eya. Akere o** [*Yes. Isn't it you*] …
Participant 27: Examples yes.

The participants in excerpt 32 above are made to think of what will serve as an argument and what will serve as a counter argument. The argument structure is discussed and how one should support their argument with examples.

[33] Participant 10: Oh, **paragrafo e nngwe le e nngwe re bua ka ntho e one** [*each and every paragraph we talk about one thing*]?
Lecturer: It must have an idea. Did we not do that in class?
Participant 9: We did.
Lecturer: And then **ga le kwala le a lebala** [*when you write you forget*]? Because you are chopping stuff from stuff, that's why. And you trying … cos there's no link. Here at least, even if it's very ha … it's not your idea. That's why because somebody wrote it for you. It makes sense. It's a paragraph. It's not that well written, but we know that you're talking about the WADA, the list, the things that are prohibited. **Kuna ne** [*There is*] consistency, **uyayiqonda** [*you get it*]?

In excerpt 33 above, the participant asks whether each paragraph should have one main idea in it; something the lecturer taught in the previous class regarding the structure of a paragraph having a topic sentence and other sentences such as supporting sentences, concluding etc. However, when the students came to consult by asking the lecturer to review their writing before they submit, the topic sentences were missing in most paragraphs and when the lecturer pointed that out, the participants seemed to draw the link between what was done in class and its significance to the task at hand.

In excerpts 29-33, participants use their languages to try and understand how they are going to structure their assignment. This includes where references should appear, the structure of a paragraph, and the argument structure. The argument structure (a HOT skill) was one of the biggest reasons participants consulted because they had to write an argumentative assignment. So, structural problems force students to think about their ideas and how to incorporate them. This is discussed further in Chapter 5.

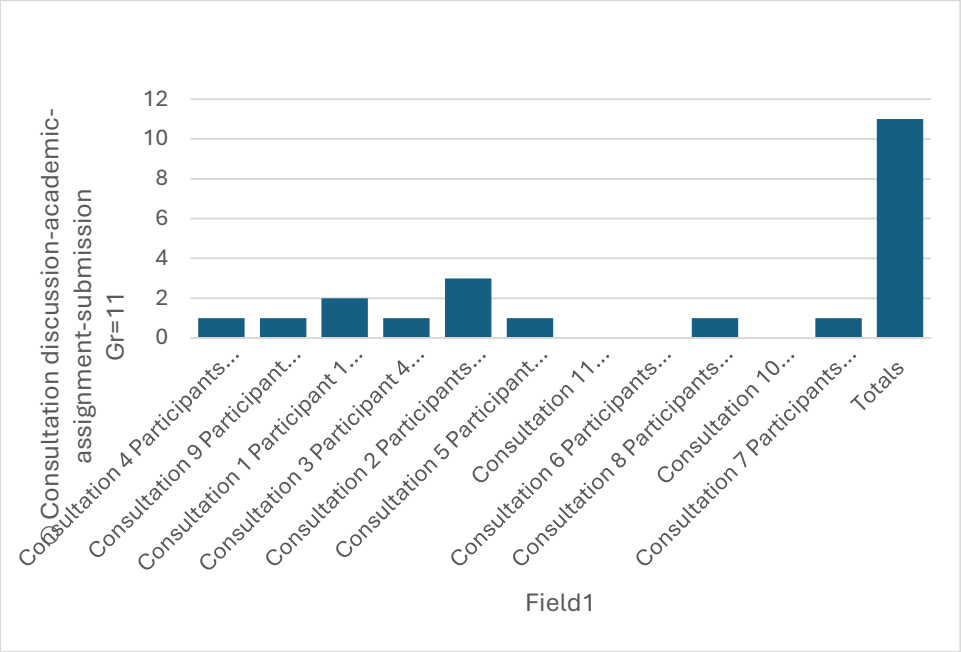
4.2.2.4. Consultation discussion-submission

Another prominent code in terms of frequencies that propelled the reasons for consultation, was that of the submission of the assignment. Once again, this section points out how the participants used their languages to discuss the submission processes of different assessments. Submission discussions during consultations seemed to fall under LOT skills on Bloom's taxonomy in that they addressed less cognitive demanding issues like arrangements for submission of the assignment.

The codes for submissions have been divided into two broad categories. One category of codes focused on the submission of the assignment that was due (at that time) with 11 instances coded; and the second category of codes focused on the submission of other class assessments with 6 instances codes. As shown on the graph below, more than half of the consultations were associated with the item of submission of assignments. Consultation 7 with participants 13 and 14 falls out of the context of assignment submission because they came to consult on a class assessment on summary writing, and this was before the assignment was due. Although consultations 11, 10 and 6 were focused on the theme of submission, they did not consult regarding the submission of their assignments but regarding other items such as conceptualization, structure and group dynamics. Again, consultation 5 with participant 19 was initially about the class assessments, but the participant also used this time to enquire about the assignment before submission, on behalf of her group members. The graph below shows the

spread of instances whereby participants asked about submission, and in all these instances English alongside other South African languages
was used.

Figure 26: Consultations on task submission



Most of the discussions on submission were focused on when the participants should submit. Consultation 9 with Participant 20 is the only consultation whereby only submission was discussed and where it was the main reason for consulting. In the other consultations, participants who came to consult concerning structure and the conceptualization of the assignment also inquired about the details for the submission of the assignment. Submission was not the main reason, but it appears as one of the top three things discussed during consultations. Submission in such cases were discussed towards the end of the consultation session. Excerpts from the consultations that show participants switching between languages to gather information about submission of assignments are presented below.

> [34] Participant 4: So **nka nna ka e submitta** [*I can submit it*] maybe ...
> Lecturer: **Ee. Ke go buletse** [*Yes. I have opened for you*] until Saturday, but please try and do it **tlhe** [*please*]. Saturday morning at nine.
> Participant 4: And **ke** [*I*]...
> Lecturer: **Ee** [*Yes*]. Tomorrow. Yes. That would be best, cos I can mark it and return your script.
> Participant 4: Alright. **Ke tla e submitta kaosane** [*I will submit it tomorrow*].
> Lecturer: Sharp, sharp!
> Participant 4: **Ke a leboga** [*I thank you*] mam.

Participant 4 above had discussed the conceptualization of her assignment and at the end was given a chance to resubmit her assignment. She then discusses the submission that she must do, stating that she would resubmit "**kaosane**", meaning tomorrow, after having effected the changes to her assignment. This is the last thing being discussed before the student leaves the lecturer's office, ending off with a polite thank you.

> [35] Participant 5: **Re emele diinstructione** [*Should we wait for the instructions*] or should we start to write?
> Lecturer: There are no instructions. Those are the instructions. There is nothing extra. Everything is under, **wa bona tab ena** [*you see this tab*]?
> Participant 5: Oh, just that … just means by the space **e leng gore e tlo bulwa ka, ka diseventeen** [*that it will open on the, on the seventeenth*]?
> Lecturer: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Participant 5: **O ka nna wa submitta** [*You can submit*]. So …
> Lecturer: **Wa submitta** [*Submit*].
> Participant 5: Okay.

Just as with Participant 4 above, participants in excerpt 35 came to discuss the assignment and at the end of the consultation session, the topic of submission of the assignment emerges. Participant 5 asks on behalf of her group whether further instructions for submission will be presented later, to which the lecturer replies by stating that there are no further instructions and that the date for submission is already set.

> [36] Participant 20: Because the other groups had to submit it …
> Lecturer: Yes, you know how, yes, it must …
> Participant 20: Mhm.
> Lecturer: … but, uh, (reading) assignment must contain the following parts compiled in this order … title page, table of contents … text or, or what what, and the reference list (stops reading). I don't see a mark for it. **Wa tlhaloganya** [*You understand*]?
> Participant 20: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Lecturer: If there was a mark **nne ke kare** [*I would say*], okay, let's try and do it, but I don't see a mark, which makes it all right **ke** [*then*].
> Participant 20: If you don't submit it?
> Lecturer: **Ee** [*Yes*]. As long as I have … there is somewhere **mo maina a lona a feletseng teng** [*where your names are completed*].
> Participant 20: **Eya**. **Ga re submitta** [*Yes. When we submitted*] the names were there, the first thing, the names …
> Lecturer: On the title, on the title page?
> Participant 20: Yes. On the title page, the lecturer's name and all of those things.

In excerpt 36 with Participant 20, the conversation about task submission is about a group member who was tasked with submitting the group assignment on behalf of the group. This consultation was solely on submission and its criteria. This participant came to the office and started switching languages to English, isiZulu, and Sesotho. When I asked her for permission to record her for research purposes, she agreed and started speaking in mostly English. There is only one instance when she talks about the assignment when she speaks about submission, and she switches to Sesotho. This participant hardly switched languages but did so at one point to understand more about the submission criteria. Switching languages can be used very well in

clarifying things as evidenced here. The intention of switching between languages as explained by the participants in the individual interviews, individual questionnaire and focus group will be elaborated in this section as it progresses.

Consultations that included a discussion of the submission of class assessments were mostly focused on a situation where the students missed the deadline to submit an assessment. The consultations with Participant 1 and Participant 19 account for six of the seven cases where the code for class assessments and submission was allocated. Participants 19 came to consult solely to request to be given a chance to write the assessments that had been closed and ended up explaining her story of why she did not submit the assessment in time. That piece of information was coded as "non-academic" because she explained her private life events that led to her missing the deadlines for submissions. Similarly, Participant 1 also divulged private life events to explain her reason for missing the deadlines to submit class assessments and she also requested the lecturer for another opportunity to submit her assessments. Thus, missing the submission of assessments seems to be closely linked to conversations about non-academic life events. In these conversations, students used African language to tell stories about how and why they missed the deadlines for the submission of assessments. The main reason for the switching between languages was to explain and supply additional information or in this case, explain one's life circumstances and to reason with the lecturer about another opportunity to submit the outstanding assessments. Here are some excerpts from the participants on the submission of class assessments.

> [37] Participant 1: Okay. **Kgopela go botsisa le ka di** [*I also ask to enquire about the*] class assessments.
> Lecturer: Ah (student name)! You are the one who sent the email?
> Participant 1: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Lecturer: E, e, e, e, e … **Wena** [*You*] you are gonna get me in trouble. You are gonna really get me in trouble. **Wa itse** [*You know*] why? Because these class assessments were open first … I think after the first two weeks I opened the first one. **O batla go nthaa o re** [*You want to tell me that*] since three … since the first two weeks of class, **ke la** [*it is*] … you've never been to class?
> Participant 1: No, I have been but like, **ntse ke le** [*I have been*] going back between home and Potch, home and Potch.
> Lecturer: **Ee**. **Mare** [Yes. But] you should have done **tlhe e onenyana** [*at least one*].
> Participant 1: Oh!

The excerpt above shows the switching of languages as the participant and the lecturer discuss her inability to submit any of the class assessments that were written, and the student's request

to have an additional chance to submit some of the assessments. The assessments that closed had to be submitted on the NWU LMS.[4]

> [38] Participant 19: Twelve minutes past nine.
> Lecturer: Er, **eya ko go** [*yes, go on*] the … your eFundi and check if you can see it. There's one that I have opened. Your … the site **ke** [*is*] Resubmit ALD Motlhankane. I don't know if it's my whole name. Motl … Yes, yes.
> Participant 19: **Askies** [*Sorry*]?
> Lecturer: **Leina la site ke** [*The name of the site is*] Resubmit, uh, ALD Motl 2011. Can you see it? The site?
> Participant 19: Let me just go to ALDE.
> Lecturer: Not ALDE **ya** [*of*] every day. Don't go to every day's site. Go to …
> Participant 19: **Ke ye** [*Should I go*] to the main site? Home?
> Lecturer: Yes. And go to your site. Go to your sites, the list for all your sites. And then look for a site that you have never seen before. Resubmit. I've just added you to the site, **wa bona** [*you see*]? 20 … scroll down all the way.
> Participant 19: **Ga e yo. E re ke go cheke mo** [*It is not there. Let me check you here*].
> Lecturer: But you are on the site. It can't be **gore** [*that*] you are on the site but you can't see it.
> Participant 19: Maybe … Lecturer: **Eya, e refreshe** [*Yes, refresh it*].
> Participant 19: **Ga e yo. E ntse e sa tlhahe**. [*It is not there. It is still not showing*].
> Lecturer: So, I've opened two so far. I'm opening the last two. And then **wena** [*you*], you have until 23:55 today. (inaudible). **Uyandiva** [*Are you hearing me*]?
> Participant 19: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Lecturer: **Akere ga o bue. Jaanong ke tla reng**. [*Isn't it you are not speaking. So, what can I say*]. Edit … **Wa di bona he** [*Are you seeing them then*]?
> Participant 19: **Aa. Ke santse ke emetse e bule. Er, ke, ke bona tse itwo** [*No. I am still waiting for it to open. Er, I, I can see two*].
> Lecturer: **Tse itwo** [*Two of them*]?
> Participant 19: **Ee mma** [*Yes Mam*

In excerpt 38, the participant uses her language Sesotho and English to discuss the new dates on which she must submit missed assessments online. The assessments take a long time to open on the LMS and therefore there was a discussion on what is showing on the one side and what is open on the other hand. The excerpts above show that students switch languages to ask for permission for the submission of assessments after the deadline and they also ask for information pertaining to submission of tasks for clarity purposes.

4.2.2.5. Unrelated matters (academic and non-academic)

This section presents information on discussions that happened during consultations but were unrelated to the module, unrelated to the discussion that was held, and unrelated to the university. Such occurrences happened during consultations, especially in the middle of a consultation or towards the end when the participants had received the help they needed. Such

[4] The NWU LMS eFundi is where the assessments that had closed had to be reopened by the lecturer and then submitted by the students. Once an assessment has closed, the students cannot submit unless the lecturer reopens the assessment for the student. That is what the discussion in excerpt 34 and 35 is referring to about opening for resubmissions.

conversations were socially motivated and were done multilingually as well, solidifying the fact that indigenous South African languages are used a lot in social contexts. Participants spoke about a range of things from personal, psychological, emotional, and spiritual issues. The next section looks at how participants discussed unrelated matters to the ALDE module lecturer, that had something to do with their general progress in their studies.

Another prominent code that emerged during the analysis on ATLAS.ti was the discussion of matters that were unrelated to the assignments or assessments during the consultation sessions. Examples of matters that related to university life and not necessarily the assessment that the students came to consult about are presented below.

> [39] Participant 28: It's just like **dimodules ke** [*the modules are*] blow, blow after blow. Blow after blow …
> Interviewer: **Kana** [*Indeed*] you wrote the semester tests neh? So, marks are out?
> Participants: **Ja** [*Yes*]/Ijoo!
> Participant 28: I am like content with mine, like, I'm okay.
> Interviewer: But?
> Participant 28: Chemistry …
> Interviewer: **Ke wena o ntseng o re** [*You are the one who have been saying*] … is Chemistry, **ke yone fela** [*is the only*] problem?
> Participant 28: Cos Zoology is personal mam.
> Participant 26: **E** [*It is*] personal.
> Participant 28: Chemistry! Chemistry ijoo! **O bona dilo mma. Ijoo, o bona dilo. Heee, o nagana gore o phasitse** [*You see things mother. You see things. Then you think you have passed*].
> Participant 27: **Wena** [You]!
> Participant 26: Lecturer …
> Participant 29: **Wa tshega, wa tshega** [*You laugh, you laugh*].
> Participant 26: As if you didn't write these answers with such confidence.
> Participant 27: **Wena** [*You*]!
> Participant 28: **O shebe** [*Look at*] Google **le** [*even*] Google. But you know the problem is with that lecturer, is he wrote his own textbook.
> Interviewer: Oh, so he knows it by head mos?
> Participant 27: He wrote his own textbook and then sometimes mam we search things on Google, **aikho** [*It is not*] related to what he says. And then he's gonna mark that wrong. And then you lose marks.
> Interviewer: He's the lecturer. That's all I gotta say. If you want to pass do what he says you must say. Don't say your own thing there, otherwise **la go faila** [*you are going to fail*].

In excerpt 39, the participants also speak about things that they are experiencing at university, but that are not related to the assignment or the module that they came to consult about. During the day of this recording, the participants had just received marks for other modules than the one they came to consult about, and they vented about their marks and how tough these courses and universities generally are. This can be seen as part of small talk that emerges during the consultation sessions that relates to students' struggles with other modules.

[40] Participant 14: **Ne re kwala test** [*We were writing a test*].
Lecturer: **Ka nako yaka** [*During my time*]?
Participant 13: **Nna ke tsogile lata, ke batla go bua nnete** [*Me, I woke up late, I just want to tell the truth*].
Lecturer: **Waitse ha le ntire hantle. Jaanong ke ruta dilo tse ke di buileng mos** [*You know you are not doing me right. Now I teach the things that I already spoke*]. Okay. **A re ye … re ya ko eFundi neh** [*Let us go to … we are going on eFundi right*].
Participant 13: Yes.
Lecturer: Okay**. Jaanong ga o tsogile lata? Nagana ka tlase ya nine thirty. Ga ene e le ya eight mos jaanong e ne e le mathata** [*Now if you woke up late? Imagine with a nine thirty class. If it was the one of eight it was now going to be a problem*]?
Participant 13: Eish.
Participant 14: Ijoo, hey **mathata** [*problems*]. Eight? **Ja** [*Yes*].

In excerpt 40, the participants were discussing the reasons for missing class thus resulting in the lecturer having to repeat what was discussed in class. Participant 14 said he was writing a test, while Participant 13 said he woke up late. African home languages are used in this case to explain the reasons for not attending the class.

[41] Lecturer: If uh … I use to be a soccer fan, now I don't follow soccer much, but I know that … **ke mang kana** [*who is it again*] the current coach **wa, wa** [*of, of*] Sundowns?
Participant 5: **Mm mm. Ha re itse nix** [*No. We do not know anything*].
Participant 7: **Ha re itse** [*Us we do not know*].
Lecturer: **Ona wa, wa, wa MoZete** [*This one of, of, of ZCC*]?
Participant 5: **Ga re itse nix rona ka bolo. Re se re mpa re e etsa fela** [*We know nothing us about ball. We are just doing it only*].
Lecturer: Serious?
Participant 5: **Mm. Ra tswa** [*Yes. We are leaving*] soon.
Participant 6: **Re kwala fela gore re passe, ra tsamaya**. [*We just write so that we can pass, we are leaving*].
Lecturer: Okay. So, that guy … I use to love it, that's why. He use to be a player, like Makalakalane. Is it Augustine Makalakalane?
Participant 5: I don't know.
Participant 6: Mam **ga re mo itse** [*we do not know him*].

During the discussion in excerpt 41 above, the lecturer was trying to explain what a counterargument is by using an example related to soccer which is known by the lecturer, assuming that the students who were sports science students would understand, only to find out that they did not know what the lecturer was referring to. This became problematic as it showed the mismatch between students' field of study and their knowledge. The lack of situated knowledge in the field of sport sciences made it difficult to provide examples to assist these students. What exacerbated the situation was that not only did the participants state that they did not know the reference that the lecturer was making, but participant 5 went on further to state that they are just doing this diploma to pass, and they have no love or passion for it, and they intend to change degrees the following year. Such a discussion is important because it can help with managing dropout rates and student retention.

[42] Participant 16: … **O ye go bua le badimo** [*Go and speak to the ancestors*].
Participant 17: Ijoo! **Eya mare** [Yes, but] …
Lecturer: **Badimo? A re o ye go bua le badimo** [*Ancestors. He says you must go speak to the ancestors*]. You didn't.
Participant 16: **Eya** [*Yes*]. Ijoo.
Participant 15: **Nkanna ka botsa mam hee** [*Can I ask mam then*]?
Participant 17: **Eya o ka nna wa mmotsa** [*Yes, you can ask her*].
Participant 16: **Ga o boa nou jaana batho ba, ba tla ka dilo tse di kotsi nou jaana** [*When you come back now, people come, they come with dangerous things right now*].
Participant 17: **Ene vele tlhe** [*And true hey*].
Participant 18: **Haai, vele** [*Hey, yes*].
Lecturer: Hey **bathong** [*people*]!
Participant 16: Serious mam. **Ga go iwa gae, ga ba boa** [*When they go home, when they come back*] …
Participant 15: **O bua nnete. O bua nnete** [*He is telling the truth. He is telling the truth*].
Participant 18: **O buza ngane** [*What are you asking about*]?
Participant 17: **O mmotsa ka** [*She is asking her about the*] introduction.
Participant 16: … **ijoo, ba kene dibata nou jaana** [*they have entered into basins right now*].
Participant 15: **Bo mang** [*Who*]?
Participant 18: **Hhayi, mina ngiyanishiya la** [*No, I am leaving you here*] guys.
Lecturer: **Go maswe** [*It is bad*].
Participant 16: Ijoo joo joo. **O tla bona le mo klaseng go robetswe** [*You will see even in the class people sleeping*].
Participant 17: **Ga o attende ntho** [*You are not attending the thing*]?
Participant 15: **Mm** [*No*].
Lecturer: **Le a ntshegisa cos** [*You are making me laugh because*] I was not expecting that **yazi** [*you know*].
Participant 16: Oho …
Lecturer: No. **Ke mmamoruti tlhe** [*I am a pastor's wife*].
Participant 15: Yea. **Rona** [*Us*] we pray.
Participant 16: **Mare mo go kotsi** [*But here it is dangerous*]. Dangerous!
Lecturer: **Ko kae** [*Where*]?
Participant 16: **Mo skolong** [*At school*].
Lecturer: **Ene … o raya gore** [*And … You mean that*]? You don't say. **Rona** [*Us*] we cast out "In the name of Jesus"…
Participant 16: **Ai! Go na le, go na le tse di kotsi** [*No! There are the, there are the ones that are dangerous*]…
Lecturer: I need to stop. This is no longer part of the recording …

Participant 16 in excerpt 42 talks about students going on recess and in part consulting their ancestors so that they can be ready for examinations when they come back. Other participants agree with his sentiments. The focus of this discussion is on speaking with ancestors and other ways people use to prepare themselves for examinations.

All the excerpts above had some academic element to them even though they were not about what the students initially came to discuss (assignment and homework). In some of the discussions, non-academic things were discussed. This can be considered small talk between the lecturer and the participants. The participants spoke about different things such as the weather, weight gain, beliefs and so forth, and this showed how comfortable speaking in one's

language can make one become even in an academic setting. The element of small talk can be closely related to the item of comfortability that will be discussed later in the section under reasons for switching from students' perspectives.

While having small talk, these are some of the things that participants spoke about:

> [43] Lecturer: You are welcome. Can I stop recording? **Mare** [*But*], I, I … **O ntse o balabala** [You were talking a lot] so I wanted that … that part. **Ga ke starta ke recoda** [*When I start to record*] now you have changed your attitude … like now we are speaking English … You're so formal.
> Participant 20: Mam **go a fiša mo** [*it is hot in here*] …
> Lecturer: **Ee, mare** [*No, but*] it's not even what I am looking for.
> Participant 20: **Ee, mare** [*Yes, but*] your windows **di kwetse** [*are closed*], why? **O tlhoka** [*You need*] fresh air my sister …
> Lecturer: You're not doing the, you're not …
> Participant 20: **O tlhoka** [*You need*] fresh air…
> Lecturer: … you're not making the pots to be done, you, ah. Let me stop this recording.

Participant 20 had come to the office alternating between English and indigenous South African language (Sesotho and isiZulu). She stated in the individual questionnaire that she is a speaker of those languages as presented in Table 18 where she lists 6 languages in her repertoire and said she is a home language speaker of isiZulu. During the discussion about the submission of the assignment, she mostly spoke English. However, after the consultation discussion on the submission of the assignment ends, the lecturer asks the participant why she changed languages during the discussion, and she replies by speaking in a mixture of Sotho languages together with English. She does this effortlessly without hesitation or missing a beat. This just shows the range and command of the student's use of languages in her repertoire.

> [44] Participant 27: I have a bit of **mokhaba** [*big, rounded tummy*].
> Interviewer: **Tshegang ka rona tlheng** [*Laught at us please*]. Like laugh louder. Make it a joke, it's fine. **Wa re … wa reng** [*You say … you say what*]?
> Participant 28: **A re o na le mokhaba** [*He says he has a big, rounded tummy*].
> Interviewer: **O tshega ka nna** [*You are laughing at me*] or …
> Participant 27: **O teng** [*It is there*].
> Participant 29: **O tshega ka wena** [*He is laughing at you*].
> Interviewer: **Aowa** [*No*].
> Participant 27: Guys. Look at …
> Interviewer: **Tshega tlhe** [*Do laugh*]. Fall on the wall and raise yourself back up. **Eya** [*Yes*]. Did you guys see the class assessment marks?

Participant 27 in excerpt 44 argued that he had gained weight, and it was showing around his stomach area, and that became a joke and something interesting to discuss during the consultation session. This was a joke because the participant had a seemingly small waist and was wearing a cropped t-shirt, but it brought humour to a serious discussion of the assignment and that of students' marks. It added no meaningful contribution to the assignment, which had

been the main reason for the group's visit to the office, but it was a point of discussion and contention in the office which relaxed the atmosphere a bit, creating a more amiable atmosphere for the more serious academic discussions that had to be held.

4.2.2.6. Consultation discussion: Group dynamics

Since the task was a group assignment, some students during consultations spoke about their group and they all had group problems. The problems included difficult group members and fighting. Some wanted to do the assignment in pairs instead of as a group while others had group members that did not contribute. Here are some examples of the data on the group dynamics where the participants switched to African languages during the consultation sessions:

> [45] Participant 3: So, mam what's happening is, in our group we were like five.
> Lecturer: Okay.
> Participant 3: We were like five in a group …
> Lecturer: Mhm.
> Participant 3: … and so, before recess, now **batho ne ba thotse kaofela** [*people were all quiet*], they were like quiet.
> Lecturer: Including you, yes.
> Participant 2: Including us, yes.
> Participant 3: Yes, like **kaofela** [*all*].
> Participant 2: Including us because we didn't choose a group leader so … is a problem.
> Participant 3: I took the initiate step. I'm like guys, **re qhala leng ka** [*when are we starting with the*] essay. Cos every time I keep on checking my, my calendar. I don't know what's going on …
> Lecturer: **Go** [*it is*] quite **saan**. **Ee** [*dear. Yes*].
> Participant 3: **Ee**, **mare ke checka** [*Yes, but I'm checking the*] calendar **gore** [*that*], this week is the week **e le gore** [*in which*] the assignment is due.
> Lecturer: Mhm. Last week. It was due last week **phela** [*yes*].
> Participant 3: **Ja** [*Yes*], that week **ya** [*of*] Monday.
> All: Yes
> Participant 2: That was like …
> Lecturer: You hadn't started **ka** [*with*] …?
> Participant 3: Then I asked guys, but like, what's going on?
> Lecturer: **Ehe** [*Yes*].
> Participant 3: And then **batho ne baya kwa, ne baya kwa** [*people were going there, they were going there*]. And then we agreed **re tlo kopanang** [*we will meet*] …
> Lecturer: This is the law faculty?
> Participant 2: Yes.
> Participant 3: Yes. And then it was like … was?
> Lecturer: Cos I was …
> Participant 3: **Ne e le** [*It was*] Tuesday …

Excerpt 45 from consultation 2 has Participant 3 relay the events that led to their group splitting. The problem with the group was the main topic of the assignment and they had a fallout because of that. This is because at the end of the discussion, the participant had to explain the reason why she and her peer had submitted what was supposed to be a group assignment with 5 members as an assignment completed by a pair. The discussion was lengthy because the lecturer thought

this was because they wanted to be granted more time to go and do their assignment as a pair, but in the end, it turned out they were there to explain why they submitted as a pair.

Participants used their languages during consultations to explain themselves or to supply information to the listener and this data is presented below. This shows that they switched to their languages for clarity, to understand and be understood.

> [46] Participant 22: But it's a very, all over the place. And this girl now messaged me, and she says she can be in our (inaudible)
> Lecturer: She says she can't?
> Participant 22: No, she can. Now we have to put her stuff also.
> Lecturer: Okay. Where is she this girl?
> Participant 22: She went back to her … She says she waited for us for half an hour. My phone was off.
> Lecturer: She only has your phone?
> Participant 22: No. We are a group.
> Lecturer: Don't you have a WhatsApp group?
> Participant 21: We do **mara nna** [*but me*] I don't think this story checks out. We said half past nine.
> Lecturer: Exactly!
> Participant 21: Why come an hour early?
> Participant 22: We waited till thirty five minutes passed and I phoned her and messaged her. She wouldn't answer.
> Participant 23: **O reng** [*What is she saying*]?
> Participant 21: **A re o tlile** [*She says she came*] an hour early.
> Lecturer: She's lying.
> Participant 21: **Mara re tswile** [*But we left*] … and sat here …
> Participant 22: We agreed to all get together …
> Lecturer: Yes.
> Participant 22: … and sit her for the day.
> Lecturer: Where?
> Participant 22: Not here.
> Participant 21: Sit here …
> Lecturer: Yes, and then work.
> Participants: Yes.
> Participant 22: Do you guys have time tomorrow?
> Participant 21: Yea.
> Participant 22: I really can't today cos I'm writing that test. But I have time tomorrow the whole day.
> Participant 21: I have time until half past two.
> Participant 22: Yea. I have a class but then after that …
> Participant 23: Today?
> Participants 21 & 22: Tomorrow.

In excerpt 46 above, similar to excerpt 45, the consultation was supposed to discuss the assignment structure, specifically the argument. However, while the consultation was in progress, one of the group members who did not come for consultation texted the other group members about why she could not come, and that message was relayed to the rest of the group during the consultation session. This discussion pointed at the group issues that they

experienced, and, in that discussion, the two black participants switched language to process the message they had received from the other group member who was white.

> [47] Participant 14: **E ya digroupu e … e …** [*This one of the groups, this* …]
> Lecturer: For the assignment **re tshwantse re divaeteng** [*we must divide*], next assignment **re idivaede** [*we divide ourselves*] into groups. **Ke** [*It is*] group work.
> Participant 14: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Lecturer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 14: So, **re ka e dira re le itwo** [*can we do it when we are two*]?
> Lecturer: No. Two people **ga se** [*are not a*] group, **ke** [*they are a*] pair.
> Participant 13: Oh, **ke ele ya go kwala** [*is it that one of writing an*] essay?
> Lecturer: Yes. Two is … 1 is an individual, 2 is a pair.
> Participant 14: **Mare ba bangwe ba kwala mos. Kgona re le** [*But others they write mos. It can be that when we are*] five, then **e diriwa ke nna le okhe, bale bone ba no relaxa** [*it is done by me and this one then the others relax*] …
> Lecturer: **Eya, la nkwalla mo groupung gore ona ga etsa sepe mofe zero or mofe** [*Yes, you write for me on the group that this one did not do anything, give him/her zero or give them*] …
> Participant 14: Oh …
> Lecturer: … two out of fifty **wa bona** [*You see*]?
> Participants: **Eya** [*Yes*].

Participant 13 and Participant 14 in excerpt 47 above came to consult about the summary they had to write for the group assignment. Most of the consultations were about the summary of the assignment that was not yet written. The participants were tasked with dividing themselves into groups and during their consultation, Participant 13 and Participant 14 asked for clarity on how that is supposed to work. The two seemed like they wanted to do the assignment together instead of finding or creating a group with others. The lecturer explains the dynamics of groups and how they should still create a group, despite their unwillingness to do so.

In all the examples given above on group dynamics, the problematic nature of working in groups is reiterated. The participants use their languages together with English to voice their complaints and their dissatisfaction and problems when it comes to working in groups. This can be used by the lecturer to improve the practice of group work in her classes as it appears to be a problem among students.

4.2.2.7. Consultation discussion-class assessment/s mark/s

Another important reason why students consult is to discuss marks. The data shows that 4 times in the consultations, students consulted regarding their marks. Below are some examples of students asking about their marks during consultations.

> [48] Interviewer: **Ke** [*It is*] Tshepo. How much did you get?
> Participant 28: Oh, the ones that we did like for eFundi?
> Participant 27: There were, there were … Oho …
> Participant 28: But then the marks **ke, ke** [*it is, it is*] marking right?
> Interviewer: **Ja** [*Yes*], but then there were class activities that we did in class.
> Participant 29: In class?

Participant 28: Oh …
Interviewer: I also entered that. They count ten percent. The ones on eFundi counted ten percent. **O ntse o sa tle klaseng** [*You have not been coming to class*], you are right. You should be worried.
Participant 29: **Ne ke tla klaseng** [*I was coming to class*].
Participant 28: He's been coming.
Participant 29: **Ga kea tla e one** [*I did not come to one*].
Interviewer: That was the day we did something **hee** [*then*]. You've got zero.
Participant 29: **Ke di ngotse kaofela diclass** [*I wrote them all the class*] assessments.
Participant 28: **Ga ke di bone** [*I cannot see them*].
Participant 27: My thing is not …
Interviewer: **Ko re** [*It means that*] if I had not asked **le ke be le irang** [*what would you be doing*]? Now people are like …
Participant 26: Mam can I please ask. This one here …
Interviewer: The what?
Participant 26: The one out of, is it twenty?
Interviewer: Eh … the yellow one or the just the normal?
Participant 26: This one over here.
Interviewer: The white one?
Participant 26: Yes.
Interviewer: Yes, it's out of ten but eish, I made a mistake. Me I'm not gonna back there.
Participant 26: **Haa** [*No*].
Interviewer: It's two percent.
Participant 26: **Aa** [*No*], two percent it's a lot mam.
Interviewer: **Ga o itse le gore o defendang tlhe** [*You do not even know what you are defending*]. Like, **wa lwa** [*you are fighting*] for no reason.
Participant 26: Cos I see ones and I'm like?
Interviewer: No. Everyone who did that activity that was out of ten got two percent. There's no one, don't you see that there's no one who got over 2? **Wa e bona** [*Do you see it*]?
Participant 27: Oh, **e counta** [*it counts*] one one?

In excerpt 48 above, the participants discussed marks for the class assessments which counted 20% towards the module mark. The participants had come to consult about the group assignment that was due, but the consultation ended up being about the marks. Once again, participants used English and African languages to try and understand all things pertaining to the marks under discussion. The lecturer had to explain how the marks were calculated.

[49] Participant 10: Check **gore** [*that*] … eish, **nna ke feitse ntho, introductione**, [*me I failed the thing, introduction*], so**, e, e, e, e** [*it is, it is, it is, it is*] …
Lecturer: **Kante** [*But*] why **nne le sa consulte ka introductione** [*did you not consult with the introduction*]?
Participant 10: Eish!
Lecturer: Cos people who came from your class who came to consult did very well.
Participant 9: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Lecturer: Yea. Thank you. Proof. Living proof, evidence. **Re bereka ka bopaki** [*We are working with evidence*].
Participant 10: **Ai, ke ithutile nou. A kere gote wa ithuta** [*No. I have learned now. Isn't it is said that you do learn*].
Lecturer: **Mm** [*Yes*]. Are you still opening?
Participant 9: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Lecturer: Alright. Er, what am I doing? **Dimarks tsa ntho le di chekile** [*The marks of the thing, did you check them*]? Are they there?
Participant 9: The, the ones you submitted yesterday?

Lecturer: Posted yes. **Le sharpo ka dimarks tsa lona** [*You are sharp with your marks*]?
Participants: **Eya**/yea [*Yes*]!
Participant 9: **Mina ngishodelwa nga two kuphela** [*Me, I'm short of two only*].
Lecturer: Okay.
Participant 10: **Nna introductione fela** [*Me, the introduction only*]. Eish!
Lecturer: **Ya** [*the one of*] Transition from high school? Where you not there?
Participant 10: Introduction. **Akere** [*Isn't it*] like, **ha ka tsamaya sharp** [*I did not go right*].
Lecturer: Oh, yea hey. **Ga e go robatse** [*It is not making you sleep*] neh?
Participant 10: **Ei. Ga e nrobatse. Ba botse tlhe. Ke bua ka yone**, [*It does not make me sleep. Ask them. I speak about it*] every day.
Participant 11: **O lla ka yone** [*She is crying about it*].
Participant 10: Ijoo! **Aa tlhe** [*No hey*], ijoo!
Lecturer: You must know **gore** [*that*] like …
Participant 10: Ai, **nou** [*now*] I've learned. **Nou** [*Now*], I've learned the hard way **shem** [*shame*].
Lecturer: Yes.
Participant 10: Haai, **mm mm** [*no*]!

Prior to the group assignment, students had submitted individual assignments in the form of introductory paragraphs. Participant 10 did not do so well in that task and explained that it haunts her, and it is motivating her to perform better in the group assignment and get better marks. Once again, the reason the group came to consult was about the group assignment. Marks were not the primary reason they came, but since they were in the office, the lecturer alerted them to their class assessment marks to minimize students coming to ask about marks at a later stage. The marks had just been released and participants took the time to look and discuss their marks.

The section above outlined the reasons identified in the study for participants' switches between languages during the consultation sessions. These reasons vary from less demanding cognitive reasons for switching and more demanding cognitive reasons. The study will use Bloom's taxonomy to extrapolate the idea of the different reasons for switching and the cognitive and less cognitive demands. However, the data and examples above show that participants consult using all the languages in their repertoire. They do so when discussing all aspects of their academic lives. For more cognitive reasons such as conceptualization and structure, language is used to express thoughts and create meaning. For the less cognitively demanding aspects, all languages in participants' repertoire are used to gain understanding, to remember and to know things. There seems to be a social aspect to the findings as well that shows up in the data. Participants use language for social acclimatization, to discuss those things that excite, bother, interest, scare them and so forth when it comes to their academic journey. This proves that language is socially situated. These aspects are discussed thoroughly in chapter 5.

4.2.2.8. Findings related to the switches between languages during the consultation sessions

The switches were counted by reading the transcriptions of the recorded consultations and counting every time a person switched from the language, they started the conversation into another language and vice versa. When counting the switches, the languages were classified as English (which is the language of teaching and learning for the module Academic Literacy (ALDE) and thus the target language), a language situated within the Nguni language group (that include isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele and Siswati), a language within the Sotho language group (that include Sesotho, Setswana and Sepedi), South African slang, as well as when participants switched and spoke more than three languages in one sentence. The table below outlines the frequencies of the switches between languages in the consultation data for this study.

Table 24: Frequencies of language switches by participants documented in the consultation sessions recorded and analysed for this study

Switch Language-English	***Switch language-Nguni language group***	***Switch language-Sotho language group***	***Switch Language-South African slang***	***More than three (three or more) languages in a sentence***	***Total number of switches***
422	*47*	*385*	*35*	*10*	*899*

It is not surprising that the count for switches to English is the most common (46,9% or 422/899), because as was seen above, overall, English was commonly used alongside home languages known by the participants. The second most prominent frequency of switches was to languages in the Sotho group (385/899 or 42,8%), followed by languages in the Nguni group (47/899 or 5,2%) and then to South African Slang (35/899 or 3,89%), with 1,1% (10/899) of the switches made by using three languages in an utterance. The prominence of switches to languages in the Sotho language group is also not surprising, as the NWU-PC is situated in the North West Province in South Africa where Setswana is the most prominent home language (with 72,8% of the population self-reporting this as their home language, and Sesotho is the second most prominent home language in the province indicated by 5,9% of the population (Census, 2022).

The table above indicated that while the students mainly used English during the consultation sessions with their English academic literacy lecturer (as is expected in the university context), a sizable portion of the data indicates that indigenous African languages like Setswana were also used a lot during the consultation sessions. The nature of the language used during the consultation sessions for this study is typical of speech by multilingual speakers in a multilingual context (Probyn 2001; Madiba, 2014).

In the rest of this section, the nature of the language use, as indicated by the switches between languages in the consultation data, was analysed by investigating why and how the African home languages are used during the consultation sessions recorded for this study.

4.2.2.9. Findings related to how switches to English are used in the consultation sessions

When looking at the data on the frequency of switches in Table 24 the switches to English accounted for most of the switches with 422 (or 46.9%) of the total switches made. The finding that the bulk of the consultation sessions are conducted in English is not surprising. The participants in the study enrolled in an Academic Literacy module that is offered in English. Therefore, English is the language in which the module is presented and thus the language in which all the assessments that students came to consult about are written in. The students therefore moved between English as the target language, and they opted to use African languages for specific purposes during the consultation sessions. For this section, switches to English are defined as instances where the participant would be speaking in another language (for example, Setswana) and then switch to English with a word or two and then return to the previous language used in the exchange. When a participant switched to a language such as English and then sustained speaking in that language even after the interlocutor responded in another language, the length of the sustenance in English was not been coded. What has been coded are instances where a participant would be speaking in English, switch to another language, then switch back to English or to other South African languages and slang, and vice versa. The switch would be counted and coded as 'Switch language-English".

Many of the switches to English that were counted were done by switching to one English word and then returning to the previous language (for example, Setswana). When analysing the switches between an African language and one English word, we have a switch to words such as 'like', 'yes', 'botany', 'email', 'because' and so forth. The most prominent single English word that the students switched to while using an African language is the word 'like'. 'Like' accounts for 16 switches from African languages to English and then back to African languages. The word 'like' is underlined in the examples below from the data to demonstrate how it manifested in the data:

> [50] Participant 7: **Ke buile ka gore** [*I spoke on that*] <u>like</u> **... batho ba ... dicoaches, batho ba, ba, ba nang le diclub** [*people that ... the coaches, people that, that, that have clubs*] ...
>
> [51] Participant 16: **Ke yone e nneng ke batla go e botsa gore** [*It is the one I wanted to ask, that*] <u>like</u> ...
> Lecturer: **Hoekom** [*Why*]?
> Participant 16: ... **ga re le** [*when we are*] ...

> [52] Participant 23: How like **batho ba** [*people they*], like **ba bua maaka. Ba bua maaka jwang** [*they speak lies. How they speak lies*] about other people **…**

The word 'like' is used either as a linking device or as a filler when participants are organizing their thoughts. The other word those students switched to a lot in the consultation data for this study, is the reply 'yes' or 'yea'. In all instances the word was used as a reply or an agreement. 'Yes' alone accounted for 8 instances of code switching where an African language was used, the switch to 'yes' occurred and the participant then switched back to the African language. If 'yea' is added to the count for switches to 'yes', this English word accounted for 13 of the switches in total. This is prominent because some words only showed up once or a couple of times depending on the consultation discussion.

> [53] Participant 4: **Gore** [*That*] supplements are not the only thing **tse o ka kereyang tse** [*that you can get that*] …
> Lecturer: So people who think like that are misinformed.
> Participant 4: Yes.

> [54] Participant 6: **Disubstances** [*Substances*].
> Lecturer: … substances. **Akere** [*Isn't it*] doping is substances **le** [*and*] supplements is substances. So, the, then, already you can try and make this one and make this one. **Ga ke itse gore a la ntlhaloganya** [*I do not know if you understand me*]?
> Participant 6: Yea.

In all instances above, yes/yeah/yea are used to reply to a question or agree with a statement. In all instances, the participant spoke another language but switched to English when replying.

Another prominent element in the data of the switches to English is when a participant switches for not having, not thinking of, or not knowing the equivalent of the word in the language that the student was speaking in, and they switch to English for ease and convenience. This was discussed thoroughly under the type of switches and subject specific and terminology below, however, here are some of the examples of how students switched often into one English word in instances where they did not know a term or concept in the African language:

> [55] Participant 5: And **waitse nna ga ke tlhaloganye** [*you know me I do not understand*] hedging**. Go leng ke Googola. Ke kraya** [*How long have I been Googling. I get*] zero **ga ke kwala** [*when I write*] hedging.

The word hedging here is a process whereby one uses tentative words in academic writing and avoids making absolute statements (Hyland, 1994:240; Kondowe, 2014). Chikara *et al.* (2023: 126) define hedges "as meta discourse devices that authors employ to scale back their adherence to claims". The struggle of the student to understand the concept of hedging is clear

in excerpt 55 above. This was an ideal opportunity for the lecturer to guide the student by using a description or circumscription in an appropriate African language that might have assisted her to understand the concept hedging better. An understanding of the concept might be needed in the future writing of the student and if the student understands the concept, then she can use it accordingly. Therefore, the lecturer has learnt that she should use such a scenario as a lesson to sharpen her use of consultation sessions in the future and not just focus on one aspect, which in this case was the assignment that had to be submitted. The participant did not come to consult about hedging per se; she and her group had come to consult about the group assignment and how to structure their argument. Participant 5 explains how long she has struggled to understand this concept and what she has done to try and understand it and even after all this effort, when she writes, she has "zero" understanding of the concept hedging. Other examples of switching for words that are not commonly used or known in the language of the participants include the examples below:

> [56] Participant 3**: Aa, ke kentse** [*No, I did put*] document **e ke** [*that I*] …
> [57] Participant 1: **Ha ke mo tsebe**. **Ke hlakane le ena** [*I don't know him/her*. *I met him/her*] this year.

Excerpts 56 and 57 refer to everyday terminology that is used where the equivalent words or concepts in most South African languages is unknown or uncommon, much of what has been researched under codeswitching in the South African context (Mabule, 2015; Probyn, 2009). The word document is an example of such a word. **Tokomane** would be the direct translation in Sesotho as the language the participant was speaking, however, the word document is used by the participant instead. The ability of speakers to go between languages as they do in the above excerpts and many other examples has been described by others as code-switching (Mabule, 2015; Probyn, 2009) and lately, the term translanguaging has dominated this research conversation on the use of languages as expressed above (Makalela, 2013). In instances where codeswitching and translanguaging are used in the classroom, they are helpful, resourceful and necessary.

This section has shown how participants switched to English during consultations. The switches happened by switching one word or a few to English and back to African languages. The importance of this section was to present participants as multilingual and versatile. They use their languages in interesting ways and the point for them is to be understood and to understand. They are using their language for expression.

In addition to switches to single English words, there are numerous examples in the consultation data of participants switching from Black South African Languages to English and then back and forth. The important part of these instances is that the participants would start off in an Black South African languages and switch to English and then go back to an indigenous language and then back to English and repeat the cycle without discontinuity in the sentence and with coherence and cohesion well intact. Below are examples:

> [58] Participant 6: **Ke itse kere o kgona go dibaita** [*I said that you can debate*] er, maybe points **tse pedi tse tharo** [*that are two or three*]. Maybe **ntho ya ga** [*the thing of*] Palesa **le ya ga** [*and of*] Buyi. **Eseng o dibaite** [*Not to debate*] the whole thing, its gonna, like it's gonna be long …
>
> [59] Participant 7: **Nna** [*Me*] mam question **yaka e ne e le gore assignmente e, re choosa** [*of mine was that this assignment, we choose*] like, maybe introduction **ya motho o kreileng dimarks tse** [*of the person who got marks that are*] high, so that **re etsa continuous ya teng** [*we continue with it*], or **re comphaila** [*do we compile*] everything?
>
> [60] Participant 4: **Gore** [*That*] supplements are not the only thing **tse o ka kereyang tse** [*that you can get that*] …
> Participant 3: **Ee**, **mare ke checka** [*Yes, but I'm checking the*] calendar **gore** [*that*], this week is the week **e le gore** [*in which*] the assignment is due.

In all instances of switching to English, the sentences in excerpt 58 above start off in Setswana or another indigenous language and then continue in English only to return and repeat the cycle. This shows the versatility of the language command of the students and their ample use of these languages when consulting. It also shows how multilingualism is not a barrier but an enabler in teaching and learning.

In excerpts 58-60 above, the students consulted about the structure of the argument, particularly the counter argument. During the consultation, the participants used languages in the Sotho language group, and Setswana seems to be the most dominant. The word used in excerpt 58, "**go dibaita**" which was translated as "*to debate*", and in the context of the assignment meant 'to argue', shows how the students use an adapted English word (adopting Setswana orthography) to express this important concept that they are inquiring about in the consultation session.

In excerpts 61 and 62 below participants would speak in their languages and switch to using a typical English phrase and back to their African languages again. The words 'proper diet' and 'calendar' as used below are examples of the switch to some English phrase that would be more readily available than struggling to find the same word in one's language. The participants would switch between languages often in this manner.

[61] Participant 27: **Ena o bua ka** [*He is speaking about*] proper diet. **Nna** [*Me*] my focus will be on atmosphere. I'll just include the carbon footprint. **Gore** [*That*] that can …

[62] Participant 3: **Ee**, **mare ke checka** [*Yes, but I'm checking the*] calendar **gore** [*that*], this week is the week **e le gore** [*in which*] the assignment is due.

…

Participant 3: **Ha e na** [*it does not have a*] thesis. **Ha e na** [*It does not have*] the problem statement

[63] Participant 13: **Ee**. **Jaanong gape** [*Yes*. *Now again*] based on plagiarism, **diflag di tsamaya yang** [*the flags, how do they go*]?
[64] Participant 14: **Tsele tsabo … bare ke eng** [*Those ones of…what are they called*]? CI Skills **daar** [*there*], since **re di … re di ngwala ka** [we have … we have written then in the] first semester.
[65] Participant 7: **Di kwale** [*Write them*] in case **di counta** [*they count*] two percent.

In some instances, the switches would start in one language and end in the other, keeping the sentences coherent and grammatically logical (for example in excerpts 66-69):

[66] Participant 20: **O tlhoka** [*You need*] fresh air…

[67] Participant 14: So, **re ka e dira re le itwo** [*can we do it when we are two*]?

[68] Participant 9: **La. Ukuthi** [*Here. That*] where I got this information from.

[69] Participant 16: **Mare mo go kotsi** [*But here it is dangerous*]. Dangerous!

As the heading of this section details, some switches were made from Indigenous South African languages into English and the sentences would be grammatically coherent. While consulting, participants had a natural ability to move from their languages to English and make sense as detailed above. The section intended to show that the switches happen spontaneously, and they make sense. As a result, participants can go between languages using any available resources to make meaning. In the case of switching to English, sometimes it would be with filling words such as 'like' and 'yea' or with typical English words not common in the languages of the people switching. The point of this section was to illustrate different ways how students switch to English and assume some of the reasons that may be causing the switches or explain the structural elements that are apparent during the switches.

4.2.2.10. Findings related to how switches to Indigenous South African languages and South African slang are used in the consultation sessions

As the data in Table 24 display, the most frequent languages of indigenous South African languages that participants switched to were languages in the Sotho language group with a total

of 385 (or 42.8%) of switches counted. This is followed by a much smaller number of switches into languages that form part of the Nguni language group (47 or 5.2%). An even smaller number of switches were coded as switches to South African Slang (35 or 3.89%) of the switches. For the context of the study, this section looked at all the switches that happened from English to indigenous South African languages and slang.

To conceptualise an assignment means drawing the links between the ideas presented, in this case, the links between the ideas of auto immune diseases and the theme of misinformation. The students used their languages together with English to conceptualize and structure by engaging cognitively with the task as witnessed in excerpts 26-30. The participants used their multilingual repertoire to express the ideas they were trying to link in the assignment. When participant 28 explains her argument, the sentence starts off in English and then moves to Setswana and back to English again. It is not surprising that most of the switches in the context of the NWU-PC are between languages in the Sotho group, as Setswana and Sesotho are the most prominent home languages in the province (Census 2022). They are also two of the official languages of the NWU alongside English and Afrikaans.

4.2.2.11. Findings related to switches to indigenous South African languages from English

Like the discussion about switches to English in section 4.2.2.9. above, this section will focus on sharing examples from the consultation data where switches were made to one word in an indigenous language in the context where the rest of the sentence was in English; and switches from English to Black South African Languages and then back and forth. In excerpts 70 and 71 below, examples of switches to one word in an indigenous South African language in the middle of an entire English sentence are presented. In both these cases, the one word was often a linking device rather than a random word, meaning that switching languages can help students with better sentence structure and to convey their message clearly. Here are some of the examples:

> [70] Yes. I mean like what they offer mam. I might say **gore** [*that*] this is my … example, I only have a, a hospitality accommodation … [Participant 21, Consultation 10, self-proclaimed Sesotho speaker from individual questionnaire]
> [71] Cos we had seen **ukuthi** [*that*] we had skipped the number of words so chop, chop up some things. [Participant 9. Consultation 6, isiXhosa speaker]

The above examples where **ukuthi** and **gore** are used show that participants used the word as a linking device in the same manner. The word, whether used in the Sotho group context or Nguni group context, serves the same purpose in both examples.

In some instances, in the data, participants would start a sentence in English and switch back and forth between English and other South African languages. This is discussed under switches from South African languages to English that even in that process, the sentence is meaningful, and the message is conveyed well. Furthermore, context and structure are seldom lost. Below are examples:

> [72] Participant 5: Oh, just that … just means by the space **e leng gore e tlo bulwa ka, ka diseventeen** [*that it will open on the, on the seventeenth*]?
> [73] Participant 14: So, **ke yone** [*it is*] our first …
> [74] Participant 10: Check **gore** [*that*] … **eish**, **nna ke feitse ntho, introductione**, [*me I failed the thing, introduction*], so**, e, e, e, e** [*it is, it is, it is, it is*] …
> [75] Participant 3: So, we are waiting, waiting. **Ke bona moo** [*It is them there*], they're doing their own thing. **Ba romela dimessage** [*They send messages*] there and there, and there and there. So, they didn't like, since **ke bona ba entseng** [*they are the ones that did*] the whole essay, they didn't go as far and say guys **re discussile eng** [*we discussed what*] so you guys can …
> [76] Participant 4: No, like **ke a go utlwa** [*I hear you*] mam. **Ke a tlhaloganya** [*I understand you*].

Whether the switching from English to other South African languages happened in the middle of the sentence or as a switch from an English sentence to a sentence in Sesotho, Sepedi etc., the message is continuous, and the sentence structure is maintained.

This section shows that switching between languages happens in all directions. As the section on switching to English shows, the word in English would serve a certain purpose. The same can be said about the switches to Indigenous South African languages as they are sometimes used as linking devices. However, the most example under this section seems to be switching to Black South African languages and then back to English and again to an indigenous language. This seems to show ability and flexibility on the participants' side to be able to use all the languages in their repertoire to easily and effortlessly express themselves. The section that follows looked at the use of slang during switches.

4.2.2.12. Findings where participants switched to using slang

There are also instances in the data where the participants switched to slang. The information in the table below shows that the consultation with the most slang words used during consultations 8 and 20, while 4 and 10 did not use any words that can be considered slang.

Table 25: Switches that indicate the use of slang

	Switches to South African slang
Totals	*34*
Consultation 8 Participants 15, 16, 17, 18	*7*
Consultation 2 Participants 2 & 3	*6*
Consultation 6 Participants 9, 10, 11, 12	*6*
Consultation 7 Participants 13 &14	*5*
Consultation 4 Participants 6, 5	*5*
Consultation 11 Participants 26, 27, 28, 29	*2*
Consultation 5 Participant 19	*2*
Consultation 1 Participant 1	*1*
Consultation 9 Participant 20	*0*
Consultation 3 Participant 4	*0*
Consultation 10 Participants 21, 22, 23	*0*

During consultations, sometimes participants switched to use slang words and the examples of switches in the consultation data to South African slang is presented below.

> [77] Participant 8: Then **kukhona lawa a … konje awela** [*there are those that are … what do they fall*] under **ini** [*what*]? World **angazi** [*I don't know*] what, what. **Kukhona lawa** [*There are those that are*] …
>
> [78] Participant 14: **Tsele tsabo … bare ke eng** [*Those ones of…what are they called*]? CI Skills **daar** [*there*], since **re di … re di ngwala ka** [we have … we have written then in the] first semester.
>
> [79] Participant 6: Maybe it was a wrong answer **shem** [*shame*].
>
> [80] Participant 8: Ijoo mam **angisa khumbuli shem** [*I do not remember shame*].
>
> [81] Participant 8: **IWorld** [*The world*], world anti-doping **nton nton** [*what what*] …
> [82] Participant 3: So, now when I read the essay, I read the essay. **Ga gona dicounter nton nton, ha ho na** [*There is no counter thing, thing, there is no*] … the introduction **ka bo yona ha e na eng, ha e na** [*on its own does not have what, does not have a*] …
> [83] Participant 1: Okay. **Ko e kwala nou** [*I am going to write it now*].
> [84] Participant 19: **Askies** [*Sorry*].
> [85] Participant 16: **hee mon** [*hey man*], resist.

Participant 28 in excerpt 86 below uses a slang word "**dihigh high**"that is common in South Africa among some black people as high blood pressure or hypertension.

> [86] Participant 28: Uhm, **bo dihigh high** [*like the high highs*].
> Interviewer: No, **o** [*she is*] right. **Dihigh high di etsang jwang jaanong** [*The high highs do what now*]?
> Participant 28: They're very common. Like, it's a very common disease, especially in like, the, especially in terms of race, **ko batho ba bantsho. Batho ba bantsho ba tshwarwa ke dihigh, dihypertension** [*among black people. Black people get the highs, hypertensions*] as well.
> Interviewer: Okay. Others? Probably, you can find an article that supports that as well. **Nyena abanye** [*You others*]?

Participant 28: Cholestrol.
Participant 27: HIV and TB. Cos its mostly rapid here in SA.

The excerpts above (excerpt 79-excerpt 86) provide instances where participants switched to South Africa slang. The slang words used are words that are mostly common amongst a certain demographic or among the South African population in general. For example, the word '**nton nton**' as used by participants 3 and 8 above is used as slang and according to Africtionary (2024) it "is a Xhosa term used when you don't know the name of something or the term for something". This is typical of South African slang whereby words such as 'what what', '**eng eng**' and '**wat wat**' can also be used to mean the same thing. It also trended on social media platform around the same time the data was collected and there were even videos on it during this time (Africtionary, 2021).

Other words that are listed as slang include Afrikaans words such as "**askies**" above and others like "**nou**", "**mare/mara**" which come from the Afrikaans word 'maar'. It looks like Afrikaans seemed to contribute a lot to what is regarded as slang in South Africa. On the other hand, the word '**dihigh high**' as used above is considered slang terminology. '**High high**' can be used to mean high blood pressure or the more medical term hypertension, and some black people as Participant 28 mentions would understand what one means by that.

This section aimed to show examples that participants also switched to use words that can be considered slang in the South African context. These words can be terminology in a specific field like '**high high**' in medicine, which was used correctly and everyone in the room knew what the participant was saying in using the term. Similarly, Afrikaans words that have become regular in speech and they can be considered slang like '**nou nou**' or '**mare/mara**' often used by people in different interactions to make meaning were considered slang in this study. These terms were not prevalent in the data, but they did occur and show the versality of the language repertoires of the students in making meaning.

4.2.2.13. Findings related to how switches with alternations between three or more languages in a sentence are used in the consultation sessions

There are instances in the data where students alternated between three languages or more in a sentence (see Table 24 for the frequency of these occurrences). This shows that in some instances, switches to those languages outlined above, in other words, those with languages in

the Sotho group, or the Nguni group, English, or in South African slang sometimes happened close in some sentences. Examples of these cases are presented below.

> [87] **ga gona nix** [*there is nothing*], it's empty, but the bibliography, **igcwele** [*is full*]. [Participant 3, Consultation 2, Sesotho speaker]

In this example (excerpt 87), '**ga gona**' would be of the Sotho language group, '**nix'** would be slang from the Afrikaans word **niks**, followed by English phrases, followed by '**igcwele'** which is of the Nguni language group. The flexibility in the use of languages is astounding.

> [88] Participant 19: I won't mam. That's why **ke re** [*I say*] I won't wait **ukuthi ke di ngoale** [*that I should write them*] at the same time **kaofela** [*all of them*]. I won't wait for last minute.

In this example (excerpt 88), the sentence starts in English, and it is followed by "**ke re**", which is from the Sotho language group. The sentence then switches back to English and then to an Nguni language with '**ukuthi'** and then to Sotho language group again with '**ke di ngoale**'. The way all the languages come together to form a coherent sentence shows the diversity of the participants' repertoire and how they fully embraced them during consultations.

Another noteworthy aspect of the data presented in the study is that the multilingual nature of the participants is visible in instances where self-reported Sotho language speakers would, for example, use isiZulu and Afrikaans words in some of their alternations. The placement of the words and the continuity of the text when more than two languages are used remain syntactically correct and meaningful. The sentences make sense, although they are constituted by a variety of languages. Again, this just illustrates the complexity of multilingual repertoire, and this is inevitable even in academic settings.

4.2.2.14. Findings related to an analysis of the types of language used during consultation sessions with a focus on alternation or switches between languages

When it comes to the types of alternations or switches that the participants made between the languages in their repertoires during the consultation sessions, the study recognises and lists 9 different types of switches that were prominent or that stood out in the data. These switches are perceived to be the functions of the switches participants made during consultations.

Table 26: Functions of the switches by participants

Type of functions for language use with a focus on switching or alternation between languages	***Total frequencies***
Switch type-Explaining/supplying information	*30*
Switch type-Lack/no word equivalent in the language of spoken	*28*
Switch type-Reply	*17*
Switch type-Asking a question	*13*
Switch type-Reconfirm argument	*11*
Switch type-Introduce topic	*3*
Switch type-Translation	*2*
Switch type-State an argument	*2*
Switch type-Discussion of assignment	*1*
Switch type-Small talk	*1*

As shown in Table 26 above, the most common function of speaking in one language and switching to another were cases interpreted as participants' needs to supply information or explain themselves better. Using a word because the equivalent in (especially in English) was the most used and its equivalent in the home language was not so common or in some cases would be unknown (terminology) was the next most prominent function allocated to switches. The least common function allocated to switches were to establish small talk. The two most prominent functions for switching will be illustrated in the rest of this section.

4.2.2.15. Function of switching: Explaining/supplying additional information

The bulk of the switches appeared when the participants were explaining something or supplying additional information to the lecturer (Table 26). These cases occurred in two contexts. Sometimes the switch occurred in one sentence; and sometimes there were longer passages where switches were made with the aim of adding information or explanations. Some of the examples that occurred in sentences where one language was used with a switch in the next sentence that added explanations are provided below:

> [89] Participant 1: Okay, misinformation in microbiology?
> Lecturer: **Ee** [*Yes*], it's in your field of study so any part. **Le ga o ne o ka ska tlhopha** [*Even if you would have not chosen*] microbiology. Anything **se o se dirang** [*that you are doing*]. Maybe **o dira** [*you are doing*] biology or maybe **o etsa** [*you are doing*] …
> Participant 1: **Ke etsa** [*I am doing*] Geology **le** [*and*] Chemistry.

Participant 1 in the example above is explaining to the lecturer what she will write about in her assignment. This, she is seen completing the lecturer's sentence by supplying information on what she is studying.

> [90] Participant 4: Now honestly speaking, **ga e yo** [*it is not there*] mam. Like …

> Lecturer: Okay. Let's read it together. (Starts reading) … Body building occurs … People think that supplements do all the job in getting the body shape that you desire (Stops reading) … Alright. Is there misinformation there, or some aspect, or **go iragalang** [*what is going on*]?
> Participant 4: **Fa nne ke re ke kwala thesisi nna** [*Here I was trying to write a thesis*].

Patrticipant 4 is explaining what she was trying to do in the paragraph. She is interrupted by the lecturer in the last part of her sentence speaking in English (see the sentence ending with "like …"). However, she resumes in Setswana after the interruption and continues where she ended her last sentence in that there is perfect syncronicity between "like …" and "**Fa nna** …". The participant switched to explain herself clearly.

> [91] Participant 3: … and so, before recess, now **batho ne ba thotse kaofela** [*people were all quiet*], they were like quiet.

Participant 3 in the sentence states that "**batho ne ba thotse kaofela**" which when translated means "people were all quiet". She then doubles down by emphasising the point and she repeats it in English "they were like quiet". The switch here is repeated to emphasise that the group members were quiet, and in so doing she is explaining the intensity of the quieteness in the group. The participant is thus switching to add an extra explanation in English after she already explained it in an indigenous language. One might see this as a repetition or as a translation of the Setswana. However, this research classified this as an emphasis in the explanation because in the second part which is in English, the participant does not include the word 'all'. It is thus not a direct translation of what was previously said; the repetition in English is done for the sake of emphasis, not translation.

> [92] Participant 19: **Eya** [*Yes*]. I had network problems.

With the example above, participant 19 also switches from Setswana to English to explain herself. The first part is in Setswana where she says "**eya**" translated as yes, but then she switches to English in the next sentence to explain her reason. She could not write her assessments online because as she puts it "I had network problems".

> [93] Participant 10: The various forms of **nton … i** [*thing … the*] …

With the example above, participant 10 was initially speaking in English, but when she had to explain she switches to isiXhosa to try and supply information there. Therefore, she uses the article "**i**" which means '*the'* in English to show that she is about to give an example or mention a thing at that point in the sentence.

4.2.2.16. Function of switching: Lack/no word equivalent in the language spoken

There is a link between lack of a word or lack of an equivalence of a word in one's language and switching to English. This phenomenon was coded 27 times, meaning that in all instances where one switched because of a lack of knowledge of an equivalent concept or word or where one could not easily remember or say the equivalent, the word was used in English. Typically, these words are subject-specific terminology.

Table 27: Consultations switching because of lack of knowledge of terminology or no terminology happened

Consultation sessions where switches occurred in the context of searching for equivalent concepts or words	***Frequencies: Switch type- Lack/no word equivalent in the language of spoken***
Totals	*27*
Consultation 1 Participant 1	*8*
Consultation 2 Participants 2 & 3	*6*
Consultation 8 Participants 15, 16, 17, 18	*5*
Consultation 3 Participant 4	*3*
Consultation 11 Participants 26, 27, 28, 29	*2*
Consultation 10 Participants 21, 22, 23	*1*
Consultation 7 Participants 13 &14	*1*
Consultation 4 Participants 6, 5	*1*
Consultation 6 Participants 9, 10, 11, 12	*0*
Consultation 5 Participant 19	*0*
Consultation 9 Participant 20	*0*

Table 27 above shows the spread of the switches where participants used terminology in English during consultations instead of saying something in the language originally speaking. Participant 1 had the highest number of terms that she used in English that were akin to her field of study, natural sciences. The participant had come to consult regarding writing on the incorrect topic and thus, how she explained what her field of study was and how it tied into her assignment were pivotal to the discussion. As someone from the field of microbiology and chemistry, she used English terms repeatedly when she was speaking in her African language. This will be demonstrated with examples from the data below. Participants in consultation 2 were from the field of law, and their switches to English were mostly on everyday academic language rather than subject specific concepts because they had come to consult concerning the submission of their assignment that was already done. Thus, words such as thesis, problem statement and calendar are some of the words that showed up in their switches. The other consultations had

very little or no switches to terminology words. The examples below indicate these types of switches:

> [94] Participant 17: **Ga di tshwane. O mongwe o bua ka** DNA **o mongwe o bua ka diplants** [*The are different. The one is talking about DNA, the other one is talking about plants*].
> [95] Participant 13: **Mo** [*On*] Google.
> [96] Participant 28: **O shebe** [*Look at*] Google **le** [*even*] Google. But you know the problem is with that lecturer, is he wrote his own textbook.

Here, the abbreviation DNA is commonly used rather than its unabbreviated form, Deoxyribonucleic acid, in science. This word is a scientific word and the equivalent of it in Sesotho, the language spoken in the sentence, would not be a commonly used word.

Google as a search engine name is also commonly switched to when participants speak in their Black South African languages. It is a name that the academic community is familiar with and the world outside of academia is familiar with and there is no replacement or equivalent for this word in the African language used by participant 28. Thus, the participant speaking in Sesotho and switching to English to say the name Google is not surprising but expected and acceptable.

Both DNA and Google are nouns/names and thus switching for a lack of equivalent word in the indigenous language is often done with nouns. It shows that English names and terms become the default in the context of subject and domain jargon.

> [97] Participant 1: **Ee. Askere ke bona ba** [*Yes. Isn't it they are the ones of*] microbiology **ba leng ba bantši** [*who are many*].

Terminology such as microbiology, geology and biology do not have commonly used or known terminology in most Black South African languages.

> [98] Participant 3**: Aa, ke kentse** [*No, I did put*] document **e ke** [*that I*] ...
> [99] Participant 14: **Ga re itse** [*We do not know the*] article **yona e ke efeng** [*which one it is*].

Just like the examples above, there is every day terminology that we use, whose equivalent in most South African languages is unknown or uncommon. The word 'document' is an example of such a word, and so is the word 'article'. Below is a classification of terminology as evidenced in the study. Table 28 below illustrates typical words that participants did not use the Indigenous South African languages but used English terminology instead.

Table 28: Terminology list and words where switches were used in the consultation sessions:

Subject specific terms	*Other words/terms*	*Comment about the field or domain of use*
Microbiology/biology/chemistry		*Science*
Hedging		*Education/literacy*
Google		*IT*
Botany		*Science*
DNA		*Science*
Assessments		*Education*
Problem statement		*Education/Literacy*
Thesis		*Education/Literacy*
Article		*Education/Literacy*
	Calendar	*Daily use*
	Miscommunication	*Daily use*
	Tuesday	*Daily use*
	Document	*Daily use*
	Email	*Daily use*
	Like	*Daily use*

When it comes to subject-specific terminology, the students mostly use the English terms that are used in their field. This could be because subject-specific translated terminology is mostly publicly unknown. The participants use their languages but when it comes to specific terminology in their field, they switch to a familiar English word. This is unlike when the students switch to one word in the languages that they know that is, for example, mostly used as conjunction words, such as ***ukuthi*** and ***gore***, as well as pronouns in **nna**. Furthermore, when it comes to other words or terminology, the students use terms that are everyday terms in English like **emaile** or **Googole** by making them into a new term by adding their own language's grammatical structures instead of trying to translate that into their language.

Participants would often switch to an English word to supplement the word that they did not know in Setswana or isiZulu, or other languages used in the data. Although most of the switch for terminology was the use of English nouns, participants did not only switch to English for names and terms but also for linking words such as with the word 'like'. The conjunction 'like' was used during a lot of the switches. When switching to English participants mostly switched for terminology, unlike in instances where participants switch mostly to using linking devices. Conjunctions do not account for most of the switches of one word in English. However, it is important to further note that in cases where the one word to English that was switched to, was a conjunction, the most switched to conjunction was the word 'like'. Below are more examples of switching with just the word 'like' in the sentence.

[100] Participant 7: **Ka botsotsi** [*Through criminal ways*] like **ke chelete** [*it is money*].
[101] Participant 4: No like, misinformation like, **ga ke a e tsenya** [*I did not add it*], like …
[102] Participant 29: Like **ke twenty mang ga o etsa** [*it is twenty what when you did*] that thing?

In the examples above, the word 'like' is used as a conjunction. It also seems like the students use 'like' to gather their thoughts or compose their message. This is in alignment once again with the fact that most students switched between languages in a bid to conceptualise or make sense and connect the dots. 'Like' also account for a lot of the reasons why students would switch and sustain the switch in English such as with the examples below:

[103] Participant 7: **Ja** [*Yes*]. They misinformed other players **gore ba na le** [*that they have*] like, academy.
Lecturer: Okay.
Participant 7: **E le gore** [*It being that*] like, **ke maaka, ha e molaong** [*it is a lie, it is not legal*] …

[104] Participant 4: **Ke kwetse** [*I wrote an*] intro, like …
Lecturer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Participant 4: … and then, intro **ya ka** [*of mine*], I think **e na le, e na le** [*it has the, it has the*] problem statement, **le** [*and*] thesis …

Other words used as a conjunction or linking device that was prominent in the data are the words "**akere**" and "**angithi**". **Akere** or **angithi** as a linking device was translated as "isn't it", if placed anywhere in the sentence except at the end. If it was placed at the end, it was translated as 'right', to ask a question. This can be seen in examples such as:

[105] Participant 28: Cos like, **akere** [*isn't it*] some people were developing lung diseases due to like, the bad atmosphere.
[106] Participant 10: Introduction. **Akere** [*Isn't it*] like, **ha ka tsamaya sharp** [*I did not go right*].

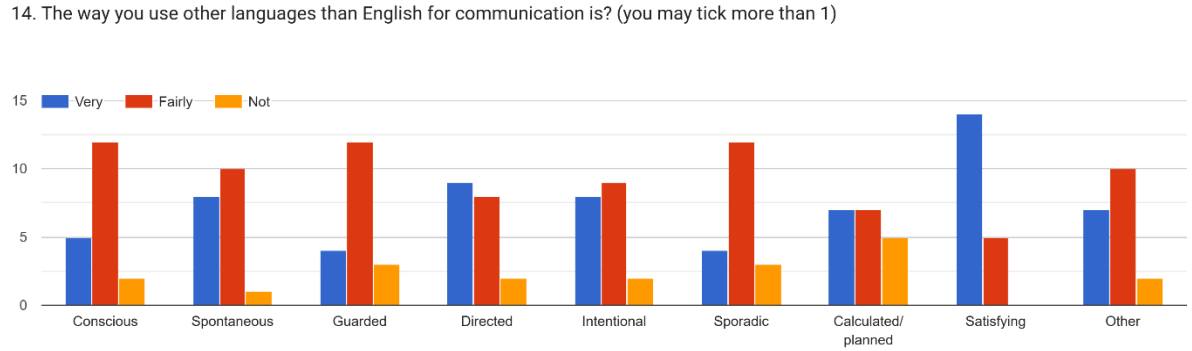
The word '**akere'** as used in the examples above is used as a rhetorical question to keep the listener engaged and to make the listener agree. This is once more linked to the reason for switching being 'to explain oneself' or to be understood. This word was used a lot of time to engage the lecturer and to keep the information being discussed interesting to the listener.

This section reported on switches whereby participants switched for terminology because they either lacked the word in their languages and knew it in English or because the English word was most common. This means that participants would most likely keep to subject-specific terminology when they switch. This implies terminology development and the Africanisation of Indigenous knowledge whereby the terms most commonly used and referred to by students are in English. This can be studied further outside of the scope of the current study.

4.2.2.17. Findings about the attitudes of participants about switching in the interview data

Owing to the section above on consultation data, this section looks at the attitudes of the participants to their own switching. Initially in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the 19 participants who completed the questionnaire were asked whether their ability to switch was a planned or spontaneous process. Their responses were captured in the graph below.

Figure 27: How language is used for communication



Most of the participants were on the fence with their responses ranking their use of their language. However, the majority said that it was a satisfying thing to do. One can also infer that the participants believed that using other languages by switches was a directed, intentional and calculated choice.

Table 29: Is the process of switching planned or spontaneous?

When this happens (switching languages), are you aware or unaware, and how does the act of using other languages than English make you feel? (a question on the process/experience)	***Total frequencies***
Grand total of frequency of codes	*18*
Language switch-unaware, spontaneous, automatic	*6*
Switching and emotions-bad, embarrassed	*4*
Language switch-depend on certain thing	*4*
Language switch-aware, planned, calculated	*2*
Switching and emotions-good	*2*

The question "Is the process of switching planned or spontaneous" which is the title of the above table is a difficult question to ask participants during an interview. One is unsure if the responses to such a direct question could be fully trusted. However, the participants responded to the question during the individual interviews, and they agreed that the act of switching is complex. In the interview data, participants were asked about the very act of switching languages during consultations. The question asked the participants if they thought that switching was voluntarily

or planned. Two participants (participant 4 and participant 6) indicated that switching language was deliberate in their view.

> [107] Participant 4: **Mm**, **nna ke** [*No*, *me I am*] aware.
> Interviewer: **O ira ka, ka bo** [*You do wit, with the*] … intentionally.
> Participant 4: If I don't know what to say, then I switch.

> [108] Participant 6: Sometimes it is …
> Interviewer: Is it calculated? Okay, sometimes …
> Participant 6: Yes. Sometimes it's planned sometimes it's not.
> Interviewer: What happens in instances when it is planned? Sometimes it is planned …
> Participant 6: **A kere** [*Let me say*] it's planned **ga ke na le batho ba eleng gore ba itse** [*when I am with people that know*] Setswana.

They intentionally chose to switch languages, especially when struggling with the English words (in the case of participant 4); and switching languages when they were in the presence of speakers they knew would understand the switch to another language (participant 6). In the case of these 2 participants, switching between languages was perceived as an intentional strategy.

Some participants said that switching languages was not planned, but rather an automatic event.

> [109] Participant 13: **Ae ke, ke** [*No, it is, it is*] likes, **ke, ke** [*it is, it is*] something **se se itlelang ga ke bua le wena** [*that just comes when I speak with you*].
> [110] Participant 5: It automatically happens cos …
> [111] Participant 16: **Aa** [*No*], automatically. **Ha Englishe e shata down mo tlhogong** [*When English shuts down in the head*] …
> Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Participant 16: … **go kena** [*then enters*] …
> Interviewer: Default!
> Participant 16: Yea **wa bona** [*you see*].
> Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Participant 16: And **ga se tsele for gore "e re ke ye ko Setswaneng". Klaar, klaar.** [*Finish, finish. It is not those of "let me go to the Setswana"*] …
> Interviewer: **Ga o inagane. E itlela fela. Ga lefoko le satle la Englishe, klaar o setse o** [*You do not think about it. It just comes. When a word of English does not come, finish you already are*] …
> Participant 16: **La Setswana le teng kafa** [*The Setswana one is here this side*].

For 6 of the 11 participants, switching between languages was spontaneous and unplanned. However, it is important to note that Participant 16 states what Participant 4 similarly says about words escaping her and her deliberately switching. When 'words escape them', Participant 16 says he automatically switches. For participant 16 it is spontaneous and automatic, while for Participant 4 it is deliberate. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that Participant 6 said it was both spontaneous and calculated, depending on the situation. This leads to the next point. Some participants indicate that switching being planned or unplanned depended on different reasons.

When switching languages, three participants mentioned that it was not spontaneous or calculated switches, but that it depended on external issues and the situation at hand. Participant 24 states that "it depends on the lecturer". This implies that if the lecturer is a speaker of one's languages, then they will switch languages automatically. However, he further cautions that although one would sometimes meet a lecturer who is a speaker of their language, the lecturer would not allow the participant to switch. Examples where participants expressed additional issues that directed whether they could switch or not are provided below.

> [112] Participant 14: Sometimes. It depends on conversation …
> Interviewer: Mhm …
> Participant 14: Sometimes it's automatic and sometimes I must plan **gore** [*that*] 'okay, now I'm going to use English. You know **gore** [*that*] …
> Interviewer: **Go ya ka boemo** [*It depends on the situation*]?
> Participant: Yes. **Go ya ka conversatione ya rona e ne e le** [*It depends on our conversation and*] the way **e ne e le** [*the way it was*] … if **ke thola lecturer o mongwe o leng gore ga understande** [*I find another lecturer that does not understand*] Setswana, Sepedi, like **o bua** [*he/she speaks*] Afrikaans **le** [*and*] English, in that way I have to make sure **goreng** [*that*] …

> [113] Participant 6: Yes. Sometimes it's planned sometimes it's not.
> Participant 6: **A kere** [*Let me say*] it's planned **ga ke na le batho ba eleng gore ba itse** [*when I am with people that know*] Setswana.
> Interviewer: Okay. You intentionally speak Setswana …
> Participant 6: Yeah. Yeah.
> Interviewer: Sometimes is not.
> Participant 6: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Interviewer: And then in instances where you do, do you just find yourself **o gowile, o switchetse jwale jwale** [*having gone off, switched and so forth and so forth*]?
> Participant 6: To Setswana, maybe **ke ga re** [*is when we*], maybe **ga re na le debatenyana** [*when we have a small debate*] …
> Interviewer: Okay.
> Participant 6: … Then **ke, ke** [*I, I*] …
> Interviewer: **O bo esc …ga e escalaita e ya ko databeising** [*Then you esc … when it escalates it goes to the database*] …
> Participant 6: Yes.
> Interviewer: … **gore** [*that*], "I need a word", 'ti ti'…
> Participant 6: **Mm, mm** [*Yes, yes*].

Once again, as shown in the excerpt from Participant 6 in excerpt 113, when words fail them, participants automatically switch to their other languages. This seems to happen automatically, and it helps participants with expression and being understood. These are mentioned as the main functions for switching that the researcher perceived when analysing the recordings of the consultations.

As a result of the complex nature of switching languages, switching seems to lead to an emotional result. This means that because someone switches between languages, they experience different emotions because of their ability. Participants state that they had

experiences that were associated with switching that were either good or bad experiences. Some of these experiences led them to feel embarrassed and ashamed of the act of switching while some of the experiences seemed to have freed them and allowed them a chance to freely express themselves.

> [114] Participant 6: It makes me feel good, but sometimes …
> Interviewer: Mhm.
> Participant 6: … not so good because **keebe ke na le motho o sa itseng** [*I would be someone who does not know*] Setswana neh ….
> Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 6: … and then accidently …
> Interviewer: **Ee, ga se** [*No, it is not*] accidentally. **E itlela fela** [*It just comes*] so …
> Participant 6: **E itlela hela** [*It just comes*], so I'm like …
> Interviewer: … That you feel so bad when that happens.
> Participant 6: Yeah.

> [115] Participant 4: … sometimes **o, o fila** [*you, you feel*] good, **o fila sharpo gore** [*you feel good that*] no, **ke buile** [*I spoke*] and **o ntlhalogantse** [*he/she understood me*].
> Interviewer: **Ehe. Ke utlwagetse** [*Yes. I was heard*].
> Participant 4: And then there are sometimes **mo e leng gore, motho yo buang le ene ga a go understande** [*where you see that the person you are speaking to does not understand you*], so **o feela** [*you feel*] bad **gore** [*that*] maybe **ke a mo offenda** [*I am offending them*].

> [116] Participant 16: **Mona, o tshaba go bua le motho cos ga o itse for gore ke Motswana or ke eng** [*Here, you are scared to speak to a person because you do not know if they are Tswana or what*].

Although switching is explored in this study as part of the natural use of the language repertoires of the multilingual participants, it also comes with an emotional element that may hinder the successful use of such a strategy as expressed by some of the participants above. It can be embarrassing, and shameful, and sometimes leaves people in an ambigous position of whether to do it or not, which are not great experiences. The experiences outlined above about switching shows an element of vulnerability that comes with the act, thus switching should be used to empower rather than to disepower.

When used correctly, switching can be an empowering act and the participants in the study attest to the potential of empowerment that comes with switching languages.

> [117] Participant 9: I guess I feel lucky in a way …
> Interviewer: Mhm.
> Participant 9: … that I am able to speak more than one language.

> [118] Participant 4: **Ke nagana gore yang emphawara** [*I think that it empowers me*]. Like …
> Interviewer: Why?
> Participant 4: Because **o kereya informatione e o e batlang, ka, ka, ka language e o e understandang betere** [*you get the information that you want in a, in a, in a language that you understand better*] …

4.2.2.18. Participants' reasons for switching

This section of the study analyses reasons why students say they switched during consultations. The data was collected using a questionnaire completed by the participants and follow-up individual interviews and a focus group discussion were done.

This section looks at the data whereby participants explain in the questionnaire why they switched words between Indigenous South African languages and English. This data will be presented in the following order:

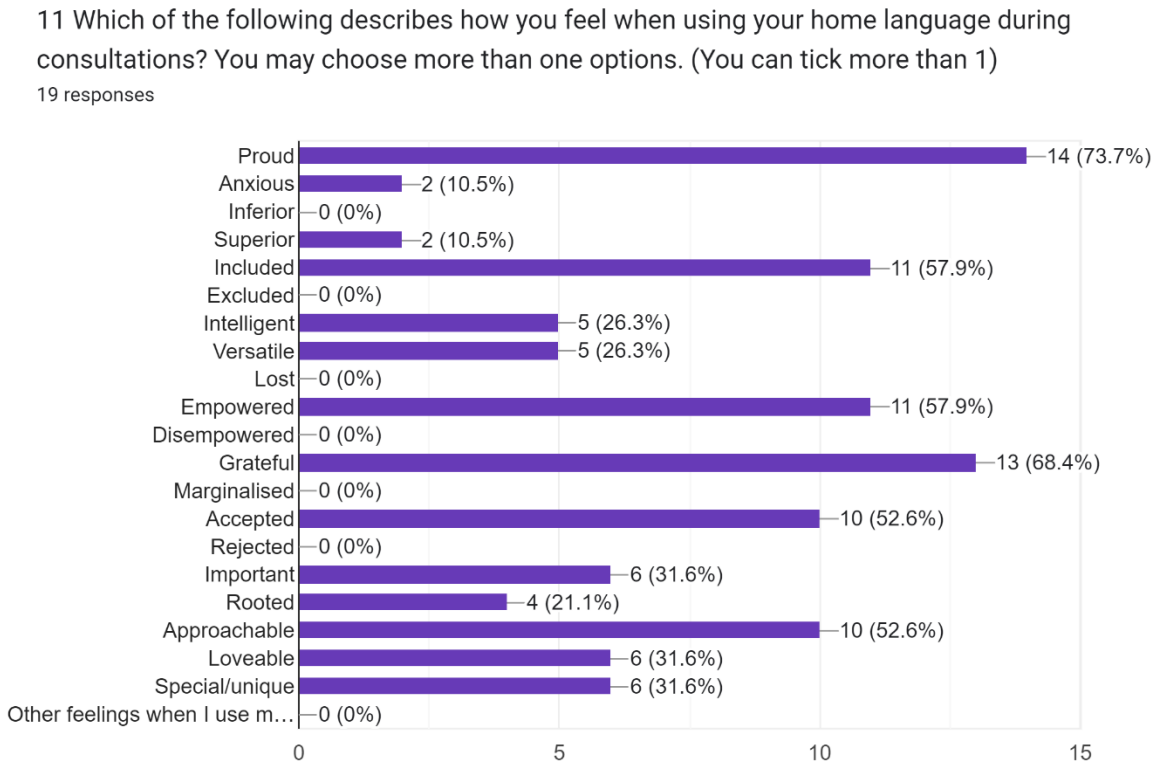
- Data from the questionnaire,
- Data from the interviews, and
- Data from focus group.

Participants' reasons for switching: Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire findings

The Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire was aimed at students who had come to consult using their languages and who consented to participate in the study.

From the data in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, it was clear that the participants were already using their languages, especially in informal settings. Bringing these languages to other contexts such as the classroom would be highly beneficial to the students. Moreover, using these languages can be empowering to the students because one can argue that it will increase participation and because of that hopefully improve academic results. Participants mentioned in the questionnaire that using their languages during consultations was encouraging in several ways. They said they were proud of their languages and proud of using them. This is constantly mentioned in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire data that it makes the participants proud, and it creates a feeling of inclusion.

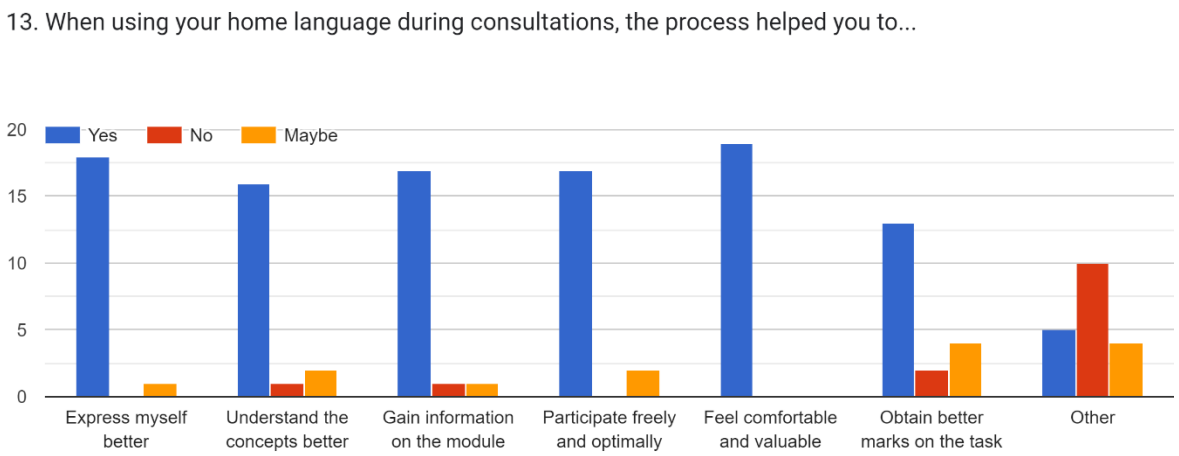
Figure 28: Emotions/feelings associated with switching languages



A sense of pride as shown above is what 14/19 (which is 73.7%) participants chose to express how the ability to switch languages makes them feel. Feeling 'grateful' (13/19 = 68%) a was the second highest emotion selected as indicated on Figure 28 above. Overall, participants selected positive feelings to express how switching languages makes them feel. Felling 'included' and 'empowered' were each selected by 11 participants (57.9%), while 'accepted' and 'approachable' were both selected by ten participants each (52.6%). The only negative emotion expressed was by two (10.5%) participants, and it was linking feeling 'anxious' to switching. The rest of the feelings indicated were positive but had a small number of participants who selected them.

On item 13 of the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the participants were asked what switching languages helps them with. Below is the graph showing how students ranked the process of using their languages during consultations.

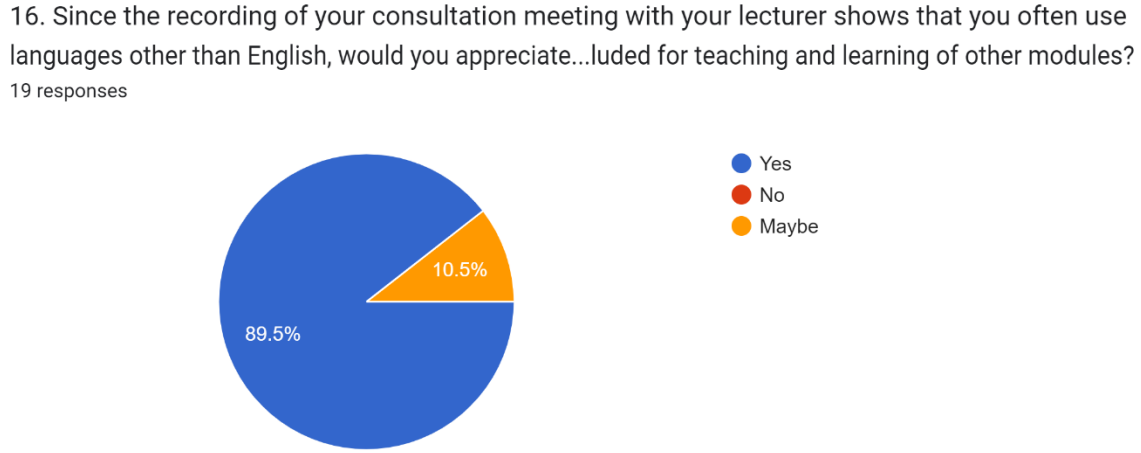
Figure 29: How switching languages help participants



In general, it is clear from Figure 29 above that the participants had a positive attitude towards the idea of using all the languages in their repertoires during the consultation sessions because it was helpful to them. The participants believe that languages are therefore valuable to the process of understanding a task at hand. They can help the students formulate a task and thus executing instructions or explanations in just one language can destroy this ability.

Moreover, participants were asked if they would appreciate it if their languages were included for teaching and learning. Their responses are shown in Figure 30 below.

Figure 30: Possibilities of using home language if included for teaching and learning of another module

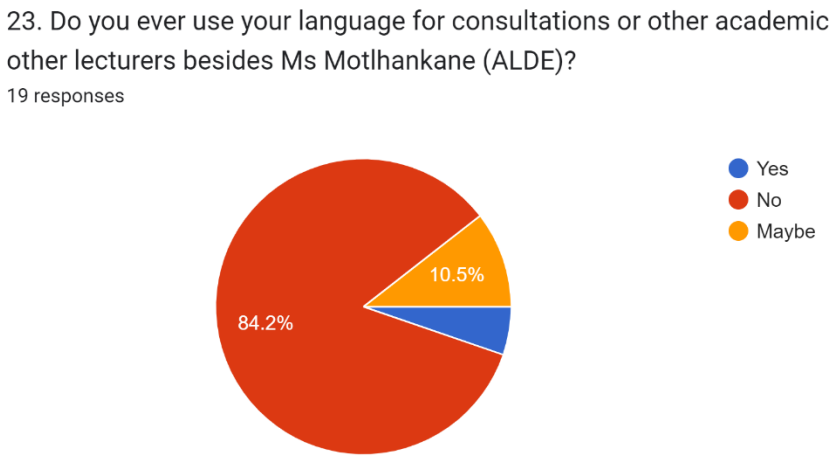


In Figure 30 above, when asked if students would like to use their home languages for teaching and learning in other modules, most participants (17/19) said, 'yes' while 2 participants said

'maybe'. Since one could only choose one option, no one answered 'no' to the possibility of using their languages for teaching and learning, but the answers were 'yes' and 'maybe'. Maybe can be interpreted as a positive attitude because the participant is at least leaving room for that possibility.

When participants were asked if they ever used their languages elsewhere with other lecturers for teaching and learning, their responses mostly showed that they did not. The responses are expressed in Figure 31.

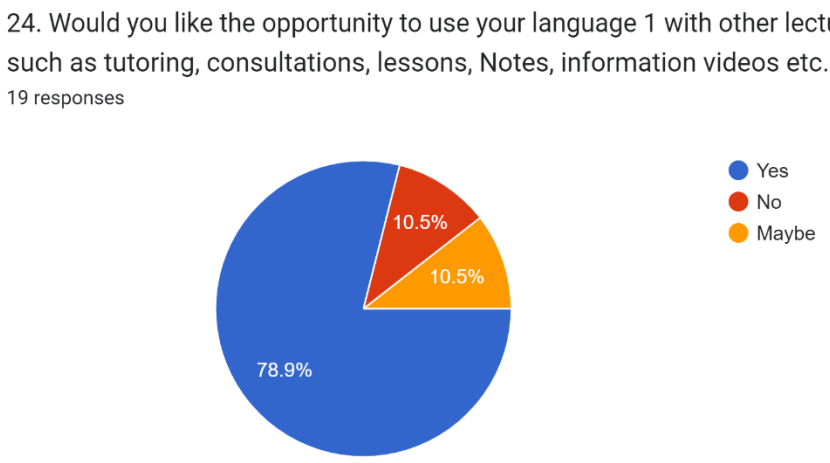
Figure 31: The use of other languages than English in other Modules



From Figure 31 above, most participants (84.2%) indicated that they did not use all the languages in their repertoires when they consulted with other lecturers. Most of the respondents said 'no' and few said 'maybe' and 'yes' respectively. The participants who answered 'yes' (1 participant) and the 2 participants who answered 'maybe' were asked to explain their responses on the questionnaire. One participant stated that in the module 'OTHER PC 121 (Not the real name of the module) the lecturer does use languages other than English and Afrikaans in class. This was affirmed by another participant who said, "Not necessarily, 'OTHER PC 121' There are times when the lecturer makes an example in a different language". So, some lecturers at NWU-PC include the students' languages in their teaching and learning processes and students notice this with appreciation.

Another question item in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire asked participants if they would like the opportunity to use their home languages or other languages in their repertoires with other lecturers and for other purposes.

Figure 32: Would participants like to use language 1 (other than English) for other teaching and learning activities



Most participants (78.9%) said that they would like a chance to use their languages with other lecturers and for other purposes. Likewise, 10.5% of the respondents said 'no' and another 10.5% said 'maybe'. The fact that the participants expressed a desire to use their languages for other teaching and learning activities corresponds well with the findings from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire in Figure 25 where participants expressed that they would use their languages if it was possible and consulting in their languages had 322 (or 67.8%) of the participants saying they would do it.

Overall participants showed a positive attitude towards using their languages for academic purposes.

4.2.3 Participants' reasons for switching: Individual Interviews and Focus Group Discussion findings

This section of the research looks at the different reasons students gave for using their languages during consultations. The data is from the interviews and the focus group. Students gave different reasons for switching languages and the table below presents the frequencies of the reasons coded in the data.

Table 30: Reasons for switching according to participants

Field1	*Total Frequencies*
Totals	*26*
○ *Reasons for switching-to be clear, make no mistakes*	*10*
○ *Reasons for switching-receiver/the lecturer*	*9*
○ *Reasons for switching-fill in words, expression*	*4*
○ *Reasons for switching-confidence, pride*	*3*
○ *Reasons for switching-comfortable*	*1*

There are ample reasons why participants switched between languages during consultations. The data above in Table 30 shows that switching to be clear and switching because of whom the participants spoke to was rated high. This seems to correspond with one of the highest reasons why students came to consult. As stated above, students came to consult to conceptualise as the highest reason followed by trying to understand structural elements required in their work. The main reasons are therefore clarity and understanding. In their bid to formulate structure or in their bid to conceptualise their assignments, clarity and understanding form the core of their focus. They want to understand, and they want to be understood, and this is explained clearly by the participants in the interview as shown below.

> [119] Participant 25: **O tshaba go etsa dimistake** [*You are afraid of making mistakes*].
>
> [120] Participant 1: **Ee** [*Yes*], and like it relays the message well …
> Interviewer: Oh!
> Participant 1: … what you are saying.
>
> [121] Participant 6: Now, **akere motho o mongwe o kgona go ntlhaloganya** [*isn't it the other person can be able to understand me*] …
> Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 6: … and I feel like if **o kgona go ntlhaloganya** [*they can understand me*], it's a good thing.
>
> [122] Participant 4: Cos like, **ke fila gore re dirisa mafoko a, a, a, a** [*I feel that we use words that are, are, are, are*] wrong.
> Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 4: Not, not to say a wrong **mare a** [*but that are*] …
> Participant 25: **A sa dumellweng mo** [*That are not allowed in*] …
> Participant 9: It doesn't … it doesn't …
> Participant 4: … like, we confuse … **Ja** [*Yes*]. We confuse, because English **le** [*and*] Setswana **ga di tshwane** [*are not the same*].
> Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 4: Like, when you think **o nagana ka** [*you think through*] Setswana before you …
> Interviewer: You speak it **ka skgowa**. **Ee** [*in English. Yes*].
> Participant 4: So, whatever **se o se naganneng ka Setswana, ee** [*you have thought of in Setswana, yes*], to take it to the other language …

When it comes to being understood as the core reason for switching, most of the participants expressed that the biggest problem is that they do not want to use the wrong words or to make a mistake in what they are sharing and end up being misunderstood.

The second most prominent reason for switching during consultation raised by the Individual Interview participants is because of the receiver or the person with whom they are having a conversation. If a person is a speaker of other languages and the participants perceives that to be true, they are most likely to switch their languages when speaking to that person. This is a particularly interesting issue because the participants were also selected primarily because they had started switching when walking into the office. Perception does play a big role in a person's decision to switch languages. When asked about the reasons that led them to switching when speaking during consultations, during interviews and the focus group discussion the participants explained that the lecturer or the receiver was an important influence. Here are some examples from the students' answers:

> [123] Participant 13: Yeah, **ke** [*I*], because eish! **Ee … ne ya go nna** [*Yes … It was going to be*] difficult because if **ke sa, ke sa kreya motho er, lekcha e buang language yaaka e tlile go nna** [*I did not, I did not get a person er, a lecturer who speaks my language it is going to be*] difficult.
> [124] Participant 24: **Ka gore o itse** [*Because you know*] Setswana **wena** [*you*]. Then **Englishe wa itse** [*English you know*] sometimes **e na le go betsanyana** [*it has the ability to beat you a little*] sometimes …
> [125] Participant 24: But **gona le dilekchara tse e leng gore ai, le ga o bona gore oo o itse** [*There are some lecturers that no, even if you see that they knows*] Setswana**, mare ke hela o bua ka Englishe** [*but you must just speak in English*] because … **a kere** [*let me say*] appearance **ya gagwe, ga o mo sheba** [*of his/hers when you look at them*] …
> [126] Participant 16: **Ee. Go iwa ka gore lekchara a wa go nkutlwa** [*Yes. it depends on whether the lecturer hears you*] or **yang** [*what*]. [Participant 16, Consultation 8, Setswana speaker].
> [127] Participant 14: Yes. **Go ya ka conversatione ya rona e ne e le** [*It depends on our conversation and*] the way **e ne e le** [*the way it was*] … if **ke thola lecturer o mongwe o leng gore ga understande** [*I find another lecturer that does not understand*] Setswana, Sepedi, like **o bua** *[he/she speaks*] Afrikaans **le** [*and*] English, in that way I have to make sure **goreng** [*that*] …
> [128] Participant 4: **Ga ke bona gore lekchara oo o understanda** [*If I see that the lecturer understands*] Setswana, **nna ke tlile go botsa ka** [*I am going to ask in*] Setswana.

In the examples above, the participants mentioned that they spoke using their languages during consultations because they noticed the lecturer spoke an African language. Of the participants from the Sotho language group, 7 participants explained that they were confident that the lecturer would understand them and reciprocate when speaking their languages.

During the focus group discussion, Participant 9 described how important it is that the lecturer or the receiver embrace the use other languages with students if they are speakers of those other languages, saying that often lecturers who could speak in their languages and help them do not do so.

[129] Participant 16: **Waitse nna ke ne ke reng? Nna ke ne re** [*Do you know what I was saying? I was saying that*] …
Interviewer: **Ba enzani** [*What do they do*]?
Participant 9: **Ba ya shinga.** Like straight face, no smile, nothing.

When lecturers are very strict and do not welcome the use of other languages besides English, particularly if the lecturers can speak other languages, this can lead to students not consulting or finding it difficult to speak in their languages and unwelcomed. Participants also mentioned the unfriendliness of lecturers and their unwillingness to speak in other South African languages as a reason they do not go for consultations alongside their shame for speaking broken English (see excerpt 124, Participant 24). They also explained that they cope with such situations of not going to consult in various ways from the Focus Group Discussion:

[130] Participant 25: **Rona re romela difriend** [*We send the friends*].
Participant 16: **Ja** [*Yes*].
Participant 9: It's only a …
Participant 25: **Ja. O re mo tshepileng** [*Yes. The one we trust*].
Interviewer: Serious?
Participant 25: **Ja. O** [*Yes. The one*] like, **o leng gore o rata ene skgowa sentle** [*the one that loves English really*].

[131] Participant 9: We send an email.
Interviewer: You don't go … **Mo emaileng le kwalang hee** [*In the email what do you write then*]? What do you write?
Participant 16: Email **ga o di kene** [*you do not care*].
Participant 25: **O kwala yone e** [*You write that one that is*] simple, cos like, **o e paka sentle. O na le nako** [*you package it well. You have time*].

The different ways of avoiding consultations with lecturers such as sending peers, sending emails, rehearsing a few sentences and hoping that things do not go off script and other ways of coping were coded 13 times in the data. Excerpt 132 contains a poignant example that sums up the struggles of students in trying to speak in English only:

[132] Participant 4: … **physio ya rona ke lekgowa**. **Nna** [*our physio is a white person. Me*] I go there and I tell him like I was turning and then the, the … like, I break the English to the point that when I finish talking I ask myself, what did I just say. But I break the English.
Colleague: But at the end of the day uh …
Participant 4: He will ask, he will ask, he will ask …
Colleague: Until.
Participant 4: … eventually he will understand.

The participant in excerpt 132 explained the frustration with speaking in one language and the experience that comes with it. Sadly, she is aware at the time that she "breaks the English" and she further advocates that there should be interpreters in offices even when students go to consult as stated in excerpt 133 below.

[133] Interviewer: **Hee o aka** [*No, you lie*]. Okay. So now transitioning from high school to here, **o** [*you*], experienced in terms of the way **go rutiwang ka teng mo** [*the teaching is done here in*] university, how has that been like?
Participant 4: That's why **re tlhoka** [*we need a*] translator.
Interviewer: That's why **le** [*you*] …
Participant 4: University doesn't make sense.
Participant 25: And **le Englishe ya teng le yone** [*the English here as well*] …
Participant 4: Ijooo!
Participant 16: English.

In addition to the above reasons for switching between languages, participants also mentioned that they switched to fill in gaps or words, which is also tied to switching to be clear and understood in this study. The participants that brought up this reason explained that they switched because words escaped them:

[134] Participant 9: Sometimes you use a wrong word in a different sentence.

Participant 9 also states that when speaking in English only, sometimes one finds herself using 'wrong' words, hence, she switches. Participant 16 in excerpt 111 says when English shuts down in the head, Setswana automatically comes forth. As Participant 16 mentions, when English words run out, he automatically fills the gap with words from his repertoire. The participants mentioned that their languages are always available in their mids to fill in the gaps when they talk.

Furthemore, other participants mentioned that they used their languages because their languages make them confident and proud because they are comfortable. Participant 5 in excerpt 135 states that being confortable makes one confident when she stated that:

[135] Participant 5: … **e be e le gore** [*it is when*] we are, we are comfortable neh, **ene e go dira o nne** [*and it makes you to be*] confident …

Being comfortable and confident can ensure that students participate fully in their studies and their languages carry the ability to help them do so. Therefore, there is a direct link between feeling confident because one is speaking their language and being comfortable in speaking in one's language.

Therefore, this section on the attitudes of the participants in using their languages during consultations has shown that the experience and the attitudes of the participants to this process is positive. Findings presented on participants from consultations demonstrated that participants use their languages to deepen understanding. It showed the different levels and types of language switches to indicate the use of languages as a potent tool. The findings also point to the fact that during a consultation when different languages in the participants'

repertoires were used, it unlocked a great level of understanding because it was used for very serious aspects of writing whereby conceptualisation and structure were discussed (both examples of HOT skills in Bloom's taxonomy). It was also used intentionally to gather information related to LOT skills. These findings are discussed further in Chapter 5.

4.3. What are students' attitudes towards using multilingualism (especially the use of African languages) in higher education?

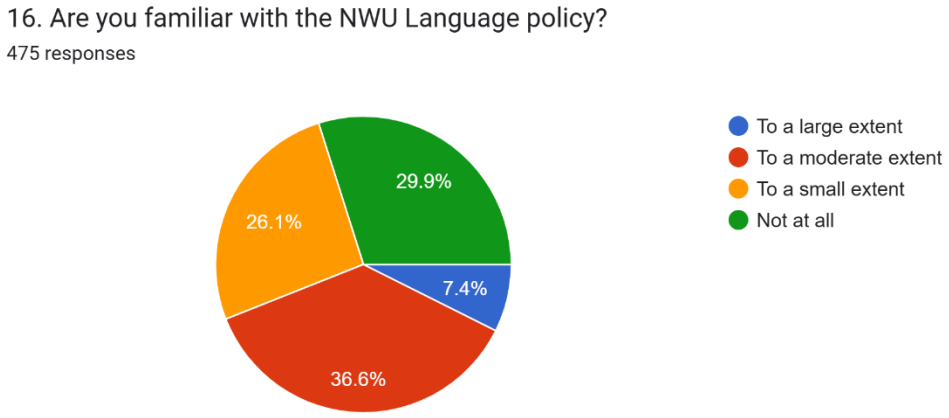
Considering what was discussed before in this chapter about the language repertoires of participants and how some of the participants went on to use their repertoires to consult with their lecturer, this section looks at the attitudes of participants towards the use of African languages in higher education.

4.3.1. Knowledge of language policy

It is noteworthy in this study, that the language policy of the NWU is a functional language policy that recognises four languages as the official languages of the university, while accommodating all South African languages in its fold where possible. Furthermore, the NWU-PC (and the NWU-MC) is tasked with the promotion of three of the languages of the policy, which are Afrikaans, English and Setswana. This is because these are also the languages of the region and thus the languages of the Campus (Census 2022). The NWU Vanderbijlpark campus develops Afrikaans, English and Sesotho.

In this part of the study, whether the participants were aware of or knew of the language policy of the NWU and that of the NWU-PC and what their attitudes were regarding this policy was investigated. There were a few questions asked in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire to establish the participants' knowledge of the policies and data is presented below:

Figure 33: Knowledge of NWU Language policy (Language Repertoire Questionnaire item 16)



In the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, when participants were asked if they were familiar with the NWU language policy (in item 16), 7.4% of the participants said they were familiar with the policy to a large extent, then 36.8% said they knew about it to a moderate extent, 26.1% said that they knew the policy to a small extent while 29.9% said they knew nothing about the policy. There are a lot of participants (almost 30%) who do not know much about the language policy of the NWU, and this shows in the answers that they gave for follow-up question when they were asked to elaborate on their answers by summarising the policy in their own words (Open-ended question).

These open-ended responses were coded in ATLAS.ti. Table 30 below captures the frequencies of the coded responses to this open-ended questionnaire item.

Table 31: Knowledge of policy (Language Repertoire Questionnaire)

Code indicating the level of knowledge expressed in the open-ended question item where participants had to summarise the NWU's language policy	Frequency
Language Policy - has an idea about the policy	114
Language Policy - has a little idea about the policy	113
Language Policy - does not know the policy	42
Language Policy - copied and pasted	35
Language Policy - irrelevant answer	1
Language policy of the NWU – unclear	1

When looking at the data presented in Table 31 above, 1 participant gave an unclear answer, and another participant gave an irrelevant answer. It is not clear whether the latter did not understand

the question. Here is the response of the participant who gave an irrelevant answer when asked to summarise the NWU language policy:

> [136] Participant 1: we should not use cursing language

All participants were asked to summarise the policy, and the codes and frequencies presented in the table above encapsulates the main themes in their answers. The first example above is totally irrelevant in relation to the NWU's language policy, because it is about cursing, a topic which is not addressed formally in the policy. The policy does refer to respectful language use, but no references to cursing are included. The other "unclear response" was:

> [137] Participant 163: The intellectualization of multilingualism ought to be regarded as an improvement idea that needs to take delivery of impact in a prepared natural manner. As well as to offer a fair and functionally multilingual language surroundings throughout all additives of the university.

The response is unclear because this summary of the policy is difficult to understand.
The responses coded as "not knowing the policy" are those who confidently state that the policy is English only, English and Afrikaans, bilingual, Afrikaans only or that gave an unintelligible answer trying to summarise the policy. Below are the examples of these responses from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire:

> [138] Participant 87: do not know about, it but will check it out when I'm done here
> [139] Participant 338: English is compulsory
> [140] Participant 437: very strict
> [141] Participant 383: I only know that almost everything is written in English
> [142] Participant 60: most of people here speak afrikaans and is interesting because i don't really
> [143] Participant 90: I think English is a medium of instruction and Afrikaans is a second language.

Considering that the participants were asked to summarise the already available policy, the responses in the excerpts above indicate that the participants showed no knowledge of the policy. Their understanding of the policy seems to have been informed mostly by observation or personal ideologies instead of policy knowledge. Saying the policy has and uses two languages is not true, however, in observing the practice around the NWU-PC or the broader University, participants might have noticed that two languages are mostly used formally.

Other participants copied and pasted information they found on the Internet exactly as it is. These participants can also be considered as not knowing the policy, even though they answered accordingly as they did not summarise but copied and pasted the information. Their answers therefore look the same. Below are the examples:

[144] Participant 135: To accommodate, pursue and provide for a functional, free and fair multilingual environment across all the components of the university.
[145] Participant 153: is to accommodate, pursue and provide for a functional, free and fair multilingual environment across all the components of the university.
[146] Participant 418: THE NWU POLICY IS ABOUT accommodate, pursue and provide for a functional, free and fair multilingu
[147] Participant 193: It is a language policy that was adopted by the NWU Council in November 2018 to accommodate, pursue and provide for a functional, free, and fair multilingual environment across all the components of the university.
[148] Participant 419: The NWU's policy is to accommodate, pursue and provide for a functional, free and fair multilingual environment across all the components of the university
[149] Participant 220: The council of NWU adopted a language policy in November 2018 to accomodate, puruse and provide for a functional, free and fair multilingual environment across all the components of the university.

No one from the interviews copied and pasted. The same sentence was taken from the NWU language policy (2022) under policy statement 5.3 which states that "within the parameters of the principle of functional multilingualism, employ English, Setswana, Sesotho and Afrikaans as the University's languages of choice". The document is available online. Another quotation that was taken was:

> In line with the dream to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, the Council of NWU adopted a language policy in November 2018 to accommodate, pursue and provide for a functional, free and fair multilingual environment across all the components of the university (Balfour, 2021).

The participants copied and pasted information readily available on the Internet without analysing it, hence, this exhibited no knowledge of the policy. Other participants had a "little idea" about the policy. These are the participants who for one did not copy and paste but tried to put the description of the policy in their own words but mentioned that there were three languages in the policy of the NWU. The NWU supports four languages which are English, Afrikaans, Setswana and Sesotho. Those that only mentioned three are referring to the NWU-PC, but they used it to describe the NWU language policy. In part, the participants knew most of the languages of the NWU policy, albeit not entirely. Their responses can be seen below:

[150] Participant 12: We have 3 languages that represent the NWU these are languages that the institution include in everything, to advertise and recruit. Setswana is the least used, English and Afrikaans dominate. as such only those two a student can decide that they complete their course of study using.

[151] Participant 37: With classes offered in English, Afrikaans and Setswana, translation will be made available. There are translators for a majority of the classes.

[152] Participant 49: The languages used are English,Afrikaans and the language of the locals which is Setswana.

[153] Participant 299: English & Afrikaans and Setwana

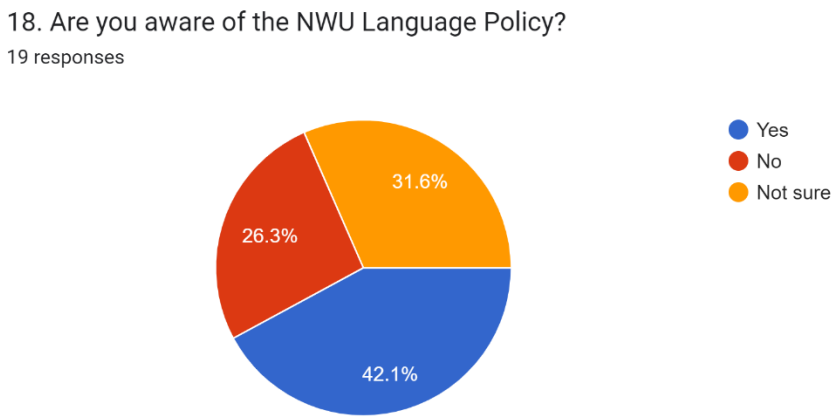
The respondents said the NWU language policy has three languages it recognises or promotes. However, in the responses above, it is apparent that through observation once more, participants have noticed that although there should be other languages promoted, only English and Afrikaans are promoted, and Setswana is hardly promoted.

Some participants summarised in their own words that the policy is multilingual, and some explained that four languages are the languages of the university. Others stated that the NWU promotes functional multilingualism. Below are some of the examples of the data that indicated that these participants knew the NWU's language policy to a greater extent:

> [154] Participant 16: It's a policy implemented to cater to the mutilingual needs of student diversity.
>
> [155] Participant 453: The NWU accommodates and allows the use of multilingual languages throughout its campuses.
>
> [156] Participant 69: Everyone must feel welcome speaking in their languages, and use it to teach, learn, and interact freely.
>
> [157] Participant 79: The policy is there in order to strive to include and promote African languages. This is to ensure that the students feel welcomed and heard.

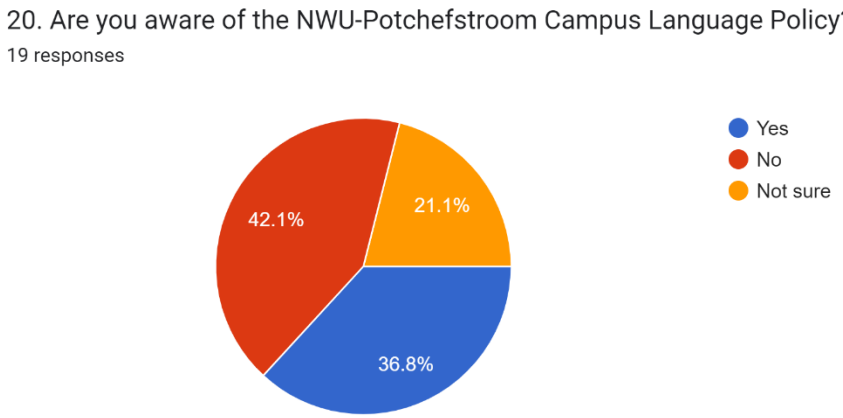
The responses above encapsulate what the NWU language policy is about. The policy is indeed multilingual. Others alluded to the fact that other languages besides English and Afrikaans are encouraged, even though classes are carried out in those two mentioned languages. Others indicated the intention of the policy to promote South African languages and others mentioned the languages of the NWU policy that are explicitly stated are Setswana, Sesotho, English and Afrikaans. Similarly, when participants from the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire were asked about the NWU-PC policy their responses showed that some knew the institutions' policy, and others had no idea. Below is a graph that summarises these responses.

Figure 34: Knowledge of NWU Language policy from the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire



When the 19 participants who took part in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire responded, 26.3% were not aware of the policy at all, 31.6% were not sure about the policy, and 42.1% said that they were aware of the policy. Unlike the NWU language policy which aims to promote four official languages and other languages through functional multilingualism, the NWU-PC is tasked with promoting Afrikaans, English, and Setswana as languages of the NWU-PC. As such, one is most likely to see these three languages visible on the NWU-PC. Participants who took part in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire and the Individual Interviews were asked whether they were aware of the NWU-PC policy and here are the responses below:

Figure 35: Awareness of the NWU-PC Language Policy



The 19 participants' responses showed that 42.1% of the participants were unaware of the NWU-PC language policy and that 36.8% were aware of it, while 21.1% were not sure. These are participants who took part in the consultations using languages from their multilingual repertoires during consultations. Some of them went on to participate in the interviews and the focus group discussion.

When the same participants were asked in the Individual Interviews if the university is implementing its policy, of the 10 participants interviewed, 6 participants who answered this question said 'no' while only 1 said 'yes', arguing that some lecturers are practising the policy. Participant 4 stated that:

> [158] Participant 4: For learner and staff. Of which I believe, it's just in paper.
> Interviewer: **Ga e bereke** [*It is not working*]?
> Participant 4: No. It's not working.
>
> [159] Interviewer: No comment? I reserve the right to keep quiet. Okay. How successful though do you think that the NWU is implementing its policy **e ntseng ke bua ka yone ya di** [*that I have*

been talking about of the] four languages? Vaal, Mafikeng, and Potch or, especially this campus, Setswana Sesotho, er, I mean Setswana English and Afrikaans?
Participant 6: Honestly **nna** [*me*] I don't see that happening.

Participant 4 said that the policy is just on paper and it is not working. Other participants also strongly stated that the NWU is not implemnting its language policy. Participant 6 said she does not see that happening, a sentiment that was also expressed by participant 1 who further stressed that the NWU-PC policy lacked implementation with respect to the development and use of Setswana on campus. Participanst 9 in excerpt 160 below stated that some lecturers are implementing the NWU language policy when she stated that:

[160] Participant 9: Some lecturers are actually doing it.
Interviewer**: Go a flickara** [*It is flickering*] somewhere.
Participant 9: There's a spark somewhere.

Participant 5 states that:

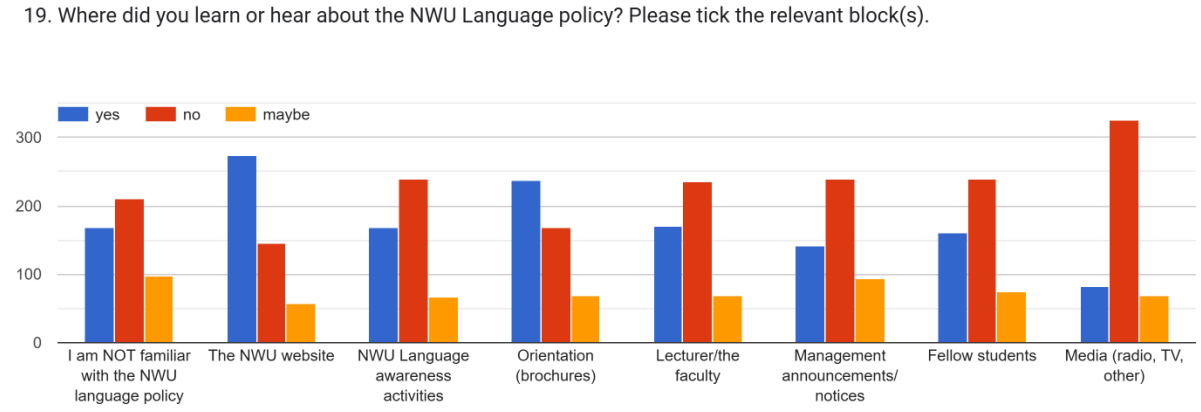
[161]Participant 5: … but **re etse** [*we do the*] … there was this other something that the lecturer **o e entse, gore** [*that the lecturer did, that*] this week, **ke teacha ka setswa… a re eng** [*I teach through … what dis he/she say*]? I mean English …
Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Participant 5: … Then the Afrikaans, **ba tsaya ditranslator** [*they took the translators*] .
Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Participant 5: Next week, **o teacha ka** [*he/she teaches in*] Afrikaans. The English …
Interviewer: **Ba tsaya** [*They took*] …
Participant 5: … **re tsaya ditranslator** [*we take the translators*].
Interviewer: Oh.
Participant 5: So, it was …
Interviewer: It was nice.
Participant 5: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Interviewer: And it felt … people felt like they are all accommodated.
Participant 5: And **wa bona** [*you see*] even if you you are not comfortable **ka di** [*with the*] earphones …
Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Participant 5: … **tseo** [*those ones*] …
Interviewer: **Mm, mm, mm** [*Yes, yes, yes*].
Participant 5: … You can come next week cos **ke** [*it is*] same content **ka** [*in*] English.
Interviewer: Mhm. So, even if **re re ka** [*we say in*] Setswana, there must be translation into the other languages.
Participant 5: Yes.

So, generally from the data collected as part of the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, and the Individual Interviews, participants were not aware of the policy, and most could not explain it. Others who were very confident that they knew about it ended up showing that they partially knew the policy or did not know it at all. Some as has been reported copied and pasted the policy and some admitted that they never knew that there was a policy before, and others said they will go on to learn about it after the questionnaire.

Moreover, when it came to interviews, most participants did not know the policy and was made aware by the interview. This resulted in them knowing the policy by the time a few of them participated in the focus group discussions.

Participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire were asked where they learned about the policy and the graph below illustrates their responses. The findings on where they learned about the policy are presented in an integrated graph below:

Figure 36: How participants learned or heard about the NWU language policy



The participants who said they knew about the policy attributed that to the NWU Website which mostly writes things in the four languages of the University and gives the reader the option of choosing how they will consume the content from the four NWU languages. The other prominent source of learning about the NWU language policy was from orientation at the beginning of the year. When asked where they learned about the language policy of the NWU, those participants that knew about the policy claimed to have learned about it from the NWU website. Some said that they learned it through first year orientation at the beginning of the year, and some said that they learned from their lecturer/faculty, fellow students and NWU language awareness activities. Very few participants claimed to have learned about it from the media. Again, a considerable number of the participants said that they were not familiar with policy.

Orientation at the beginning of the year seems to contribute a lot in making students aware of the language policy of the NWU as Participant 25 from the Individual Interviews explained that he learned of the policy during orientation week. His response was:

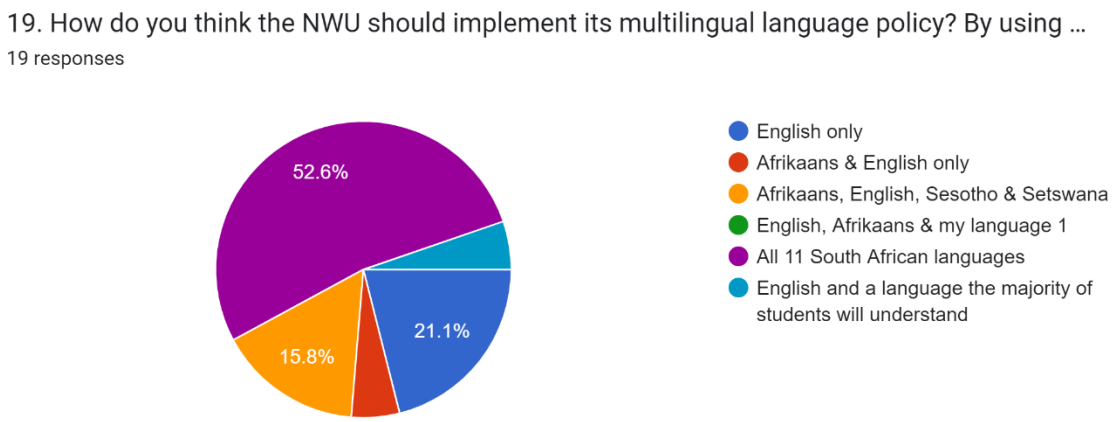
> [162] Participant 25: Oh, **ee, ee. Ke ile ka e utlwa … ke ne ke se** [yes, yes. I did hear it … I was not] sure. **Ke e utlwile mo anthemeng e** … **e** [*I heard it in this anthem that … that*] …
> Interviewer: Oh, **mo pineng** [*on the song*]?
> Participant 25: **Ee, mo pineng ya bone gore ai, di** [Yes, on their song that no, they are] four. **Go raya gore dilanguage di** [*It means that the languages are*] four.
> Interviewer: I can't. Serious?

Participant 25: **Ee, ke utlwile moo** [*Yes, I heard it there*].
Interviewer: Serious?
Participant 25: **Wa gopola ka** [*You remember during*] ...
Interviewer: **Nna ka re o bone** [*I thought you saw*] somewhere.
Participant 25: **Aa** [*No*].
Interviewer: Officially so. **Ee** [*Yes*].
Participant 25: **Yone gopola itse mafirst year**, **kana ne ba di bitsang di die ding tsele** [*It, remember when the first years, what were they calling those things*] like, **mo ba re rutang** [*where they teach us*]?
Interviewer: **Diorientatione** [*The orientations*]?
Participant 25: **Ee, diorientatione** [*Yes, the orientations*].
Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*].
Participant 25: Since **ke e bona daar ba e, ba re ruta yona sentle, ke be ke re** [*I saw it there, they were teaching it precisely, then I said*] oh...
Interviewer: **Ba ruta antheme** [*They were teaching the anthem*]?
Participant 25: **Ee, ba ruta anthemenyana eo. Ja, ke e shebile gore dilanguage di** [*Yes, they were teaching that little anthem. Yes, I was looking at it that the languages are*] four. **Ke ga ke lemoga gore, go raya gore mo, go dirisiwa dilanguage tse** [*That is when I realized that, it means that here, they use languages that are*] four but **ko diquestion pheipheng, ke tse pedi fela. Ke sekgowa le, le, le** [*at the question papers, it is just two. It is English and, and, and*] ...
Participant 24: **Le Afrikaanse** [*And Afrikaans*].
Participant 25: ... **le** [*and*] Afrikaans.

Participant 25 expressed that he learned the NWU language policy had four languages from the university anthem. When asked where he learned about the NWU language policy, it reminded him of learning to sing the NWU anthem during orientation and he noted the anthem used four languages. The response of this participant shows the importance of activities such as student orientation and the value of practicing multilingualism by using the languages of the institution in the official anthem of the university to make students aware of policies. Similar activities conducted during orientation has the potential to extend on the work that is done during orientation, also including senior students and staff. In contrast, when participants were asked if they knew about language awareness week/activities that take place on all campuses of the NWU annually, seven of the participants said that they did not know of these language awareness activities organised by the University, and one of the participants said that they knew about language awareness week but did not understand what it was all about: "... there was a board, and then I went to go Google exactly what is the language awareness week" said the participant.

Item 19 of the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire asked students to respond to the question of how the NWU should implement its multilingual language policy. The item included a list of close-ended possible responses that the participants could select. The responses are presented in the graph below.

Figure 37: How participants think the NWU should implement its language policy (item 19, Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire)



Of the participants who answered, 52% of the participants who completed the individual questionnaire said they think all 11 official languages of South Africa should be used as languages of teaching and learning at the NWU. A quarter (25%) of the participants stated that the NWU should use English only and 15.8% of the participants said that the University should use Afrikaans, English, Sesotho and Setswana (which are the official languages of the institution).

When it comes to functional multilingualism, most participants did not know it but when it was explained to them, they all agreed that it was a good idea and should be implemented. In the focus group however, Participants 16 & 4 lamented that it would be impossible for NWU to maintain a functional multilingual approach because it was failing at maintaining a language policy with only four languages.

This section presented the participants' knowledge of the NWU policy. The results show that most participants do not know the NWU language policy and what it entails. This section was important to know whether the participants commenting on multilingual language policy implementation knew what the policy advocated for. Their attitudes toward the university policy and multilingual education will be presented below.

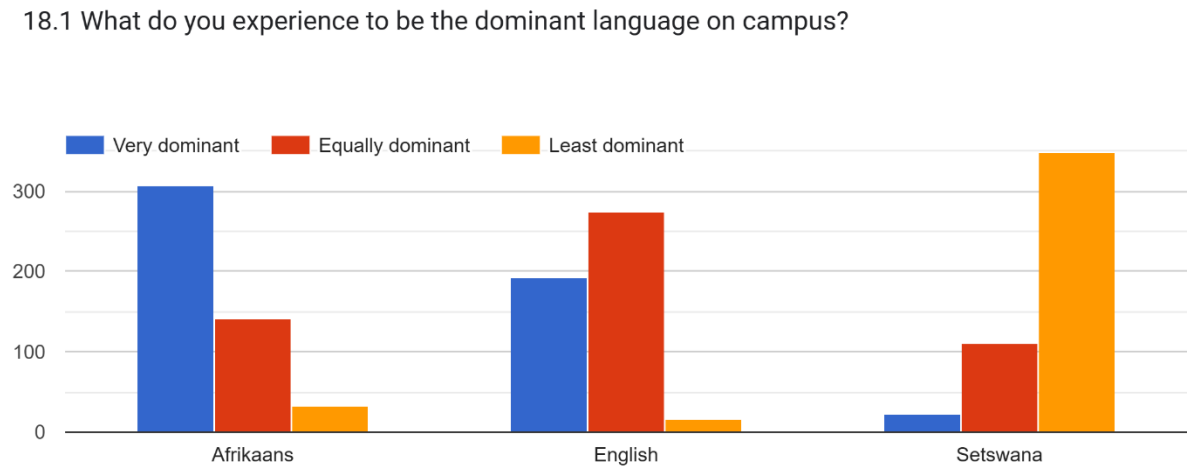
4.3.2. Multilingual education

After having drawn the participants' attention to the language policy of the NWU and the NWU-PC, the investigation in the study advanced to ask further questions to ascertain the participants' attitudes about multilingual education in higher education.

Participants in this study were asked how they felt about the concept of multilingual education by using all the instruments with which the four data sets were gathered. The discussion in this section will follow the pattern of the different data sets and instruments used. This study sought to firstly investigate participants' knowledge and attitudes towards multilingual education. Having established the following in the findings reported in the chapter so far, the following is known about the nature of the language repertoire context of the participants and the sociolinguistic context of the NWU: 1) The languages mostly spoken at the NWU, especially NWU-PC, are Setswana, Afrikaans, isiZulu, Sesotho, isiXhosa and English. 2) All the participants in the study are multilingual. 3) English is perceived as the most prominent second language and it is perceived as the second strongest language of most of the participants. With this background information in mind and the assumption that participants have by now figured out what the direction of the study is, the issue of multilingualism in higher education is discussed. Participants were asked about how languages are represented and used in the context of NWU-PC and how they can be used even more effectively.

In the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, item 18.1 asked participants to share their experiences of the most dominant language on the NWU-PC:

Figure 38: Perceptions of the participants concerning the "dominance" of languages on the NWU-PC (item 18.1, Language Repertoire Questionnaire)

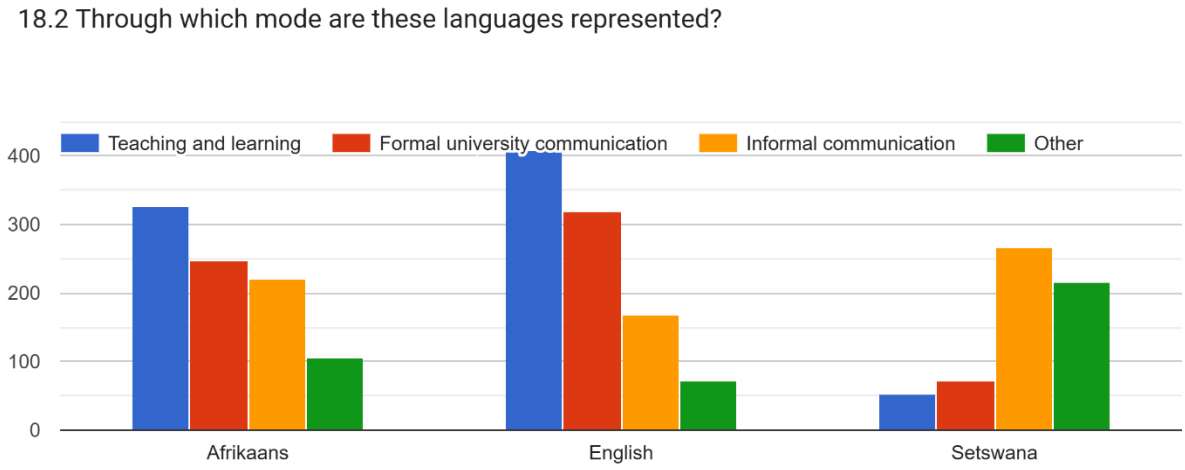


When asked about what they perceive as the dominant language on campus, the majority stated that the dominant language is Afrikaans, followed by English. Setswana was said to be experienced as the least dominant language of all three on campus. A lot of participants also said

that English was equally dominant to Afrikaans. What was most clear from responses to this item was that Setswana was not perceived as a very dominant language on the campus.

In item 18.2 of the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the participants were asked in which domains (modes) of language use the official languages on the NWU-PC were represented in their view:

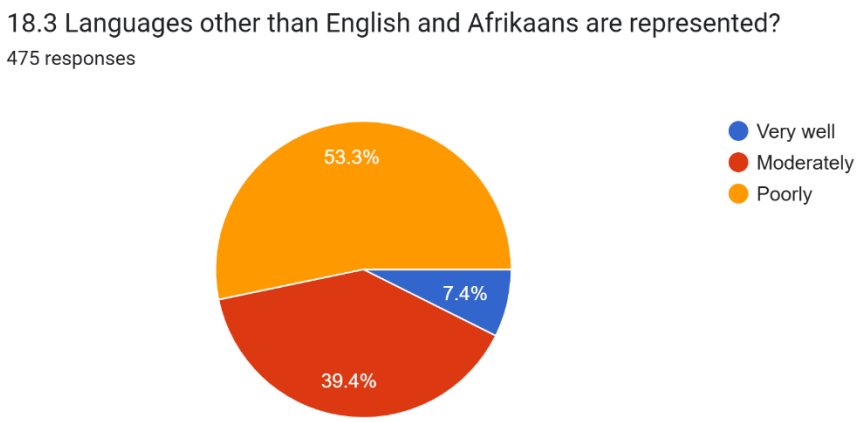
Figure 38: Perceptions concerning the participants' views of the domains of language use of the dominant languages on the NWU-PC (item 18.2. Language Repertoire Questionnaire)



Considering the responses the participants provided in the previous graph; this follow-up question was asked to ascertain in which domain or area of language use the participants see the campus languages represented the most. English and Afrikaans were represented the most in teaching and learning with very little Setswana representation in this domain. In the context of formal university communication, English and Afrikaans were also perceived to be highly represented, again with the perception of very little representation for Setswana. Setswana received a higher representation in informal communication and other contexts of use. Afrikaans also seems to have a significant representation in informal communication on the campus.

With the context of the NWU-PC language distribution and the perception of the prominence of the use of languages in the domains discussed, participants were asked what they thought about the representation of languages other than English and Afrikaans on the Campus. Their responses are reflected on the graph below:

Figure 39: Perceptions of the representation of languages other than English and Afrikaans on the NWU-PC (item 18.3, Language Repertoire Questionnaire)



The majority (53.4%) stated that other languages are poorly represented on NWU-PC. Furthermore, 39.1 % perceived that languages other than English and Afrikaans were represented moderately on campus and only 7.5% believed that languages other than English and Afrikaans were represented well very well on campus.

Participants were asked to elaborate on their answer on the representation of languages other than English and Afrikaans on the NWU-PC. The participants' responses to the open-ended questions were coded in ATLAS.ti and the most prominent responses are presented in the table below:

Table 32: Data on the participants' perception of the representation of languages at the NWU-PC (item 18.3, Language Repertoire Questionnaire)

Code	*Frequency*
Representation of languages besides English & Afrikaans-Not so well	*174*
Representation of languages besides English and Afrikaans-Well	*78*
Representation of languages besides English and Afrikaans-Somewhat well	*73*
Representation of languages besides English and Afrikaans-Not at all	*56*
Representation of languages besides English and Afrikaans-Very well	*49*
Representation of languages besides English and Afrikaans-Unclear	*24*
Representation of languages besides English and Afrikaans-Unrelated to the question	*22*
Representation of languages besides English and Afrikaans-No idea	*13*
Grand Total	*489*

Most of the participants said they felt that languages other than English and Afrikaans are not so well represented on the NWU-PC. Below are some of the participants' responses to describe the lack of representation of other languages on the NWU-PC.

> [163] Participant 465: Not very well, due to the fact that it was a predominant Afrikaanse Uni.
>
> [164] Participant 390: They are not included very well because I have never heard a lecturer teach in Setswana or another language.
>
> [165] Participant 391: they are very poorly included, you never hear someone speak or ask a question in isiZulu or seSotho/ seTswana

The participants expressed that their perceptions of the lack of inclusion of their languages at different levels of the structures of the NWU in the excerpts below.

> [166] Participant 405: Other languages such as Setswana,isiZulu,Tshivenda,Sesotho and others are not represented well,they are infact close to non-existent.
> [167] Participant 9: There are not at all. Lecturers speak in Afrikaans and the majority of students.
> [168] Participant 342: Not at all. Zero
> [169] Participant 361: I think other languages are not represented at all. Setswana itself isn't represented on campus.
> [170] Participant 391: they are very poorly included, you never hear someone speak or ask a question in isiZulu or seSotho/ seTswana

Participants expressed their attitudes towards the lack of representation of languages other than English and Afrikaans at the University, and a few of them said that other languages were excluded and there was no problem with that. Some even went on further to suggest that everything must be in English only; this will be discussed further in a section below. In excerpts 163-170 above, participants expressed that they had not noticed any representation at the level of teaching and learning and other participants said there was no commitment even from lecturers or students to promote or use their languages. Participants mentioned that no one was asking questions in class or teaching or explaining in their language, except for Afrikaans students and lecturers who would use their language often in class. As a result, the perception was that the most represented languages on campus remained English and Afrikaans. Other participants however pointed at the fact that the policy speaks of the promotion of other languages, but formal communication still happens in two languages. Moreover, some participants spoke of the exclusion that comes with not being able to speak the two most dominant languages on Campus, particularly Afrikaans. Furthermore, participants expressed their exclusion and how people do not affiliate with them because of their inability to speak Afrikaans and the exclusion of other languages even on the signage around Campus as some places remain serviced in Afrikaans only, despite the majority of non-Afrikaans speaker on campus.

Even though most participants perceived that languages other than English and Afrikaans were not represented well or not at all or experienced a negative view of the representation of other languages, about 49 participants felt that languages other than English and Afrikaans were very well represented. They pointed at different areas and different ways in the University where this representation is visible:

> [171] Participant 13: very well, we clearly hear that in our anthem
> [172] Participant 72: They are included very well as we are put in a variety of groups and they are different societies for each culture
> [173] Participant 153: very well because they stated that access to languages must be developed therefore it means that they want to increases the student access and support access by providing with the translation of study materials and interpreting in time and off time

Participants pointed to different areas where languages other than English and Afrikaans are used at the NWU-PC. Some stated that it happened in class, others said they perceived the use of more languages in things like the NWU anthem and others mentioned the visibility of the languages. Thus, responses of the participants to the relevant items in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire indicate that they seemed aware of language representation at the NWU. Participants expressed that there was a lack of prevalence of Black South African languages in the representation of the NWU languages on NWU-PC. With the awareness of the participants having been detailed above, the participants' attitudes on the use of multilingualism at institutions of higher education were examined. The graph below presents the participants' views about the responsibility of the NWU to implement multilingual education.

Figure 40: Participants' thoughts concerning whether NWU has a responsibility towards multilingual education in South Africa

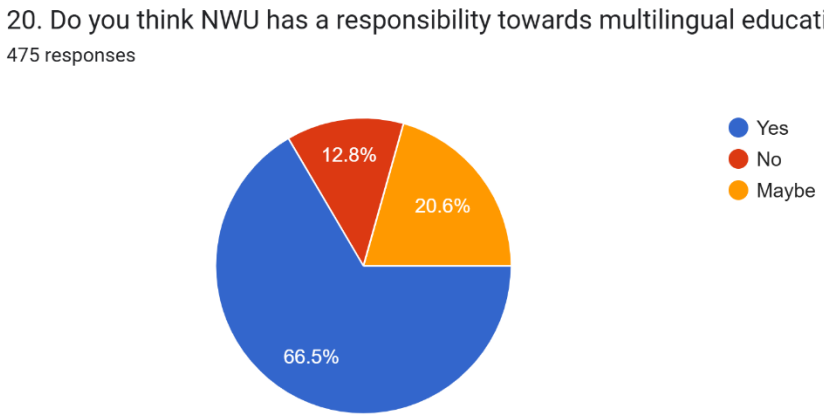


Figure 40 above shows that most participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire thought that the NWU had a responsibility towards multilingual education. A smaller percentage thought that the University 'maybe' had a responsibility and an even smaller number of participants though that the University had no responsibility towards the multilingual education. This an interesting finding because the NWU has committed itself to multilingual education through its language policy.

As shown elsewhere in this chapter under 4.2.1. in Figure 25 participants express that if the NWU was to implement multilingualism in some domains, they would make use of those available multilingual interventions such as consultations, study materials and tutoring to name a few. Participants believe that languages other than English could be used in all contexts included in item 26 of the Language Repertoire Questionnaire. Consultations with lecturers received the highest score indicating that participants believed that more languages could be used when they consult with their lecturers. This is an important finding because this group of participants did not participate in the consultation part of the study. The participants' view that the use of other languages during consultation sessions with their lecturers is therefore a strong and detached indication that this domain is probably an ideal one for the implementation of Black South African languages at the NWU-PC. Other activities that participants indicate they believe it would be useful to use more languages include tutors/supplementary instructors, interpretation, extra lessons by lecturers and instructions and lessons. Using more languages to create notes by lecturers received the lowest scores by participants, although a sizable portion of the participants still indicated that they believed more languages could be used to generate notes by lectures.

In a related item (number 27 on the Language Repertoire Questionnaire), participants were asked if they would like to receive more multilingual material in specific contexts.

Figure 41: Participants' perceptions about the desire to receive more multilingual materials in specific contexts (item 27, Language Repertoire questionnaire)

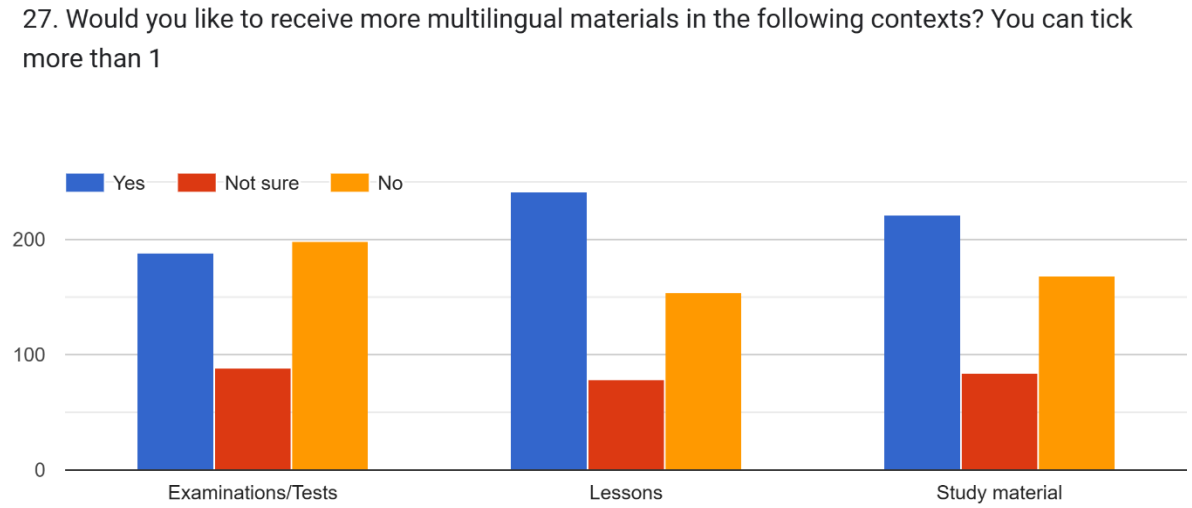


Figure 41 above shows that participants preferred to receive additional materials in lessons and study materials, while fewer believed additional materials would be useful for examinations and tests. Therefore, of the 475 participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire less than half were to an extent, welcoming of the idea of receiving multilingual materials in the contexts of lessons, study material and examination/tests respectively.

Item 22 on the Language Repertoire Questionnaire inquired about the perceptions of the participants about the spaces or activities where they perceive multilingualism that goes beyond the use of English and Afrikaans on the NWU-PC. Participants were asked the following question: Where do you often/ normally see the multilingual representation of other languages than English and Afrikaans on Potchefstroom Campus?

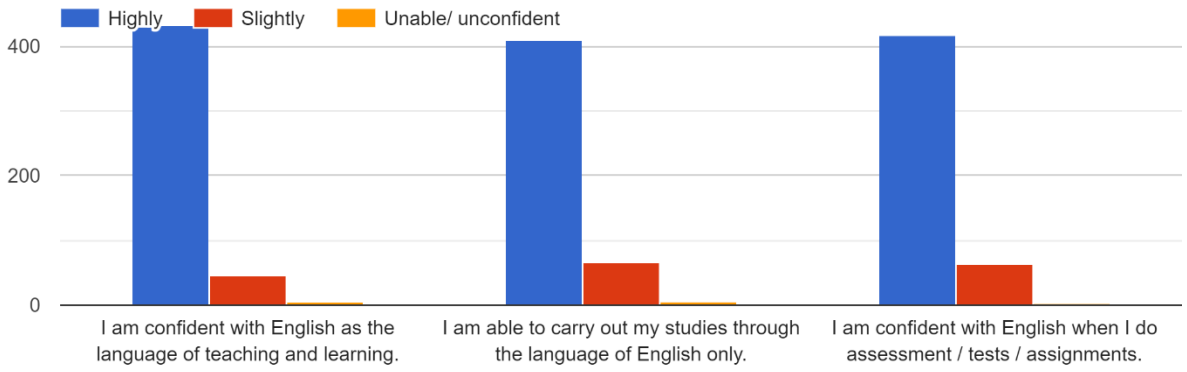
Table 33: Participants' perceptions of domains or contexts or activities where they perceive multilingual representation at the NWU-PC (item 22, Language Repertoire Questionnaire)

ACTIVITY	*Mostly*	*Sometimes*	*Never*
During teaching and learning	*85*	*132*	*258*
Assessment (e.g. assignment instructions, tests, exam papers)	*91*	*85*	*299*
On signs and boards	*217*	*185*	*73*
Amongst people in informal conversations	*355*	*141*	*19*
Amongst people in formal settings	*77*	*217*	*181*
Official university communication (eFundi, NWU website, emails etc.)	*115*	*128*	*232*
Non-academic contexts such as residence, sports and so forth	*174*	*183*	*118*
Other	*105*	*135*	*235*

The domain or activity where participants perceive multilingualism in other languages other than English and Afrikaans most prominently on the NWU-PC, is in social interaction between people. That is where the participants witnessed multilingualism most prominently. This was followed by signage around campus and non-academic events. In the view of the participants, multilingualism was not represented in assessment, teaching and learning, official university communication, and other events and spaces. When it comes to perceptions of multilingualism that goes beyond English and Afrikaans some of the time, the participants believe that it happened a lot amongst people in informal conversations. The data also shows that the participants perceive advanced multilingualism as something that happened mostly outside of the classroom on signs and in non-academic settings. According to the perceptions of the participants in this study, multilingualism on the NWU-PC remains informal and social rather than educational and formal.

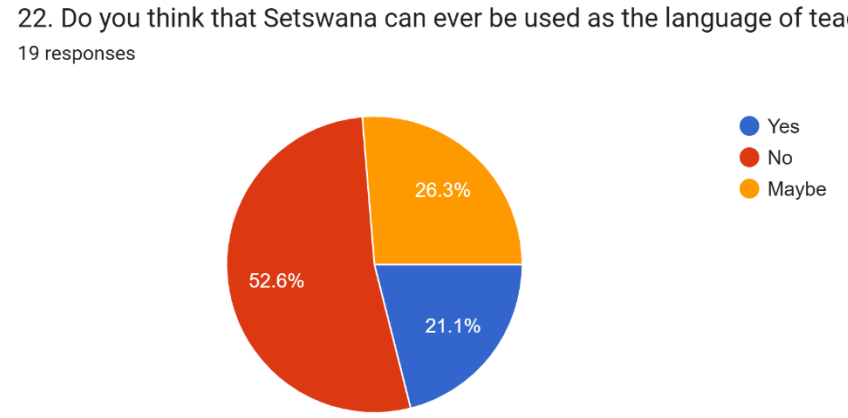
The participants' perceptions about their confidence in using English in the academic domain was assessed in item 25 of the Language Repertoire Questionnaire.

Figure 42: Participants' perceptions of the level of proficiency in using English for Teaching and learning (item 25, Language Repertoire Questionnaire)



Considering that the study was aimed at participants who were enrolled for an Academic Literacy module offered through the medium of English, most participants were confident about using English. No participant claimed to be unable to carry out teaching and learning tasks in English, and a very small percentage said that they were slightly able to perform teaching and learning tasks in English. One always needs to interpret perception data about language proficiency with caution as it does not present information about the real levels of proficiency of the participants.

Figure 43: Participants' opinions about whether Setswana alone can be used for teaching and learning (item 22, Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire)



When asked if they thought that Setswana could be used as the alone as LoTL, the majority 52.6% (or 10 participants) said no, 26.3% said maybe and 21.1% (or 4 participants) said yes in figure 43

above. A closer analysis of the participant's responses to this item indicated that, while most speakers in the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire data (8 participants) were self-identified Setswana first language speakers, only one participant believed it could be used as the sole language of teaching and learning.

When it comes to knowledge about the policy of NWU, most participants did not know about the policy. The question was asked to see if participants knew about the policy and if they would then advocate multilingual education because of this knowledge. Most participants attended schools where they used other languages together with English from as early as primary school into secondary school. These are the same students who now use their languages alongside English to consult as evidenced in this study. Participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire advocated for English only more than the other options given. Participants in the Individual Language Repertoire were more welcome to the idea of using other languages for teaching and learning.

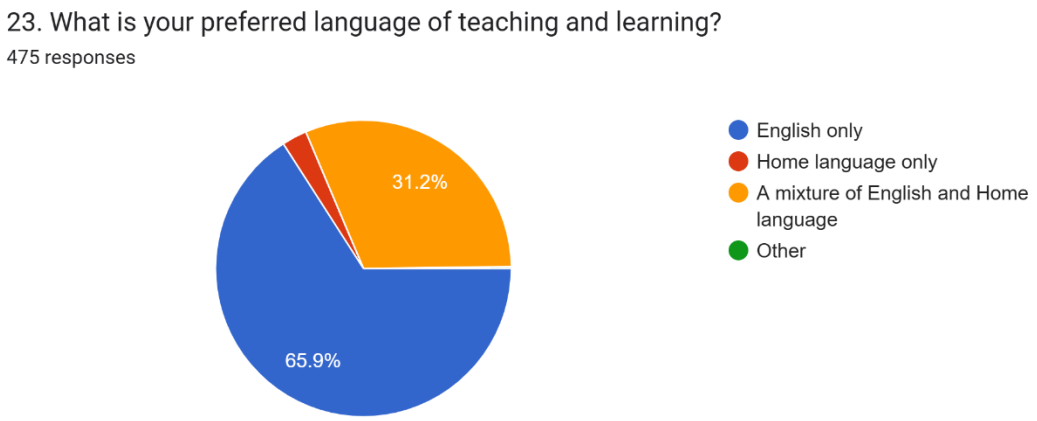
4.3.3 Language attitudes

In this section, findings related to the language attitudes of the participants will be presented. This section analyses the attitudes held by students with regards to different languagesSepedi and Sesotho.

4.3.3.1 Preference - English only

There are several instances where the participants in the study indicate an overt preference for an English-only language policy at the NWU-PC. Participants feel that the University should use English only as a mode of teaching and learning. A prominent theme that emerged from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire is that English is the language that the majority understand.

Figure 44: Perceptions of the preferred language of teaching (item 23, Language Repertoire Questionnaire)



As presented in Figure 44 above, most participants who responded to item 23 of the Language Repertoire Questionnaire believed that their preferred language for teaching and learning should be English only. A total of 31.2% of the participants stated that they prefer a mixture of languages whereby they use English and the home language for teaching and learning, but 2.7% (13) of the participants preferred using the home language only for teaching and learning. Most of the participants who indicated that they preferred to use their 'home language only' as LoTL were Afrikaans home language speakers and very few participants chose Black South African languages only as their preferred LoTL.

From the Individual Interview data, the theme that emerged (as illustrated by excerpt 174 below) is that the implementation of multilingualism in teaching and learning would be time consuming:

> [174] Participant 5: … but **gape ya go nna le, le impacte … ga ke itse maan. Gape ga e tle go ba sharpo** [*again it is going to have an, an impact … I do not know man. Again, it is not going to be right*].
> Interviewer: Mhm.
> Participant 5: Imagine **nou jaana re na le, a ke re** [*right now we have, let me say*] the whites, **ba thene mo klaseng** [*they are ten in the class*] …
> Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 5: … **re bua** [*we speak*] Setswana. …
> Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 5: … the time **re switchetsa ko Englisheng** [*we switch to English*], time.
> Interviewer: Mhm.
> Participant 5: So, we won't have time …
> Interviewer: It is going to be time consuming.
> Participant 5: … it's better, it's better … exactly. It's better to stick **mo** [*to*] language of instruction …
> Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
> Participant 5: … whereby **re tlhaloganya ba botlhe** [*we all understand*].

While participant 5 argues that the use of mulitlingual education, particularly in class will be time consuming, Participant 16 concurs with Participant 5 when that multilingual education will be time conuming.

> [175] Interviewer: So, **ga o batle Setswana ko klaseng le Afrikaanse. O batla** [*you do not want Setswana at class and Afrikaans. You want*] English only?
> Participant 16: **Ja** [*Yes*]. Setswana **sa go etsa** [*is going to*] ...
> Interviewer: … **sa go re deleiya** [*it is going to delay us*].
> Participant 16: **Wa bona. Tlampe o bue** [*You see. You must speak*] Setswana; **ba bangwe ga ba utlwe** [*others do not hear*] Setswana.
> Interviewer: **Ba translaite** [*They should translate*].
> Participant 16: **Wa bona. Ya go re jesa ka nako** [*You see. It is going to make us run out of time*].
> Interviewer: Okay. So, that's why **ke botsa gore** [*I ask that*], so should we have like a division. **Re re** [*We say*] formal things, formal things like **diklase** [*classes*] …
> Participant 16: English.
> Interviewer: … English. And then informal things like …

The responses reported in this section are an indication of negative attitudes towards the use of languages other than English (and to a small extent Afrikaans) in the teaching and learning context at the NWU-PC.

4.3.3.2 Get rid of Afrikaans and the headsets

Many of the participants implicitly stated that they would like Afrikaans to be completely removed from their teaching and learning. These are mostly participants who have lecturers who teach in Afrikaans and where simultaneous interpretation into English is used to make the class accessible to all students. The participants from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire were very vocal about this aspect and this theme emerged constantly across the data sets even when participants were never asked a particular question about their attitudes towards interpretation and the use of headsets. As a result of classes in Afrikaans being interpreted into English, participants expressed their frustrations with wearing headsets during class. They bemoaned this experience as demeaning and as an indicator of unequal power relations in class, using words that described experiences of superiority and inferiority between the students fuelled by this classroom practice. From the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire participants said the following:

> [176] Participant 2: That the headsets that are used for English-speaking students should just stop. English should be a language medium for everyone and in class most of the English-speaking people do not understand something or feel excluded in the class.

> [177] Participant 20: Bring about diversity, equality, fairness and eradicate superiority and inferiority energies in all spaces, inside and outside lecture rooms/halls. Stop offering earphones for non-Afrikaans-speaking students in lecture rooms, as that vividly displays inequality. Teach ALL the students in ENGLISH only, and by these means, the aforementioned modes of improvement will to some extent, be fulfilled.

From the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, participants said the following regarding headsets:

> [178] Participant 19: Most classes/lessons are given in Afrikaans and [students who have English as LoTL] have to make use of interpretation services. This sometimes is much of an inconvenience as you would ask a question in English and the lecturer will reply in Afrikaans and you would have to get answer from the interpretation service, of which you sometimes do not get the gist of the answer. It would be ideal and I believe fair, for the classes to alternate languages, in the sense that, if the class was presented in Afrikaans, it should be presented in English during the next class and the Afrikaans speaking students also make use of the interpretation services.

> [179] Participant 447: Let me start by saying that at NWU we have the best lectures and good facilities. If lesson can be in English and the translation in afrikaans and setswana my performance and experience would be better. I drag my self to class every time that I knwo I will have to use those painful headsets for an hour and a half, listening to someone else translating what the lecture is saying. While Afrikaans speaking students are 100% fully included in the lesson. It is not fair at all there are 11 official languages and it just shows and proves that the Afrikaans speaking Lectures have a privilege of teaching in their own mother tongue and some students benefit from that. I have been to other universities such as the university of Venda and no lecture conducts lessons in Tshivenda and the university of Zulu land, lectures are offered in English. I believe that people who are not proficient in Afrikaans are not given a chance to even participate in class as the lecture will ask questions and in most cases the questions are clear to Afrikaans speaking students and not everyone.

Participants expressed real frustration with wearing headsets during lessons that are interpreted from Afrikaans into English. They argue that it reinforces structural inequalities and stereotypes of inferiority and superiority amongst students and that the headsets are uncomfortable or cause pain to people who wear them for longer. As a result, they argue for English-only classes or a different approach whereby classes are even interpreted from Setswana and English to Afrikaans.

4.3.3.3 Positive Language Attitudes

In as much as participants expressed negative attitudes towards multilingualism and some of the current multilingual teaching and learning strategies practiced at the NWU-PC (see 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2. above), also expressed positive attitudes. Most of the positive attitudes can be seen in the examples below and will be elaborated on.

Item 14 on the Language Repertoire Questionnaire asked the participants if they thought that NWU has a responsibility towards multilingual education in South Africa and many of the participants responded ‘yes’. They were thus asked to elaborate on their answers in Item 15 of the questionnaire and below is a table that summarises their responses.

Table 34: Frequency of codes related to positive attitudes towards multilingual education

Codes that indicated positive attitudes towards multilingualism (from item 15, Language Repertoires Questionnaire)	*Total frequencies*
For diversity and inclusion implementation	*170*
Commitment and responsibility	*55*
Both positive and negative attributes of inclusion	*23*
Equality and access	*22*
Understanding content	*17*
Furthering knowledge, access, educating	*17*
For communication	*13*
Comfort and Freedom	*11*
Superiority/inferiority	*5*
Reasons for including multilingualism-Inclusion, majority	*4*
For teaching and learning	*3*

In Table 34, the most prominent code related to a positive attitude toward multilingual education is linked to diversity, inclusion, equality and access. The second most prominent code is the one that links positive attitudes towards multilingual education to experiences of commitment and responsibility.

The most prominent reason that participants advocated for the inclusion of more Black South African Languages at the NWU-PC is that it will create an inclusive environment and provide evidence that the institution embraces diversity. This view is contingent to the views expressed above by some participants that the use of Afrikaans and English only, particularly Afrikaans, is experienced as exclusionary in nature at the institution. Participants expressed that the use of Afrikaans in the classroom and outside the classroom excludes them and makes them feel like outsiders. Therefore, using other languages will make them feel welcomed and part of the University, a situation that they do not find themselves in at the current moment.

> [180] Participant 17: I think the University has to include it to display diversity
> [181] Participant 35: everything is about Afrikaans and we cannot hear even one word from Afrikaans.
> [182] Participant 37: As a university, students from all over the country are found. It makes no sense to only represent 3 of the 11 official languages
> [183] Participant 61: "1.Yes ,because its a South African University. It has the responsibility to cater to its people and South Africa as a whole has 11 languages and most of the students in the University are from this very country and not only from the North West province.
> 2.The NWU is a higher educational,meaning it accomodates thousands of students from different ethnicity groups,backgrounds and from different provinces in SA.Which is also an institution which trains students both theoretically and practically. Having a language barrier as a student would have great impact on both academic and the adapting progress of the student."

Participants explained they believe that if other languages than English and Afrikaans are included, it will promote inclusivity and encourage the acceptance and optimalisation of diversity. Most of the participants argue that South Africa is a very diverse place and embracing this diversity will foster a healthy environment rather than the current status quo. Participants further state the University should encourage more than just a few languages that are stipulated on their policy but all the languages of South Africa.

Another important attribute of multilingualism that the participants felt it was positive was that the NWU has already committed itself to promoting a language policy that is multilingual, and it is their duty to execute this commitment. Below are some of the comments made by participants regarding this:

> [184] Participant 101: The NWU has committed themselves to having a multilingual, thus making themselves responsible for contributing towards multilingual education in South Africa
> [185] Participant 106: NWU should be able to integrate other languages.
> Because they somehow made it seem like they will offer us that.
> [186] Participant 164: As a higher education institution, it is important to promote the multilingual culture of South Africa, to our future leaders and civilians, that are students now.

Participants believed that it is the responsibility of the NWU to implement the multilingual plan promoting multilingualism. The promotion of multilingualism is thus encouraged by the participants in this regard. This commitment and responsibility together with encouraging diversity and inclusion above are social rather than academic endeavors and they seem to have the highest response rates as reasons why multilingualism should be encouraged. However, the participants who stated the social benefits of inclusion and diversity far supersede those who named commitment and responsibility as the reasons why multilingualism should be encouraged.

Contrariwise, the educational benefits of including Black South African Languages received far fewer mentions in the response to Item 15 of the data gathered from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire. Using South African languages to understand teaching and learning content is listed at number five on the list of reasons participating students gave for inclusion of multilingualism and was not mentioned as frequently as inclusion and diversity which was mentioned the most prominently. It is also not mentioned as often as commitment and responsibility, which is second on the list of the reasons given by students for the implementation and inclusion of multilingualism at the NWU. As an educational benefit, participants advocate for the inclusion of multilingualism for understanding content. Here are some of the explanations given:

[187] Sometimes when things are explained, they aren't as clear as if you'd understand in your own language or one of the other languages you speak and it could be confusing at a time for certain people, so incorporating of other languages ensures that everyone is on the same page because some students say they understand in class even though they not entirely sure but if the same concept could be explained or making of examples in the language they are mostly comfortable with, then it would ensure that every student fully understands on that lecture that day.

[188] It's important to implement other languages for better understanding & responses.

[189] Because some people had their education in other languages than English or Afrikaans. This makes it hard for them to understand other languages as good at university level.

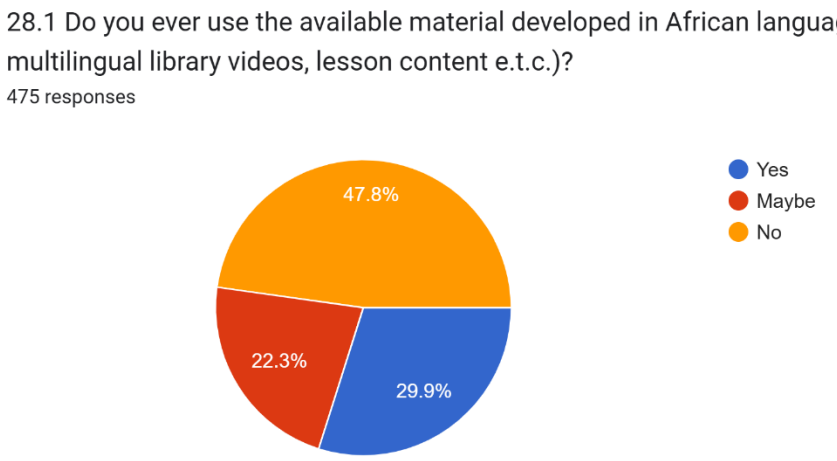
[190] Participant 1: But they made a plan for Afrikaans, so other plans can be made for other languages, just as Afrikaans is a language …
Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*].
Participant 1: It's on the same level as other languages.
Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*]. Should also … other languages can achieve that.
Participant 1: **Ee** [*Yes*].
Interviewer: Alright.
Participant 1: They made words in Afrikaans …

[191] Participant 6: Yeah. If **ba kgona go sebedisa … akere** [*they can use … isn't it*] they say English is the, the universal language?
Interviewer: Mhm.
Participant 6: If **ba kgona go berekisa** [*they can use*] Afrikaans, which is somebody else's home language …
Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*]. It's not universal **yone** [*it*].
Participant 6: … they should use all languages …

Participants argued that it was possible to implement teaching in Setswana or other South African languages because Afrikaans was an example that the status of a language can be promoted and realised if effort and practice are applied. The participants said if Afrikaans was developed in the past to meet a standard of being able to teach even at universities, the same could be done with other languages. This is a positive attitude to hold; that one's language can be developed and used just as other languages have been developed and are now used.

The use of African languages as languages of teaching and learning has also been met with mixed emotions and this is expressed in the attitudes that the participants hold about teaching in these languages. In the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, participants expressed different attitudinal positions regarding the use of Black South African languages being used as languages of teaching and learning.

Figure 45: Participants' views of the usage patterns of material available in African languages (item 28.1, Language Repertoire questionnaire)



The NWU has made available multilingual material created by different faculties and schools to different modules to align with the multilingual repertoires of its students. The NWU has services such as translation and interpretation; particularly in Setswana and Sesotho as languages that they strive to promote as official languages of the NWU (2022). However, when participants were asked if they make use of the available materials, the most participants said 'no' they do not as use their languages, as reported in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire.

Most of the participants (227/475 or 47.8%) said that they did not use available material in African languages often. Those that said that they often use available material in African languages were 29.9% (or 142/475) of the participants while 22.3% (or 106/475) said that they maybe use it. The NWU has undertaken to develop material in African languages in different forms and this material is often made available for students to use. Glossaries are developed in African languages from different faculties (Coetser *et al.*, 2022; NWU Language Directorate Annual Report, 2021). There are multilingual videos created from diverse areas of the NWU such as from teaching and learning, library and information and banners to name a few. For example, in the module Academic Literacy, multilingual videos explain concepts are available under the *Writeit* Project by Prof Tobie van Dyk (Language Directorate annual report, 2021).

In the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, some participants stated that they know about multilingual material, and they use it. They were welcoming of the use of these materials in higher education and some pointed that they had been exposed to such material.

> [192] Interviewer: For example, if we are talking things like **bo di** [*the*] … besides question papers, what else can we think of where we can add the Setswana, **re e dire** [*make it*] … because **mo,**

mo, gate ke eng? Websiteng ya rona ya [*in the, in the, what is it? our website for*] ALDE **ya, ya** [*of, of*] eFundi, **gona le divideo tsa** [*there are videos of*] Setswana. Have you ever listened to one?
Participant 5: Yes. **Tse tsa** [*These ones for*] Referella and stuff, I have.
Interviewer: Really? **Wena e kare wa nshaya shaya** [*It is like you are lying to me*].
Participant 5: **Waitse** [You know] I have mam, **mare** [*but*] it's just that, Setswana **le sone** [*itself*], especially like …
Interviewer: **Sa academiki** [*The academic one*] …
Participant 5: … **se** [*it is*] hard. **Ga re ya** [*When we go*] academically, **re kena** [*we enter*] …
Interviewer: **Se thata** [*It is hard*]!
Participant 5: … **se thata sone. Se tiile. Se popota** [*it is hard. It is strong. It is solid*]!
Interviewer: **Se letlapa** [*It is rocklike*].
Participant: **Ee, se gana ka sone** [*Yes, it refuses with itself*].

Participant 5 above admits to using multilingual material that already exists at the university. She self-report to have listened to *Referella*, an online cartoon animation and explanation of referencing. *Referella* is available on the library side of the NWU, and one can choose to listen to the videos in Setswana, English, Afrikaans or Sesotho. However, she cautions that the level of Setswana in the video can be difficult sometimes because academic Setswana is hard.

Participant 16 also self-reports that he listened to multilingual videos. He says the material must be kept out of class and people can go watch or listen to materials in home languages in their own time.

[193] interviewer: That's true, that's true. **Ne ke, ke botsa** [*I was, was asking*] concerning study materials as well. Uh, maybe to create a video **ke tlhalosa** [*explaining*] concept **ya** [*of*] referencing **ka** [*in*] Setswana. Will you use that?
Participant 16: Jerr … **Go na le engwe e ke e boneng ko, ko** [*There is one that I saw at, at*] eFundi.
Interviewer: Mhm.
Participant 16: **E teng, ya** [*It is there, of*] Setswana.
Interviewer: **Ehee** [*Yes*]! Is it … are those … would that be useful or not? **Ke a e gopola. Ga ke itse gore a ke ya** [*I remember it. I do not know if it is the one of*] ambiguous language or **ke ya eng. Ke a e gopola** [*what is it about. I remember it*].
Participant 16: **Ka bo di … disite tsele tsa bo Plagiarisime kakwa** [*At the … those sites of Plagiarism there*].
Interviewer: **Ehe** [*Yes*], referencing.
Participant 16: **Ja** [*Yes*].
Interviewer: So, is that, would that be help you or does it have to be in English? **Cos le yone** [*Because even it*] it's just you and the material. It's, it's not necessarily the lecturer or other people involved.
Participant 16: **E** [*It is*] extra.
Interviewer: It's extra material for you.
Participant 16: **Mm. Cos ha ka kwa o sa tlhaloganye sentle, o ka pota kakwa.** [*Yes. Because if that side you do not understand better, you can go to that side*].
Interviewer: **Mm** [*Yes*].
Participant 16*:* **Ke yone e tla go thusang** *[It is the one that will help you*] better for **gore** [*that*] Setswana, **o utlwile kae le kae le kae. Ga o ya kakwa** [*you heard where, and where and where. When you go that side*] …

Participant 16 said he also used some multilingual material on plagiarism. He and Participant 5 above, are the two participants who were hesitant about accepting the use of Setswana in class

during lectures citing that it will take time and exclude some students. However, they both admit to using multilingual material. In general, all interviewees said they welcomed the use of multilingual material and would use it. Others said that they would also attend class or write tests that included their languages, and some said they would use help in the form of facilitators and tutors in their home languages.

In the focus group discussion, participant 16 said the following about using multilingual material:

> [194] Interviewer: **Ko** [*At the*] library, **ko eng ga gona** [*at what, there is no*] Setswana? Library **e na le divideo tsa** [*has videos of*] introduction to the library **ka** [*in*] Setswana. **Le etle le di reetse** [*Do you sometimes listen to them*] or **le a itse le gore di a exista** [*do you even know that they exist*]?
> Participant 16: **Aga! Wa bona ba, ba se berekisa** [*Ah! You see that they use it*] like **mo dilo tse di** [*on things that are*] …
> Interviewer: **Tse di jwang** [*That are what*]?
> Participant 16: … **Tse, tse, tse re sa di tseneng. Ba isa Setswana kgakala. Kwa. Ai** [*That, that, that we are not involving ourselves in/we do not go into. They take Setswana far. Over there. No*]!
> Interviewer: **Ga le tsene** [*You do not go into the*] library?

Participant 16 said that sometimes the translation of material is not done strategically, in other words, the NWU does translations of materials that are not used often by students, on topics that they do not care for, such as visiting the library. In general, participants said they would use multilingual materials, but they are often picky about it (referring to difficulties with the varieties of Black South African languages that are used and not using multilingual material on topics that they do not find important). These views indicate the complexity of attitudes towards multilingual education and specific elements included in the implementation of multilingual education at the NWU.

Other participants advocated for a translanguaging approach in the classroom. The response below is on how translanguaging can work in class:

> [195] Participant 6: Yeah. It should be encouraged.
> Interviewer: **Ba dire jang cos ga ba itse** [*What must they do because they do not know*] Setswana?
> Participant 6: Or maybe **a re re** [*let us say*] neh, obviously **mo klaseng** [*in class*] it's not like **batho botlhe ke makgowa** [*all the people are white*].
> Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*]. Indeed, indeed.
> Participant 6: **Gona le motho yo tlhaloganyang akere** [*There is someone who understands right*]?
> Interviewer: **Ee** [*Yes*].
> Participant 6: **Nkebe a re** [*He/she should be saying*] okay guys, **a mme go na le motho o buang** [is there a person who speaks] Setswana, **o tlhaloganyang go re** [*who understands so that*] …
> Interviewer: … **ka reng** [*am saying*].
> Participant 6: … **ke kopa a tlhalosetse motho o mongwe** [*I ask that he/she can explain to this person please*].

Interviewer: Okay, I hear you.
Participant 6: Then **go a tlhaloganyiwa** [*understanding takes place*].

Some participants expressed that they do not mind the use of their languages even in the classroom, such as excerpt 195 above. Participants 14 and 4 also stated that they would not mind being taught in their home languages. Participant 14 says [196] **Ke entse Sepedi ko sekolong** [*I did Sepedi in school*] … and therefore assumes he would understand. Likewise, Participant 4 explained that she learned what she knows through Setswana in high school and thus say that [197] I would write a test in Setswana. However, elsewhere Participant 5 in excerpt 192 says Setswana, especially the academic standard of Setswana, is very difficult and thus learning through it would be a challenge.

When it comes to attitudes towards multilingual education, the attitudes expressed by the participants in this study vary between accepting the use of their African languages and English. Some participants hold negative attitudes towards the multilingual materials developed by the NWU while some express positive attitudes about the materials. From the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, most participants said they want English only for teaching and learning, and this seems to be fuelled by the fact that they do not want Afrikaans. Most of the participants who completed the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire hold positive attitudes towards using African languages in higher education and at the NWU. However, they are picky about what they prefer to receive in other languages. These complex attitudes (being positive and negative about implementing multilingualism at the NWU and in higher education in South Africa) are expressed across the data sets gathered and analysed for this study.

4.4. Summary and conclusions of chapter

In conclusion, this chapter presented the findings of this study through the five data sets. The data presented aimed to show responses to answer the three research questions, namely, what the language repertoire of the participants are, how students used their black South African languages during consultations to deepen understanding and what the students' attitudes towards multilingual education in general and at the NWU are. For the first question, data on the nature of the language repertoire was presented, from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire and the data shows that most of the participants are multilingual and their use and command of the languages in their repertoire varies from one individual to another. There is a concentration of certain languages in the participants' repertoires that could also be referred to as specific

dominant language constellations (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2018). Setswana first language speakers made up the bulk of the participants and this was followed up by the Afrikaans, isiZulu, Sesotho and English respectively. All eleven South African languages that were included in the questionnaire (sign language as the 12th language was not included) were present in the language repertoires of the participants. The participants perceive their ability to use their home languages to be very high. They also perceived their ability to use English high, although their third language was not compatible to their home language and English. Most of the participants used their languages throughout the school system alongside English. Likewise, data from the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire proved that participants in this study were multilingual. Participants reported themselves to be proficient in a range of languages, with some reporting to be proficient in as many as seven languages or as few as two languages. This data set proved the range of the multilingual repertoires of the participants. The findings from the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire were corroborated by the findings from both the interviews data set and the focus group discussion. Generally, the findings presented proves that the participants in the study are multilingual, and this is a common reflection of the South African universities' landscape.

Concerning the data on recorded consultations, participants use their multilingual language repertoire during consultations to make meaning and deepen understanding. Using Bloom's taxonomy to analyse the data on the consultations (section 4.2), participants used their languages to access HOT skills and also to discuss topics that could be viewed as representative of LOT skills. In all the interactions, home languages served as a important tool that can be used to improve student learning. Furthermore, the languages of the participants were used during consultation through translanguaging and transliteration as some of the multilingual teaching pedagogies that have been widely researched. Participants also self-reported that they use their languages to understand. Moreover, participants explained that using their languages is empowering and makes them experience good emotions such as comfort and being heard. This means that they are able to contribute, and their contributions are heard.

Moreover, Chapter 4 presented the findings on the language attitudes of participants in section 4.3. The language attitudes of the participants towards the use of Black South African languages in academia shows that there is a keen interest from participants to use their languages. However, some participants believe that English only as LoTL would be beneficial because it accommodates everyone. Participants also expressed negative attitudes towards the use of Afrikaans as LoTL, particularly at the NWU-PC.

The discussions of these findings and situating them in the context of the existing body of knowledge, as well as the context of providing the NWU with recommendations to strengthen its multilingual language policy, will be presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in Chapter 4 and relates these findings to the available body of knowledge. As previously stated, this research at its core seeks to understand *how participants used their languages during consultations to deepen understanding; and how this insight can be used to improve the implementation of a multilingual language policy at the NWU-PC where Black South African languages are used more effectively in the teaching and learning sphere*. The discussion in Chapter 5 will start to garner aspects of the findings that will be carried forward as recommendations to the NWU-PC to enhance the implementation of its multilingual language policy.

The chapter first discusses the nature of the language repertoire of the participants. This discussion is directly linked to the research question "What is the nature of the language repertoires of students at the NWU-PC, with a focus on the African home languages students?" (See Chapter 1). Findings from all data sets presented in Chapter 4, except for the consultation recordings, provide answers to this question.

This section is followed by a description of how the participants use their languages to deepen understanding in the academic context. This discussion is linked directly to answering research questions 2 and 3 and 4 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2). Lastly, the chapter focuses on the participants' attitudes towards multilingual education, starting from policy to practice and their views on the promotion of previously marginalized South African languages in higher education.

5.2. The nature of the language repertoires of the participants is multilingual

In answering the research question on what the nature of the language repertoires of the participants in this study is, the findings are divided into two themes.

What is the nature of the language repertoires of students at the NWU-PC, with a focus on the African home languages students?

In this study, understanding the nature of the language repertoires of the participants is an important foundational question. It is foundational because it is argued in this thesis that if one understands the nature of the language repertoires of participants well, one could align language

policies in education more effectively with the sociolinguistic realities of students (Coetzee van Rooy, 2018; Madiba & Mabiletja, 2008).

In general, the language repertoires of the participants in the study are multilingual. From the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the results show that the participants are multilingual. The first question regarding the languages of the participants asked what languages they spoke. Reflective of South Africa's multilingual nature, the official languages of South Africa were all present in the findings, albeit at differing degrees. The most prominent languages mentioned by the participants were Setswana, Afrikaans, isiZulu and Sesotho, followed closely by isiXhosa. The NWU 's official languages according to policy (Setswana, Afrikaans and Sesotho) all appear as part of the dominant languages of the participants in this study. isiZulu and isiXhosa have also been reported as present in the campuses of the NWU, especially at the VC and PC (NWU Language Directorate Annual Report, 2021; Siziba, 2024) and thus their presence in the responses come as no surprise.

Most of the participants who completed the question in the third strongest language indicated moderate to very poor competence in their perceived third strongest language. This means that the participants indicated competence in their home languages and English, but very little to no competence in the third languages. These results are akin to research on language constellations (Aronin, 2020; Coetzee-van Rooy, 2018) in the context of South African students where scholars report that multilingual participants know several languages, but they use combinations of these languages in different contexts. This is evident in the data because the participants mentioned they knew several languages to differing degrees. There are languages that participants are very competent in (usually the first and second language), and there are those languages that participants are not very competent in (third strongest languages in the study and beyond). Aronin (2020: 19) states thus "Unlike linguistic repertoire, which embraces all the skills and registers of all the acquired languages, the Dominant Language Constellation includes only the most expedient languages for a person."

Research over time has shown that the majority of South Africans are multilingual and that South African students are no exception (Madiba 2013; Siziba & Maseko, 2023). In the Language Repertoire data and the Individual Language Repertoire data, most of the participants that have English as their second strongest language also claimed that they could speak it well enough or very well. Perceptions of proficiency to speak English as a language is perceived to be lower than perceptions of proficiency in understanding, reading and writing it. This was further established through the individual interviews whereby Participant 5 states that [198] "**re a funda, funda**"

meaning that "*we are learning learning*". This shows the multilingual tapestry of South Africa which is a bonus rather than a hindrance. Participant 5, a first language speaker of Setswana, when speaking of her use of isiXhosa, said it is the dominant language in her area where she lives and it is her additional language. She was learning isiXhosa and could speak it to a certain degree because that was the language of the majority in her neighborhood.

Participant 16 expresses the same sentiment when they say:

> [199] Participant 16: **Ke rata** [*I love*] Sesotho.
> Interviewer: **Wa se rata** [*You love it*], or **wa se dirisa? Wa se bua** [*You use it? Do you speak it*]?
> Participant 16: **Ee, mole le mole** [*Yes, here and there*].

Participant 16 says he speaks Sesotho here and there. Proficiency levels of the many languages that the participants use is different, and they are shown in the examples given here and in chapter 4 (see Table 5-17 in section 4.1.1.). Participants in the study prove to be highly multilingual and this is a great tool that can be used to advance African languages by acknowledging that their speakers are highly proficient in them, but they are highly competent in a few languages.

The Language Repertoire Questionnaire ascertained the languages that the participants perceive as part of their repertoire; as well as self-perceptions about the proficiency levels for different skills in the languages that are included in the participants' repertoire. Like other studies that used the Language Repertoire Questionnaire (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2018), the findings in this study also indicate that the participants perceived their levels of proficiency in the languages included in their repertoires as varied (see Tables 6-17 in Chapter 4). Some speak their first language better than they write them. Some understand their languages better than they speak, read or write them, especially their third strongest languages. Some participants have a first language that is not necessarily their strongest language. They would say Setswana is my first language, but English is perceived as my strongest language.

Similarly, in the interviews participants say that they speak more languages than one as presented in Tables 6- 17 of Chapter 4 that their home languages would be used specifically for communication with friends and family (socially), while English would be considered an academic language. When looking at the results on which language is perceived as the participants' strong language and their second strongest and third strongest language, participants perceived their first languages as their strong languages. In Tables 6, 9, 12, and 14 in Chapter 4, the perception of the participants regarding their home languages is that they are highly competent in their languages. Competence, which included the ability to read, write,

speak, and understand on a five-point Likert scale from very well to very poor, showed that the majority ranked their competency as very well in the home languages (see Tables 6-17 in Chapter 4). The perceived competencies in home languages were attributed to many factors, but the participants in this study acknowledged that academic home language is far more difficult. Home languages were used to support learning in English a lot earlier in school and their prevalence lessened in secondary school. The majority claimed to have Setswana, Afrikaans, Sesotho, and isiZulu as the most spoken languages in that order. The majority of participants indicated that English is perceived as the second strongest language.

The same is true for their perceptions of their proficiency in English. English was chosen as another language the participants spoke in the home. In the same questionnaire, English is reported to be the home language of 9.3% of the participants. English is not the dominant home language of the participants (akin to the Census 2022 findings related to home languages in South Africa). However, English was overwhelmingly present as the perceived second-strongest language of most participants. In Tables, 7, 10, 13 and 16, English is the second strongest language. Van Rooy and Coetzee-van Rooy (2015: 135) argue that in South Africa "matric marks of any sort, language included, is not accepted by all researchers. The degree to which the school language curriculum prepares students adequately for higher education is unclear". Therefore, even though research has consistently shown that students struggle with English as LoTL in schools and at university, students in this study believe that they can use English very well or well enough.

Participants' perceptions of their English proficiency were that they could perform language tasks in English very well. The participants are less confident about their ability to speak English where the majority indicated that they believe that they speak English well enough. Likewise in the individual questionnaire, English was chosen as second language by all participants.

In the individual interviews, most of the participants indicated Black South African Languages as their language 1, but most of them indicated that they could speak other languages at various levels.

The nature of the language repertoires of the participants in this study is therefore multilingual, and participants believed that they could perform the language tasks asked about in the study well in their home languages and English perceived as second strongest language. However, participants were not equally confident about their ability to speak English. Furthermore, the participants indicated that they did not hold high proficiency in some tasks in their third strongest languages.

Multilingual language repertoires and educational experiences

As explained previously about the education system in South Africa (see Chapter 2), most of the learners attend schools where their home languages are used as languages of teaching and learning in primary school until Grade 3. In Grade four, the language of teaching and learning switches to English and the learners continue to learn their home languages as subjects. The data from the study also shows that the most participants in the study are from the where they used their languages alongside English throughout the school system before coming to university. Participants went to schools where their home languages and English were used as media of instruction in their primary schools (see in Chapter 4, Figures 21-22) where a lot of translanguaging, codeswitching and transliteration took place. This was supported by data from the individual interviews where the majority (7/10) of the participants mentioned that they attended high schools where their home languages were used to support their learning in English. South African teachers have found ways of incorporating learner's languages in educational practices such as codeswitching and translanguaging (Msimanga & Lelliot, 2014)

As the participants state that their languages such as Setswana were used to teach the English content in high school. Maluleke (2019) argues that mostly, teachers code-switch when teaching to make the learners understand content and concepts. The reality of the students taught at most universities in South Africa is that democracy by calling for transformation, equity, redress and access to higher education acknowledges students' languages as possible languages of LoTL, but English remains LoTL for these students in most South African universities. As Akooje and Nkomo (2007) agree, before mergers of institutions of higher education, a lot of black students did not enroll in previous Historically White Universities (HWU) and transformation through mergers has allowed them to attend universities in HWUs. The language experiences of the participants when it comes to language in university will be explored below.

The findings in this study are that academic literacy training is important at South African higher education institutions because participants enter universities underprepared and language plays a salient role in the problem of academic underpreparedness of students (Boughey & McKenna, 2016; Hewlett, 1996; Mhlongo, 2014; Sebolai, 2014; Sebolai, 2020). Participants in this study are aware of how language is detrimental to their unpreparedness as they explain that they struggle at university because of their level of English (see for example excerpts 13 – 15 in Chapter 4). Participants expressed that English at university is difficult because they were never adequately prepared. Participant 13 further added that the curriculum at high school should remove some things that he deems unnecessary to prepare them thoroughly for university. Since it has been argued that the high school curriculum in the country does not prepare students for university

there are a lot of factors that are said to be influencing the difficulty of transitioning from high school to universities and a lot of research has looked at language as one of the factors (Nel *et al*., 2009, Setlalentoa, 2013; Spaull & Kotze, 2015). Even though the perception of languages in the previous paragraph show that participants perceived that they could perform language tasks in English well, the reality was that the participants in the study also said that their English was not up to the standard of university.

Considering the nature of the language repertoires of the participants the study notes that the participants are multilingual, and they use their home languages and English in academic domains, particularly in this study the oral literacy is used. Participants also know languages in addition to their home language and English and the perceived proficiency levels of in all their languages as different.

5.3. Consultations to deepen understanding

Advancing from a better understanding of the nature of the multilingual repertoires of the participants discussed above, this section moves on to discuss the findings related to the use of languages during the consultation sessions between the researcher as lecturer and the participants in the study. The main aim of this study is an investigation into how students use their multilingual repertoires to deepen their understanding of academic matters during their consultations with their academic literacy lecturer (also the researcher in this study**).**

Like research on multilingualism in the country, the way students use their multilingual repertoires to make meaning is not a new aspect of research (Carstens, 2012; Shabanza, 2019). What is new is that this study focuses on the way language is used to make meaning during consultation sessions between the lecturer and students. This investigation is therefore conducted in the micro level sphere of language in education policy as explained in Chapter 2 (Hamid, 2019; Spolsky, 2012). There is also the meso level of policy which is at institutional level. The NWU has declared four languages as its official languages and the policy stipulated that intentional plans will be taken to intellectualise Setswana and Sesotho just like Afrikaans and English are intellectual languages at the NWU. The study focuses on describing and analyzing the multilingual participants' use of all the languages in their repertoires to advance their academic knowledge – aligned with the strategy of functional multilingualism as espoused by the NWU language policy. The participants use the languages that work for them in the context that they are in when they come to consult between lecturer and student.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, during consultations participants came to consult by using their language varieties including English when communicating with their lecturer. They chose to use

all the languages in their repertoire and this phenomenon is discussed in this section. In the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, participants were asked about several scenarios wherein they would like to use their home language given an opportunity, and "Consultation" was one of the options. The majority said they would use their languages during consultations in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire when participants were asked in general if they believed that they would like to consult with lecturers using all the languages in their repertoire (see Figure 25). Most of the participants (67.8%) said that they would use their languages during consultation with their lecturers if it were possible to do so.

The second set of data that provided information about the participants' use of languages from their multilingual repertoires during consultation sessions, emanated from the audio-recordings of consultation sessions that were made and analysed in this thesis (see section 4.2 in chapter 4 where these findings are presented). Twenty participants who were audio-recorded during the consultation sessions provided written consent for their recordings to be included in the thesis. During the consultations, a range of topics were discussed by the participants. The discussions ranged from information about assessments to questions about marks, to inquiries about the content of assignments, assessments and submission dates. These types of topics included in the consultation sessions were module related. A second broad theme during the consultations was topics that were not directly related to the module. These included topics such as an interest in the study, students' struggles in other modules, and personal things that were mostly omitted in the transcribed data to honour the ethical arrangements linked to confidentiality and anonymity. The multilingual switches that were present during the consultation sessions were initiated by students or was student led. The researcher /lecturer stuck to a protocol where she made sure that she was not the one who initiated the first switches in the consultation sessions. Once participants initiated switches between the languages in their repertoire, the lecturer also switched to foster a climate in which the students could discuss the issues that they wanted to consult about as effectively as possible. The switches made between languages by the researcher are not analysed in the study. The focus is on the switches made between languages made by the student participants. The analysis and description of the code switches findings during the consultation sessions are reported in section 4.2 in Chapter 4. The findings indicate the prevalence of the multilingual nature of the consultation sessions. In this section, these findings are situated within the context of the existing knowledge about multilingualism in the higher education domain.

As stated in Chapter 1 (see section 1.7), by the time of conducting this research there seemed to be no evidence of studies conducted or reported on the topic of office consultations with

lecturers in a multilingual setting of higher education, particularly in South Africa. If such literature exists, a comparative analysis of the findings would be an interesting avenue of research to consider. Therefore, the findings related to the multilingual nature of the office consultation sessions that is the focus of this study will be situated in the context of related work done about multilingualism in higher education settings in South Africa.

5.3.1. Consultation data: Reasons for multilingualism (or switches between languages) during the consultation sessions

This section addresses the reasons observed by the lecturer for the multilingual conversations (including switches) during the consultation sessions. In general, taking into consideration the findings described in section 4.2.2. in Chapter 4 into account, thinking from the point of view of students, the main reason for the multilingualism during the consultation sessions provided by the students was that they used their languages to understand and to be understood. In other words, multilingual skills were used to: (a) receive input from the lecturer about the academic work that they were consulting about; and (b) provide input (information to their lecturer) about their understanding (or struggles to understand) related to the academic work that they were doing.

5.3.1.1. Reasons for consulting: High Order Thinking (HOT)

In this section, the findings about the reasons for using multilingual conversations during consultation sessions in this study will be divided into two sections regarding 'conceptualization' as HOT and 'structure' as HOT.

One element of the analysis of the consultation data related to inferring a reason for the use of multilingualism (including the switches between languages) in the consultation session. In Table 24 and section 4.2.2 in Chapter 4, the frequencies of reasons for the use of multiple languages during the consultation sessions were reported and discussed. In this section, the findings will be situated within the body of related existing literature about the use of multiple languages during academic conversations or consultation sessions.

As is clear from Table 21 in section 4.2. in Chapter 4, the most prominent reason for coming to consult was to conceptualise the assignment. This was followed by consultation sessions focused on the structuring of the assignment. In the analysis presented in this thesis, these two reasons require higher order thinking (HOT) on Bloom's (1956) taxonomy. The study argues that discussions during the consultation can be classified as HOT when participants consult on the conceptualization of the assignment and the structure of the assignment because these two tasks (although they are just two in number) require cognitive engagement with the task at hand.

On the other hand, the LOT category in the study refers to those consultation discussions where there was less cognitive engagement required in discussing the item. These include discussions about students' marks, submission dates, group dynamics as well as discussions irrelevant to the module or to the university. At the LOT level participants ask simple questions, enquire about dates and marks, and discuss other things that are not cognitively demanding. The second section will focus on the relationship between the use of multilingualism during the consultation sessions in relation to lower order thinking (LOT) skills. Higher order thinking (HOT) skills are defined as "analysing, evaluating, and creating" while LOT skills are "remembering, understanding, and applying" (Ahmad *et al.,* 2015; Makgopa, 2021; Ndlela *et al.,* 2020).

When considering the data on the reasons for coming to consultation, some of the reasons are linked more clearly to HOT and some to LOT. See Table 35 below for the framework created by relating Bloom's taxonomy to the reasons addressed by students during the consultation sessions.

Table 35: Relating the reasons addressed by the consultation participants to Bloom's Taxonomy

Reasons for consultations booked by the participants	***Academic elements addressed during the consultation sessions***	***Nature of thinking skills related to academic elements addressed during the consultation sessions***
Literacy, writing process, comprehension	*Conceptualization* *Structure*	*Higher order thinking*
Academic motivation (or demotivation)	*Submission* *Marks* *Group work*	*Lower order thinking*
Social motivation	*Related reasons* *Unrelated reasons*	*Lower order thinking or academic acclimatization* [5]

Research on multilingualism (or the use of Black South African Languages) in the higher education sector in South Africa indicates that the most prominent reason for using Black South African Languages included in the repertoires of participants is that it can support students with the HOT required at university (Ngcobo *et al*., 2016; van der Walt & Dornbrack, 2011). Ngcobo *et al.* (2016) argue that through translanguaging participants in their study were able to use their

[5] These "social" reasons are not related to thinking skills directly – but are related more directly to academic acclimatization. So these are called "LOT" skills in this framework – but these could also be conceptualised as very important elements in another framework for academic acclimatization, such as in planning, time management and goals (Soares *et al.,* 2023).

isiZulu knowledge to inform their summary writing in English and positive feedback came from participants regarding that. Similarly, Van der Walt and Dornbrack (2011: 96) argue that through a biliteracy approach, Afrikaans students in their study "having had the advantage of being taught through their mother tongue [since] primary and secondary schooling, [had] developed sufficient cognitive academic language to be able to negotiate academic content in another language". They argue that this is clearly in line with Cummins' (2008) BICS/CALP model of literacy development. Participants in this present study may not have had the kind of BICS/CALP language development described above by Van der Valt and Dornbrack (2011) (in the cased of Afrikaans-English bilingual South Africans) because the system they underwent switches from Grade 4 into English as a medium of instruction. This comes from having learned through the home language from grade 1 as mentioned previously. This system can further be complicated by what van Staden (2011) describes as:

> Policy-wise, South African children are supposed to start their learning at school from Grades 1 to 3 in their home language. However, many schools are faced with teaching learners in these Foundation Phase grades already in a language of learning that is different from what is spoken at home (Heugh, 2013). When learners progress to Grade 4, the language of learning changes again, resulting in more than 80% of learners being taught in a further second, or even third language (usually English, a language spoken by less than 10% of the population as their first language). For Grades 1 to 3 learners, 'home language' therefore does not necessarily coincide with 'language of learning'.

Thus, the participants that came to consult, as it has been shown are multilingual at varying degrees and are products of a system that neither helps them develop their CALP to a level required to function well multilingually, nor develops their English adequately to carry out academic tasks solely in English. As such, the participants in this study used all the languages in their repertoire simultaneously to prepare for their assignment.

HOT: Consultation on conceptualisation

Conceptualisation as observed by the researcher is the most prominent reason why the participants in this study came to consult with the lecturer. 'Conceptualisation' in this study refers to the discussions that the participants in this study had with the lecturer to demonstrate their thinking about what they will write about in their assignments. In the consultation sessions, they explained and drew maps or links that demonstrated their conceptualisation of what they will write about (Campbell *et al.*, 1998). For example, since most consultations were on the assignment that had to be submitted, most participants that consulted were explaining how their argument will be framed in relation to the context and in relation to the field of study. The theme of the assignment was misinformation. A participant, for example, from the field of Tourism,

explained that she would talk about misinformation in the tourism industry of South Africa by focusing on how tour places misinform the public about what they have to offer (see excerpt 28 in Chapter 4). In the consultation session, context, argument, and field of study are related in order to assist the participant to conceptualise the assignment or part of the assignment. The participant further used her home language (excerpt 28) to explain some of the things that she meant to clearly articulate and clarify as part of her stance in the assignment. The participant used Black South African Languages in his/her repertoire to explain, infer, and present her thinking about the conceptualization of the assignment.

If conceptualisation is linked to thinking and the expression of thoughts, of importance here is to acknowledge that multilingual brains use all the languages available in one's repertoire to think and express thoughts. If a person is multilingual, thinking in all the languages available in the repertoire helps to express what is on his/her mind. An example of the way an African multilingual repertoire is used is the way the student explains the argument he/she makes using slang through the word '**dihigh high"**. The way the participant uses the words "**high high**" is significant to how it would most likely be used people that she knows. It is as a slang word common in some areas in the country to mean hypertension. The understanding of the term used in the consultation room shows that slang is contextual (Mojela 2002; Robbin, 2020). Other people may not know what one is referring to if they are not familiar with the *lingo* of a place. The participant also expresses the real meaning of the word by saying "**diherpertension**", borrowing from English (converting the English word) and adding a plural noun signifier '**di**' (from Setswana) to the English term. This process of using words from one language and conforming them to the standard of the spoken language is called transliteration and said to be the easiest way in coining and terminology development (Dlamini, 2022; Mphahlele. 2004; Nhongo, 2024; Ramani *et al*., 2007).

Nhongo (2024: 1286) states that:

> Transliteration is a process of changing the word so that it fits to the phonological and morphological habits of an adopting language after adopting the term referring from the source language. Transliteration as a concept of translanguaging can be an important term creation strategy because this intellectualisation process is taking place in a multilingual andragogic context

Transliteration can benefit students and be used to create terminology in the form of dictionaries and glossaries, and the participants in this study used it to their benefit during consultations such as an example with **diherpertention** above. It is a constant feature in the data of recorded consultations whereby participants used it to deepen understanding.

In a study by Nomlomo and Katiya (2018), participants expressed that using glossaries in with terminology in their home languages had huge benefits. The benefits cited were in the cognitive domain and related to enrichment in the sphere of academic content knowledge (Nomlomo & Katiya, 2018: 84). Students' responses seemed to be influenced by their high school backgrounds and the languages they had more exposure to before they joined higher education. Some students indicated that the glossaries were useful for deepening their understanding of concepts in engineering.

Furthermore, in this study, more participants acknowledged that the use of their languages (whether spontaneous or planned) was aimed at facilitating the processes of thinking and expression (see excerpts for examples 109-111 and Table 30). Participant 16, for example, states that he switches spontaneously when he is explaining himself, in the space where there is no English word available, the Setswana fills that gap, and he doesn't even think about it; it happens automatically (see excerpt 111). Participant 4 (individual interview), said, [201] "I think in Setswana and translate it to English". Participants in this study therefore did not struggle to explain the concepts of their assignments but fluently and seamlessly moved between all the languages available in their repertoire to conceptualise, structure, express and explain their assignments. These multilingual conversations seemed easier and more comfortable for the participants to do rather than speaking purely in English.

When conceptualising, participants in the study contextualised and related ideas while getting knowledge to produce an assignment. A more cognitive demanding task for the assignment was merging ideas from different group members while forming a coherent assignment. The participants had to apply what they learned about structure cognitively in the task and produce a written text. In as much as they had to think about an argument, they also had to think about the counterargument. Furthermore, they also had to think about what the idea of the paragraph was. Examples of how students used their languages to achieve these cognitive demands for their assignment are exhibited in excerpts 26-30 in Chapter 4, and they are evidence that indigenous African languages are instrumental in getting students to think academically and apply knowledge. Thinking academically and applying knowledge are aspects of academic literacy that often elude students. This is also on the cognitive side of Bloom's taxonomy where HOT is applied in writing or any academic process. The students in higher education should be allowed to use their language because those languages can help them cognitively. Currently, the tacit knowledge that students bring to university classrooms is marginalized and using indigenous South African languages can help bring this to the fore and aid in students' understanding in the academic context.

In academic literacy, conceptualisation is of utmost importance and students learn that to perform an academic task, they need to understand what needs to be done and how it should be carried out. The bulk of research focusing on reading and writing has shown that Black South African languages can be used to help learners and students deliver the final output aligned with the requirements of the task from school level (Mbambo-Marimirofa *et al*., 2023; Mudzielwana *et al*., 2012; Oyetunji, 2013) up to university level (Hungwe, 2019; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2023; Parkinson *et al.,* 2008). There is a direct link between conceptualisation and understanding, and the quality of conceptualisation and understanding achieved by the participants ultimately affects the quality of the written work they submit for assessment. African languages advance the understanding of students. It is generally accepted that students at a level such as higher education should be able to understand concepts before attempting to apply the concepts in their writing, however, Paxton (2003:7) states that much of the inability to comprehend stems from practices in high school such as memorizing and copying from both the teacher and the learner. This seems to be lacking in the experience of South African students in higher education as it shows that students fail to first understand a task before attempting to answer the question at hand (Millin & Millin, 2014; Paxton, 2003; Zulu, 2005). A lot of students do not understand the instructions in English only, thus supplementing that with instructions in African languages would be helpful. The finding that the participants came to consult to clarify what needs to be done and how it needs to be done in the assignment provides clear evidence that conceptualization and understanding remain pertinent problems for South African students – at least for the participants in this study.

Being able to understand academic knowledge is presented at the second level in Bloom's taxonomy. However, an assignment such as the one that the participants came to consult about was pitched at a higher cognitive level. They had to apply the knowledge they learnt on assignment structure, introduction structure, paragraph structure, referencing and the likes to produce an academic assignment on the topic of misinformation. The cognitive skill of application is on a higher level than understanding on Bloom's taxonomy. In the assignment that the students were preparing to submit, they had to apply their knowledge of an academic essay by demonstrating how they would compose an essay on a topic related to their field of study. However, to get to the application part participants use all the languages in their repertoire during the consultation session to advance their understanding of the topic and the assignment. The participants wanted to understand how the concept or theme fits into the context of an academic essay in their field of study. Once understanding of these important foundational elements of

academic writing has been established, one can move to the level of application and then the higher order thinking required to compile a completed academic essay.

Moreover, the ability to situate their argument or contexualise their arguments by relating it to their field of study (be it natural science or sports science) in the South African context, was problematic for most students (Boughey, 2014; Hurst, 2015). The students did not only switch between languages to understand what they must write in the assignment but also to form a logical argument in their assignments. Purely expressing this in English was problematic for the participants in the consultation sessions and thus, their output in English only were problematic when it came to the elements of conceptualisation and structure of the planned assignment. Considering that this assessment was conceptualised through multilingualism and that it is then presented purely in English remains problematic. The consultation sessions seem to be motivated because the instructions are purely English. Inquiries about the conceptualisation of the assignment occur in multiple languages during the consultation sessions. Yet, the final product is presented in English only. Planning these translanguaging moments (receiving input in one language, using multiple languages to conceptualise the task, using one language when the task is performed) as part of a multilingual pedagogy for an English Academic Literacy module needs to be mediated in further research and this is addressed in Chapter 6.

HOT: Consultation on Structure

When it comes to consulting for structure, again whether in the assignment - which was the topic of most consultations on structure - or in class assessments, Black South African languages were used by the participants in this study. Concerning the structure of the assignment, participants wanted to know how different parts of the assignment fit together and what a certain part is about. Participants asked about the structure of the assignment, particularly the structure of the argument. The assignment required the participants to write an argumentative essay (see Appendix J). Here the relationship between the thesis of the essay, the claim made, the argument, counterargument and source integration had to be drawn. Notably, participants struggled with combining their different ideas in a group to create one idea or argument. The lecturer had asked students who had the same ideas in their first assignment (which was an introductory paragraph only) to stay in one group. However, the complexity of class division made this difficult. For example, one student in Consultation 10 was from a BA Business Management degree background, another one in the same group was from a BA Tourism Management program and the other group members were from Health Science, particularly sports science. Moreover, even when participants were in the same faculty, such as Natural Science, expecting them to write on one argument was problematic. Combining students' ideas, particularly from their first

assignment to create a coherent group assignment was difficult in that the discussions were diverse. People can talk about microbiology but from different standpoints and that problematizes itself in group assignments. This is not a new problem of group work (Khuzwayo, 2018; Ngwenya & Arek-Bawa, 2022), which is part of student-centered constructivist pedagogies and is not the main discussion here. However, it is important to note that these difficulties were discussed using all languages in the repertoire of the participants during the consultation sessions.

The assignment task, namely, to write an argumentative essay, required the participants to go beyond the level of understanding in the taxonomy of Bloom as shown above and extended their thinking skills to that of creating an integrated argumentative essay. Not only did the participants have to understand what a thesis statement or counter argument is, but they also needed to be able to apply that knowledge in formulating their own thesis statements and counter arguments, thereby integrating the input from the group members. This is also one of the areas that most participants seemed to consult the most about as they struggled to conceptualise, which is to form an idea from the theory that they have received about the structure of argumentative essays and the output or assignment that they had to create. Eybers and Paulet (2022: 116) argue that South African university students do not come to university with the "… preparedness to employ the academic literacy practices that are needed for argumentation". Most first year students struggle to easily form a coherent argument, let alone come up with a counterargument and these are some of the elements of the assignment that the participants found most difficult to grapple with and that motivated the reasons to book a consultation appointment with the lecturer (also the researcher in this study).

During the process of conceptualising their arguments for the essay, the participants found or created a structure for the assignment. In the example on tourism given above (see excerpt 28), the participants are asked what the counterargument will be for the fact that there is misinformation in tourism advertising - meaning that in some advertisements, tourist destinations add attractions that they do not have. In the counterargument, the participants said they must report the problem.

'Reporting the problem' as mentioned by Participant 21 can and is probably intended to curb the occurrence of misinformation in the field of tourism and is subject knowledge that the participant is aware of. Thus, this participant knows about her field of study, and the discussion was on how to argue about what she knew. During the discussion, multiple languages are used, showing once more as has been discussed in the case of conceptualisation of the assignment above, that for

multilinguals, the process of organising thoughts and even arguments plays out in a multiplicity of languages. It is the fluidity of the use of languages in a sentence such as that provided by participant 21 in excerpt 28 above that the beauty of multiliteracy is visible as the participant relates knowledge in tourism and advances an argument in more than one language.

The participant uses English and Sesotho conjunctions in one integrated and fluent sentence structure to express the argument structure. The word **gore** [*that*] as used is a Setswana linking device/a conjunction and it serves its purpose well in linking the ideas of the participant. **Diattraction** [*attractions*] also is used to express the gist of the argument; that the misinformation is in saying '*I have these attractions*' when in fact I do not. **Diattraction** as is used here is borrowing whereby Setswana noun clauses[6] **Di** is linked to the word attractions in English, where **Di** symbolizes a plural noun linked to the English word attraction. This process is called transliteration (Dlamini, 2022; Mphahlele. 2004; Nhongo, 2024; Ramani *et al*, 2007), and it occurs so often in the text that it was not coded and is used here to illustrate switching between languages. On the issue of the intellectualization of African languages, some believe that using transliteration is good for coining and terminology development (Nhongo, 2024). This a feature common in most of the consultation data whereby participants randomly and effortlessly take from other languages to create new words; participants take mostly from English and create new words to express themselves. Participants would rather say **diassignment** than **diasaenemente**, not following the grammatical rules of Setswana when borrowing the word from English. The micro-linguistic descriptions of borrowing are beyond the scope of this study. However, for this study, the important element here is that participants use all the languages in their multilingual repertoires to structure their arguments and the examples above are testament to that.

An example of explanations where these multilingual practices are used is given by participant 8 where she explains that doping in sports is a problem, and she links it to her field of study that these practices should be reported to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA):

> [202] Lecturer: What did you say? **Be uthini ngama** [*What were you saying about the*] doping?
> Participant 8: **Kwamadoping kukhona lawa** [*With the doping, there are those that are*] dangerous like **amasupplements, amadoping. Kukhona lawa** [*The supplements, the doping. There are those that are*] **ah** [*uh*], dangerous, like **ama** [*the*] after effects **wakhona a** [*of them are*] too dangerous.
> Lecturer: **Mm** [*Yes*].

[66] This is beyond the scope of this research but is added for emphasis and clarity. The work by researchers like Letlala (2022), Letsholo & Matlhaku (2014) and Selvik (1996) on these topics are available. Further analysis of the use of these multilingual practices during consultations could be conducted in further research in the postdoctoral phase of the study.

> Participant 8: Then **kukhona lawa a … konje awela** [*there are those that are … what do they fall*] under **ini** [*what*]? World **angazi** [*I don't know*] … what, what. **Kukhona lawa** [*There are those that are*] …
> Lecturer: … **ukuthi linga asebenzisa** [*that you can use them*].
> Participant 8: **Ee** [*Yes*].

Participant 8, who was otherwise quiet throughout the discussion when her peers explained themselves in their languages added to the conversation by explaining her argument in isiZulu. She can express herself, and she has an argument on misinformation about doping in athletics. Her expressions though are in a mix of isiZulu and English, in a statement such as "… Then **kukhona lawa a … konje awela** [*there are those that are … what do they fall*] under **ini** [*what*]? World **angazi** [*I don't know*] what, what. **Kukhona lawa** [*There are those that are*] …" (in excerpt 202) above. Interestingly, "World **angazi** [*I don't know*] what, what" is the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and it is the same term used in consultation 6 when the lecturer reads the draft that the participants brought to her. A similar word is used in consultation 10. All the participants that used this term in their argument were sports science students, demonstrating a knowledge of their field and their use of this term provides an example of their ability to reason and connect Academic Literacy and their field of study. The formulation however is in isiZulu that is followed by "**angazi** [*I do not know*] … what what". Her isiZulu is used to express her loss of words, but she does not dwell on it and continues to make her point. In this way, languages are used interchangeably for expression, explaining and arguing.

Eybers and Paulet (2022) assert that students draw from social structures, culture and agency to bring a uniqueness in learning argument structure. In this study, the uniqueness of African languages in grappling with argument structure together with prior knowledge whereby participants 5 and 6 in Consultation 4 talk about "**go dibaita**" translated as "*to debate*" shows the participants employing former practices from language subjects (like debating done in high school) to understand, relay and explain their argument. Prior knowledge and capacity help the participants to formulate the structure of an argument as evidenced in the excerpts in Chapter 4.

The two themes discussed above, i.e. conceptualisation and structure, are the two most prominent academically challenging reasons that motivate the participants to book a consultation session, and these elements (conceptualization and structure of arguments) are by nature an integral part of demonstrating academic literacy abilities. They are the very essence of this study's attempt to show how participants use their languages in consultation to make meaning in an academic literacy context. They draw on the cognitive and metacognitive abilities of students in the writing process. The process of writing itself is not linear but involves brainstorming, planning, questioning, drafting and ultimately coming up with a concept or an idea

to write about. These processes can be considered metacognitive in that they force the student to think about the assignment, what he/she will include, and where. The process is very important and is often given little attention when teaching academic writing, and this takes away the fact that academic writing is a process. Byrd (2011: 65) states that attention must be paid "to accept writing as a process, and – furthermore – writing as an activity that deserves explicit attention in the curriculum and daily lesson planning". Participants coming to the office to consult regarding their assignment is part of the writing process, and the conversations that happen during the consultation process with the participants form an important part of the academic literacy learning process.

Consulting about the structure of arguments and the structure of academic essays also involves cognition in that the participants have to mind-map and draw correlations between concepts in terms of argument structure and create counterarguments and contrasts in their argument while integrating sources to strengthen those arguments made. This process is a mental exercise illustrated by the students via the examples from the analysis of the consultations. They cognitively deploy all available language resources in their repertoire to achieve the results. The consultation sessions provided a display of how Black South African Languages can be used very productively by students, and as explained, the switching between languages or the use of multilingual resources was student-centered, illustrating the agency of the participants as initiators and producers rather than mere receivers of knowledge. Scholars of teaching and learning have argued for the application of a constructivist learning theory (Mogashoa, 2014; Bada & Olusegun, 2015) as a teaching approach that allows a more student-centered approach to literacy teaching (Carstens, 2012; Lea & Street, 2006). Shabanza (2019) worked on how a constructivist theory plays out in discussions at a university in South Africa at the writing centre and found out that South African languages helped in student understanding. Shabanza's scholarly work demonstrates how Black South African Languages are potent tools for literacy and academic development akin to the findings reported in this study.

5.3.1.2. Reasons for consulting: LOT

In addition to the HOT skills discussed above, there are many examples where the consultation participants used multilingual resources to demonstrate LOT skills. This section looks at the other ways participants used their languages for lower-order thinking on the assessment tasks discussed during the consultation sessions. The LOT skills are not related to the cognitive aspects of the assignment (like structure and conceptualization). These took place when participants needed to clarify questions, or yes or no questions, explaining oneself and social expressions. The LOT skills discussed in the section below show how during consultations participants also

used their languages to express those things that are not regarded as cognitively demanding. Multilingual conversations about these elements are not discussed extensively because they are not as prominent in the data, and they do not relate directly to the main research question.

Multilingual conversations related to submission, marks, and group dynamics

Consultations that involved 'submissions' in their discussions were visible in the data in two ways. One was two consultations whereby the participants came to consult about submission and marks. Participant 20 came to consult solely about the submission of the assignment on behalf of the group; what she should include and exclude in the assignment were the basis of the question. This was the shortest of all the consultations because it was straightforward. It is the kind of question one asks after they have completed the assignment, after the HOT skills that include conceptualization and structure have been completed, the assignment written and the only remaining issue was how and what to submit at the end of the process. Participant 3 came to consult concerning how the problematic group dynamics forced her and her peer to submit a group assignment as a pair instead of a group of five. The bulk of the conversation is spent explaining the situation and it is not really about the HOT skills related to the writing of the assignment. The gist of this consultation also focused on the submission. In this narration, multilingualism is employed by the participant to explain herself and to be understood, which is one of the biggest underlying factors students said motivated them to switch between the languages in their repertoires (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.3.1).

Participant 13, unlike the other participants, also came to consult about the summary that they had to submit. The question that drove the conversation was where the students had to go to find the article that they had to summarise and what they had to do with the article. It was more instructional interpretation rather than the rigorous stuff of thinking about an idea and linking it to a structure.

Other participants came to consult regarding their marks, which this study also classified as LOT. Most participants who spoke about marks during consultations needed to know where they could access marks for class assessments. They enquired about how marks were calculated, the Turnitin report and how many marks they needed. When they deployed their multilingual resources in these conversations, they switched between languages to clarify marks. Participant 13 asked in excerpt 63, "**Jaanong diflag** [*Now the flags]*?". This is in reference to the Turnitin report where he had a 30%+ similarity index linked to his introductory paragraph. He asked his questions in Setswana, and used transliteration (Mphahlele, 2004; Nong *et al*., 2002; Baloyi, 2023). The theme of marks and languages showed that once again participants wanted to understand their

marks and therefore seem to use their multilingual resources to ensure that they get the right information. When participants were asked what their reason for using their languages was, they said it was to understand the information related to their marks better. Discussing the topics of marks, submission dates and group dynamics are LOT matters. Even in these LOT matters, participants used their multilingual repertoire to make sure that they understood the information they needed well.

Multilingual conversations related to social matters

Social interaction was one of the most prominent reasons provided by the participants in the study for using the resources in their multilingual repertoires. There is a sizable body of knowledge that indicates that indigenous African languages are used outside school and university classrooms in South Africa (Desai, 2001; Dyers, 2008) and Desai (2001: 325) argues that the aim should be to move African Languages from the home domain to the education domain. From the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, Table 33 shows that the representation of African languages, and 'social interaction' as a domain received the highest frequencies where participants (355/475) said that they saw multilingualism take place. Likewise, in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire (in Figure 23) responses show that participants said they use their languages mostly in informal communication which can be likened to social interactions (13/19). This response was second on the list after 14/19 responses from participants that said that they use the languages in social interaction with friends while on campus. In the interviews, responses repeat the same message (see Chapter 4, excerpt 1).

Therefore, most people on campus are likely to see multilingualism take place in social interactions and hardly in formal teaching settings or lecturers. The NWU has done a lot to encourage the use of African languages in the domain of academic life or the public domain such as through translation into African languages for some modules, the creation of glossaries and word banks, offering interpretation services and video content in African languages for some modules and a lot of other formal activities (NWU Language Directorate annual report, 2022). However, the momentum for the use of multilingualism in formal academic teaching settings is still slow and not that widespread enough.

Sociolinguists have reported the continued use of indigenous African languages for social interaction and the expression of cultural identity over a long period of time in South Africa (Ditsele, 2014a; Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2018). Speaking in their languages made participants excited, open and free (Hurst & Mona, 2017) to discuss a lot of things. Yafele (2021) also reports that participants in his study were excited and "having fun with words" when using translanguaging in

class. During the consultations, this use of language for social interactions includes what the researcher referred to as the discussion of unrelated issues or issues not related to the module or not related to university work (see Chapter 4). Therefore, moving the use of multilingual resources from the private to the public, or from the social to the formal, would be beneficial to the students. In the findings reported in this study, observing the energetic participation of seemingly shy students, like Participant 16, who participated in the conversation when he used his multilingual resources during the consultation to discuss how the social practices of people affect the performance of others during examinations. He adamantly states that before examinations, students go home to undergo rituals to strengthen them for the examination and to talk to the ancestors. As shown in excerpt 42 Participant 16 mentions that … **ijoo, ba kene dibata nou jaana** [*they have entered into basins right now*] to express that people do rituals even relating to school and examinations. This was a non-academic conversation. The finding that indigenous African languages are used on campus for social interaction, but not for teaching and learning and related academic matters, was confirmed in the study from the individual interviews and the focus group discussion. The example from excerpt 42 shows how the social context of spirituality and identity converge with the context of university or examination. It is in this area of social use of language where the decolonization of the academic space is explained by Participant 16. In Chapters 1 and 3 when the paradigm of this research aligned itself with transformation, the transformative nature of the experience of participants' voices is advocated for because this transformation can include voices and perspectives of the marginalised.

Furthermore, participants explained during the interviews and focus group discussions, that they mostly use the Black South African Languages in their multilingual repertoires to communicate outside of class with their families and friends. They pointed out that they hardly use these languages for teaching and learning.

In conclusion, it is clear from the findings that using multilingual resources by the participants during consultations is a good way to express one's knowledge and understanding, and to clarify and clear misunderstandings. The participants who asked about the topic of the submission of assessments during the consultation sessions asked questions such as "when the site will be opened for submission", "what to include when submitting" and "if they could go and submit right away". The aim of these parts of the consultation sessions was for clarity and to avoid misunderstandings related to this important stage of the assessment process. Black South African languages can help clarify and in general assist with the avoidance of misunderstandings. Multilingual conversations during the consultation sessions seemed to be a good way used by participants to discuss matters like time management or project management. These are

elements we try to expose the students to in the academic literacy training in the module, explaining that part of academic literacy is the ability to submit assessments on time, to manage your time well to study and to set goals. These LOT matters (time management, knowledge of submission processes) are important features of student acculturation in academic literacy (Street, 1998; Van Dyk and Van der Poel, 2013). If students fail to complete their assessment on time and to successfully submit their assessment tasks, this puts a strain on the university system and can lead to students failing their studies. The finding that the participants use their multilingual resources to manage these LOT matters well indicates that their repertoires are meaningful in this context as well.

5.3.2. Description of the use of multilingual resources during the consultation sessions

The aim of this section is to situate the findings related to the description of how the multilingual resources of the participants are used during consultation sessions (see section 4.2 of Chapter 4 where the findings are reported) within the context of the related body of knowledge. The nature of the switches between languages (or the deployment of multilingual resources during the consultation sessions) and the function of the switches is discussed in this section. These findings will be related to the existing body of knowledge about the nature and functions of multilingualism in South African higher education where possible.

5.3.2.1. The nature of the languages of the switches (or the deployment of multilingual resources) during the consultation sessions

I borrow the use of the words “multilingual repertoires-in-use” (Prediger & Uribe, 2020) to describe how participants make use of their languages in their repertoire to make meaning during the consultation sessions in this study. This study posits that the consultation data can be considered as naturally occurring data. In other words, the consultation data is regarded as instances of natural speech that occur within the multilingual South African higher education context. This position is undergirded by the observations of the lecturer (researcher) that students deploy their multilingual resources consistently during consultation sessions, and that the participants in the study were made aware of the fact that the consultation sessions are recorded. In other words, the multilingual consultation data reported and analysed in this study are consistent with the observations of the lecturer (researcher) and the awareness that the sessions were recorded did not influence the language use of the participants as the data indicates that the multilingual nature of the conversations prevailed despite knowledge of the audio-recordings.

During the consultation sessions in this study, participants who found it easier to speak in their languages are those in the Sotho language group (Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana). Some of the most prominent home languages at the NWU-PC and in the North-West Province (Census, 2022) are the Sotho language groups. There are scholars who argue that these languages (Sesotho, Setswana and Sepedi) should be regarded as one language that should have a standard orthography to reduce the number of languages spoken in the country and on the continent (Prah, 2006; Ndhlovhu, 2022). This argument is akin to Alexander's (1998) harmonization proposal. This conversation falls without the ambit of this study. However, what is relevant to the study is that the participants in the study are speakers of the typical dominant Black South African languages in the provinces and on the NWU-PC.

As mentioned earlier (evidenced in excerpt 201), some students had to have the lecturer instigate a conversation in some indigenous African languages to prompt them to respond and contribute during the consultation session. In Chapter 3 under 3.4.2.2, it is stated that the consultations discussions in Black South African languages were started by the participants and recorder, however, in group discussions the participants who would lead the discussions using multiple languages were mostly from the Sotho language groups. Speakers of Nguni languages often did not start the conversations, and the lecturer had to probe them so that they could contribute in their languages and English. In notes by the lecturer during the period where she recorded consultation sessions, she wrote that "The students that felt at home and easily started conversation were Sesotho and Setswana speakers. It was as though knowing that the lecturer is a speaker of one of these two languages made them feel free to converse in them". Another observation that the researcher made for the Sepedi and isiZulu participants in the study at that time was: "they were more reserved in participating in the conversation during the consultation sessions". This might have been due to many reasons such as being shy or introverted; but this is speculation as information about this issue was not gathered during the study. However, it is important to note that when these students were directly asked for a response they contributed to the conversations.

In excerpts 43 and 202, participants who were isiZulu speakers did not speak in their languages until the lecturer instigated the conversation. In excerpt 43, the participant as explained came speaking in isiZulu, Sesotho and Sepedi together with English but switched mostly to English after agreeing to be recorded. from Newcastle who could speak both isiZulu and Sesotho came for consultation (she is a self-identified isiZulu home language speaker with more Black South African Languages in her repertoire). Prior to being recorded, the student used those two languages and English until the lecturer asked if she does not mind being recorded for research

purposes. At this point, the student switched to pure English, proving that the student could speak and had a great command of the English language but that she felt comfortable during informal consultations (before the recording started) to use all the languages in her repertoire. In the end, when the lecturer asked the participant why she switched, she did not respond to the lecturer's question but rather spoke in Sepedi and Sesotho as a sign of competence in many languages at her command.

However, this shows that when lecturers insist on speaking just one language, they force students into a metaphorical corner where they must depend on their command of English only. When participants felt free to use all their multilingual resources, they used these selectively to express themselves fluently.

Participant 8 in excerpt 202 also started speaking back in a mix of isiZulu and English when the lecturer asked her about her side of the argument. She was quiet but when she was invited to speak, she used her language together with English to express her thoughts. Most participants though, used all the languages available in their repertoires to make meaning and convey a message. The use of their languages as they merge and collide and synergise to make meaning showcases the beauty and intricate nature of codeswitching or translanguaging in this context. Whether a person switches to one word such as "**gore**" (a Setswana word that means "*that*" in English), the message continues seamlessly, and the message is clearly articulated while using more languages. Languages are complementary rather than incompatible and language is used in a transferal process that Jørgensen (2008) calls languaging. Jørgensen (2008) explains languaging as the intention behind choosing a language in the process of communication; and emphasises that what is poignant is that there is agency and autonomy on the part of the participants. Participant 16 said when his English shuts down, a Setswana word automatically fills the space, and he does not have to dig deep and try hard to find the word (in excerpt 118, in Chapter 4, section 4.2). Whereas the switch may be happening because of a lack of a word in a language, it is the ability of the speaker to pull out at the right time and place the word or words appropriate and in a language that she then has access to and to maintain a grammatically lucid and correct structure while communicating something meaningful. That is the striking observation one can make from studying these examples.

This ability of the multilingual participants in the study shows the strengths of such a strategy whereby all the languages are used to make meaning. There is however a clear language of the switch that constantly affirms what the participant would consider their dominant language in the language repertoire. The main language for the consultation sessions was English because

the module was taught in English. However, participants would switch to indigenous African languages in their repertoires consistently. What this study does not investigate is whether a participant would display a different mix of multilingual resources during similar consultation sessions with different lecturers who might not be able to use the Sotho languages. This issue is beyond the ambit of the study but could be the topic of future studies that focus on office consultations with the same group of students and different lecturers. This is also a limitation to the study because in Chapter 3, under 3.4.2, the languages spoken by the researcher who is also the lecturer, as well as the potential bias brought in by this element, is addressed.

The data from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the consultation sessions and the interviews indicate that the participants are multilingual and hold several languages in their language repertoires. None of the participants claimed to only speak one language and this multilingual complexity and versality is seen in the data that provides information on the language repertoires of the students and in the analysis of the multilingual consultation data. A person can alternate between all the languages in his or her repertoire, but there seems to be languages that are more prominent in the consultation sessions analysed for this study. It becomes apparent that the switches mostly happen in Setswana, Sesotho or isiZulu and English for most speakers, with occasional additions from slang. The multilingual utterances communicate clearly. Although the above stated languages appeared the most during the consultations, participants were speakers of many South African official and unofficial languages such as, isiNdebele, isiSwati, Sepedi, Xitsonga and Sepitori among others (see Table 19).

What is clear from the consultation data is that participants seldom use one language only but continuously use multilingual resources in their repertoire when they participate. The use of several multilingual resources in a conversation is an ordinary occurrence for multilingual speakers; restricting their speech to one language only is not easy (Makalela, 2014; Mabule, 2015). Multilingual South Africans use all their linguistic resources to make meaning when they communicate. When words in one language escape them, participants switch to the other languages in their repertoires to make meaning. In the individual interviews, most of the participants indicated that this happens naturally or spontaneously (see excerpt 111, Section 4.2.2). The data reported in this study is therefore similar to data from other contexts where multilinguals use all their resources to participate in educational contexts. Makalela (2015) said these techniques of automatically switching between languages show the interconnectedness of languages with identity as cognitively the brain already knows what to switch to and goes and

retrieves exactly what is needed. He advocates for the concept of translanguaging in explaining this phenomenon (Makalela, 2014).

Translanguaging is defined by Makalela (2015) as the fluidity and flexibility of languages being used. Makalela (2014; 2015) argues that this fluidity renders the name language obsolete because it ceases to be a language when one moves to and from codes in their communicative practices. In the interest of this study, moving between languages and the blurredness of such an activity will be regarded as translanguaging. In this study, translanguaging is seen as different ways multilingual people deploy all their linguistic resources to make meaning in different contexts. The multilingual consultation data discussed in this study can be viewed as instances of translanguaging or the deployment of multiple linguistic resources to make meaning (akin to the concept "languaging" by Jørgensen, 2008; "metrolingualism" by Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010, to mention a few). Participant 6 in excerpt 195 explains how translanguaging can work in the lecturer hall when she says those that can understand what was said in Black South African languages can explain to the rest of the class if someone does use his/her language during actual class time. Furthermore, the consultation data in this thesis are examples of translanguaging or deployment of multilingual resources because the participants are not restricting their language use to one of the languages that they know, rather they are expressing themselves through all the languages that they know, using their multilingual language repertoires as a tool to advance their academic work rather than a hindrance. Makalela & da Silva (2023: 2) argue that "current language policies are mimics of the Western enumeration of languages, which does not favour the sociolinguistic matrix of fluid multilingualism prevalent in the Global South countries such as Brazil and South Africa". Thus, he believes that translanguaging as a strategy (also referred to as the deployment of all the multilingual resources in the repertoires of the participants in this study) allows the use and promotion of more than a language or a few languages but allows for the use of all the speakers' linguistic resources in the repertoire and that this is a strategy that is befitting of the current South African context. Languages encounter each other and thus multilingual complexities extend beyond speaking a language or using a few languages. This is evidenced in when participants use more than three languages at a time in a sentence or slang (as seen in section 5.3.1 where this data was discussed in the study). This strategy is about using multilingualism in a way that works for all the students involved in the higher education system in South Africa.

This study focuses mainly on the fact that students use their multilingual resources in the context of office consultations with their lecturers, an aspect that is under-researched currently and that most universities have not considered to inform their language policies. How do we then utilise

the multilingual abilities displayed by the participants in this study to create conducive academic environments and climates in which these students could achieve success? Students' consultations are student-driven or initiated. Participants in this study are the ones that take the initiative to come to the lecturer, and as mentioned in this study; they initiated the switching in their languages. It was not forced; it was organic and yet intentional and meaningful. Their languages were used to understand difficult concepts and get them into university (i.e. these multilingual practices enabled them to pass high school well enough to be admitted to university). This foundation is a solid one that universities must seek to build on and extend instead of seeking to diminish, demonise, demoralise and frustrate the oral and literacy practices of the people. African languages have long been known and understood as oral languages and not necessarily languages used in formal education settings. The use of Black South African Languages by teachers in classroom interactions (adding an element of orality to this discussion) to strengthen students' learning throughout the university is commendable. The use of the multilingual resources of learners and students gives hope to people who often feel hopeless in the education system. Multilingual learners and students are bolstered when their languages are used to facilitate their learning and when these resources are not seen as a barrier to their education. In the intellectualization of African languages into academic spaces, the foundations of African languages as languages of orality must not be ignored and should form the basis for the encouragement (Abdi, 2007; Ngcobo & Nomdebevana, 2010) of extending African language into the educational domain such as was done in this study. Ngcobo and Nomdebevana (2010: 189) argue that "spoken language corpora can become the basis for extracting terms that can be used in the intellectualisation process". In this study, spoken practices using African languages serve as the basis for deepening understanding and meaning making, and can even be used to draw students' attention to other possibilities of using their languages, thus spoken practices become an awareness driving force to intellectualization.

In the South African context, translanguaging is often employed by lecturers to help students to make meaning (Batyi, 2022; Makalela, 2018, Yafele, 2021) and this has been touched on in this section and in the previous chapters. As explained in sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2. (where the reasons for using multiple languages from the repertoires of the participants in the study are related to their conceptualization of the assignments and the structure of the assignments in the consultation sessions), participants often borrowed words from other languages and transformed these words into formats that fit into the Black South African Languages that they selected to switch to. This phenomenon was not coded but it happens way too often in the data

and therefore, it warrants discussion. In other words, for the participants in this study, translanguaging is not a hard thing to do, and it is often something that they do not think about.

Caution should be made that it is not always great when participants borrow from English to their own language. An example below shows the trouble of borrowing, and the structural elements involved:

> [203] Participant 7: **Ke buile ka gore** [*I spoke on that*] like … **batho ba … dicoaches, batho ba, ba, ba nang le diclub** [*people that … the coaches, people that, that, that have clubs*] …
> Lecturer: Mhm.
> Participant 7: … like **ba, ba, ba misinformationeile** [*they have misinformationed them*].
> Lecturer: … informed
> Participant 7: **Ja** [*Yes*]. They misinformed other players **gore ba na le** [*that they have*] like, academy.

Participant 7 said that "**ba, ba, ba misinformationeile** [*they have misinformationed them*]" to explain her argument. This is not the proper grammatical structure for English, therefore, borrowing brings about problems attached with language and structure. The proper English word would be 'misinform', therefore, the borrowing would say '**misinformile'**, and the lecturer helped the participant to transform the borrowed word correctly. Therefore, in the quest for meaning making and allowing practices such as translanguaging and transliteration, it is important that words are not butchered, or the use of wrong words are not accepted in the creation of meaning.

From a pedagogical view, this instance of "working with the way to transform" an English word to use in a Sotho language, is important. By including the correction in the conversation, the lecturer extends the students' use of the English concept by teaching them how to transform this word with more semantic correctness when it is borrowed and used within the Sotho language. At the end of the interaction, the student used the English word (misinformed) correctly. The transition from "misinformationed" as "**misinformationeile**" in the Sotho language to "misinformed" in English provided the perfect opportunity to deepen the student's understanding of this important concept that should be used in the assignment.

On the other hand, the grammatical issues present in excerpt 203 above can creep into the participants' English writing if not corrected. In other words, if the lecturer did not correct the participant, they might have used "misinformationed" in the final English assignment that they submit because that is the word they used during consultations. The skills of multilingual lecturers who can interpret and guide multilingual students when they borrow and coin terminology correctly is an important element of a multilingual pedagogy that should guide the cognitive development required in the journey to becoming better at academic writing in English.

Considering that the translanguaging pedagogy rejects the notion of named languages (Makalela, 2015; Prinsloo & Krause, 2019) the reality is that when participants use their languages alongside English, standard Setswana is not used (Wagner *et al*., 2020). Sometimes, the standard word in the relevant Black South African Languages is not even considered when students use their languages to make meaning. The students also use a lot of slang that is understood only in their language or by a certain group or in a certain context. For example, Participant 4 uses "**Tanki** [*Thank you*]" when they end their conversation. This is a borrowed word that has morphed from the Afrikaans word 'dankie' and is more commonly used than the Setswana equivalent. The equivalent of this in Setswana would be "**Ke a leboga**"; but **tanki** is used more commonly in oral conversations than the standard variety of "**Ke a leboga**". Words such as **Sharpo** (sharp in English), **entleke** (**eintlik** *(actually)* in Afrikaans) are borrowed words commonly seen in the data. This issue, whether the standard forms of the indigenous African languages should be used in educational contexts, adds another layer of complexity to the discussion of multilingual pedagogies in the South African higher education context. Ndoleriire (2024) argues that standardisation is important as it leads to intellectualisation.

Considering the longstanding research and extensive body of knowledge in South Africa about codeswitching and the use of vernacular languages in school contexts, universities should seek to build onto the already existing practices of codeswitching (including more recent conceptualisations such as translanguaging) in the higher education context. The practice of multilingual pedagogies in the academic context in higher education could contribute to creating a more welcoming environment and climate to students who enter from schools where these practices were used extensively in high school.

The types of switches that students made in the consultations of this study prove that there are power relations at work when switching is analysed. Participants acknowledge that finding a lecturer who allows them to switch their languages makes them feel confident and comfortable (excerpt 114-118). Participant 1 also included the word "freedom" in the focus group (excerpt 114-118).

> [204] Colleague: So, I think, the other question … what is the motivating factor for, for using your, your- first language when uh, during consultation?
> Participant 4: The freedom of understanding.
> Participant 1: And the confidence.
> Colleague: The confidence, your understanding …
> Participant 16: **Ke tsone** [*They are the*] top three.
> Colleague: Top three? It's two. Is it not two?
> Participant 16: **Ke** [*It is*] building confidence, understanding …
> Participant 1: And freedom.
> Colleague: And freedom?

Participant 16: Freedom of speech.
Colleague: Okay.

Creating spaces where students feel free to use all the multilingual resources in their repertoire to make meaning in the academic context is a sign of liberation and actualization on the part of the students. Permission to use all one's multilingual resources affords one freedom and choice, something that monolingual English conversations do not create. The strategies that participants use can be seen as translanguaging or codeswitching. When participants switch, they employ all the codes they have in their language repertoire. Some participants use slang, and other Black South African Languages in addition to those home languages.

Some students in the focus group discussion said that they did not consult with some lecturers because they feared what would come out of their mouths in front of the lecturer. In excerpts 130-131 in Chapter 4 participants stated that they do not go to consult in the office by either not going or sending friends who love to speak English, while others say they send emails. Participant 4 on the contrary said she speaks broken English and that is how she copes. She said she breaks it so much that she ends up confusing herself. Therefore, as has been lamented by other studies before (van der Walt & Dornbrack, 2011; Modise *et al*., 2021; Makeleni, 2024) and now cemented in this study, participants at university struggle a lot with English only as a medium of instruction. Azagsiba and Manyike (2024: 9) also pointed out that this struggle with English is present in school when one participant in their study states that "Sometimes when we have to present, I feel like I am going to pronounce a word wrong, and the other learners will laugh at me, and I am scared when facing them". English as LoTL is not the language of most learners and students and even when students get to university, they struggle with English.

Again, from the focus group, one participant said she wished there were interpreters next to the lecturers even in their offices so that they could speak comfortably and get their message across. While another said that there should be more African languages speaking lecturers hired by the university. The same student who said she wants an interpreter present when she goes to consult mentioned that she played soccer for the university and their coach was Afrikaans. The student said, [132] "I break the English" when I do not know what to say to the coach in a way that he will understand. The student added that this happens to such an extent that when the student is done speaking, she is not sure of what she said. She loses her train of thought and process along the way because of her struggle to try and express herself in one language, English. Therefore, the ability and opportunity provided for the participants to use their languages is a good practice because it allows for the voices that are often silenced by monolingual English.

Firstly, participants used their languages to deepen understanding whereby when they were conceptualising and structuring the assignment in the pre-writing process, they used their languages to plan the assignment. They used it to think about how they were going to argue, what their stance was, and how they would use claims and counterarguments to express their argument, using it for HOT skills in academic writing. Furthermore, participants use their languages for LOT skills in enquiring about marks, Turnitin reports, due dates, and all those things associated with assignment writing that do not involve critical thinking.

This study reports there is a social element to switching as participants use their multilingual resources to discuss things that resonate with them socially, and their languages are highly involved in such a task. In all those processes mentioned above, African languages were used alongside English. Therefore, when looking at the nature of the switches participants use translanguaging as a pedagogy to communicate when consulting with their lecturer. They borrow words from one language to another, they transliterate and create new words, and they move seamlessly between languages regardless of how different the languages used are from each other. In these activities, meaning is not lost. This study has chosen the contradictory position of saying translanguaging is used and naming languages in the same breath. This seems contradictory, but this study stems from a point of view where languages are named (such as Setswana and Sesotho in the NWU Language Policy, and where people identify themselves as speakers of a certain language such as Tshivenda or Siswati). Another reason why this study acknowledges and sees languages as named and separate is because the study itself is written or reported in a language called English. Participants trans-language or move between what this language sees as separate languages.

5.3.2.2. Function of the switches

Participants in this study used switches for different functions (see Table 26 in Section 4.2.5). The most prominent function reported by participants when they switched between languages was to explain themselves or supply information. The second most prominent reason was that they switched because they lacked a word that they could use that was appropriate in their languages. These two prominent functions for switching reported by the participants will be discussed.

a) Functions of switching: Explaining/supplying information

When it comes to switches from one language to another during consultations, participants stated that they switched to supply information or to explain themselves (see Chapter 4, excerpts 89-93). Considering that the consultations were generally students coming to the lecturer, it is expected that they would switch to understand or be understood. Here, switching languages is a strategic way to ensure that the message is delivered to the intended audience as it should be.

Thus, when participants were asked in interviews why they switched in Table 26 participants said they switched to be clear and to not make mistakes.

The main data set in this study is the analysis of the way in which participants used languages to deepen understanding during consultation. Therefore, it is not a surprise that explaining themselves and supplying information are reported as the main reasons for their switching. In the process of meaning-making related to HOT skills (related to conceptualization and structure) and LOT skills (related to asking about submission processes and talking about social issues), participants had to explain, ask, reply, and elaborate. Switching between their languages was instrumental in this context because as the participants explained, they switch to be understood and to clarify. They also switch to not making mistakes in their explanations and reasoning (excerpts 119-122). Participants in other studies have stated that their African languages can be used to make them understand (De Wet, 2002; Ngcobo & Barnes, 2021)

b) Function of switching: Terminology

Translanguaging as discussed above is a great pedagogy to advance multilingual education, whether borrowing, or coining a term or using a word or two as shown above (see Chapter 4, excerpts 53-55 and Table 28) is worthy of discussing because most young people do not use standard indigenous South African languages when speaking. As such coining terms and transforming terminology in English into an indigenous language can potentially be confusing. As mentioned in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4), universities have embarked on a tremendous journey of creating word banks, dictionaries, and glossaries for terms and concepts used in the higher education context in all disciplines (Khumalo & Nkomo, 2022; Siziba, 2024). These terms often result in creating words in the African languages that the young people are not familiar with. These words remain unused and do not permeate the fabric of society easily because the students do not use them. Borrowing words can be effective in this situation. Students will say words such as **Referensa**, **rebata**, **introductioneng** (examples of words used by participants in this study) that are more familiar to them rather than using referencing, rebut, or in the introduction. However, the standard terminology in Setswana for these words are **Le morago, ditshupetso**, and **go ikarabela ka mabaka**. Most students would be unfamiliar with these terms.

In this study, the phenomenon of transliteration has been mentioned a few times because of how it emerges in the data. In an interesting, study by Nong *et al*. (2002: 17) participants showed an interest in a hierarchical use of words from a lexicographical standpoint whereby "preference hierarchy: Indigenous word → Sothoised loan word → direct borrowing" is prioritised. Siziba (2024) cautions against creating terminology that is irrelevant to the students in the quest for intellectualisation. She explains that although terminology of medical terms had been created in

Shona and Nguni terminology for teaching Physics in Zimbabwe, those terms remain highly unused because those that coined them did not consult the speakers of the language and the terms "require learners to have high levels of cognition to understand them" (Siziba, 2024).

When translating material to African languages and introducing it to the participants, those that do so should remember that the students in the South African context have never been taught their languages entirely past grade 3 in the past. Their languages were used to supplement the use of English as a medium of instruction in secondary school and the non-standard version of their language, the spoken or oral variants of the languages were more prominent than the written standard variety. Teaching entirely in African languages is not yet plausible and the participants in this study are aware of this. Terminology development is progressing, but students will take time to adopt and use it. It should be introduced comprehensively to them instead of assuming that in some magical way, home language users of Black South African Languages would instinctively understand newly developed terms. Teaching in spoken African languages is advisable while simultaneously introducing newly developed terminology. Introducing the terms should include comparative processes where the newly developed terms are placed next to the borrowed or codeswitched words. This will allow students to infer meaning and grasp and understand the new terms better. Students are most unlikely to use translated African language materials because the terms used are unfamiliar to students. (The use of multilingual or bilingual study material might be more effective – where students can see the translated texts into the indigenous language next to the English text). When students walk into the office to consult, they will ask '**re referensa jang** [*how do we reference*] and not '**re dira ditshupetso/re supetsa jang**'. Although the term **tshupetso** is self-explanatory and will be easy for students to understand next to referencing, the problem is that that is not a commonly used word yet. It is not commonly used in high school, and it is not used amongst students. Therefore, coining and terminology development should consider words that students commonly use and then introduce the new concepts slowly and strategically through a well-planned multilingual pedagogy (including the use of selected bi- and multilingual texts) supported by Mesthrie (2008).

Perhaps it is time universities listened to their students on how they would like to be helped instead of assuming how. Language policy implementation should thus take a bottom-up approach and not a top-down approach. Policies that take a top-down approach are likely to fail (Coetzee-De Vos, 2019) and Siziba (2024) speaks against the universities for sometimes writing policies from the top and leaving clauses open to interpretation for faculties to implement. Lecturers that have an interest in helping students use their languages must find out what works for their respective students. This will avoid a duplication of projects that are nonbeneficial to the

intended recipients and will encourage a more student-driven approach that sees and recognizes not only the languages of the students but the different needs of the students.

Some participants would switch only to speaking one word in English after starting a conversation in their home language and then return to the indigenous language. This was often done when participants switched for terminology reasons; that is, when they could not find or did not know the equivalent of the English word in the indigenous language, they would insert the English word in the middle of a Sesotho or Setswana utterance. This strategy was used for subject-specific terminology such as DNA, Microbiology and supplements which were terms familiar to the participants' field of study. Therefore, it is clear in this study that when participants switch languages during a sentence, they maintain subject specific terminology in English because often they did not know the equivalent terms in the indigenous language.

5.3.3. Conclusion

The section below will showcase the emotional intelligence and awareness participants express when using multilingual resources. Therefore, because of this study, participants should be allowed to use their languages even in areas that expand beyond the consultations because of the benefits of such a practice. Greenfield (2010: 521-2) argues that "research in this area [multilingualism] must reject the typical binary disposition to evaluate speakers' attitudes toward learning in either English or the mother tongue and, instead, consider the instructional potential of multiple modalities being incorporated simultaneously". The spontaneity of the languages and complementary use of languages that would have otherwise been considered alien to one another is a skill that shows how multilingualism is an enabling tool rather than a disadvantage.

Through personal interviews and the focus group discussion, the students seem to commonly complain about the difficulty level of English in higher education compared to that of high school. Academic literacy as a module at different universities is implemented to deal with the mismatch media of instruction or the languages of teaching and learning among high school and university. Most students are said to come to universities unprepared for the demands of tertiary education (Adekunle *et al.*, 2022: Prince & Simson, 2022). The study argues that using students' Black South African Languages at university can help bridge the gap between high school and university and result in more effective acculturation of first year students in the higher education context.

5.4. Attitudes towards multilingual education

This section of the study seeks to address the question: *What are students' attitudes towards the use of multilingualism (especially the use of African languages) in higher education?*

This is important because knowing people's attitudes can help with planning to sway their opinion or further cement it. Since the main research question is to find out how participants use their multilingualism to deepen understanding, finding out their attitudes towards multilingualism is imperative in shaping their way to realising the good in using their languages. There is no clear definition for language attitudes. Language attitudes are not measured but are observed and inferred (Ditsele, 2014). Bangeni and Kapp (2007) express that "[l]anguage attitudes are traditionally defined by second-language theorists in terms of both perceptions and affect". Ditsele (2014) includes five concepts related to defining attitudes which are belief, opinion, stereotype, behaviour and habit. Concerning the study of the language attitudes of participants in this study, what participants know about the policy and how the NWU is implementing multilingualism was a starting point.

To understand the attitudes held by the participant on multilingual education, the data sought to unearth participants' knowledge of language policy of the NWU and their attitudes to it as well as their understanding of multilingual education and how it is presented and potentially should be presented at the NWU.

5.4.1. Knowledge of the NWU Language Policy

Pienaar (2023) in her study asked both lecturers and students' knowledge of the NWU Language Policy in VC and she found out that the first-year students knew very little of the NWU's multilingual language policy and most of the lecturers knew to a great extent about the policy because they had read it while others said they had heard or know that it exists. The study also found out that most students did not know, or where incorrect in their language of the policy (Pienaar, 2023: 64). In this current study, NWU-PC student participants were asked about their perceptions and knowledge of the NWU's language policy in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire items 16 and 17. While item 16 asked the participants whether they knew about the policy, item 17 asked them to summaries the policy in their own words and the responses are found in Figure 33 and Table 31. The participants' responses to these questions would provide answers to the research question raised above. The assumption was that the participants with more knowledge of the language policy of the NWU would in principle be more positive about the implementation of multilingual education in higher education. Furthermore, these questions aimed to ascertain what the participants' attitudes towards the use of Black South African

Languages in higher education were and to relate these attitudes to the relevant findings from the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire completed by participants who had come to consult about their ALDE assignments with their lecturer while using their black South African Black South African languages. Viewing the participants' responses to these questions from various angles provided via the different research instruments, the trustworthiness of the relevant findings would be supported.

The NWU Language Policy (2022) is explicitly stated as explained in Chapter 2 (Bamgbose, 1999; Kadenge & Mugari, 2015) and readily available online (Ravyse & van Zyl, 2022). Generally, few participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaires and the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire knew details of the NWU language policy (see Figures 33 and 34 in Chapter 4 where these findings are reported). Similarly, during individual interviews (see excerpts 138-143) most participants expressed that they knew little or nothing about the NWU language policy. Pienaar (2023) also found that NWU students in her study compared to participants who were lecturers, like most of the participants who were students in this study knew very little about the institution's language policy. In this study, some of the participants expressed that they had never heard of the NWUs Language policy in three data sets (Language Repertoire Questionnaire, Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, Interviews). The situation was a little different during the focus group discussion because three of the participants had already come for the interviews and were thus aware of the NWUs language policy and Participant 4 said she had always known about the policy, even before coming to the interview. This was not surprising since most of the participants in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire did not know about the NWU's language policy, even though 42.1% had said that they did (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.1 Figure 34).

From the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, when asked to summarise the policy, in both questionnaires participants would say 'yes' to knowing the policy but when asked to summarise it, very few of the participants could provide a correct and comprehensive summary. In Figure 33 and Table 31, the data on the knowledge of the policy as well as the summary of the policy are presented, and the majority indeed did not know about the policy. Some participants claimed to know the policy but could not articulate its main essence properly. Most of the participants outright stated that they did not know the policy. Some claimed that they knew it a little and very few said they knew it. Some participants were hearing for the first time that the University had a language policy, and this most likely meant that they did know that the policy advocated multilingual education. While participants in this study knew very little about the NWU language policy, Ravyse and Van Zyl(2022) in a study at the NWU found that stakeholders currently involved

in the daily operations of the NWU, including students, are in support of the language policy being instrumentally used to support learning. Thus, the policy is seen as instrumental by those that advocate for its implementation. Therefore, if the different stakeholders (including students) were aware of the NWU language policy, maybe they would be more inclined to its implementation.

Findings in this study corroborate the findings from Pienaar's (2023) study stating that a lot of work is still needed to distribute information and knowledge about the NWU's multilingual language policy to the student body. One can argue that if the students are not aware of the institution's language policy, they would not know about the opportunities available to use their multilingual resources to advance their academic success. They might not accept implementing multilingual practices at the University if they do not know that the NWU wants to implement a multilingual language policy. One could also argue that knowledge of the policy is a necessary precursor to convince participants to support the implementation of the policy. Therefore, a lack of knowledge of the NWU's language policy limits participants' imaginations to use their multilingual resources to advance their academic success, and it poses a potential hurdle in the way of the NWU when it tries to implement its multilingual language policy. This still places African languages in the private domain of the office consultations between student and lecturer and minimizes the potential of using African languages in class/lecturer halls and assessments and other domains not yet even imagined for using African languages. This study did not incorporate the views of staff members as it focused on the views and multilingual practices of NWU-PC students. However, in Pienaar's (2023) study, the NWU also needs to make staff aware of the nature of the NWU's multilingual language policy. This is imperative because findings in this current study indicate that participants are aware that lecturers on the NWU-PC do not necessarily support the use of multilingual resources in the teaching and learning domain. Participants highlighted the experience that some black South African lecturers at the NWU-PC would not help students in the Black South African languages even if lecturers are users of those languages. In Pienaar (2023)'s study, it was reported that at the NWU, some Afrikaans lecturers seemed to refrain from using Afrikaans as part of multilingual pedagogies to explain further and clarify things in Afrikaans because they believed it was wrong.

NWU has a language awareness program that is offered annually as part of its transformation agenda. This program is aimed at making staff and students aware of the NWUs commitment to diversity by providing extra-curricular activities focusing on language awareness, race awareness and gender awareness. When participants in the interviews were asked if they knew about the NWUs Language Awareness weeks, and if they had attended them, most of the participants said they did not know about them and very few said that they had attended them. This was important

information to gather because the NWU has programs in place to distribute knowledge and to encourage multilingual education and based on the responses of the participants in this study, NWU staff and students are not aware of this. Based on the participants' responses in this study, it seems that some people think that the languages of the NWU are Afrikaans and English only, meanwhile the policy stipulates that it aims to promote Afrikaans and English, together with Setswana and Sesotho. When NWU students do not have knowledge of the NWU multilingual language policy, they are not likely to even consider that they can use other languages to advance their teaching and learning, because they cannot even imagine that they could be used for teaching and learning. This is evident in the attitudes of participants to be discussed below. Language planning and policy is about awarding a language the status that allows for its promotion and protection (Makiti, 2001; Spolsky, 2004) and the NWU has done so specifically for Setswana and Sesotho (NWU Language Policy, 2022). Some participants mentioned in the interviews that they knew about the policy and learned about it from different sources. Those who knew the language policy said that they learned about it from places like the NWU website, language awareness events, and workshops (Figure 36) that were offered as part of the first-year reception and orientation program (excerpt 162). So, the NWU has made some inroads in making students aware of its policy and this is a good thing. Having established that some participants in the study knew the language policy, the study further investigated how those who said that they were familiar with the policy would reply to the specific questions aimed at determining their attitudes towards African languages.

Despite the advances that the NWU has made with the implementation of a multilingual language policy, the implementation of Setswana and Sesotho, particularly as languages of teaching and learning, has been slow or invisible if we take the responses of the participants in the study into account. During the individual interviews, it became clear that all the interview participants in the study, except for Participant 9 and Participant 5, said that they did not see the policy being implemented (see excerpt 158-161). They stated that the multilingual language policy at NWU is not implemented in the teaching and learning context, and other domains (for example, in administration). Signage on the campus in the form of publicly displayed signs was the most prominent form of representation where the interview participants saw evidence of the use of Setswana as part of the policy on the NWU-PC. Even in these cases, the participants indicated that the Setswana signposts were represented far less on campus than public display signs in Afrikaans and English. The participants stated that, in their view, Afrikaans remains the most dominant language on the NWU-PC and English follows suit with a much smaller presence of Setswana. Therefore, although Setswana is a language recognised by policy as one of the official

languages of the NWU-PC, the participants' perceptions are that the language is not visible enough.

5.4.1.1. Status of languages used at the NWU-PC

In Chapter 2 (see section 2.2) where the issue of language policy in Africa and South Africa is discussed, it has been stated that the status of colonial languages as languages of teaching and learning from as early as primary school into university remains the norm rather than the exception (Antia, 2021). Currently (in 2024), the languages of teaching and learning at the NWU remain mostly English and Afrikaans except in some rare cases where Setswana and Sesotho are used. At the NWU-PC, one can choose to receive tuition in either Afrikaans or English and not in Setswana, even though all three of these languages are considered official languages of the NWU-PC. The dominance of English and Afrikaans as the languages of teaching and learning on the NWU-PC continues to render the system as unequal as language is used as a tool that grants unrestricted access to epistemic knowledge to some and partially denies access to others. This is articulated by the participants in the study when they express that they do not want to attend Afrikaans classes, even though they are interpreted into English.

The participants of the study are aware of the status of Afrikaans as one of the important official languages used at the NWU-PC. The perceptions of the high status of Afrikaans are not a misnomer because the NWU-PC was a prominent Afrikaans-medium University for a long part of its existence (see Chetty, 2010; Eloff, 2007; Pretorius, 2017; in Chapter 2). However, 20 years have passed since the former "Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys" (*Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education)* and the University of the North West (in Mahikeng) have merged in 2004. The student demographics on the NWU-PC are predominantly non-Afrikaans at this stage.

Afrikaans is still a very dominant language of teaching and learning at NWU-PC. The University has a reputation for being one of the last South African university campuses that offer programs in Afrikaans and promotes the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in higher education. Most former Afrikaans universities stopped using it as a main language of teaching and learning but continue to use it and support it as an additional language (Hill, 2024). The case of Afrikaans is different from that of other indigenous South African languages in that it is a language of teaching and learning at university because it is also used as a language of teaching and learning in schools in South Africa from primary to secondary school. The development and growth of Afrikaans as a prestigious language of teaching and learning throughout the apartheid regime of South Africa was discussed comprehensively in Chapter 2 (section 2.3-2.4). During the period

1948-1994, Afrikaans was cemented as a language of teaching and learning through the official language policies and this history resulted in the continuing status that Afrikaans enjoys in post-1994 South Africa, also as a language of teaching and learning at NWU-PC. The status of Afrikaans as a language of teaching and learning is therefore very different from the status of the other indigenous South African languages. For this reason, Afrikaans continues to be a language of teaching and learning at the NWU-PC, a former Afrikaans university before the mergers of universities in 2004. To this day, classes that are taught in Afrikaans on the NWU-PC are interpreted into English. Across a long period, black students at the NWU-PC have responded negatively to the experience of attending Afrikaans classes where they had to use headsets to receive interpretation of these classes into English (Van Rooy, 2005; Wittezaele, 2008). The participants in this study also hold the same negative views of this interpretation practice that form part of the many strategies employed at the NWU to implement a multilingual language policy (NWU Annual-Report-Language-Directorate, 2021). Within the context of the implementation of a multilingual language policy (Blaauw, 2008, NWU Annual-Report-Language-Directorate, 2021) the NWU-PC has the responsibility to maintain the use of Afrikaans (and English) as official languages, while at the same time developing Setswana and Sesotho for use as languages of teaching and learning. This is a complex language policy imperative and the participants in this study indicated that the development imperative for Setswana and Sesotho is not yet at the same level as the maintenance work done for Afrikaans.

The participants in this study view English as a language of teaching and learning at the NWU-PC very positively (in contrast to their views about the use of Afrikaans as the language of teaching and learning on campus). As discussed in Chapter 2 the use of Afrikaans as the language of teaching and learning in the South African educational space has been viewed negatively, especially by black students and black learners. These views have led to poignant events in the history of the country such as with the Soweto Uprising of 1976 (Shingange, 2021) where the insistence of the Apartheid government to use Afrikaans as medium of instruction in former Bantu education contexts was opposed vehemently. In contrast to the negative views about Afrikaans as language of teaching and learning in South African education, English was favoured by black South African students, often lauded as the language of liberation (De Wet, 2002; Ngcobo & Barnes, 2021). The resistance to the use of Afrikaans as language of teaching and learning, and the positive responses to the use of English, were often to the detriment of positive attitudes to use indigenous South African languages as languages of teaching and learning in South Africa. English is seen as a language of globalisation (the language of employment, the lingua franca of the country, Khumalo, 2016; Ntombela, 2024), and aligned with the view of most participants in

the study, English is perceived as the language that everyone understands (see Figure 44 from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire where more than 60% of participants said they preferred English only as LoTL).

The positive attitudes towards the use of English as a language of teaching and learning in the higher education sector of South Africa are complex. This is akin to many other studies undertaken in the South African universities' context where studies on the language attitudes have always shown that students prefer English as LoTL. Bekker (2004) conducted a study among students at the University of South Africa and found that the majority preferred English. Similar studies were carried out at different universities overtime and have proven that students prefer English as LoTL even though they may not be very good in English (Madlala, 2018; Ndinteh, 2019). This preference starts from primary school where parents prefer English over home language education (Linake & Makeleni, 2021).

In this study, participants showed a great preference for English only LoTL from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire (Figure 44, Chapter 4). However, for those participants who came to consult in their languages (also reported in the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire responses) the participants were open to the use of all the official languages of South Africa (Figure 30 in Chapter 4). Whilst participants who had used their languages during consultations leaned a lot more to the idea of being taught in all the official languages of the country at NWU than those who did not come to consult, it seems that the awareness of the use of one's own language during consultations helped participants to become more open to the use of their languages for teaching and learning. In a study on the language attitudes of participants from UNISA, Ncgobo and Barnes (2021:91-92) state that "… although the students unanimously agreed that English should be used as a medium of instruction at UNISA, this consensus was tempered by the desire of some students to also introduce African languages to be used alongside English". The continued preference of English only as the LoTL is underpinned by the knowledge that African languages are beneficial to the students in meaning making, however, the hegemony of English sways the participants' decision to ask for English only (Ncgobo & Barnes, 2021).

Most students in South African universities struggle with the use of English only as LoTL. This issue is also evidenced in this study where participants in the interviews argue that English at university is hard, difficult, and insufferable, expressing their struggle to cope with English as the sole language of teaching and learning in their studies (excerpts 13-16 in Chapter 4). In this study, participants as expressed in excerpts 13-14, report that the level of English at university is hard. Besides the NWU, this issue is reported and described for other South African students (Boughey,

2014). Despite the knowledge of the difficulties with using English as the language of teaching and learning in higher education in South Africa, English continues to be the most preferred mode of teaching and learning at university for most students. Furthermore, Participant 5 in excerpt 189 states that Setswana too is difficult. Therefore, languages are deemed difficult by participants. Using all the languages in the students' repertoires can be far more beneficial to mediate the difficulty of language just as participants in this study are seen doing during consultations as they switch effortlessly between their languages.

Although the sentiment shared by many participants in this study is that English is the language that all people understand, participants in the interview were made aware of how their languages can also be used as languages for teaching and learning. The interviews seem to raise the awareness of some participants to change their views about the use of their Black South African languages as languages of teaching and learning at university. However, despite the evidence of some changes in the attitudes of some of the interview participants, Participant 16 and Participant 5 maintained that English is the only language that they want to use for teaching in class as they maintained that this approach was in the best interest of all involved and that Black South African languages should be used for other activities such as extra study material, tutoring and so forth. The high status of English perceived as the most preferred language of teaching and learning in higher education in South Africa seems difficult to contest.

5.4.2. Attitudes towards multilingual education

This section looks at the different attitudes held by participants as reported in the different data sets on the use of different languages as LoTL.

5.4.2.1 Attitudes towards Afrikaans as the language of teaching and learning

Perhaps the position of Afrikaans as a language of teaching and learning as mentioned above tells of the influence and status of this language in academia in South Africa. In all the datasets reported in this study, participants at the NWU-PC, a former Afrikaans university prior to the merger in 2004, argue that being taught in classes where lecturers use Afrikaans and where interpretation services are made available into English via headsets, are problematic. The participants report their negative attitudes towards the practice of interpretation in this study (see excerpts 163-166). The participants believe that this practice perpetuates the racial stereotypical societal problem prior to 1994's democratic election where black students at the NWU are marked as "different" from Afrikaans students because they must use headsets for teaching and learning through Afrikaans (Wittezaële, 2008). The practice of interpreting Afrikaans lectures into English is viewed as a remnant that perpetuates the spirit of Apartheid at the institution.

Participants feel that physically some progress towards transformation was made in South Africa in that previously marginalised students can attend university at institutions where they would have not been able to attend because of the racial divide of South Africa prior to 1994. However, the participants in the study feel that the status quo continues structurally. Afrikaans as a language of teaching and learning continues to exert dominance over the classroom experiences of black South African students at the institution to a point where participants call it a superiority complex together with others who view it as a form of exclusion by Afrikaans over South African languages (see excerpts 163-166, section 4.3.). Thus, participants had a negative attitude towards Afrikaans as LoTL. Ironically, this negative attitude towards Afrikaans as LoTL does not translate into a positive attitude towards the use of Black South African languages as LoLT at the institution.

This study focuses on the experiences of black South African students at the NWU. The data from Afrikaans participants (e.g. from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire) are not considered in this study, even though Afrikaans has a large home language speaker community among the students attending the NWU-PC. In this context, one notes that Afrikaans students often request to be taught in Afrikaans. This is in contrast with the attitudes of the black South African students who are the participants under discussion in this thesis. They are not begging to be taught in their indigenous home languages, and they continue to prefer English as main LoTL. In this study, particularly related to findings reported from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire (Figure 44, Chapter 4), 65.9 % (317/481) of the participants state that their preferred language of teaching and learning is English. This positive approach towards English as LoTL prevails despite evidence that the English proficiency of many students who come to universities is not well developed and they therefore enter university as underprepared students who struggle to achieve academic success (Khumalo & Maphalala, 2018; Madadzhe, 2019; Schutte & van Zyl, 2023; Weideman *et al*., 2021; Van Rooy & Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2015). However, in the interview data, Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, interviews and the focus group discussions, participants who became part of the study because they have consulted with their ALDE lecturer (the researcher) while using their Black South African languages, 10 of the 19 participants (52.6%) believe that the LoLT should be English and the home languages at university and there is a general agreement that Black South African languages should be used as LoLT at university alongside English, as expressed in the interviews and focus group discussion.

In 2021, NWU-PC students took to Tik Tok to protest the use of headsets during classes. A similar ordeal occurs on the NWU Facebook page whereby students voice their frustrations with this practice. There has been reports even on news media of protesting against the use of headsets

at the NWU-PC in classes (Nkosi, 2013; Gaanakgomo, 2018). Despite the protests and negative attitudes expressed by NWU-PC students about this practice, even today some classes are interpreted into English from Afrikaans and non-Afrikaans speaking students must listen through headsets. When the call for the decolonization of higher education continues to be echoed in the higher education arena of South Africa (Oyedemi, 2020), perpetual voices of students crying for epistemic social justice (for example, expressed by NWU-PC students who protest the use of headsets and interpretation) is a clear indication of how truculent the higher education system still is when it comes to decolonizing the language of teaching and learning (Mutongoza *et al.*, 2023).

What most students do not like about this arrangement is that they do not trust that the interpretation is exactly what the lecturer said, that there are nuances or small talk that happens in Afrikaans and gets lost in interpretation, and that the University is not doing them a favour by interpreting services for them because they pay a full amount for tuition and deserve to receive tuition in the language of their chose as explained in one of the quotations from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire below:

> [205] [Participant 17] For the majority of the students, English is not our home language. Therefore the Afrikaans speaking people (both lecturers and students alike) should not feel like they're doing us a favour by speaking English. Also, why is it that some courses are only offered in Afrikaans and not English too? The provision of interpretors is inadequate. English should be the medium of instruction as it is a universal language. Why should the Afrikaans speaking students get to learn in their home language and we are not afforded the same chance?

The statement above by a participant echoes a sentiment carried by most of the participants in this study and the attitude they hold regarding Afrikaans as the language of teaching and learning. However, the sentiments above regarding language are contradictory in that the participant says that they want English only and want Afrikaans removed and they want to be afforded the same chance to learn in their home languages as the Afrikaans students. This opinion is one person's expression but holds true to the contradiction of the choice of languages of teaching and learning by participants who do not speak Afrikaans and English only. As a result, most participants outright say that they want classes in English only and that Afrikaans should be removed, and they seldom advocate for the use of their home languages. This happens at the cost of the use of the home languages of Afrikaans students. The attitude that the language of teaching and learning should be English only will be discussed below.

5.4.2.2 Attitudes towards Indigenous South African languages as languages of teaching and learning

When asked about their understanding of functional multilingualism, participants in the study had no idea or had vague ideas about its meaning (see excerpts 144-148). After it was explained to them as 'using all the languages available at the university when it is functional to do so because there are people who can speak and understand the language being used, then that particular language must and can be used at that particular point', all the participants in the interviews encourage the use of functional multilingualism as espoused in the NWU language policy. The NWU language policy's (2022: 1) definition is as follows "functional multilingualism" means that the choice of a particular language in a particular situation is determined by the situation or context in which it is used". The participants fully agreed that indeed if it was possible and necessary to use a certain language at a particular place and time then it should be so. The participants' attitudes towards such an approach were positive, yet they did not elaborate much on it. However, caution was placed on the implementation of this language choice practically in class with Participant 16 stating that currently, the NWU is not doing a good job implementing Setswana and Sesotho in academic contexts, and this was showing that functional multilingualism would be hard to achieve.

The lack of representation of Indigenous South African languages in the lecture halls and teaching and learning in general, as it has been constantly reported in the data as more useful in the social than academic domain fuels the attitudes held by participants towards their inclusion as the languages of teaching and learning. In the interview data, four participants from rural and township schools advocated for the use of English as LoLT instead of the use of their Black South African languages. Participant 5 and Participant 16 said it would be time consuming to use their languages for teaching and learning and that English was best for all involved, while participants 24 and 25 agreed with the latter (see excerpts 162). What has been most interesting in the research of multilingual participants in the South African context about the use of their languages for teaching and learning is that they are against the use of Afrikaans as a language of teaching and learning, but they are supportive of the idea that English is the preferred LoLT. Participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire for the ALDE population also said that it would be best to be taught in English only and to remove Afrikaans as an LoLT option completely. The attitude of the most participants is not for their languages to be promoted, but instead they prefer English, and they advocate for the removal of Afrikaans instead.

In the focus group discussion and some of the personal interviews, the students went as far as to lament the fact that them receiving their high school teaching in some home language is the

reason why their English is poor at university (see excerpt 19, Chapter 4). Participants from rural and township schools complain that the level of English proficiency used in high school was not adequate to prepare them to using English only in tertiary education. This concern was mostly voiced by students from township and village schools. The students who also came from government schools that are situated in towns or suburbs and are considered former Model C schools did not experience problems with their English and did not experience the transition from high school to university as problematic when it came to the use of language. These participants also mentioned that they could speak and understand Afrikaans, something that the village and township schools had no grasp of. The level of their English proficiency, as well as their ability to understand some Afrikaans, gave the participants from the former Model C schools an advantage in navigating the NWU-PC because of the history of this university with the use of Afrikaans that still permeates the corridors and offices of the university and lecture halls.

As noted above, these attitudes position African languages in a precarious position. The African languages are used by the participants during consultations, but the same participants do not outright advocate for their use as languages of teaching and learning. They see their languages as a good tool to use for social inclusion and cohesion and as less useful for education. This is contrary to Afrikaans students who view their languages as languages of teaching and learning and thus a language of power beyond the social sphere. African languages need to extend beyond the private and move towards the public, especially as languages of teaching and learning. How to achieve this shift in attitudes and status of the African languages is a major question.

In as much as most of the participants in the study advocated for the use of English only as LoTL, there were some students who said they would not mind being taught in their languages. The majority said their languages can be used for supporting lessons or lecturing in the form of tutoring, extra reading material, PowerPoint slides and so forth. However, very few of the participants want to be taught in their languages exclusively. The majority want their languages to supplement English as main LoTL. This finding is in line with the findings reported about the nature of the language repertoires of the participating students. Most of the participants learned through their languages and English at high school, with their home languages used to support English. They see value in using their home languages as part of the constellation of languages used as LoTL thus, their attitude towards their languages used as complementary LoTL with English is positive.

5.4.2.3 Attitudes towards English as a medium of instruction

English is favorably mentioned as the language that should be used for teaching and learning. In the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, more than 65% of the participants said that they would like to be taught in English only (Figure 44, Chapter 4), while 21.1% from Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire said they would prefer being taught in English only (Figure 37). Even though English is the LoTL for many of the participants, the Language Repertoire Questionnaire exposes the fact that in practice, it was not always their LoTL before participants came to university. In primary schools in South Africa, learners are taught in their home languages until Grade 3 and then they switch to English as a medium of instruction from Grade 4 (Boakye, 2015:137; Hibbert, 2010). This has been hailed as a disadvantage for the black South African majority who switch to English only classes at grade 4, at a time where they have not fully learned their home languages (Desai, 2001). Despite the criticism against this approach, the state of the education system continues to be the same. This situation also prompts the teachers in secondary schools (and those in primary schools) to mitigate this gap or this abrupt switch from the home languages to English by codeswitching during lessons (Probyn, 2009; Mbambo-Marimirofa *et al.*, 2023; Selemela, 2020) or as recently, translanguaging (Makalela, 2014; McKinney & Tyler, 2024). This is because Cummins (2008) advocates for the best time to switch languages (after seven years when the learners have been fully immersed in their languages to be able to add another language to achieve BICS and CALP) but switching mostly takes place at Grade 4. Thus, most learners are underprepared for participating in their studies fully in English only from primary, to high school and all the way into university.

So, for most South African students, the use of English only is deemed detrimental. Even though research has pointed to the detriment of English only as LoTL, most of the participants are in favour of it as is evidenced from most the data sets reported in this thesis (see for example Figure 44). The overwhelming support for English as LoTL is related to the participant's views that English is perceived as the language of work, as a language understood by most people in South Africa and some participants even added that the use of English was good for inclusion of international students at the NWU-PC as well.

5.4.2.4. Attitudes towards Setswana as a language of teaching and learning

Most participants in the interviews and focus group discussion do feel that receiving extra teaching materials in Setswana would be beneficial for them. During the interview, Participant 4 said explicitly that she would not mind being taught in Setswana and the focus group went on to explain that she would appreciate an interpreter present when she goes to consult because she struggles with English (see excerpt 133). The general attitudes of the Setswana home language

participants in the interviews, focus group discussion and the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire were that Setswana cannot be used as a LoTL exclusively. Some participants expressed the level of difficulty of Setswana as a language in words such as Participant 5 in an interview in excerpt 192 saying "**se popota**" [*it* (Setswana) *is tough*]. The same participant also spoke about terminology as an issue, but she mostly advocated for English only as time-solving solution even though she self-identified as a Setswana speaker (see excerpt 174).

The participants in the interviews acknowledged that Setswana as a language is difficult, and they may not be able to follow teaching and learning if it was done exclusively in Setswana. However, Participant 4 says she would be able to take tests, be taught, and do a lot of educational stuff in Setswana. Participant 4 is from a rural village in the North West, so her comprehension and command of the language may be higher than that of participants from more urban and township areas (see excerpt 197). Participant 14, a Sepedi speaker, just like Participant 4 said he would be able to take classes in Sepedi because he did it in high school (see excerpt 196). Therefore, some participants believe that multilingual education can have positive educational benefits for them. They have a positive attitude about the use of indigenous South African languages and multilingualism at their university.

The two participants who were from urban areas (Pretoria and Heidelberg) and who attended affluent schools when compared to their counterparts who mostly attended township schools, advocated for teaching in the African languages of the students during the individual interviews. Their view was that Setswana can be used as a language of teaching and learning just as Afrikaans had been used. This is a positive outlook at the issue because they could see Afrikaans as a positive example that can guide the planning and execution of indigenous South African languages as languages of teaching and learning. The township students wanted to be taught in English only and the village student also advocated for the use of the home language and not English. The township students pointed out the problem of the type of language that is deemed home language to them because of the diverse nature of their backgrounds and surroundings; whilst the village participant also pointed to the fact that she was taught in Setswana at high school and would therefore do well being taught in the same language at (see excerpt 182).

However, it is important to note that when students were asked in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire for the ALDE population why the university should include African languages, the most prominent response to the question was that it fosters social inclusion and respect for diversity. Students saw the value of their languages being included as a sign of being welcomed, an aspect that most students argue is not reflected in their experience at the NWU-PC (see

excerpts138-153). The students feel that Afrikaans as a language is used to exclude them and thus the use of their languages would make them feel included. Very few of the students related the need for the use of language for conceptualisation or the structuring of arguments in the academic context as shown in the analysis of the consultation data.

5.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has situated the main findings reported in Chapter 4 within the relevant literature to draw conclusions that would provide answers to the research questions posed in this study. In this chapter, the findings related to three of the sub-questions asked for in the study have been answered by interpreting and situating the findings from Chapter 4 within the body of the existing literature:

- What is the nature of the language repertoire of the students at the NWU-PC?
- How do students use their languages during consultations to deepen understanding?
- What are the attitudes of the participants towards multilingual education?

The data from the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire and both the interview and focus group discussion as shown above has proven that multilingualism is a norm for these South African participants. There is also evidence that literacy is embedded in the home language and English for the participants.

Concerning the consultations, participants consulted using all the languages in the repertoire to make meaning. The languages were used for serious academic inquiries such as conceptualisation and structure, which required HOT skills from the participants. Examples of cognitive and metacognitive uses of language were employed in which the participants had to think and think about their thinking in relation to what they would write in the assignment. They also consulted for other more administrative issues such as submission arrangements, marks and group dynamics which required LOT skills during the discussion using English and their languages. Lastly, they used a social approach to language to discuss other things such as their involvement and marks in other modules, personal matters and non-academic things and this solidified the use of African language as languages of social interaction. Indigenous South African languages are used and should be encouraged for HOT skills instead of just as useful languages for LOT skills. The use of languages during the consultation sessions analysed for this study proved Black South African languages are used as LoTL by these participants and through the use of the Black South African languages, deepening of the understanding of academic matters is achieved.

Participants are not very knowledgeable about the language policy of NWU. This makes them vulnerable as they do not know details of the language arrangements at the NWU-PC and therefore do not know what is permissible and what is not. Policy awareness campaigns are conducted at the NWU-PC, and there is evidence that some of the participants did get useful information and knowledge about the language policy of the institution at these events. However, these events do not seem to be working effectively. More needs to be done in language awareness and to provide opportunities for staff and students at the NWU-PC to gain knowledge and information about the language policy of the institution. Although participants are multilingual as is shown in the language repertoire data in the interviews and the focus group discussion, they hardly use their languages for teaching and learning, hardly see it represented on campus, and therefore do not regard it as a language of teaching and learning. Participants do not want to be taught solely in their languages because they have no reference point for that happening in their career. Even though they use their languages during consultations, they are not confident in being taught through their home languages exclusively. The participants prefer an approach where English is used in tandem with their home languages as LoTL.

In Chapter 6, the conclusions and recommendations that follow from the presentation of the findings in Chapter 4 and the discussion and interpretation of the findings in Chapter 5 are presented.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

This research study undertook to investigate how students use their indigenous South African languages to deepen their understanding of their academic work. The study looked at the NWU-PC English academic literacy students who came to consult with their lecturer (also the researcher) using their Black South African languages and asked them questions regarding their language use and its relevance to policy implementation at the institution. Some of the students who consulted using their Black South African Languages completed an online questionnaire, some were interviewed and from those interviewed, some attended a focus group discussion. In addition, an online questionnaire was distributed to all the NWU-PC participants who wished to participate, although it was intended for ALDE (English-only) academic literacy students. In this chapter, the conclusions, contributions to the body of work related to multilingualism and multilingual language policy in higher education, and recommendations that emanate from the major findings of the study are presented.

6.2. Major findings

The major findings from the study will be related to the research questions posed in the study.

6.2.1. Multilingual repertoires of students

Considering the nature of the language repertoires of the participants, two themes emerged from the data: most participants are multilingual, and most participants used their Black South African Languages alongside English throughout the school system.

Multilingual repertoires of participants

The reality of the higher education system of South Africa is multilingual. The students who enter institutions of higher education are highly multilingual. This is true for the NWU-PC participants in this study, and in the data from other universities that show that the students are highly multilingual. The NWU-PC as a campus of the NWU is not different from other NWU campuses as the study shows. This study showed that the NWU-PC participants have a variety of languages in their language repertoire and that they are not equally competent in those languages when they reflected on their perceptions of their proficiency in different skills.

Setswana, as one of the official NWU-PC languages, is a prominent indigenous language on the campus, as it is in the North West Province as well. English, the main language of teaching and learning of the participants in the study, is not a prominent home language of the participants, except for one participant who reported in the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire that English is their home language and an additional language (a contradictory response that could not be interpreted deeply with the information available from the study). However, English is the undisputed additional language of the Setswana home language participants. For the home language speakers of indigenous African languages, Afrikaans was not included as a prominent language in their repertoires. Afrikaans is a prominent home language of students on the campus and of the participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, but the focus of this study was on the home language users of other Black South African Languages (Setswana, Sesotho and isiZulu) among the participants in the consultations and all the data collected thereafter.

Setswana and the other languages from the Sotho language group (Sesotho and Sepedi, and even sometimes Sepitori) were used the most by participants when they came to consult. Setswana was the most prominent language used by participants during the consultation sessions. Another language used during the consultation and that had a sizable home language representation in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire was isiZulu. IsiZulu was also used during the consultation sessions. Consultation participants also included slang (mostly Afrikaans words, and sometimes Sepitori). Some of the consultation participants switched between three or four languages in one sentence. The prevalence of slang and switching in three or more languages was rare.

From the findings related to the nature of the language repertoires of the participants, one can infer that the indigenous South African languages, particularly Setswana, should be used more for teaching and learning as participants report using it mostly in informal settings and outside the lecture halls, especially at the NWU-PC as espoused in the NWU language policy (2022). Using the indigenous South African languages can help students deepen their understanding, as was illustrated during the consultation sessions analysed for this study. Pedagogies such as codeswitching and translanguaging, that allow for the use of languages by the students, are highly recommended.

Multilingual educational background

The data showed the multilingual nature of the student's repertoire, and it was evident that participants in this study were not only multilingual, but most of them were also from multilingual school backgrounds. The participants had mostly attended primary schools where their home languages were used prominently in their education, seemingly far more than English. The

situation changed when they got to secondary schools where their languages were used less than in primary schools and English was used more prominently. This reality, that home languages and English were used as languages of teaching and learning during the school experiences of the participants, was particularly true for the interview participants where seven out of the ten participants indicated that they were from public rural and township schools where the home language and English were used concurrently. Only three of the interview participants were from public urban schools where English was more prominent as a language of teaching and learning.

The reality of the participants in this study is that most of them came from schooling backgrounds where the use of the home language and English was the norm in the teaching and learning context. When they arrived at university, they adapted to using English only as their language of tuition challenging and most students struggled with the demands of academic English at university. The way that the participants in this study coped was to use their languages alongside English to make meaning. All the languages in their repertoire were used complementary when they engaged in the consultation sessions analysed for this study. This practice showed the power of a multilingual repertoire when it is used as a resource rather than a barrier. None of the students who consulted spoke in English or only in their Black South African Languages. They used a multiplicity of languages even though it was clear from the data what a participant's most dominant language was and what the additional languages in their repertoire were. English was present in the consultation sessions and other data sets as well. It was perceived as the targeted language in which the assessment was to be written, or the module was presented.

In conclusion, the nature of the language repertoires of the students at the NWU is multilingual. The participants in the study are competent in the home language and English is perceived as the second strongest language. The language constellations of the participants are that they can perform language tasks in their first languages and English very well. The participants in the study self-report that they have basic literacy skills in their languages alongside English, therefore, multilingual pedagogies in the university should take this into account.

6.2.2. Consultation to deepen understanding

Multilingual participants as explained above partook in the study. Those who came to consult with their lecturer used their multilingual language repertoire to deepen their understanding of the academic matters they focused on in the consultation session. A few themes emerged from their use of multilingual language repertoires to deepen understanding during consultations, and those themes will be discussed below.

Conceptualisation and structure (Higher Order Thinking Academic Literacy skills)

Participants in the study showed that indigenous South African languages can also be used for teaching and learning. They demonstrated this by mainly coming to consult using their languages alongside English to understand the assignment. Using their many languages alongside English provided a demonstration of how these multilingual student participants at the NWU-PC use their repertoires to advance their academic understanding.

The participants used their languages to conceptualise and structure the assignment (and the arguments presented in the assignment) and this was at a level of higher-order thinking (HOT) skills if one considers Bloom's taxonomy as a framework. The description of how the participants used their Black South African Languages during consultation sessions illustrated the viability of using students' languages for academic success. This finding is relevant in advocating for transforming the current academic literacy modules offered at the NWU into a more academic literacy or multiliteracies approach that views all the languages of the students as a resource rather than a hindrance in their academic journeys. Allowing the students to use their languages even in class and other teaching and learning environments such as assessments and presentations can activate the HOT skills needed by students to advance academically. This autonomous model of literacy destroys the logic of using only English or Afrikaans as a definer and carrier of knowledge and advocates that a multiplicity of modes and multiliteracy or multilingualism in education can be helpful for students who are deemed underprepared for university. This is because the students in their first year at university are not used to an education system where English is used as the only language of teaching and learning; and because there is evidence that their English proficiency needs more support if these languages are to become the most prominent languages of teaching and learning at university for these students.

The process of using Indigenous South African languages academically was student-centered, as they initiated the switching of languages in the consultations. This social constructivist approach to learning is in tune with the twenty-first century learner-centred teaching and learning whereby the learner is a contributor to the knowledge creation and sharing (Amineh & Asl, 2015) instead of just a receiver of knowledge. Participants use this strategy of applying more than one language in their thinking process to ask, explain, argue, and so forth. They use different approaches such as translanguaging, transliteration, coining, and borrowing to illustrate their point. Moreover, the most important thing is that in the convergence of all the above in a multiplicity of languages, logic, sense, and clarity are maintained. They are not speaking gibberish just because it is multiple languages, but instead, they are clear, intentional and purposeful in their statements.

Submission, marks, unrelated matters & group work dynamics (Lower Order Thinking Academic Literacy skills)

While the most important motivations for consultation were HOT academic literacy skills (conceptualisation and structure), many of the issues discussed during consultation related to LOT academic literacy skills. These LOT academic literacy skills were about topics such as submission, marks, personal issues, other non-related content issues, and group work dynamics. Participants still used their languages to ask general questions about things like marks, and assessment due dates, and talk a little about what interests them. The use of home languages together with English clarifies any misconceptions and avoids misunderstandings. This is necessary because, in Bloom's taxonomy, things like remembering and recalling information or restating information are what LOT skills focus on. It was the same during group discussions. Discussing these topics does not require higher levels of cognition, yet participants still used their languages to discuss them, especially to enquire about dates and marks. Participants also used their languages for a LOT of academic skills to explain matters unrelated to the module.

What consultations in the languages of the participants together with English show is that language and its use bear an emotional and attitudinal implication for the users. The use of language has the power to evoke good or bad emotions and thus, the choice to use a language has a bearing far beyond the mere speaking of a language. When asked how speaking in their languages made them feel, interview participants mentioned positive emotions such as confidence, comfort, and happiness which are necessary for stimulating an interesting and engaging conversation. However, some participants expressed that speaking in their languages made them feel positive emotions such as a sense of exclusion, disconnection and not being confident. It is in this ambiguity that some participants explain that speaking in their languages often makes them feel both included and excluded. This study therefore contributes to the large findings about the perplexity of the use of Black South African languages at university.

This ambiguity is expressed in words such as:

> [115] Participant 4: … sometimes **o, o fila** [*you, you feel*] good, **o fila sharpo gore** [*you feel good that*] no, **ke buile** [*I spoke*] and **o ntlhalogantse** [*he/she understood me*].
> Interviewer: **Ehe. Ke utlwagetse** [*Yes. I was heard*].
> Participant 4: And then there are sometimes **mo e leng gore, motho yo buang le ene ga a go understande** [*where you see that the person you are speaking to does not understand you*], so **o feela** [*you feel*] bad **gore** [*that*] maybe **ke a mo offenda** [*I am offending them*].

Speaking multiple languages at university is a contestation of space and a negotiation of identity. It is political and can be used as a character builder or breaker. One needs to tread with care when

using a multiplicity of languages as it can be a symbol of inclusion or exclusion. This level of sensitivity to language use as expressed by participants shows that being multilingual also involves emotional intelligence and social wellbeing of utmost care.

In conclusion, it is a fact that participants use their languages to deepen understanding. They do so through complex structures and clear intentions. The participants cited a few reasons why they switch in their speech such as the interlocutor or the receiver, the comfort and freedom it brings and the fact that they want to be understood (clarity). Expressing themselves in one language may be a hindrance since the participants expressed in the data that speaking English is not their strongest point. The participants in the study through different languages were able to use their other languages to deepen understanding by achieving HOT in multiple languages, and they also used their languages for the LOT to understand, clarify, explain and so forth. An interesting element of the use of language is the social discussions that happen through the multiplicity of languages. Participants spoke about social aspects of their lives, ranging from other university-related matters and non-academic aspects of their lives. The use of African languages continues to break the barrier and challenge the structural place of these languages in the school setting as mostly construed as outside activity as the academe works in formulating ways to bring it to the class and formal activities. Although consultations are semi-formal, the formal part which was the discussion about the assignment was inherently formal and African languages were very instrumental in the discussions.

6.2.3. Language attitudes

When it comes to the NWU multilingual language policy most participants seem to advocate for an English-only policy and a removal of Afrikaans. Very few participants advocate for the use of their Black South African languages only (excluding the Afrikaans participants in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire).

To conclude on the reasons why students came to consult, it is evident as has been the intention of this section to show that students use their Black South African languages during consultations alongside English. This is done to deepen understanding of the academic matters that they are consulting about, be it on the structure or the conceptualisation of the tasks and other less academic topics. What is of great importance here is that using different languages can help students, especially with complex tasks such as an assignment and students prove that there are benefits to using their languages for such tasks. This pedagogy can be extended further, and the university has put in place some measures to do so. However, different role players are not fully involved in this task, especially lecturers. Policy awareness should target lecturers and

measures need to be put in place to train and prepare the lecturers to undertake the mammoth task of multilingual functional policy implementation. More participants should be involved as participants express that often the resistance is from lecturers who insist that they speak only English even though both the lecturer and the students are conversant in other languages. The Afrikaans lecturers and students are active in conversing in Afrikaans as per language policy stipulation and therefore lecturers and students should do the same in African languages as this too is stipulated in the policy. Relevant strategies such as transliteration or translanguaging can be appropriately used alongside the use of glossaries and videos that are already in circulation.

Knowledge of policy

Most of the participants did not know about the NWU multilingual language policy. Therefore, it was not surprising that they did not know that their languages should indeed be used in teaching and learning and they believed that their lecturers do not know this either. As a result, most participants attacked the use of Afrikaans as a language of teaching and learning as used by its speakers instead of advocating for their languages. Because of their lack of knowledge of the NWU language policy, the participants thought that Afrikaans being used as a language of teaching and learning was an unfair practice instead of understanding that this is included in a multilingual policy and even more so, advocating for the use of their Black South African languages which are also provided for by policy.

Theme: Negative Attitudes

When participants in the study speak about the subjugation that comes with using Afrikaans with terms such as inferiority and superiority (see excerpts 163-166 in Chapter 4), the awareness of students' reality cannot be dismissed in a quest to state that an institution is transformed. Transformation still needs to be implemented in this area because it is an unfair practice as voiced out by the recipients of the interpreted classes. The participants stated that they do not want headsets, yet the practice continues. Students most likely to receive interpreted classes are black students because the interpretation of classes mainly happens from Afrikaans to English. Perhaps the study does not do a comprehensive analysis of the implications of removing Afrikaans interpretations from English classes as is the status quo at the NWU-PC currently because this has a bearing on things such as capacity and equity employment, which are far beyond the scope of this study. However, bearing in mind the statistics of enrolment at the NWU and NWU-PC where most of the students are black students, conversations on the support of students from all possible angles are key. The participants' unwillingness to easily agree with inclusion as being welcomed into an institution and demanding their voices and plight to be heard is fair when reflecting on the nature of the inability of the institutions to transform as seen by

students. The fact that for more than ten years students have complained about headsets and yet the implementation of this practice continues shows little transformation of the institution on this issue. Most participants in this study stated that there is no inclusion of their languages, and that Afrikaans must be removed as a language of teaching and learning at the institution while English must be made the only language of teaching and learning.

Language awareness is necessary in promoting inclusion, from policy inclusion to practice and implementation. The more people are aware of the policy, the more they might want to implement it and promote it. Awareness is necessary in inviting them to think of more possibilities of what participants' languages can be used for and how they can be included. Based on the findings reported in this study, it seems that the use of Black South African languages thrives in the public sphere in informal settings at the institution (Table 33, Chapter 4). Insights from the participating students in this study indicate that it might be worthwhile to create further studies to find out from students how the use of Black South African languages could be encouraged to thrive in academic settings rather than only in social settings. We should not assume what students need because then we assume the role of superiority and subjugate the students.

Positive attitudes

Some participants had a positive attitude about the use of their Black South African languages as reported in the Language Repertoire questionnaire, but the majority said that they preferred being taught in English only. More participants presented positive attitudes to being taught in their languages when they responded to the Individual Language Repertoire questionnaire, as well as when they were interviewed. In the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, seventeen of the nineteen responses said they think their languages should be included as languages of teaching and learning. Of the ten participants interviewed, six of them were positive about the use of their languages for teaching and learning and encouraged it. These were participants who had used their languages for consultations, and they expressed that speaking in their languages made them feel confident, heard, free, and comfortable among other reasons. Some interview participants who agreed with the use of their languages said it could be used just as Afrikaans are, terminology can be created and teaching and learning in the languages can be normalised.

Ambivalent attitudes

Some participants expressed concerns about implementing many languages as languages of teaching and learning as espoused by the language policy of the NWU. These participants expressed a positive attitude to the implementation of multilingualism at the institution, but they also had reservations about how this would be implemented practically to not exclude students who do not understand all the languages. Participant 5 exemplifies this when she said the

university can implement its policy, but it will not be good for all involved (excerpt 174 in section 4.3.3).

In this section, the discussion on language attitudes of participants towards multilingualism was discussed. The general findings prove that in the Language Repertoire Questionnaire, participants who had not been recorded using their languages for the study said that they preferred English only as a medium of instruction, even though the majority attended schools using all their available languages. In the data from the Individual Language Repertoire Questionnaire, the interviews, and the focus group, the participants (who consulted with the ALDE lecturer and were audio-recorded for the study) were willing to consider their languages being included in teaching and learning because more than fifty percent said that the university should use all South African languages in teaching and learning. Fewer said English-only classes are ideal. The participants did not like the interpretation of Afrikaans classes into English because they had to wear headsets while Afrikaans-speaking students did not. The headset situation created a negative attitude towards Afrikaans as LoTL. The university should consider some of the issues raised under language attitudes to change the status quo and allow students who feel excluded to feel included.

6.3. Summary of the study

The intellectualisation of indigenous South African languages in higher education has been a transformation agenda key point. It has been pushed by mainstream academia and encouraged, yet it has not yet been embraced by the students, who are the intended recipients of such an education. The argument I make in this study is that students use their Black South African languages as pointed out in Chapters 4 and 5 above to make meaning. The students' translanguaging and multilingual use of the languages in their repertoires is unavoidable, keeping the nature of their repertoires into consideration.

Through this research study, participants were made aware of the ways that they use languages academically to make meaning, albeit at a micro level of consultation interactions. Participants need to be drawn to the beauty and power of their languages instead of being made to feel that their languages are inferior and that speaking their languages is a sign of weakness and incompetence. The richness of their repertories should be embraced, encouraged, and used effectively to garner access to academic success. Thus, at the policy level, the NWU has done great in putting on paper the necessary elements to ensure that a multilingual policy is envisioned. Like many other higher education institutions in South Africa (and globally), multilingual policy implementation remains a challenge. The language awareness programs that

are offered annually at the NWU provide a good start to making students aware of the importance of their multilingual repertoire. First-year student reception and orientation programs are also appropriate intersection spaces where incoming students could be made aware of the multilingual language policy of the institution. The NWU started with initiatives to train academic staff to implement multilingual pedagogies (see Wildsmith-Cromarty *et al*., 2022 for a discussion of the short learning programs available at the NWU). However, in my view, this course has not been thoroughly marketed, and a small number of staff have participated in it to date. The NWU would do well to create opportunities where academic members of staff could present work where they explain how they implemented a multilingual pedagogy in their teaching and learning and what worked well and what did not work well. Learning from other academic members of staff could be a way to market and present research and practices on multilingual pedagogies at the NWU more effectively.

6.4. The study's contribution

The main contribution of this study is a direct investigation into the use of Black South African languages by multilingual students in office consultations about academic literacy assignments with their lecturer. The bulk of the studies on multilingual pedagogies in schools and higher education in South Africa has focused on how teachers or lecturers use multilingual pedagogies (see the work of Antia *et al.*, 2021; Gambushe, 2015; Madiba, 2014; Mbiri-Hungwe, 2019; Probyn, 2019; Schafer, 2010) and this benefits the students. Some studies focus on how students use the languages in their repertoires to make meaning in academic settings (see for example Van der Walt & Dornbrack, 2011), but more research that analyses how students use their multilingual resources to advance their academic understanding should be done.

This study's contribution is in its analysis of the use of black South African languages by multilingual students during consultations with the lecturer. This area is largely under-researched or unreported, and it is a vital way in which students at university can be allowed to use their languages positively for HOT academic skills that assist them in making meaning of their assessments and other academic work. From this study, the use of multilingual resources assisted the participants in this study eliminating misunderstanding and ambiguity when they planned for the writing of their assignment the most because they gained the necessary information using their Black South African languages. The same applies to the use of indigenous South African languages alongside English for LOT academic literacy skills when consulting about marks and submission or when discussing general things that impact the lives of students. When

it comes to LOT academic literacy skills, using one's language as the students in this study illustrated helps with thorough understanding and clarity. It also ensures full participation.

6.5 Limitations of the study

This study has focused on how African languages are used by participants to deepen understanding. There are a few limitations to this study.

1. Participants: This study focused on the students at the NWU-PC and only students who were doing ALDE were used in the study. This means that those who were doing ALDA, the same module as ALDE but done in Afrikaans were not included.
2. The data shows a sample of students speaking mostly in the Sotho language groups and the Nguni language group as the languages from both groups are familiar to the researcher/lecturer. Students speaking other South African languages such as Tshivenda and Xitsonga are not present because the lecturer does not have participants speaking in those languages coming to consult in their languages. Students who speak these two languages are the minority in terms of the demographics of the data, but the lecturer/researcher would have had difficulty if they had come to consult in their languages. This reiterates the point that participants used their languages because their lecturer could understand them.
3. The study focuses on the function of languages and not micro linguistics. This element (a micro-linguistic analysis of the language used during consultations) is absent from the data analysis. A micro-linguistic analysis of the transcriptions and translations of the consultation data gathered for this study could be done in future and could provide additional insights into the use of Black South African languages in the higher education context.

Therefore, the study is a case of the NWU, particularly NWU-PC; and how the scenarios played out during consultations may not be the same on other NWU campuses and other universities in South Africa. Similarly, the languages present in the repertoire of the students may not be the same in other campuses of the NWU or other South African universities. However, generally, South African universities have a very multilingual student body as reported in other studies.

6.6. Recommendations

For students and lecturers at the NWU, more language awareness projects should be targeted towards them to embrace their multilingual language repertories and encourage their use in

teaching and learning. It should not be about making them aware of the fact that their languages are part of the university through the NWU language policy, but it should also be to instill pride in their languages and encourage ownership for the betterment, intellectualisation and use of their languages.

Lecturers who are non-Afrikaans speaking should be encouraged to use their languages in the lecture halls and consultations with students just as the English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking lecturers do. Interpretation services should be provided for such instances where the Indigenous African-speaking lecturer uses their languages on campus or in class. This means that there should be interpreters who can interpret in African languages to English just as there are those who interpret from Afrikaans to English. This would encourage the use of African languages in teaching and learning and would include most students who often keep quiet in class because of language insecurities. Students and lecturers should be encouraged to use translanguaging as a pedagogy. Students and lecturers should be made aware of how using multiple languages opens epistemological access and adheres to the NWU language policy. Also, an investigation into interpreting from English or African languages into Afrikaans in relevant cases should be done. In other words, where there are more users of English in a module, interpretation could be considered into Afrikaans to continue the long history of Afrikaans education at the NWU in a sensible way.

Some of the recommendations that emerged from the study are that 1) There should be interpreters in lecturers' offices to interpret what the students are saying during consultations as this is one of the reasons why they do not go to consult (excerpts 130-132 in Chapter 4). 2)Translanguaging pedagogies such as students and lecturers interpreting what the student just said to the rest of the class should be encouraged and practiced (excerpt 195, Chapter 4). Employing more black indigenous South African language speakers and short courses in those languages for non-speakers should receive more attention.

Because the lecturers will not readily know how to use their languages together with the ones they have been using for teaching and learning, programs that teach them how to do it should be encouraged and made visible (marketed better). Evans (2011) writes on creating such a course to teach upcoming teachers how to include multilingual pedagogies when they are in class. Similarly, Wildsmith-Cromarty *et al.* (2022) discuss the availability of such a course at the NWU and the attitudes of those who participated (employed staff) on the use of multilingualism and the linguistic diversity of students. Universities should encourage their staff but also train them

because the assumption that lecturers will automatically know how to use multilingual pedagogies such as translanguaging is far from reality.

More lecturers and practitioners already using their languages should report on the different multilingual strategies they are currently using and their impact on their students so that there may be enough evidence for such practices at universities and encourage proper pedagogical development and absorption of their styles into teaching and learning. The lecturers or practitioners need not only be from language studies/linguistics or the humanities but should be from different fields of study where multilingual pedagogies are implemented. Something as minute as consultations in African languages may be considered irrelevant to mainstream teaching and learning. Still, it contributes to the use of the Black South African languages of students to deepen academic understanding, an issue of contention in higher education.

6.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, universities in South Africa have multilingual language policies that have been criticised for lack of or slow implementation. This study showed that the participating students in the NWU are very multilingual. It also showed how these participants used their languages during the consultation to deepen their understanding. Creating a culture and climate where academic consultation sessions can be done multilingually is one way of implementing policy - allowing students to use their Black South African languages in areas such as consultations with lecturers. Such practices should be encouraged as understanding the assessment requirements is crucial to the success of written assessments. In addition, these multilingual spaces would also open opportunities for students to address non-academic matters that impact their lives (including their academic progress). From such a practice, a lecturer can help students and find out what they mostly struggle with and address these matters when engaging with the entire class in formal lecture settings. The lecturers and students who implement these multilingual practices demonstrate how effective and important this approach is to deepen academic understanding and create welcoming and open spaces where multilingual South African students feel at home. Universities in South Africa should become places where multilingual students have a sense of belonging.

Participant 4 summarises the struggle of South African students using English only at university as such:

> Participant 4: Like really. It's like we are doing English in Afrikaans, **mare** [*but*] it's English. It's so … It's so, **deermekaar** [*complicated*], complicated, whatever. It's, it's … it's not real. **Ekare ke Afrikaanse mare ke Englishe. E** [*It's like Afrikaans, but it is English. It is*] …

When it comes to the interventions made that use African languages at university, may they be purposeful, intentional relevant and fulfilling. Content in the African languages at this point should not be created to tick boxes to say we did it but should serve to minimise the struggle exemplified above. Participant 16 when speaking about available materials in Setswana at the NWU such as the library videos stated the following about current interventions:

> Participant 16: **Aga! Wa bona ba, ba se berekisa** [*Ah! You see that they use it*] like **mo dilo tse di** [*on things that are*] …**Tse, tse, tse re sa di tseneng. Ba isa Setswana kgakala. Kwa. Ai** [*That, that, that we are not involving ourselves in/we do not go into. They take Setswana far. Over there. No*]!

However, it is also important to acknowledge the great work that the NWU has done in creating a space where students' languages can be used effectively through its Language Policy document (2022). The university has also done great things in advancing this multilingual language policy as explained in the excerpt below:

> Participant 9: Some lecturers are doing it.
> Interviewer**: Go a flickara** [*It is flickering*] somewhere.
> Participant 9: There's a spark somewhere.

From the findings in this study, the NWU has made some strides in the direction of implementing a multilingual language policy. It is also clear that more should be done to advance this very important endeavour.

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Appendix A: Language Repertoire Questionnaire

Biographical information

1. How old are you?

Younger than 18	18-21	22-30	31-above

2. Which year of study are you in?

A first time 1st year	2nd year student	3rd year or above student

3. Which province do you come from?

North west	Free State	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	kwaZulu Natal	Eastern Cape	Northern cape	Western Cape	Other

General language use

4. Which of the following is your home language/first language? One's home language is the one that you use at home MOST of the time.

English	Afrikaans	Setswana	Sesotho	isiZulu	isiXhosa	Sepedi	Tshivenda	Siswati	isiNdebele	Xitsonga

5. Do you use other languages regularly (daily) at home? Please write in the names of the additional languages that you use at home?

_____

6. We do not know all the languages that we know at the same level of proficiency. In your opinion, what is your strongest language? The language that you feel most proficient in? What is your second strongest language etc. How well can you speak, read, write and understand the languages that you know?

Language	Write in the name of the language	Speak					Read					Write					Understand				
		Very well	Well enough	Moderately	Poorly	Very poorly	Very well	Well enough	Moderately	Poorly	Very poorly	Very well	Well enough	Moderately	Poorly	Very poorly	Very well	Well enough	Moderately	Poorly	Very poorly
Strongest language																					
2nd strongest																					

language																				
3rd strongest language																				
4th strongest language																				
5th strongest language																				

7. Which language do you use for the following activities?

Activity	English only	Predominantly English	Language 1 only	Predominantly language 1	More than one language
Reading					
Emailing					
Texting					
Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.)					
Watching TV/ listening to radio					
Browsing on the Internet					
Praying					

Educational language use

8. While in your school career these activities were carried out in which languages? Tick the relevant column.

8.1. Pre-school (crèche or at home)

	English only	Home language only	English and home language	More than 2 languages at once	I can't remember

Informal activities on the school ground					
Teaching and learning (classroom activities)					
Tests, examination and all other assessments					
Studying with classmates (group work in class / after school)					

8.2. Primary school

	English only	Home language only	English and home language	More than 2 languages at once	I can't remember
Informal activities on the school ground					
Teaching and learning (classroom activities)					
Tests, examination and all other assessments					
Studying with classmates (group work in class / after school)					

8.3. Secondary/high school

	English only	Home language only	English and home language	More than 2 languages at once	I can't remember
Informal activities on the school ground					
Teaching and learning					
Tests, examination and					

all other assessments (classroom activities)					
Studying with classmates (group work in class / after school)					

University

NWU language policy

9. Are you familiar with the NWU Language policy?

Yes	No

10. Please summarise the NWU language policy in a sentence or two.

11. Do you think that languages other than English and Afrikaans are included and represented well on the NWU-Potchefstroom Campus?

Not represented at all	Represented to a small extent	Moderately represented	Mostly represented	Completely and equally represented

12. Elaborate on your answer above

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

13. Where did you learn about the NWU Language policy? If you do not know about the NWU language policy (you answered NO above – you are NOT familiar with the policy), please tick the relevant block.

I am NOT familiar with the NWU language policy	The NWU website	NWU Language awareness activities	Orientation (brochures)	Lecturer/in the faculty	Management announcements/ notices	Fellow students	Media (radio, TV, other)	I can't remember	Other

Multilingual education

14. Do you think NWU has a responsibility towards multilingual education in South Africa?

YES	NO	NOT SURE

15. Elaborate on your answer above.

.....
.....
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.....
.....
.....

16. Where do you often/ normally see the multilingual representation of other languages than English and Afrikaans on Potchefstroom Campus?

During teaching and learning	Assessment (e.g. assignment instructions, tests, exam papers)	On signage and boards	Amongst people in informal conversations	Amongst people in formal settings	Official university communication (eFundi, NWU website, emails etc.)	Non-academic contexts such as residence, sports and so forth	Other: please provide details
Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:

Practical application of multilingualism at university

17. What is your preferred language of teaching and learning?

English	Home language	Mixture of English and home language	Other

17.1. If you selected other, please elaborate more.

18. What would you say is your opinion on any of the following thinking about English as the language of tuition?

18.1. I am confident with the language of tuition.

YES	NO

18.2. I am able to carry out my studies through the language of tuition.

Highly able	Able	Slightly able	Unable

18.3 I am confident with the language of tuition when I do assessment / tests / assignments.

Highly able	Able	Slightly able	Unable

19. What would you say is your opinion on any of the following with the use of languages other than English as your current language of tuition?

19.1. I would make use of the following if made available in my home language or other languages that I know (you can tick more than 1).

Tutors/SI	Notes	Lessons	Instructions	Consultations	Extra lessons	Facilitation	I will not make use
Other options:							

20. Would you like it to receive more multilingual materials in the following contexts? You can tick more than 1.

Examinations	Lessons	Study material	I would not like it
Other suggestions:			

21. What do you think would be a key to the success or failure in the implementation of a multilingual language policy at the NWU? You can tick more than one response.

Attitudes of lecturers	Attitudes of students	Attitudes of management	Multilingual skills applied in tuition	Availability of multilingual study material	Availability of multilingual online learning materials	Other: specify

21.1. Please elaborate if you answered "Other":

Appendix B: Individual language repertoire questionnaire

Questionnaire 2 (individual questionnaire)

Your inclusion in this part of the research is because you have been identified as someone who uses their home language during consultation sessions to communicate with your ALDE lecturer. Based on this finding, please answer the following questions about your language use in general and specifically how you use another language (rather than English) for teaching and learning.

Biographical info

1. Sex

Male	Female	Other

2. Age

18-20	21-29	30-39	40+

Language use at home

3. What is your language 1/home language?

English	Afrikaans	Setswana	Sesotho	isiZulu	isiXhosa	Sepedi	Tshivenda	Siswati	isiNdebele	Xitsonga

4. What other languages do you know?

English	Afrikaans	Setswana	Sesotho	isiZulu	isiXhosa	Sepedi	Tshivenda	Siswati	isiNdebele	Xitsonga

5. Which (should it not be 'How many'?) language do you speak at home with the following people? (you may tick more than 1)

	Language 1 only	More than 1 language
Family members		
Community members		
Close friends		
Relatives		
Partner		
Roommates		
Neighbours		

6. Which language do I use for the following activities? (you may tick more than 1)

		All English	All Language 1	Half English half other language/s	Mostly the other language/s	Only the other language
6.1	Reading	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.2	Emailing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.3	Texting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.4	Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.5	Writing shopping lists, notes, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.6	Watching TV/ listening to radio	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.7	Watching movies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.8	Browsing on the Internet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.9	Praying	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Language on campus

7. In which contexts do you normally use your language 1/home language for teaching and learning? (You may choose more than 1)

In class	In informal conversations	In formal conversations	with my lecturer/s	Other context where I use my home language / first language:

8. In the contexts listed above how much time is spent doing the following in your language 1/home language?

	Most of the time	Some times	Little time	All the time
Speaking				
Listening				
Reading				
Writing				

9. Why do you use a language other than English on campus in trying to make meaning? Where you indicated "Not applicable", you do not have to answer the question. (you may tick more than 1)

	Not applicable	Strongly agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree	unsure
It is easy						
It comes naturally						
To understand the content better						
When I struggle with expressing myself in English						
When I feel comfortable						
To understand better (not the same as no. 3 above)						
To show solidarity						
When I am among friends and others who speak the language						

Other reason to use languages other than English on campus:						

10. How much do you often use other language/s for teaching and learning?

Daily	Often in a week	Often in a month	Rarely	Not sure

11. The way I use other languages than English for communication is? (you may tick more than 1)

Adjective	Very	Fairly	Not	Unsure
Conscious				
Spontaneous				
Guarded				
Directed				
Intentional				
Sporadic				
Calculated/planned				
Satisfying				
Other				

12. Which of these words describe the way you feel when using your home language / first language on campus? Indicate the degree of the feeling as well. Where you indicated "Not applicable", you do not have to answer the question. (you may tick more than 1)

Feeling	Not applicable	Extremely	Very	Slightly	Not at all
Proud					
Anxious					
Inferior					

Superior					
Included					
Excluded					
Intelligent					
Versatile					
Lost					
Empowered					
Disempowered					
Grateful					
Marginalised					
Accepted					
Rejected					

Important					
Rooted					
Approachable					
Loveable					
Special/unique					
Other feelings when I use my home language / first language on campus:					

13. Indicate the mood that you often feel when using your language 1/home language. (You may tick more than one)

Mood	Very	Not	Absolutely not	Not sure
Happy				
Excited				
Fair-minded				
Melancholic				
Sad				
Fuzzy				
Other				

If you ticked "Other" please elaborate:

14. When using your language as observed in the consultations, the practice helped you to: (you may tick more than 1)

	Yes	No	Maybe
Understand concepts better			
Gain insight into the module			
Express myself better to the lecturer			
Participate freely and optimally			
Feel comfortable and valuable			
Obtain better marks on the task			

15. Do you think that using languages other than English should be included in teaching and learning of other modules?

Yes	No	Maybe

16. If you often use languages other than English, would you appreciate it if they were included in teaching and learning of other modules?

I do not often use other languages	Yes	No	Maybe

17. How do you think that the use of languages other than English in academia can be achieved?

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18. Are you aware of the NWU Language Policy? (a) Write down the gist of what you understand of the NWU language policy. (b) What are your thoughts on the NWU

language policy? (I am not sure if it is necessary but when it comes to policy, we only have questions pertaining to the NWU Language Policy and nothing on NWU-PC. I say this because NWU-PC is our site of research and a lot that has been mentioned in the study)

(a).....
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.....(b)
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.....

19. How do you think the NWU should implement its multilingual language policy? By using ...

English only	English and Afrikaans only	English, Afrikaans and my language 1	English, Afrikaans and all South African languages	English, Afrikaans, Setswana and Sesotho	Not sure how

20. Any other comments you want to share about the implementation of the language policy of the NWU?

Appendix C: Individual interviews

Background info questions

Where do you come from?

Which is the dominant language there?

What is your L1? Your home language? Or the one used at home most of the time?

What other languages do you use? Why do you use other languages? With whom do you use other languages? When do you use other languages?

Transition from high school to university

- What type of high school did you attend?
- Is there much of a difference in the language you mostly used throughout school and the kind of language that you use here at university?
- How has the transition been in terms of language use? What are your experiences with language and the transition from school to university?
- Do you often speak your L1 or other languages on campus? What other languages do you use on Campus? Why? With whom? When?

Language use during consultation hours

You gave me permission to use the audio-recordings where I observed and recorded you when using your other language/s to communicate with me during consultation times. In these conversations in my office/on email, you chose to not use English only, but to also use your other languages.

- Why do you think you use languages other than English when you communicate with me during consultation sessions in my office / on email? What is the motivating factor for doing so?
- Does the process of using other languages empower or disempower you? Motivate.
- When this happens, are you aware or unaware and how does the act of using other languages than English make you feel? (a question on the process/experience)
- How does the ability to switch to other languages make you feel? Motivate. (a question on the emotion/feeling)

Multilingual education

- Do you believe that as a speaker of languages other than English, these languages can be used as languages of teaching of learning at university? Why/why not?
- If you say “Yes”, how could these languages other than English be used as languages of teaching and learning at university?

Language policy of the NWU

- Are you aware of the language policy of the university? Can you briefly explain the NWU language policy in your own words?
- The NWU policy speaks of “functional multilingalism”. What do you think this means?
- How successfully does the NWU implement its multilingual language policy? Explain your view with some examples if you can.

Any other language issues that you think is important or interesting at NWU?

Appendix D: Focus group questions

Background info questions

- Where do you guys come from?
- Which is the dominant language there?
- What type of high school did you attend?

Transition from high school to university

- Is there much of a difference in the language you mostly used throughout school and the kind of language that you use here at university?
- How has the transition been in terms of language use? What are your experiences with language and the transition from school to university?

Multilingual education

- Do you believe that as a speaker of languages other than English, these languages can be used as languages of teaching of learning?
- Why/why not?
- If you say “Yes”, how could these languages other than English be used as languages of teaching and learning at university?

Language policy of the NWU

- Are you aware of the language policy of the university? Can you briefly explain the NWU language policy in your own words?
- The NWU policy speakes of “functional multilingalism”. What do you think this means?
- How successfully does the NWU implement its multilingual language policy? Explain your view with some examples if you can.

Any other language issues that you think is important or interesting at NWU?

Appendix E: Consent form and information leaflet for Focus group discussions

Ethics Committee for Language Matters (ECLM)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM DATE:

ECLM Authorization

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Inclusive education in Higher Education: The language issue

REFERENCE NUMBERS:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Kedumetse Motlhankane

ADDRESS: NWU

CONTACT NUMBER: 22046216@nwu.ac.za

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my PhD in linguistics. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the **Ethics Committee for Language Matters (ECLM) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU.....)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

This focus group interview is used to gather data from participants as part of a PhD research. The focus group interview seeks to investigate students' (ALDE 111) attitudes towards the use of languages at university (NWU), their understanding of the university's language policy and their attitudes towards multilingual education and its implementation. Participating in this interview will help the researcher gather data on students' understanding of the above mentioned and also ascertain their attitudes towards multilingual education in higher education.

The research estimates that about 5-10 students will participate in the focus group. The students that participate must be registered for ALDE 111 (English). The students must have also answered a previous questionnaire and participated in individual interviews on the use of languages other than English during consultation with their ALDE lecturer at university. There are "no

known risks" to participating in this study. People who participate in this study will contribute to ongoing debates and research on the implementation of language policies, especially in institutions of higher education.

Your responses are completely anonymous and you will not be identified in any way in the reporting of the findings of this research. All information taken from this study will be coded and used for the purpose of research and nothing else. The investigator will keep the data collected safe and after analysing it the data will be destroyed. Your decision to participate in this study is complete voluntary. If you decide to not participate in this study, it will not affect the care, services, or benefits to which you are entitled. You may choose to not participate in this study by not agreeing to be part of the focus group interview.

What will happen to the data?
The data from this study will be reported in the form of a PhD research study and later parts of the results will be used in publications in journal articles and conference presentations. In all of this reporting, you will not be personally identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated (e.g., your address or the name of your school).

The researcher will store the data for a period of 5 years as per NWU rules. The data will be stored on her google drive and an external drive and will create a pin to be used to access the data. To delete or discard of the data, the researcher will delete all the information and any trace of it in the trash/bin to ensure that the information is completely erased.

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be paid/compensated to take part in the study. There will thus be no costs involved and a token of appreciation will be given to participants.

How will you know about the findings?
The general findings of the research will be published in the PhD that would be available at the NWU library. You are welcome to read about the results in the theiss.
Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Kedumetse Motlhankane at 22046216@nwu.ac.za if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can contact the chair of the Ethics Committee for Language Matters (Prof Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy) at 016 910 3442 or susan.coetzeevanrooy@ nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I ……..…….. agree to take part in a research study entitled:

I declare that:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publically and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 20....

....
Signature of participant **Signature of witness**

- You may contact me again ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____
Postal Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone Number: _____
Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname:
_____

..... **Signature of witness**

Appendix F: Consent form and information leaflet for individual interviews

Ethics Committee for Language Matters (ECLM)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

DATE:

ECLM Authorization

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Inclusive education in Higher Education: The language issue

REFERENCE NUMBERS:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Kedumetse Motlhankane

ADDRESS: NWU

CONTACT NUMBER: 22046216@nwu.ac.za

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my PhD in linguistics. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to

take part. Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the **Ethics Committee for Language Matters (ECLM) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU.....)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

This individual interview is used to gather data from participants as part of a PhD research project. Participating in this interview will help the researcher gather data on students' understanding of the above mentioned and also ascertain their attitudes towards multilingual education in higher education.

The research estimates that about 15/30 students will participate in individual interviews. The students that participate must be registered for ALDE 111 (English). The students must have also been recorded using languages other than English during consultation with their ALDE lecturer at university. There are "no known risks" to participating in this study. People who participate in this study will contribute to ongoing debates and research on the implementation of language policies, especially in institutions of higher education.

Your responses are completely anonymous and you will not be identified in any way in the reporting of the findings of this research. All information taken from this study will be coded and used for the purpose of research and nothing else. The investigator will keep the data collected safe and after analysing it the data will be destroyed. Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to not participate in this study, it will not affect the care, services, or benefits to which you are entitled. You may choose to not participate in this study by not agreeing to be part of the individual interview.

What will happen to the data?
The audio-recording of the individual interview will be transcribed and I will analyse the transcriptions of the audio-recorded data. The data from this study will be reported in the form of a PhD research study and later parts of the results will be used in publications in journal articles and conference presentations. In all of this reporting, you will not be personally identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated (e.g., your address or the name of your school).

The researcher will store the data for a period of 5 years as per NWU rules. The data will be stored on her google drive and an external drive and will create a pin to be used to access the data. To delete or discard of the data, the researcher will delete all the information and any trace of it in the trash/bin to ensure that the information is completely erased.

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?
No, you will not be paid/compensated to take part in the study. There will thus be no costs involved and a token of appreciation will be given to participants.

How will you know about the findings?
The general findings of the research will be published in the PhD that would be available at the NWU library. You are welcome to read about the results in the thesis.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Kedumetse Motlhankane at 22046216@nwu.ac.za if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can contact the chair of the Ethics Committee for Language Matters (Prof Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy) at 016 910 3442 or susan.coetzeevanrooy@ nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in a research study entitled:

I declare that:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publically and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

....

Signature of participant **Signature of witness**

- You may contact me again ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____
Postal Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone Number: _____
Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname:
_____

..... **Signature of witness**

Appendix G: Consent form for Language Repertoire Questionnaire

Ethics Committee for Language Matters (ECLM)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

DATE:

ECLM Authorization

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Inclusive education in Higher Education: The language issue

REFERENCE NUMBERS:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Kedumetse Motlhankane

ADDRESS: NWU

CONTACT NUMBER: 22046216@nwu.ac.za

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my PhD in linguistics. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. Prior to publication of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the **Ethics Committee for Language Matters (ECLM) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University (NWU.....)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that we (the researchers) are conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

This research study is for a PhD which will use a questionnaire to gather data from participants. The questionnaire seeks to investigate students' (ALDE 111) attitudes towards the use of other languages at university (NWU), their understanding of the university's language policy and their attitudes towards multilingual education and its implementation. Filling in this questionnaire will help the researcher gather data on students' understanding of the above mentioned and also ascertain their attitudes towards multilingual education in higher education.

The research estimates that around a 400-500 students will participate in the study. You will be expected to reflect on your use of languages other than English for study purposes, your attitude about that as well as your feelings towards integrating other languages for studying purposes. People who participate in this study will contribute to ongoing debates and research on the implementation of language policies, especially in institutions of higher education. There are "no known risks" to participating in this study.

Your responses are completely anonymous and you will not be identified in any way in the reporting of the findings of this research. All information taken from this study will be coded and used for the purpose of research and nothing else. The investigator will keep the data collected safe and after analysing it the data will be destroyed. Your decision to participate in this study is complete voluntary. If you decide to not participate in this study, it will not affect the care, services, or benefits to which you are entitled. You may choose to not participate in this study by not completing the questionnaire.

What will happen to the data?

The data from this study will be reported in the form of a PhD research study and later parts of the results will be used in publications in journal articles and conference presentations. In all of this reporting, you will not be personally identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated (e.g., your address or the name of your school).

The researcher will store the data for a period of 5 years as per NWU rules. The data will be stored on her google drive and an external drive and will create a pin to be used to access the data. To delete or discard of the data, the researcher will delete all the information and any trace of it in the trash/bin to ensure that the information is completely erased.

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be paid/compensated to take part in the study. There will thus be no costs involved.

How will you know about the findings?

- The general findings of the research will be shared with you by
- If you would like feedback on your personal results, then ...

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Kedumetse Motlhankane at 22046216@nwu.ac.za if you have any further queries or encounter any problems.
- You can contact the chair of the Ethics Committee for Language Matters (Prof Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy) at 016 910 3442 or susan.coetzeevanrooy@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I ……..…… agree to take part in a research study entitled:

I declare that:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publically and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…….. on (*date*) ……...…….. 20....

....
Signature of participant **Signature of witness**

- You may contact me again ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I would like a summary of the findings of this research ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I would like feedback on my functioning/wellbeing as reflected in the questionnaires I completed ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____
Postal Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone Number: _____
Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname:
_____

..... **Signature of witness**

Appendix H: Ethical clearance and information letter

Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: Fezlwe.mseleni@nwu.ac.za

18 March 2024

ETHICS APPROVAL: LETTER OF CONTINUATION

As stipulated by the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (item 8.8), requests for extensions of approved projects are made on the Annual Monitoring form received and reviewed by the chairperson of the ECLM (NWU Ethics Committee for Language Matters). Based on the verification of the chairperson of the ECLM of the Annual Monitoring report received from the applicant on 14 March 2024, the ECLM chair approves the extension of the research project for the period documented below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SCRE) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the ethics approval for the study is extended and the study may continue, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Inclusive education in Higher Education: The language issue

Student/Researcher (Principal Investigator): K.E. Mothlankane
Study Leader/Supervisor: Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy

Ethics number: N | W | U | - | 0 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 4 | - | 2 | 1 | - | A | 7
Institution Study Number Year Status

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Single
Commencement date: 18 March 2024 **Risk Category:** Low risk
Expiry date: 17 March 2025

This approval is for an extension of an already approved ongoing study lead by an academic member of staff. Approval of the extension is provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

- No major changes to the initial ethics application were reported.
- All ethics care stipulations as included in the initial approved ethics application continue to be implemented.

Appendix I: Gatekeeper clearance and information letter

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: +2718 299-1111/2222
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za
Research Data Gatekeeper Committee

NWU RDGC PERMISSION GRANTED / DENIED LETTER

Based on the documentation provided by the researcher specified below, on 22/11/2021 the North-West University (NWU) Research Data Gatekeeper Committee (NWU-RDGC) hereby **grants permission** for the specific project (as indicated below) to be conducted at the NWU:

Project title: Inclusive education in Higher Education: The language issue.

Project leader: Prof AS Coetzee- Van Rooy

Researcher/Project Team: K Motlhankane

Ethics reference no: NWU-00724-21-S7
NWU RDGC reference no: NWU-GK-21-072

Specific Conditions:

Approval date: 22/11/2021 **Expiry date: 22/11/2022**

General Conditions of Approval:

- The NWU-RDGC will not take the responsibility to recruit research participants or to gather data on behalf of the researcher. This committee can therefore not guarantee the participation of our relevant stakeholders.
- Any changes to the research protocol within the permission period (for a maximum of 1 year) must be communicated to the NWU-RDGC. Failure to do so will lead to withdrawal of the permission.
- The NWU-RDGC should be provided with a report or document in which the results of said project are disseminated.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemics the Committee would like to advice the researcher to practice the necessary caution and adhere to the National Covid-19 Guidelines when conducting research with participants.

Please note that under no circumstances will any personal information of possible research subjects be provided to the researcher by the NWU RDGC. The NWU complies with the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) as well as the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPI). For an application to access such information please contact Ms Annamarie De Kock (018 285 2771) for the relevant enquiry form or more information on how the NWU complies with PAIA and POPI.

The NWU RDGC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the NWU RDGC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance. Yours sincerely

Prof Jeffrey Mphahlele
Chairperson NWU Research Data Gatekeeper Committee

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Appendix J: Assignment instructions

THEME: MISINFORMATION VERSUS SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE IN MY FIELD OF STUDY

Universities as institutions have the responsibility to generate reliable, verifiable knowledge. Closely related to this key function of universities is the responsibility to assist students in developing a "critical literacy", in other words, abilities in reading and analysis required to critically evaluate the reliability of information. We live in a society in which information is freely available, but in which it has become possible to manipulate information to serve the interests of individuals or groups. The label "post-truth society" is often used to describe the widespread dissemination of misleading and biased information. Misinformation originates from a variety of sources such as rumours, mainstream and social media, the Internet, communications driven by corporate-vested interests, and even governments. Although trust in science has remained fairly steady over time, recent studies point to a growing divergence of opinion between scientists and the broader community on issues such as evolution, climate change, genetically modified foods, or recently developed medicines. This situation has the potential to harm the legitimacy and progress of scientific discovery and the use of scientific knowledge for the good of society.

Focusing on your own field of study and the South African context, you will write an introduction to argumentative essay (Formal Assessment 2: Introduction) and later a full argumentative essay (Formal Assessment 5: Essay) on the topic described above. The full-length essay must follow the instructions provided below and the introduction should reflect the eventual essay content (refer to the instruction documents for these assessments provided on eFundi).

- Identify a topic within your field of study in which information has been disseminated recently which is controversial in nature. Focus on something which is relevant to the South African (and/or African) situation.
- Provide details of the context in which the identified information was disseminated.
- Drawing on your disciplinary expertise, decide whether this information can be classified as misinformation and provide reasons for your judgment.
- Support your point of view by applying your knowledge of how to construct a sound argument. Point out, in particular, argumentative fallacies (such as misinterpretation, the use of incorrect or irrelevant facts, ignorance, emotion, the abuse of power).